



## Research Article

# The Roles and Responsibilities of Women to Agriculture: A Case of Pakistan's Rural Punjab

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**Abstract** | This Research was conducted to explore the role of females in agricultural events in Muzaffargarh district, Pakistan. Our research indicates that women are essential to all agricultural tasks, from the preparation of the land through selling. Compared to males, they undertake a greater percentage of the labour in the agricultural sector. This paper emphasizes 'The Roles and Responsibilities of Women to Agriculture. In the agricultural sector, rural women from all over the world contribute significantly to both the growth and stability of rural regions as well as to agricultural production. Rural men and women both contribute significantly to the agriculture business, including cottage industries, animal production, and crop production. For this research data was gathered from 100 female respondents using random sampling technique. The data that had been gathered, was examined using SPSS. According to the findings of our research, women in the study area were energetically involved in agricultural activities. To better meet the requirements of their family, they invested more time in agricultural activities.

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## Introduction

Agriculture is one of the most important economic sectors in developing countries. It is also crucial from a sociological standpoint because many people reside in rural areas. The life and status of rural women must be improved, and their rights under the economic reform must be protected. In the global agriculture systems, rural women do have a variety of responsibilities (Swanson *et al.*, 1989). The purpose of

this study was to analyze rural women's contributions to Pakistani agricultural systems, including orchard cultivation, protected cultivation of irrigated and non-irrigated field crops, dairy and livestock production, and animal husbandry. For more than 30 years, women have played a tremendous role in global development. Because of this, women are heavily involved in the production of food in many nations throughout the world especially in the developing nations (Ozcatalbas and Akcaoz, 2010).

In every aspect of agricultural activity, women have played and continue to play a critical role. Nowadays, women's major duty is to perform agricultural tasks. Women put in more effort and longer hours than men do. Most significantly, they perform more responsibilities than men do. They are playing the most important and vital role in Agriculture sector (Satyavathi *et al.*, 2010).

Women are heavily involved in agriculture, livestock, and agro-based industries in rural Pakistan. They worked all day to complete their tasks (Habib *et al.*, 2022). Typically, women required to spend more time on agricultural work than men. Because they perform these duties in addition to their regular household duties, women are far more involved in food preparation and storage (Habib *et al.*, 2022; Shreve, 2000).

Pakistan is a developing country with a pre dominantly agricultural socio-economic structure. According to available data, about 43.6% of women in developing countries and 36.7% of the developed countries work as female workers in agriculture. Pakistan has her 9<sup>th</sup> largest work force (GoP, 2021). Almost 38.5% of the work force in Pakistan is employed in the agricultural sector (GoP, 2022).

Women can be mothers, domestic workers, wage earners, agricultural processors, market women, entrepreneurs, and agricultural producers. Many women and girls work as unpaid family workers. Many are primarily involved in producing food supplies for their families, and many girls do a fair amount of agricultural work, especially in Pakistan's southern Punjab province (Chambers and Momsen, 2007).

In developing nations like Pakistan, where agriculture employs the bulk of the workforce, rural women's participation in agricultural operations is extremely essential and they contribute to family income. Women's participation in agricultural producing activities is growing as a result. In general, women are crucial to the raising of livestock, activities following harvest, and agricultural cultivation (Begum and Yasmeen, 2011).

Women's labor force play an important role in developing countries as they work very hard in agricultural sector. In addition, they also have some

duties related to family life at home (Kazi, 1995).

According to the Economic Survey of Pakistan, most of the population is dependent on the agriculture sector, either directly or indirectly. Revenue sources produced by the agricultural industry. The foundation of the Pakistani economy is based on agriculture and agro-based business. More rural women work in agricultural activities. Rural men and women both contribute significantly to the agriculture business, including cottage industries, animal production, and crop production (Butt *et al.*, 2010).

In Pakistan, women farmers work alongside men on the farm. They participate in fodder cutting, cotton harvesting, and rice planting. For instance, in Punjab, most women work in the cotton and rice fields alongside males. In terms of managing animals, women are also quite involved (Khan *et al.*, 2012).

Among Sindh, particularly among harries (tenant) families and in the desert, women work on the farms alongside their men. In Balochistan, women typically participate in agricultural chores alongside family members. Women work extremely little outside the home in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa because to purdah, a tight social structure, and sociocultural factors. However, women work on farms nearly exclusively with the exception of plowing in mountainous, dry, and tribal districts (Mirani *et al.*, 2014).

Women represent the majority of agricultural producers worldwide, and they are also heavily involved in fisheries and livestock husbandry. Women play a vital role in the production of food, particularly in horticulture and small livestock according to the (Elbehri and Lee, 2011). Rural women put in a tremendous amount of effort in crop production, from soil preparation to post-harvest and food security chores, contributing significantly to the output of the agricultural sector (Habib, 2021). One of the main agricultural rural economic drivers is poultry farming.

In rural Pakistan, women work in all facets of agricultural production, including planting, transplanting, weeding, harvesting, and post-harvest tasks including threshing, drying, and storing. The typical household duties of cooking, cleaning, and maintaining the home, as well as some of its construction, are also carried out by rural women in Pakistan (Sadaquat, 2011).

## Materials and Methods

### Study area and data collection method

Women’s Role in Agriculture in Muzaffargarh, Pakistan was the topic of the current study. For collection of data a Well-organized questionnaire was formed and then for this purpose simple random sampling method was applied. This research setup was created to examine the relationships between several parameters regarding Women Role in Agriculture. In Pakistan’s rural areas, female participation was found to be higher than male participation (Labour Force Survey, 2020-21). A sample of 100 participant was randomly chosen for this research from the selected district Muzaffargarh. A straightforward random sampling method was used to interview the sample respondents.

### Tool for data collection and data analysis

A questionnaire was created with data collection as its ultimate purpose, taking variables and indicators into consideration. A questionnaire is well structured organized Performa to obtain responses (Singh, 2006). To collect data, a structured questionnaire was developed and then given to respondents to collect essential and pertinent information. Following the information gathering, the researcher used SPSS software for the purpose of data analysis. The information was then dispersed and interpreted using tables.

## Results and Discussions

The study emphasizes the importance of the unseen laborers women in agriculture, who assist farmers and make significant contributions to the agriculture sector. Along with recognizing the increased involvement of rural women in agricultural tasks, the report also emphasizes the skills and potential of rural women, emphasizing their significance in Pakistani agriculture.

In addition to working in farms and fields, women are also involved in enhancing agricultural output. Begum and Yasmeen (2011) reported that rural women in Pakistan are not only involved in domestic services, but also in rural socio-economic activities by adapting crop services production, cotton industry, and animal husbandry. These activities include nursery preparation, weeding, crop threshing, grain cleaning, food storage, etc.

Determine the situation of women in agriculture was the aim of this study. The contribution of rural women in Muzaffargarh to agricultural production and animal husbandry was examined in order to achieve this. The selected respondent’s average age is shown in the table to be 30, with a minimum age of 20 and a maximum age of 44. The findings indicated a very low literacy rate in the selected sample size, with the average education level among the respondents being 3 years of formal education, with minimum illiterate people and maximum 14 years of formal education (Table 1).

**Table 1:** Statistics with respect to age and education variable.

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	St. Deviation
Age	20.00	44.00	30.04	6.53705
Education	.00	14.00	3.3200	4.58676

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Since agriculture is the backbone of the overall economy’s stability and growth, its importance cannot be overstated. Along with their domestic duties and socio-cultural obligations, women have a significant direct and indirect part in agriculture activities. Women play a crucial role in the large agricultural socioeconomic setups that make up emerging economies, but their participation differs from region to region (Rehman, 1987). If we look out in this selected area women are involved in agricultural activities in greater extent and the overall percentage is shows in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Female Working in agriculture farming.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
To greater extent	76	76.00
To some extent	19	19.00
Not at all	05	05.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Iftikhar et al. (2007) conducted a study on the role of rural women in the agriculture sector in Pakistan, and found that although these rural women played a significant role in farm and household tasks, the majority of them were illiterate and had limited access to basic infrastructure. Respondents in the selected area said that they were receiving little pay and dealing with numerous issues because they lacked

technical know-how, resources, technical direction, and agricultural knowledge.

Same like above research the following data shows that the study area's literacy rate is very low, and 61% respondents did not attend school. The table shows that 28% respondents have completed five years of education. As can be seen from the table only 07% respondents have education to middle class. If we look out SSC based qualification there were only 02% respondents, same as this 01% for Intermediate and 01% for graduation and none of the respondent was qualified to Master. This shows how rural people are being neglected by policy maker for educational purpose. Women in rural is much more talented and multi tasked women as compared to urban women but only thing why they can't compete to these women are facilities especially in the field of education because education teach you how valuable you are (Table 3).

**Table 3:** Female Farmers categorization on educational base.

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	61	61.00
Primary	28	28.00
Middle	7	07.00
Matric	2	02.00
Intermediate	1	01.00
Graduation	1	01.00
Master	0	00.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Mostly women in rural areas work in agricultural sector for their economic survival, as most of them don't have any other source of income, so they prefer to work in field to feed their family and to live good in the society (Sadaf et al., 2006). Lack of education is another reason for working in rural areas as they don't have any kind of education that leads to job availability that's why mostly women in rural areas as per our research said that they prefer to work with their male and in this sense, to tell their husband how loyal, well-wisher they are for their family, women in selected are also put their input that they also work in Agri-based sector to decrease poverty in the house, to create some economic ease for their family (Table 4).

The various agricultural and livestock operations carried out by women both within and outside the home, as well as marketing activities, are covered in

detail in this section. The majority of domestic work is done by women, and they are inevitably involved in outside productive activities. This means that although women put forth a lot of effort, it goes unnoticed and, regrettably, unpaid (Herath, 2007). Our study's findings indicate the rural activities that are being performed by a single woman in rural setup and this shows how hardworking and multi-talented they are in especially in the field of Agriculture (Table 5).

**Table 4:** Why female farmer chooses this profession?

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Poor economic background	59	59.00
Because of not doing any job	10	10.00
To help their male member	08	08.00
To complete their basic household needs	19	19.00
Any Other	04	04.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

**Table 5:** Type of programs being performed by female farmer.

Categories	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Labor work in agricultural field	83	83.00	17	17.00
Agricultural land preparing	35	35.00	65	65.00
Agricultural harvesting	67	67.00	33	33.00
Livestock work	91	91.00	09	09.00
Household work	100	100.00	00	00.00

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

In District Muzaffargarh, women take part in farming activities actively. Their role is vital both in livestock rearing and looking after household chores. It is recommended that governments and non-governmental organizations should initiate programs such as adult education or training programs to help poor agricultural women, so they could learn some skills that help them in their life. More efforts are required to motivate women and increase women's knowledge of effective management techniques and agricultural activity execution. Women's organizations should be encouraged to offer some training programs that are guide-based and aid in the development of the abilities of rural women. In general, women are

not paid for their work, so we need to develop a policy on this issue.

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## Novelty Statement

Pakistan is an Agricultural Country and this field is playing a vital role in Development of Pakistan, this paper will play as an important factor in highlighting the roles and responsibilities of Pakistani Female farmer.

## Author's Contribution

**Asim Zubair:** Conducted research, performed statistical analysis and wrote manuscript.

**Ayesha Aziz:** Conceived the research idea.

**Ghulam Akbar Malik:** Helped in Statistical Analysis.

**Iffat Batool:** Critically reviewed.

**Zohaib Atta Mehdie:** Helped in data collection.

## Conflict of interest

The authors have declared no conflict of interest.

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