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OBSTACLES TO GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION IN THE PUNJAB, PAKISTAN

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A B S T R A C T

Gender mainstreaming is a global issue, touching the sensitive brains of thinkers, researchers and scientists of 21st century. Whereas the role of women in all spheres of life is not comparable with the sources provided to them by the states and the societies as well. Although women participation in agriculture sector is remarkable but in return they are deprived of their basic education and have least access to information sources; like TV, Radio, Print Media and other sources. In this context present study was conducted to examine the obstacles to gender mainstreaming in the agricultural extension. For the present study 500 number of households were selected as study sample. The data were collected with the help of pre-tested and validated interview schedule. Findings showed minimum level of education especially for wives. Moreover, these women were having negligible usage of information sources. The study strongly recommends promotion of education and information sources for farm families. The finding of research study highlighted the immediate attention of Government, policy makers and societies to have a glance over such deficiencies.

Keywords: Obstacles, gender mainstreaming, agriculture extension

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture occupies an eminent place in the entire economic structure of Pakistan. Its contribution to GDP in nearly 21% and 45% of total employment is generated from agriculture (Govt. of Pakistan, 2013). Before discussing the gender roles i.e. man or woman playing in their daily life, it seems necessary to define gender and gender roles. According to FAO (1997) "gender refers not to women or man per se, but to the relations between them, both perceptual and material. Gender is not determined biologically, as a result of sexual characteristics of either women or men, but is constructed socially. It is a central organizing principle of societies and often governs the process of production and reproduction, consumption and distribution".

Various studies confirmed that women are more involved in different roles as compared to man and a large majority of women in Pakistan bear the burden of double or triple roles by doing reproductive, domestic and unpaid/underpaid production works as in other parts of the world (Ahmad & Zia, 1990). These women worked in fields during different stages of field or vegetable crops as found by Curry (1996) who stated that in African communities women were generally responsible for agricultural work. They collect and employed farmyard manure in the fields during land preparation (Shirima, 2001).

The other main sector of agriculture is livestock that includes large, small ruminants and poultry birds, which are the main source of milk, meat, hides and eggs, and also a source of income in hard times of villagers (FAO, 2002). The role of women in livestock is authentic and they do most of the work in livestock keeping (Ishaq, 2004). Bravo-Baumann (2000) also confirmed that women played an important role in livestock care and management and marketing of certain livestock products.

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At international level, the role of both genders in water management varies from locality to locality. A study conducted by Saini & Koppen (2001) in Eastern Gujrat of India reported that in one-third cases irrigation were exclusively performed by men. In 13% this task was exclusively done by women and 53% men and women collectively performed. But in Bangladesh the schemes of credit for improvement the access to irrigation water to women become ineffective because they did not have an access to land, credit, seeds and fertilizer (Jordans and Zwarteveen, 1997).

As the custodian of home, women are involved in post-harvest operations and food security, both these aspects are unable to separate and it is fact that both men and women are responsible of producing, processing and providing food (FAO, 1996). Almost 60-80% of food in most developing countries produced by women, they were involved in different food conservation operations like selection, peeling, breaking, processing, cleaning, washing, cutting, making pickles, drying, storing, making jams and marmalades etc. (Diouf, 1999).

The women not only fetch the water but also do washing utensils, cloths and cleaning house compound, releasing poultry and its feeding, cooking and serving of meals to the family members and care of mothers-in-law, grand mothers, parents and sisters-in-law while husbands are always busy outside work and spent very less time to homestead (Paul & Saadullah, 1991). The work of women not rendered to be as paid work and it is pity to say that wage earning women bear a larger burden of household work.

Child bearing, rearing, education and socialization is the major role of women as bestowed by nature to women. The women are also involved in community development, social relationship, and conflict management. But women have less access to all resources rather she has to face gender inequality in all spheres of life. Gender equality and women's empowerment are critical components of any program for sustainable development and poverty reduction (Randell & McCloskey, 2014). Gender inequality prevails from household to national level. Boys and men are most privileged with more investment incurred in their education, health and future income-potential, this create second class status for girls and women in and outside the home (Alderman and Gertler, 1997). On the other hand, these women faced cultural and socio-economic constraints but also problems of a technical, institutional and policy nature (Mc Guire and Popkin, 1999). Therefore, keeping in view the above said facts, the present study had been designed to analyze the obstacles to gender mainstreaming in agricultural extension in the Punjab, Pakistan: A case study of district Muzaffargarh. It was envisaged that the results of this study were helpful in involving women in extension and thereby recognizing the issue of gender equality in extension. When both male and female sectors of the society had equal access to non-formal educational resources, the country was definitely made considerable progress. The study was very broad and deep in its subject and area which could not be covered in this paper. Present paper is specified to family land holding, educational level and utilization of information sources by the farm families.

METHODOLOGY

The Punjab province holds significant position regarding agriculture in Pakistan. Muzaffargarh district of the Punjab province was selected as study area. It comprises of four tehsils namely Alipur, Jatoi, Kot Adu and Muzaffargarh. A multistage cum simple random sampling technique was applied for present study (Hussain *et al.,* 2004). The study was conducted in all the four tehsils of Muzaffargarh district. All the married farm families in the district were served as the study respondents as done by Muhammad *et al*. (2001). Five villages from each tehsil were selected randomly (Sudman, 1983), for this purpose a complete list of villages (mauzas) was obtained from Revenue Office. Thus from 20 villages 25 households were randomly selected through random numbers calculated by scientific calculator. Thus making a total of 500 number of households resulting to 1000 respondents. The data were collected with the help of pre-tested and validated interview schedule. The data were analysed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data regarding demographic characteristics of the respondents such as education, and family land holding are presented in Table- 1 and 2.

The data given in Table 1 showed that majority (77.4%) of the wife respondents was illiterate. However, 64.3% husbands were illiterate. Whereas, 10.2, 6.4, and 3.3% of the wife respondents were primary (up to 5th grade), middle and Matric passed respectively. However 10.2, 8.4 and 10.6% of the husband respondents were primary, middle and Matric passed respectively.

Whereas, 0.7 and 0.2% of the wife respondents were BA and MA passed. On the other hand 2.7 and 0.9% of the husband respondents were B.A. and M.A Passed. The above data clearly shows that there vis clear gender disparity in all level of educational degrees except primary which is equal level for both sexes. The study area has very few educational facilities. However, there is also less trend of education especially for females. On the other hand lack of sufficient resources, proper guidance and poverty are other factors impeding low literacy rate in the study area. The findings of Rasheed (2004) who found in her M.Sc. thesis under the title of "Women participation in decision making process regarding agricultural business and family matters in tehsil Gojra" which partially coincide with the findings under discussion about education level that 66.7% of the respondents were illiterate, whereas 20.0% were primary and 10.0% were matriculate.

Table 1. Frequency distribution of the respondents according to their educational level.

Educational level	Husband		Wife	
	No.	% age	No.	% age
Illiterate	290	64.3	349	77.4
Primary	46	10.2	46	10.2
Middle	38	8.4	29	6.4
Matric	48	10.6	15	3.3
FA /F. Sc.	13	2.9	8	1.8
BA / B. Sc.	12	2.7	3	0.7
MA / M.Sc.	4	0.9	1	0.2
Total	451	100	451	100

Table 2 reveals the data regarding land holdings of the family it was depicted that a large majority (78.0%) of the respondents had small land holdings up to 12.5 acres. Whereas, 16.6% of the respondents had medium (12.5-25 acres) land holdings. Only 5.3% of the respondents reported that their families owned 25 or above acres of land i-e large landholders. In rural areas land holding depicts the economic worth of the respondents and his living and thinking style. In connection with above study it was found that Rushton *et al.*(1996) conducted a study entitled " The changing role of cattle in the mixed farming systems around Banglore, India" and found that in cattle-owing farms only 3.3% of farmers were with small-landholdings.

Table 2. Frequency distribution of the respondents according to their family land holding.

Family land holding	No. of respondents	
	No.	% age
Small (up to 12. 5 acre)	352	78.0
Medium (12.5-25 acres)	75	16.6
Large (above 25 acres)	24	5.3
Total	451	100

The farm families were asked to give their response regarding their utilization of source of information with its rank order. The data presented in Table 3 depicts the utilization of information sources by the respondents showed that 27.9% of the wife respondents utilized relatives "often" as a source of information, followed by 26.6, 23.7 and 20.0% had neighbours, friends and radio often used as a source of information. However, 1.6 and 0.9% of the wives have newspaper and magazine as a source of information. Whereas, none of the wife claimed about the usage of Agriculture Department, private and pesticide agencies as a source of information. The study area has very poor literacy level so very few wives consult printed matter as supported by above shown data. On the other hand due to cultural norms and defined sex roles wives have no contact to information source agencies like Agri. Department, private and pesticide agencies. Whereas, regarding husband respondents 35.0% have utilized often friends as a source of information followed by 27.5 and 19.5% of the husbands have often utilized radio, relatives and neighbors as a source of information. Whereas, 16.0, 8.4 and 6.9% of the husbands have additional edge to their wives regarding pesticide dealers, private agencies, and Agri. Department respectively, who had often utilized above mentioned source of information.

Table 3. Frequency distribution of the respondents according to the utilization of sources of information. (n= 902)

Sources of information	Husband						Wife					
	Never		Occasionally		Often		Never		Occasionally		Often	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Agriculture Department (Extension Wing)	297	65.9	123	27.3	31	6.9	451	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Newspapers	310	68.7	104	23.1	37	8.2	412	91.4	32	7.1	7	1.6
Magazines/Journals	368	81.6	74	16.4	9	2.0	422	93.6	25	5.5	4	0.9
Radio	105	23.3	222	49.2	124	27.5	113	25.1	248	55.0	90	20.0
Television	114	25.3	262	58.1	75	16.6	294	65.2	96	21.3	61	13.5
Relatives	120	26.6	207	45.9	124	27.5	121	26.8	204	45.2	126	27.9
Neighbours	97	21.5	266	59.0	88	19.5	126	27.9	205	45.5	120	26.6
Friends	80	17.7	213	47.2	158	35.0	192	42.6	152	33.7	107	23.7
Private agencies	314	69.6	99	22.0	38	8.4	451	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Pesticide dealers	156	34.6	223	49.4	72	16.0	451	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

Scale: Never= 0, Occasionally = 1, Often= 2

Table 3(a) shows the rank order of the utilization of the source of information, as it is clear from above data that relatives were ranked first and equally utilized by both husband and wife respondents as main source of information and neighbors were ranked second and more utilized by wife respondents as compared to husband respondents followed by radio and friends ranked second and third (2.0 and 7.2 t- test value). Whereas, Agriculture Deptt., pesticide dealers and private agencies were ranked in the last at sixth number. Regarding husbands utilization of source of information friends was ranked first (0.8 t- test value) followed by radio, neighbour, and relatives ranked second. The same case as wives regarding Agriculture Deptt., private agencies and pesticide dealers ranked in the last.

Table 3(a). Mean, SD & rank order of the respondents according the utilization of sources of information.

Sources of information	Husband			Wife			t-test
	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank	
Agriculture Department (Extension Wing)	0.4	0.62	5	0	0	6	
Newspapers	0.4	0.64	5	0.1	0.35	5	8.6
Magazines/Journals	0.2	0.45	6	0.1	0.29	5	5.2
Radio	1.0	0.71	2	0.9	0.67	2	2.0
Television	0.9	0.64	3	0.5	0.72	4	9.5
Relatives	1.0	0.74	2	1.0	0.74	1	0.0
Neighbours	1.0	0.64	2	1.0	0.74	1	-0.1
Friends	1.2	0.71	1	0.8	0.79	3	7.2
Private agencies	0.4	0.64	5	0	0	6	
Pesticide dealers	0.8	0.69	4	0	0	6	

CONCLUSION

Pakistan like the other developing countries has been facing the challenge of gender discrimination in almost all arenas of life. Here, women are the neglected strata among the rural community. They should be well educated and civilities for bright future of the nation. Radio, Television and printed matter should address farm families regarding their problems in agriculture and community development. But it is the need of hour that women should well equip with education and latest information.

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