



Socio-Economic Problems Faced by Rural Women in Agricultural Activities in Pakistan

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Abstract

The foundation of Pakistan's economy is agriculture. The income from agriculture and agro-based activities makes up a significant portion of the GDP. In rural areas, women form the backbone of the household economy and are heavily involved in agro-based activities. In Pakistan, in general and the Punjab province in particular, rural women play a significant role in agricultural activities. Their agricultural contribution is undervalued. The purpose of this study was to identify the challenges that rural women have when engaging in agricultural activities. The case study was chosen from Punjab, Pakistan's District of Muzaffargarh. For this study, a multistage sample procedure was employed, and 50 respondents—rural women—were chosen using convenient sampling. Using the proper statistical software, the data were analyzed and interpreted in order to make the necessary findings. According to the findings, the majority of working women engaged in a variety of agricultural tasks, such as planting, harvesting, and picking. The majority of working women were employed to boost their family's income, but they were having a difficult time taking care of their kids and completing housework. One of the primary issues is the landlord's negative attitude. It is recommended that the mass media be used to change the unfavorable stereotype of working women in rural areas.

Subject Areas

Sociology

Keywords

Agricultural activities, Problems, Constraints, Rural women, Pakistan

1. Introduction

According to a recent World Bank estimate, the majority of the poor—roughly three quarters—live in rural regions and depend on agriculture and allied industries for their livelihoods [1]. It is clear that without rapid agricultural growth, development, food security, and poverty alleviation cannot be fully realized [2]. Therefore, helping the impoverished in rural areas improve their standard of living and food security in a sustainable way is extremely difficult. In general, growth, income distribution, better food security, and the reduction of poverty in rural areas depend heavily on gains in agricultural productivity [3]. The success of initiatives aimed at agricultural development in rural regions depends on the rural woman, who is essential to all of them [4].

Agriculture provides a direct or indirect source of income for almost 70% of the rural population. Additionally, it supplies businesses with raw materials, acts as a market for industrial goods, and accounts for roughly 53% of foreign exchange earnings. Since agriculture is the cornerstone of the economy's stability and growth, its importance cannot be understated [5]. Women contribute significantly to both direct and indirect agricultural activities in addition to their domestic duties, social obligations, and cultural obligations. The foundation of emerging economies is agriculture, and women are integral to their larger agricultural socio-economic structure, but regional differences exist in their engagement [6].

In less developed nations, agriculture is the primary source of income, and the growth of this sector directly affects the development of those nations [7]. The largest economic sector in Pakistan, like in the majority of developing nations, is agriculture. According to [8], it accounts for 21% of GDP.

Since Pakistan gained its independence, the agricultural sector has dominated the country's economy [9]. Despite the structural change towards industrialization, it remains the foundation of the rural economy and has a significant impact on the socioeconomic structure of the rural population. About 45 percent of the nation's employed workforce is dependent on it. With its current 21% GDP contribution, it is the primary source of income for rural residents, and it is the center of the rural economy's advantages and disadvantages [10]. The majority of Pakistan's population depends either directly or indirectly on the revenue streams produced by the agriculture industry, and the country's population is growing at an alarming rate. Therefore, the growth of agriculture is essential to raising living standards, reducing poverty and food insecurity, and promoting general rural development [11].

Pakistan's economy is based on horticulture, which includes two parts: animal husbandry and harvest production [12]. Additionally, they employ 60% of the provincial population and retain 45% of the country's total workforce [13]. According to this topic, women make up the majority of Pakistan's population and have a particularly significant role in many facets of life. One of the most important sectors of the Pakistani economy is agribusiness. Women play a crucial role in horticulture and agro-based activities since rural exercises are conducted

in the country's provinces [14].

As per research, during 2014-2015, horticulture accounted for 20.9 percent of the GDP and employed 43.5 percent of the province's workforce. Increased rural production and high harvest yields are essential for food security, which lessens the ability of farming systems to withstand environmental change. In order to strengthen farming's ability to support rationally higher financial development directions and reduce poverty in Pakistan, a system of approach should be established in conjunction with a favorable sociopolitical environment, adequate management, and sound macroeconomic fundamentals [15]. Agribusiness, which includes agriculture, fisheries, and animals, is the legislature's main focus. Given new developments, ideas, and future directions for the sustainable growth of the agro industry, intentional efforts are being made to improve farm-level practices and establish connections between agriculturists and business sectors and industry [16].

The majority of agricultural work in rural regions is done by women. Given that Pakistan is mostly an agricultural nation, the importance of rural women cannot be understated. Similar to other developing nations, Pakistan's rural women are part of the millions of workers who toil diligently to produce crops that provide basic needs like clothing, food, and shelter. According to [17], women's contributions to Pakistan's rural farming communities—more especially to domesticated animals—are essential to the family's income [5]. Generally speaking, their dedication to the economic development of Pakistan is neither acknowledged nor validated. According to [18], women are also involved in the creation of domesticated animals through tasks like bolstering, cleaning the animals' sheds, and feeding them grain. They also provide work and administration, but they avoid pay-producing activities and basic leadership management.

In operations including food production, processing and storage, livestock care, marketing, and distribution, rural women are essential. Among the many obstacles they must overcome are inadequate distribution networks, land, finance facilities, and restricted access to education. Due to low yields and a high incidence of waste during harvesting, processing, and storage, there is less food available and less money for rural women [5]. Notwithstanding these obstacles, if provided sufficient incentives and gender parity, women typically possess significant potential for maintaining agricultural output and family income [14].

Numerous socioeconomic considerations have a significant impact on farm women's overall lives [19]. Women's responsibilities in agriculture are significantly impacted by a number of factors, including gender inequality, income disparities, occupational stress, low family life satisfaction and lack of family support, helplessness, lack of social security, inadequate education, and operational holdings [20]. Women have historically played a crucial role in on-farm operations, managing the home food supply and caring for crops, therefore they are disproportionately affected by these disturbances.

It has been noted that women are more involved in agriculture than males are,

from preparing the land to managing agricultural crops after harvest and raising cattle [21]. The fact that men in this district are moving to other places in order to increase their income and improve their socioeconomic standing is one of the factors contributing to the growing trend of involvement in agriculture and related fields, according to the research survey. As a result, the shortage of male laborers in agricultural activities is growing daily, and the burden for female agricultural workers is also growing [22].

According to [23], women labor more than males in agriculture, yet they are denied access to many basic needs and do not receive proper nutrition or medical care. In Pakistan, it is very fundamental to separate sexual orientations according to socially constructed morals and obligations [12]. According to this analysis, women's contributions to agrarian development are not limited, and their role in the farming industry should be understood. A few rules should be in place to protect women's rights at a higher level and prevent abuse at all costs. Women ranchers must acquire skills for improved post-collection procedures and capability, as well as for improved horticulture operations [24].

Originally from American community psychology, the term "empowerment" is associated with social researchers [25]. Giving power is the central tenet of empowerment, which has a strong connection to Marxist social theory. The concept of empowerment entails two possibilities. The first is the power that each individual possesses. Empowerment necessitates that power be altered or replaced in terms of position; nevertheless, empowerment is impossible for anyone if power cannot be altered and stays the same. Second, the empowerment emphasises the need to broaden its concept. Generally speaking, it represents our experiences rather than a person's perception of authority.

Instead of what other people desire or what is right for them, power is what we want or what we wish to do [26]. Power is emphasized in traditional social science as influence or control [27]. Power is frequently static and unalterable. Power, according to [28], is a concept that exists between a person and an object. Power does not reside in alone, isolation, or inheritance. Empowerment is essentially the act of moving from one position to another and from one status to another.

It is the authority that promotes control over their life. It enables people to empower themselves and achieve anything for themselves [29]. Empowerment literally means that a person is being encouraged to make their own decisions. They ought to raise their understanding of political structure and political and financial decision-making. According to [30], empowerment focuses on decision-making and equips a person to make the best choice for themselves. Empowerment also refers to assisting individuals in improving their health and economic levels [31].

However, in Pakistan's agricultural sector, women are disproportionately affected by social and economic issues, which are mostly caused by the unequal distribution of resources; individuals lack confidence and lack the ability to alter their life. In Pakistan, social awareness initiatives run by the government or semi-government may be very important for empowering women. One of the poorest

countries in the world is Pakistan, where the impoverished lack the resources to meet their basic necessities. In many places, women are unable to receive a basic education because they cannot afford it. The most effective way to empower Pakistan's female population is to educate them about their strengths. It enables them to enhance their way of life.

The production of food and crops, crop management, food security, and other cropping pattern approaches are all heavily reliant on female labor and farmers. The foundation of Pakistan's rural development and national economy is thought to be agriculture. 70% of Pakistan's population lives in rural areas and depends on agriculture both directly and indirectly for their daily needs and way of life. The agricultural sector employs the largest percentage of Pakistan's workforce, which is mostly composed of 30.2% men and 67.2% rural women. Although they make up the greatest fraction of the agricultural workforce, women lack the authority and right to oversee the entire administration of land and crop production [32]. In the sector of agriculture, women encounter a variety of issues and challenges. The parts that follow go over these issues [33].

According to [34], ignorance was a significant problem among Pakistani women farmers. They stated that because sons were viewed as the future farmers, they were given more opportunities to learn about farming than daughters. The agricultural production industry includes a wide range of agricultural activities in which men and women participate in a variety of field activities. In addition to their greater involvement in both farm and non-farm labor and activities, there is a gender gap in terms of agricultural extension services, education, and other farm consulting services. This is also a result of Pakistani culture's contemporary public, social, anthropogenic, cultural, traditional, and religious norms.

According to [35] carried out a survey study in the Pakistani region of Mardan to determine the role that women play in raising cattle and to look at the variables that influence that role. The study's conclusions imply that government policies and tactics should foresee the significance of women's contributions to the cattle sector. Providing rural women and young girls with agriculture training, livestock education facilities, and tribute could help them contribute to the livestock farming system and give them a say in how the livestock is managed and produced.

Women in Pakistan's social structure, particularly in rural areas, are subjected to a unique position that effectively denies them access to education and autonomy. Men (fathers, brothers, or husbands) have more authority over them, and they are unable to make life decisions for themselves. The issue is that rigid gender role views, societal and cultural restrictions on women's freedom of mobility, and discrimination at work all influence women's labor market involvement [36]. Until recently, women were portrayed in rural development initiatives as mothers, daughters, or as assistants to their husbands. It was assumed that when their spouses' economic standing increased, so would their own. However, because of the unequal power dynamics between men and women as well as with regard to individuals of different castes, races, and classes, this assumption did not come to

pass [37].

Numerous labor-intensive tasks, including picking, weeding, cutting grass, collecting cotton sticks, and separating seeds from fiber, are carried out by rural women. Because rural women are primarily responsible for the care of livestock, farm operations, and related tasks like milking and ghee preparation, it is also their responsibility to gather wood and fetch water from remote areas from sunrise to dusk, rural women are always occupied with various horticultural tasks, including pre-harvest, post-harvest, and the management of farmed animals. Women are widely involved in agrarian activities around the world. Numerous studies have shown that they support various rural activities that have essential components, such as sharing activities related to harvest generation, animal creation and management, fish cultivation, and timberland administration with their male partner. However, in other parts of the world, they cooperate more than men do in horticultural activities.

2. Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frameworks are essential to study because they define the key concepts in the field and the connections between them. Understanding the theoretical frameworks that support the research gives researchers a foundation that helps them comprehend the how, why, and when of certain phenomena. Moss's study, "Gender Equity and Socioeconomic Inequality: A Comprehensive Model of Factors Affecting Women's Health," provided a theoretical foundation.

Using a number of independent variables, she explains how socioeconomic and gender inequality determinants impact women's health in "A Framework for the Patterning of Women's Health." Using historical, geographic, legal, and political models as a backdrop, the framework provides information on how men and women live their lives, along with specific cultural factors where social norms appear to influence behavior [38]. Long-standing family values in Pakistan become overly rigid in a number of circumstances. When it comes to marriages, gender inequality is linked to economic inequality [39].

The dominant have dominance and use it to exercise their authority in a variety of spheres of people's lives, including their social interactions, jobs, and personal lives. They make decisions concerning people's rights and needs, regardless of how they want to spend money. Globally, gender inequality has a negative impact on women's physical and mental well-being. Even if men are in a more fortunate position since they have greater access to resources and services, it still has an impact on them. Action must be taken to improve the circumstances in which women can exercise their right to health in order to reduce health disparities [40].

3. Application in Research

This method was discussed during the movement's summit when the all-female movement first emerged. The WID, WAD, and GAD are used in this study because the researchers emphasize the involvement of women in the agricultural

sector and talk about the numerous issues that women face in the framing process. Income is the opportunity that an entity has to save and consume during a given period of time. The researcher applies the current study's theoretical framework in this manner. The WID, WAD, and GAD theories were used because women take part in the agricultural industry, earn money, and provide the fundamental needs of society. With rural areas, women aid us with framing.

Worldwide, the greatest economic sector is agriculture. The majority of people, particularly in rural areas, depend on it for their livelihood. Although both men and women participate in agricultural activities, women's contributions are far more than men's, particularly in third-world nations like Pakistan. Crop cultivation, harvesting, animal care, food processing and preparation, working for pay in agricultural or other rural businesses, gathering fuel and water, trade and marketing, taking care of family members, and housekeeping are all activities they participate in. However, the majority of the activities are acknowledged as being unpaid.

Despite their significant contribution, they nevertheless face a variety of limitations and obstacles, such as lack of access to bank loans, credit facilities, wages, technical skills, and training. Despite these obstacles, they play an admirable part in their nation's progress. The primary finding of this study is that the researcher is able to draw attention to the particular issues that women in the agricultural industry face. According to this view, without the participation of women, our nation's revenue growth would be impossible, and our agricultural sector would not be strong. Women are granted equal rights, and those rights are safeguarded. The wid wad gat theory explains how we raise women in society, and when people give women all the facilities they need to work in any profession, the nation is the most economically powerful in the world.

4. Aim and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the study was to look into the issues that agrarian women in the district of Muzaffargarh, Punjab, Pakistan, experience in the agricultural industry. In light of this goal, we suggested the following particular goal for observing the difficulties' phenomena.

- 1) To look into the issues that women encounter when performing agricultural tasks.
- 2) To draw attention to the kinds of issues that women in agriculture encounter.

5. Material and Methods

The women who work in agriculture in the rural districts of Punjab, Pakistan's Muzaffargarh district made up the study's population. For this investigation, a multistage sampling technique was employed. Ultimately, a practical sample procedure was used to choose 50 respondents, who were rural women. Women who worked in agriculture were chosen for the position. Although the research tool (questionnaire) was created in English, local/native (Punjabi & Urdu) languages

were used for the interview questions. The instrument was pre-tested with ten respondents to ensure its correctness. Prior to the final data collection, any ambiguities that were discovered during pretesting were eliminated. The information was gathered through in-person interviews. The statistical program for social sciences (SPSS) was then used to analyze the data using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Women who were engaged in farming activities in the District of Muzaffargarh, Punjab, Pakistan, made up the examination's population.

6. Results and Discussions

Any nation's economy depends heavily on agriculture, and in my opinion, women are the foundation of the agricultural production system. Pakistan is an agricultural nation. The majority of Pakistan is supported by agriculture, which provides the majority of the raw materials used by the nation's industrial sector. Additionally, it earned two-thirds of the exports both directly and indirectly, and it appeared to be the primary indicator of Pakistani society's socioeconomic structure. Women play a crucial role in each nation's agricultural industry. Food production, food processing, and the selling of agricultural products and goods have all historically involved women in significant roles. The rural and national economies rely heavily on women.

When women are empowered, they have more options to make changes in their life. The process and outcome of empowering individuals or organizations are both referred to as "empowerment" in this context. In developing countries, women's empowerment is frequently viewed as essential to poverty alleviation and long-term economic progress [41].

Since the creation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals, a number of international development organizations have made gender equality and women's empowerment a top priority. The economic and social empowerment of women has been a top goal on the agendas of many nations. This practice is becoming more popular because poverty and disempowerment are positively correlated, as not being able to meet basic needs usually prevents one from making important decisions.

In Pakistan, agriculture is the basis of economy, an important sub-sector in livestock also, Pakistan's economy is based on agriculture, which is also a significant livestock subsector and is referred to be the country's "black gold." In addition to its 11.6% contribution to GDP and 13% contribution to foreign exchange revenue, it accounts for 55.1% of agricultural value added. Additionally, this sub-sector supplies the business with raw materials, including leather, wool, animal hair, and bones from our nation. In addition, it is a great source of wholesome meals like meat, milk, and eggs, all of which may be utilized to create a variety of additional byproducts. With its vast and varied rural areas and mostly agro-socio-economic structure, Pakistan is a developing nation [18]. The agricultural industry has been and will continue to be the foundation of the economy, accounting for 23.3% of GDP. 48% of the nation's labor force is employed in agriculture,

which provides direct or indirect employment for the majority of people in rural areas [42].

Table 1. Distribution of the respondents according to their age.

Age (in years)	Frequency	Percentage
Up to 35	20	40.0
36 - 50	15	30.0
Above 50	15	30.0
Total	50	100.0

Source, Survey, 2025.

Age is a crucial determinant of a person's behavior. It shows an individual's work ethic and attitude towards various social and financial aspects of life. The term "age" refers to the number of years that a person has lived since birth. A person's age has a significant influence on their behavior; it broadens their perspective. **Table 1** shows that less than one-third, or 30.0 percent, of the respondents were in the medium age range (36 - 50 years), while another 30.0 percent were elderly (above 50 years). The majority of respondents (40.0%) were young (up to 35 years).

Table 2. Distribution of the respondents according to their education.

Education	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	20	40.0
Primary	11	22.0
Middle	10	20.0
Matric and above	9	18.0
Total	50	100.0

Source, Survey, 2025.

As [43] have examined the significance of various socio-economic or demographic traits in social research. Education is the most significant demographic factor among these. Education also has an impact on the development of human resources in the agriculture sector. Women are the primary participants in livestock and agricultural activities in Pakistan's rural areas, and they actively support the rural economy [44] [45]. However, women's low educational attainment is the cause of many of their issues and limitations [46].

The process of acquiring information, wisdom, and other desirable traits of character, intellect, and general competency through formal instruction is known as education. It is widely acknowledged that it is quite challenging to achieve success in all areas of life without education [44]. Without education, it is impossible for our working women to comprehend, instill, and embrace new innovations.

The respondents were questioned about this aspect while keeping this information in mind. The information is provided in **Table 2**.

According to [47], education, or the number of years spent in school, is the culmination of all the methods used to influence people's behavior in a positive way. Particularly through formal education, education fosters the development of general competency, knowledge, and other positive mental attributes. **Table 2** lists the data indicating the respondents' educational attainment. According to the table, a significant percentage of respondents—40.0%—were illiterate, although 22.0 percent had completed primary school. Of the respondents, 18.0 percent had matriculation and higher, while 20.0 percent were middle-class.

Table 3. Distribution of the respondents according to their occupation.

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Work as agricultural labor	32	64.0
Household	5	10.0
Labor	4	8.0
Work as agriculture labor and household	9	18.0
Total	50	100.0

Source, Survey, 2025.

According to a study by [48], the majority of Pakistani women are involved in the production of agricultural products and the management of dairy animals by raising various livestock, including goats, sheep, cows, and buffalo [24]. The author also came to the conclusion that the majority of Pakistani women were found to be mostly engaged in farm-related tasks including milking, cleaning the cattle shed, and feeding the cattle [18].

Furthermore, a study by [23] found that the majority of rural women in the studied area contributed significantly to farming-related tasks. Crop production, field management, crop harvesting, animal rearing, family work, and home management were among these duties, but their significance and diligence have long been overlooked.

The occupations of the respondents are shown in **Table 3**. About one-tenth, or 10.0 percent, of the respondents were householders, and 8.0 percent were laborers, while the remainder, or 64.0 percent, and were employed in agriculture. Approximately 18.0% of those surveyed were householders and agricultural laborers.

As came to the conclusion that the majority of Pakistani rural women faced large and prevailing social and anthropogenic restrictions related to male supremacy, cultural standards, and traditional religion systems.

Table 4 shows that 68.0 percent of respondents indicated their family members had a positive attitude towards them, 28.0 percent said their family members had a negative attitude, and 4.0 percent said their family members had an indifferent attitude. 30.0 percent of respondents claimed that their relatives had an indifferent

attitude towards them, 28.0 percent said that their relatives had an unfavorable attitude towards them, and 42.0 percent said that their relatives had a favorable attitude towards them.

Table 4. Distribution of the respondents according to their opinion about the people attitude about them as an agricultural woman.

People	Favorable		Unfavorable		Indifferent		Total	
	Freq.	%age	Freq.	%age	Freq.	%age	Freq.	%age
Family	34	68.0	14	28.0	2	4.0	50	100.0
Relatives	21	42.0	14	28.0	15	30.0	50	100.0
Friends	22	44.0	9	18.0	19	38.0	50	100.0

Source, Survey, 2025.

Table 5. Distribution of the respondents according to their participation in agricultural activities.

Farming activities	Mostly		Occasionally		Not at all		Total	
	Freq.	%age	Freq.	%age	Freq.	%age	Freq.	%age
Seed partition	12	24.0	6	12.0	32	64.0	50	100.0
Sowing	11	22.0	7	14.0	32	64.0	50	100.0
Selling	2	4.0	4	8.0	44	88.0	50	100.0
Spreading chemical	1	2.0	3	6.0	46	92.0	50	100.0
Weeding	20	40.0	5	10.0	25	50.0	50	100.0
Harvesting	16	32.0	9	18.0	25	50.0	50	100.0
Binding	14	28.0	6	12.0	30	60.0	50	100.0
Threshing	10	20.0	7	14.0	33	66.0	50	100.0
Drying	19	38.0	4	8.0	27	54.0	50	100.0
Storage of seed	38	76.0	6	12.0	6	12.0	50	100.0
Picking	22	44.0	9	18.0	19	38.0	50	100.0
Cleaning of grain	41	82.0	3	6.0	6	12.0	50	100.0

Source, Survey, 2025.

Women regularly participate in agriculture and animal production in Pakistan's rural areas. In small production systems, rural women have a more crucial role in providing for their families' food needs and increasing their income [49]. Although women make up half of the world's population, their contributions to household economy production and administration, as well as to the nation's overall economy, have been undervalued and unacknowledged [50]. This is due to the fact that men's activities are visible while women's are invisible. Sociologically speaking, women's roles in Pakistani culture have always been viewed incorrectly. The limitations that Pakistani rural women suffer are ingrained in normative

norms, cultural values, and customs—the majority of which lack ethical or theological justification. Their work is never documented [51].

The outcomes of Pakistani women's involvement in various agricultural activities are displayed in **Table 5**. According to the table, women were involved in practically every aspect of agriculture. In every field, their percentage is high. However, seed storage has the highest percentage (76%) followed by grain cleaning (82%). The most challenging work they perform in that field is spreading chemicals, and statistics indicate that 92% of women declined to take part in that activity.

Women are essential to farming and raising rural communities' standard of living. According to [52], rural women are essential to the agricultural sector's output since they labor tirelessly on crop production from soil preparation to post-harvest and food security initiatives in developing nations [53]. It is now commonly acknowledged that women's empowerment plays a significant role in fostering increased agricultural output and development in rural areas.

Table 6. Distribution of the respondents according to face problems during working in agriculture.

Problems	To great extent		To some extent		Not at all		Total		
	Freq.	%age	Freq.	%age	Freq.	%age	Freq.	%age	
Money	11	22.0	8	16.0	31	62.0	50	100.0	
Insecurity	14	28.0	9	18.0	27	54.0	50	100.0	
Time	Less time for children	10	20.0	7	14.0	33	66.0	50	100.0
	Less time for family	10	20.0	7	14.0	33	66.0	50	100.0
	Less time for self	10	20.0	7	14.0	33	66.0	50	100.0
Shortage of water	13	26.0	8	16.0	29	58.0	50	100.0	
Low social status	16	32.0	7	14.0	27	54.0	50	100.0	
Health	18	36.0	8	16.0	24	48.0	50	100.0	
Lack of seed	11	22.0	12	24.0	27	54.0	50	100.0	
Lack of training	15	30.0	4	8.0	31	62.0	50	100.0	
Marketing problems	16	32.0	8	16.0	26	52.0	50	100.0	

Source, Survey, 2025.

However, a number of constraints, including sociocultural and economic ones, work against women's engagement in agricultural output. Although women have mostly succeeded in overcoming some of these obstacles, the job of overcoming them can be quite intimidating [54]. The efforts and tenacity of women's organizations, community-based groups, and civil society organizations battling for their cause are well appreciated.

The majority of women in Pakistani agricultural households work alongside

males on the land. Their jobs include cultivating rice, plucking cotton, and cutting fodder. For instance, the majority of women in Punjab labor side by side with males in the cotton and rice fields. Women also have a significant role in managing animals. In Sindh, women work alongside males on the farms, especially in arid areas and in tenant (haries) households. In Baluochistan, Pakistan women, who typically come from nomadic households, work alongside their family members in agriculture [55]. Women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa hardly ever leave the house for social, cultural, and purdah-related reasons. However, in hilly, desert, and tribal belt regions, women carry out nearly all farm tasks, with the exception of ploughing [56]. The percentage of time spent on agricultural tasks by women in Pakistan can be used to measure their contribution to the agricultural sector. For instance, women in Sindh's rice and cotton-growing regions dedicated 39.34 and 50.42% of their man-days annually to these crops, respectively [57].

The issues that the respondents encountered while working in agriculture are shown in **Table 6**. About 22.0 percent of the respondents reported having financial difficulties “to a great extent” when working in agricultural, 16.0 percent reported having financial difficulties “to some extent,” and 62.0 percent reported never having financial difficulties while working in agriculture. Approximately 28.0 percent of those surveyed reported experiencing “to a great extent” insecurity while working in agriculture. The inability of women to find time for themselves, their families, and—above all—their children is another issue they face in the agricultural economy. The percentage is displayed in the table.

Approximately 20.0 percent of the respondents reported having “to a great extent” less time for themselves when working in agriculture, while 14.0 percent reported having “to some extent” less time for themselves. When working in agriculture, more than one-fourth, or 26.0 percent, of the respondents experienced “to a great extent” water storage issues. Another issue that women in particular areas face is social status. Over one-third, or 36.0%, of the respondents said they experience health issues “to a great extent” while working in agriculture. Similarly, when working in agriculture, almost 22.0 percent of the respondents experienced “to a great extent” the absence of seeds. About 30.0 percent of the respondents reported having “to a great extent” or “to some extent” a lack of training issue when working in agriculture, 8.0 percent reported having “to some extent” or “never” having this issue.

7. Conclusions

Women in rural areas produce and process food using traditional technologies. Using hand hoes and cutlasses, the majority of farming tasks, including weeding, clearing, planting, and harvesting, are completed by hand. Food processing activities require simple conventional tools like mortar, grinding stones, bowls, etc. Using traditional technology makes agricultural and food processing labor-intensive, inefficient, and prone to high food processing waste rates [58].

The workforce of women is just as productive as that of men. They carry out

household chores that are regarded as an inherent and integral part of their lives. In their daily lives, these jobs take up a lot of time and effort, but none of this suffering is acknowledged. This is insufficient for a rural woman's existence, as she is as involved in agro-based activities and agriculture as males are. However, despite her significant economic contribution, women remains underpaid and under-represented in both society and government statistics due to the male population's dominance.

Since women make up half of the world's population, man cannot survive on Earth without them. Men and women support one another in various facets of life. Women have played a significant role in many facets of society. Despite the fact that women do more work than men, our society still labels them as gender sensitive. This gender adapts to important events in a way that occasionally leaves men behind, therefore the reality is really different. The majority of agricultural work in rural regions is done by women. Given that Pakistan is mostly an agricultural nation, the importance of rural women cannot be understated. Similar to other developing nations, Pakistan's rural women are part of the millions of workers who toil diligently to produce crops that provide basic needs like clothing, food, and shelter. They participate in a variety of tasks, such as farming, caring for animals, postharvest tasks, and managing the home.

Pakistani women's role in the agricultural sector. It was long anticipated that women's role in the process of advancement would be significant. Many women have social, political, and economical responsibilities. Given the importance of women's education and their participation in agriculture, it is believed that the main reason Pakistan lags behind most rising nations in terms of economic and social development is the absence of a larger percentage of educated and highly qualified women [59].

The bulk of Southeast Asian nations reside in rural areas and rely heavily on agriculture, as noted by [60]. Two-thirds of Pakistan's GDP comes from agriculture, where women play a major role. They make up 66% of all economically active agricultural laborers relative to the country's overall population. The structure of Pakistani society is widely acknowledged to be highly patriarchal. Gender positions are clearly segregated, and there are significant gender differences in how people interact with capitals of all kinds [51]. On a larger scale, a feudal and sociopolitical system based on unequal land and resource distribution.

Rural women contribute significantly to agriculture, but because they labour as unpaid domestic helpers, their contributions are rarely valued financially. As urban women, they encounter a number of obstacles that hinder them from claiming their rights in agriculture, including societal, economical, traditional, authorized, and emotional limitations. Rural women are unable to make judgements on several facets of agriculture since they do not own land. Despite their considerable presence and numerous duties, women's economic involvement is often overlooked. Underdeveloped countries have cultural customs and social laws that restrict women's empowerment by forbidding society from granting those rights as

permitted.

The role of women in agriculture must be recognized, and their labor and sacrifices must be recognized, if we are to see rapid and lasting progress. Women make up the majority of the population, particularly in rural areas where agricultural operations are carried out, hence it is not good for the economy that their participation is often understated.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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