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The Role of Farm Women in Agriculture and it's Allied Felids: A Case Study of Iran

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Abstract – **Agriculture is one of the oldest occupations of women in Iran. Their contributions to agriculture development continue to be very crucial to the National Economy. Many women in the agricultural sector are still in the informal sector and remain invisible in the official national statistics. This paper highlights the role of rural women in agriculture and its allied fields. It is argued that the rural women in Iran have been actively involved in agriculture and its allied fields. In addition to her daily work routine, consisting of, cooking, cleaning, and other domestic chores, rural women are also heavily involved in all aspects of country's agricultural sector. From crop production to livestock rearing, rural women are expected to regularly engage both domestic and commercial aspects of society. Despite such a huge contribution, her role has yet not been recognized.**

Keywords – **Crop Farming, Farm Women, Livestock, Marketing Infrastructure, National Economy, Participation.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Baghri and Shabazi (2007) indicated that Iranian farm women themselves underestimate their work in agriculture, animal husbandry, and carpet weaving. Those involved in these activities often report themselves as "homemakers."

Rahmani et al (2007) found that in Gilan female accounts for 76% of the labour input for rice and 80% for tea, in Mazandaran 50% for rice and in Gorgan 40% for cotton and 90% for summer crops. Women provide labour input for fruits, animal husbandry, dairy products, and preservation and processing activities.

Karbasioun et al. (2008) mentioned that agricultural and other rural products produced by women are sold in the market. But women often participate as unpaid family workers. Therefore, their work may be perceived as a part of household labour. Thus women are active in households as well as cash-earning activities for their families. But neither men, nor women make a distinction between purely household related activities, and those related to the market. Moghadam (2008) indicated in her study conducted in Gonbad since women have significant role in agriculture workforce, women's participated in 40 per cent of cultivating, 60 per cent of picking cotton, and 30 per cent in ploughing and preparing fields, also they had significant role in preparing natural fertilizer.

Shahnaj et al. (2009) outlined that farm women in Iranian Agriculture have always been an important foundation of these production units. Without the presence of rural women, the participation of farm women in economic activities is an undeniable reality.

Aref (2010) outlined some of barriers for participation of farm women in agricultural activities. These barriers include lack of knowledge, lack of ability of individuals to participate, lack of effective and strong government institutions, inadequate focus on human resource development and dependency on government and lack of authority in communities. Rahmani et al (2007) found that in Gilan female accounts for 76% of the labour input for rice and 80% for tea, in Mazandaran 50% for rice and in Gorgan 40% for cotton and 90% for summer crops. Women provide labour input for fruits, animal husbandry, dairy products, and preservation and processing activities.

Saadi and Arab (2005) found that level of participation of farm women was 40-70 per cent in many rural and agricultural development programs implemented in Iran. Shahnaj et al. (2009) outlined that farm women in Iranian Agriculture have always been an important foundation of these production units. Without the presence of rural women, the participation of farm women in economic activities is an undeniable reality.

The reviewed studies revealed that farm women have an important and significant role in Iran agriculture and economy, which could be supported by proper and special programme for farm women.

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Iran, province of East Azerbaijan, Tabriz that, it comprises of two districts of Markazi and Khosroshar, six Taluks and seventy five Villages. As it was pointed out, the study was conducted in Tabriz area to know the participation of farm women in different agricultural activities, However Khososhahr and Markazi districts purposively selected. A list of total villages in these districts, and other farm women population based on the census data, 200 farm women selected, in age group of more than 18. This age group is considered as the active population in agriculture. The design explains what observations to make and how to make. It also indicate to us, what types of statistical test are to be applied for analyzing the data .In the present study , " the ex-post facto research design " is used.

III. RELIABILITY, SELECTION OF THE RESPONDENTS

The primary scale was administered to a group of 30 respondents randomly selected in a non sample area. The respondents were selected from different socio-economic background, in order to cover women from different categories. The Cronbach's Alpha, value of the scale was 0.895, which was highly significant at one per cent level indicating the high reliability of the scale.

Table 1: Relationship between characteristics of farm women with their participation in crop farming

Indep. variables	Crop farming activities (n=200)		
	Work particip.	Decision-making particip.	Overall particip.
Age	-0.080 (0.259)	0.110 (0.120)	0.042 (0.557)
Education	-0.164* (0.020)	0.148* (0.037)	-0.068 (0.342)
Annual income	0.032 (0.653)	-0.037 (0.601)	-0.003 (0.963)
Land holding status	0.038 (0.590)	-0.056 (0.428)	-0.027 (0.706)
Family size	-0.096 (0.174)	0.092 (0.193)	-0.029 (0.688)
Animal possession	-0.011 (0.880)	0.036 (0.613)	0.047 (0.512)
Marketing infrastructure	0.033 (0.646)	0.071 (0.317)	0.068 (0.341)
Innovativeness	-0.185** (0.009)	0.173* (0.014)	-0.064 (0.365)
Level of aspiration	-0.145* (0.041)	0.081 (0.252)	-0.155* (0.028)
Perceived role overload	-0.048 (0.498)	0.003 (0.966)	-0.099 (0.165)
Extension contact	0.206** (0.003)	-0.140* (0.048)	0.173* (0.014)
Mass media exposure	-0.165* (0.020)	0.127 (0.073)	-0.109 (0.124)
Inter-spouse communication	0.027 (0.701)	0.003 (0.969)	-0.056 (0.437)
Cosmo politeness	0.095 (0.183)	-0.069 (0.334)	0. 071 (0.318)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

IV. Relationship between Characteristics of Farm Women and Participation in Crop Farming

Data presented in Table 1 shows that these variables such as age, education, family size, animal possession, level of aspiration, mass media exposure, perceived overload, inter-spouse communication, marketing infrastructure, had positive relationship with crop farming. Other variables had negative relationship with crop farming. In case of education, innovativeness, extension contact at 5 per cent had significant relationship with decision-making.(fig.1)

V. GLM Multivariate Tests Based on Crop Farming Activities by Independent Variables

GLM (general linear model) is a general procedure for analysis of variance and covariance (ANCOVA), as well as regression. It can be used for multivariate, and repeated measures designs. The GLM Multivariate procedure allows you to model the values of multiple dependent scale variables, based on their relationships to categorical and scale predictors (MONCOVA).Reason to use of GLM as statistical tool for this particular research. Be summaries as:

1. Existing of nominal, ordinal and scale types of independent variables. For example: Marital status and districts are nominal, level of aspiration and education is ordinal. Age and annual income are scale variables.
2. Existing of more than one dependent variables, for example: animal husbandry activities and crop farming activities, that each of them having three variables, overall, work and decision making.
3. In this specific research not suitable to use regression even multivariate regression .Because by using of regression method only one dependent variable will be predicate.

Data showed the effects of independent variables on crop farming, at three different parts as, overall, work, decision making. As we can see there was significant relationship within independent variables in models of work participation and there was no significant independents variables effects on overall crop farming and decision making participation. Also about individual effects of independent variables on dependent variables, this variable was significant effects at 5 per cent level.

1. For overall animal husbandry activities: cosmopoliteness.
2. For work participation: Level of aspiration, Mass media exposure, Cosmopoliteness.

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations

Rural women are major contributors in agriculture and its allied fields. Their work ranges from crop production, livestock production to cottage industry. From household and family maintenance activities, to transporting water, fuel and fodder. Despite such a huge involvement, her role and dignity has yet no been recognized. Women's status is low by all social, economic, and political indicators.

As results showed in this study There was no significant association between marital status of farm women and their participation in different crop farming activities such as work participation, decision making participation, and overall participation. Women's age, animal possession, family size, marketing infrastructure, Cosmopoliteness, had positive relationship with overall participation in crop farming. Annual income, marketing infrastructure, land holding, extension contact, inter-spouse communication, had positive relationship with work participation in crop farming. Work participation in crop farming was significant at 5 per cent Level with aspiration, Mass media exposure, cosmopoliteness.

Finally it is concluded that the rural women are exploited by land lords for their personal good and enrichment. Women are treated as sub- servant or personal property. In this regard government must formulate policies to enhance their skills and their work should be counted in economic indicators.

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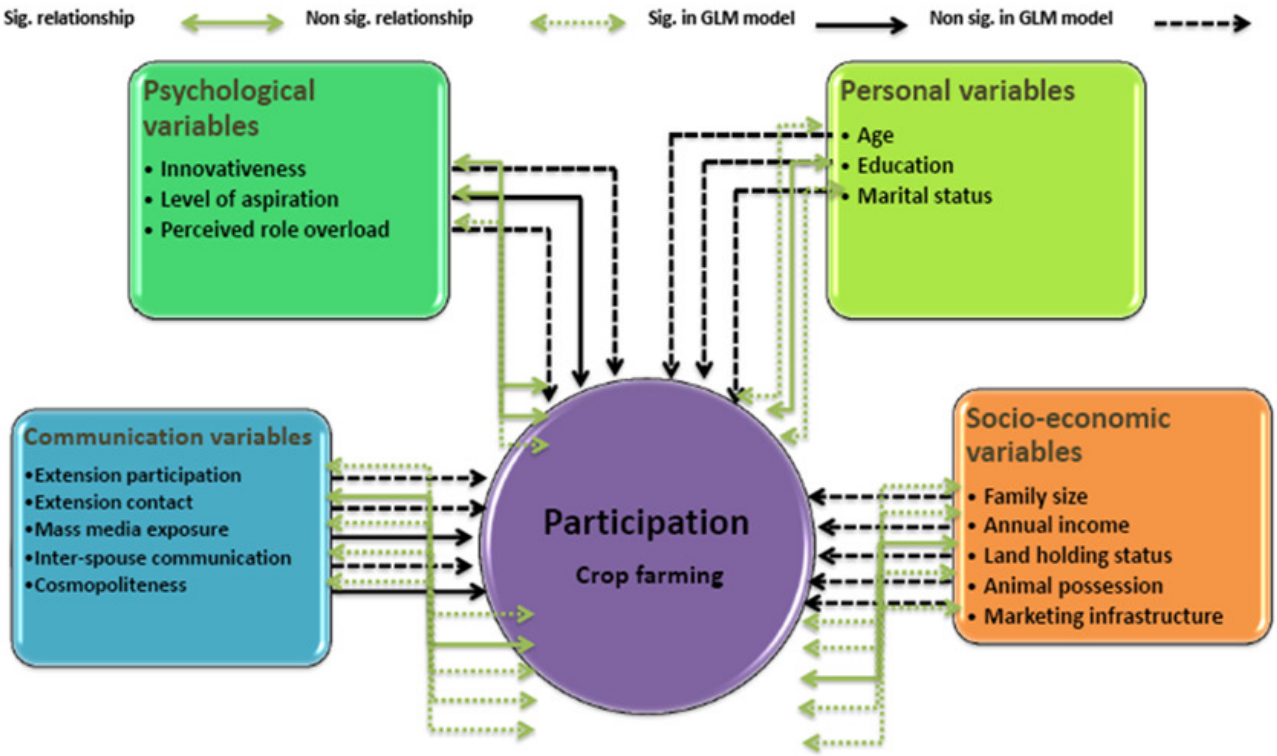

Fig.1. Emprical model of the study based on crop farming activities with independent variables