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## NEED ASSESSMENT OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION EDUCATION FOR THE RURAL SUBSISTENCE POULTRY WOMEN IN THE PUNJAB, PAKISTAN

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### ABSTRACT

Mostly it happens that males are acknowledged everywhere for their world specially role in agriculture. Participation of rural women is very little to register in the official papers of government in spite of their extended role in the on-farm and off-farm activities. Moreover, all these activities are also restricted by rural customs, traditions and values for the women. Women are not behind them as women also used to do tedious work in agriculture. Women have remarkable role in poultry farming on home level. In this regard, present study was planned to assess the need of extension education services for the rural women regarding poultry education. Through multistage sampling technique 750 respondents were selected from the entire district. Data were collected through interview schedule. Findings revealed mean age of the respondents was 33.84 while educational level was below the mark as 59.89% respondents were illiterate who never attended the school. Overwhelming majority showed their desire of getting extension service for the better productivity of poultry products. Lack of self-confidence, Social security, social conflicts and poor dissemination of information on media were the prominent contains of the women in the study area. Study recommended that there is dire need of extension services provision to these women. In the perspective, more female extension field staff should be recruited for the maximum effectiveness of poultry services.

**Keywords:** Poultry, Agricultural Education, Extension Services, Rural Women, Pakistan

### INTRODUCTION

The economy of Pakistan (GOP, 2012) is largely dependent on agriculture, which directly supports three quarters of the population and satisfies the hunger of 163.76 million people. Gender relates to socially assigned roles and behaviors attributable to men and women.

The rural literacy rate is only 41.6%. It is interesting to note that the female literacy rate of 26.6% is far below the literacy rate of male people 56.3% in rural areas. Gender equity has gained currency worldwide especially, in the agricultural sector in developing countries where women comprise half or more of the workforce. Women's active contribution in agricultural growth has been promoted and many recent agricultural extension projects have

been making efforts to increase women farmers' participation; (Saito and Weidemann, 1990; Stuart, 1994). Subsistence poultry farming in Pakistan: Food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty are the severe issue existing in Pakistan and to overcome these issues rural entities go for several strategies. Poultry farming by women is one of them through which they can earn enough cash for their livelihood uplift.

For instance, backyard poultry where chickens are reared on small scale level for the income generation (Qureshi, 1985). Bessei (1989) and Farooq and Mian (2001) described that that chicken reared on small farms under extensive management system significantly contributed to the cash income of the rural families. Likewise it is the better option for rural women of Pakistan. Extension education services for rural women involved in subsistence poultry farming: Education messages do not reach the majority of the women in the poultry sector. While there is a growing

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awareness to contact women farmers, extension education services are generally geared toward male farmers. Like in many other countries, agricultural extension education services programs for the development of rural development in Turkey is also focused on male farmers leaving the women outside the mainstream of information even when they are engaged in the activity covered. To avoid an economic invisibility of women, clearly reflects the supremacy of men in agricultural extension (World Bank, 1992). However, in some countries, female extension agents' that make contact with male farmers tends to be restricted (FAO, 1984). In this scenario of Pakistan, paid work of women and participation is very little to register in the papers of government in spite of their importance in both farm and non-farm activities which are much more limited by rural customs, beliefs, traditions and values (Haq, 2003). Female require appropriate and timely information to improve their crop production technologies, management, and marketing of the poultry production as well as, increase of their income. Many constraints on poultry production are common to men and women; in other words, are gender unbiased. However, in many countries, women in poultry production operate under greater constraints than men (Saito and Weidemann, 1990). Since any extension system must target particular categories of clients to meet their needs, gender specific problems with specific solutions: women in poultry production need special help (Saito and Spurling, 1992; World Bank, 1992, 2003). However, worldwide extension education service systems reach more men than women farmers. The reason given explains why extension education services do not reach women farmers. Ethiopian women (JICA, 1999) have longer working hours than men in addition to the extra burden regarding house management and productive activities. Further, they are generally dependent on men along with their children for taking care of livestock products and their by-products. They also engage in non-farm income activities such as petty trading, beer brewing and leather work. Rural women contribute significantly in almost all activities related to poultry, livestock production and the agricultural sector. The trained women in these sectors will definitely help to improve the production ultimately overcoming the animal protein shortage and house hold income (Younus et al.,

2007). The task of the Extension Education Service is to introduce modernization and guide farmers on various aspects of poultry production for the development in the rural areas. Pakistan has tried several extension education systems concept including the Village Agricultural and Industrial Development Programme (Village-AID Programme), Basic Democracies System (BDS) and Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) etc. At present, Extension education is a training and visit system to disperse technical information to surrounding farmers (Ahmad et al., 2004).

Problems faced in poultry education: The common constraints that women in poultry sector faces are the following: Time, lack of education, limited access to credit and inputs, land availability and tenure, lack of suitable farm and household technology, training centers, job availability etc. Another current agricultural extension system appraises the governmental department of agriculture in the Punjab province involves extension education work through Extension Field School (EFS) but gender biasness is also here. This system has four main components: technology development, training of trainers, training of farmers, monitoring and feedback. The EFSs are the farmer training sessions conducted by Agricultural Extension workers called trainers in the villager's house or the farm of a selected contact farmer. The EFSs were initially used for integrated pest management projects in countries like Philippines and Indonesia. But extension system still remains inefficient; top down bureaucratic big farmer oriented ignoring the gender equality issue, and ignoring youth as partners (Ali, 2004). For rural women education specially, in the sector of poultry is scarce due to gender biasness. Rural woman's work in Pakistan is more visible in livestock sector than the crop sector. They undertake various activities of livestock or poultry management like watering and feeding of animals, animal shed cleaning and milking (Arshad et al., 2010).

#### **METHODOLOGY**

District Toba Tek Singh of the Punjab-Pakistan province was selected as universe of the study area. It comprises of three tehsils Gojra, Kamali and Toba Tek Singh. A multistage sampling procedure was adopted by Erbaugh et al. (2003) likewise through random sampling technique; ten villages were selected from

each tehsil. From each selected village, 25 farm families were selected at random and from each selected farm family, one woman who was actively involved in poultry farming was selected, thus, the total number of sampling was 750 respondents. This experiential study is based on both primary and secondary data sources which were collected from Sep. 2012 to February 2013. The data were collected with the help of pre-test and validated interview schedule. The collected data were analyzed and tabulated on SPSS (Computer software) to draw results, conclusions and making of pertinent recommendations.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The importance of the characters like age, education, farm experiences, farm tenure and sense of ownership of the land play a vital role in the agricultural field (Hassan et al., 2002).

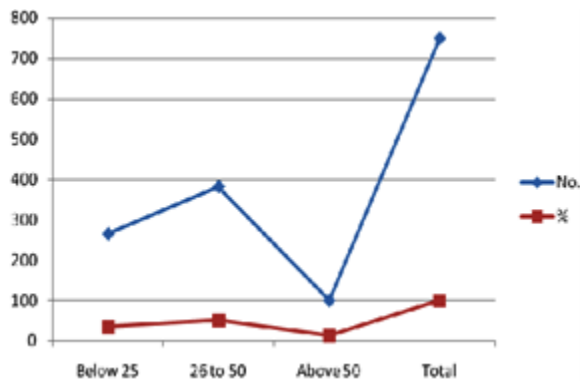


Fig 1. Assessment of the respondents according to the age, mean = 33.84, S.D = 14.03.

Figure 1 shows that 51.07% of the respondents fall under the category of 26 to 50 years, followed by 35.47% of below 25 years and only 13.47% of them were above 50 years of age. The mean age of the respondents was 33.84 with a standard deviation of 14.03. Butt et al. (2010) who found out that 81.6% of the respondents fall under the age category of 20 to 40 years, followed by 12% of 41 to 60 years and 6.4% of them were above 60 years of age.

In the case of education, a large majority 59.90% of the respondents were illiterate, followed by 15.70 and 9.70% of the respondents that attained primary and middle education, respectively. While only 5.30% had highly passed and 9.00% of the respondents were above matric. The mean education of the respondents was 0.87 with standard deviation of 1.31. In rural areas of Pakistan, many problems and constraints were experienced by women due to their low educational

level. According to Khan (2005), education is a solution to all the society problems. Education is the process of developing knowledge, perception and other required behavior of the mind, character and general competency (Evenson and Mwabu, 1998). Education leads to many social benefits like lowering the child mortality rate, high quality food, higher economic returns, technology and sources of information (Desai, 1998; Mammen and Paxson, 2000; Haq, 2003).

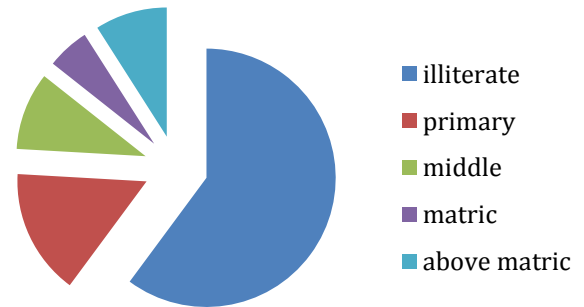


Fig 2. Assessment of the respondents according to the education, mean = 0.87, S.D = 1.31.

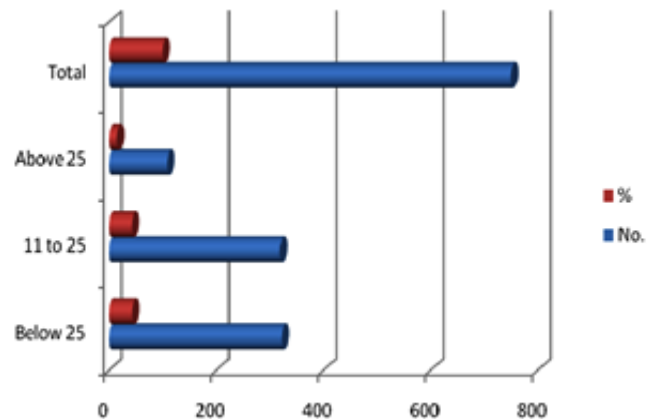


Fig 3. Assessment of the respondents according to the farm experiences, mean = 15.28, S.D = 10.73.

As shown in Figure 3, in the case of farm experiences, 42.93 and 42.53% of the respondents were below 10 and 11 to 25 years respectively, whereas only 14.53% of the respondents were above 25 years of age. The mean of the respondents' farm experiences was 15.28 with a standard deviation of 10.73. The effect of farm experiences was confirmed by Cole and Johnson (2002) and Kurkalova et al. (2003).

Figure 4 reveals that large majority 60 to 80% of the respondents indicated the need of a female poultry extension education officer in approaching poultry extension education services. The mean of the

respondents were 0.39 with a standard deviation of 0.49. The present research findings was similar with the findings of Butt et al. (2010) who found that necessary suggestions given by the respondents were that maximum female subject matter specialists should be produced in the agricultural field (64.0%), training program for females for example (agricultural development and livestock) was 40.0%.



Fig 4. Assessment of the respondents according to the need of female poultry extension officer mean = 0.39, S.D = 0.49.

Government and private organizations should focus more on problems of rural women (52.0%) and extension field staffs should be trained to educate the women engaged in farming (12.0%). Similar suggestions were also presented by Sadaf et al. (2005), Majaka (2001) and Raju et al. (2001). The rural women also play a pivotal role in poultry and livestock production activities. Their participation is well dispersed and less perceived. They are actively involved in livestock care and supervision, and rural poultry farming. Here, participation of female force in livestock and poultry production was determined and the responses were presented in the data. A majority (55.0%) of the total respondents strongly agreed and

was followed by 29.0% who agree and 16.0% agree to some extent (Sailaja and Reddy, 2003). So it can be said that majority of the total respondents were in favor of the female poultry extension education services for rural women.

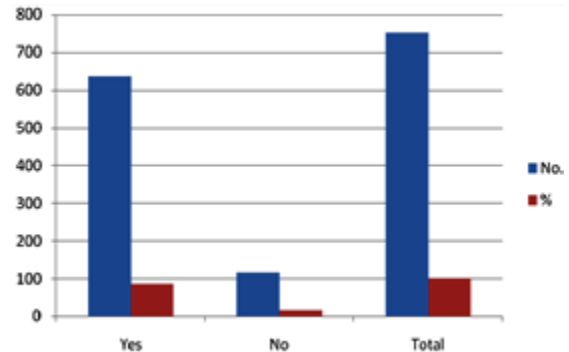


Figure 5. Assessment of the respondents according to the need of training of farmer extension education center, mean = 0.15, S.D = 0.36

Figure 5 stated that large majority (84.30%) of the respondents indicated the need for training in poultry extension education services. The mean of the respondents were 0.15 with a standard deviation of 0.36. So we can say that a large majority of the females were in need of training for poultry production. Iftikhar et al. (2009) reported that safeguard management to care for animals from diseases and precautionary measures of diseases has a mean of 0.74, while the standard deviation of the respondent was 0.44. Among training needed in poultry production, chicken meat production has a mean of 0.83 and a standard deviation of 0.38. Similar outcome were also presented by Hassaan (2010) while determining the obstacles to gender mainstreaming in agricultural extension in the Punjab, Pakistan.

Table 1. Factors that inhibit women participation in livestock activities.

Factors	Mean	Std. Deviation
Lack of self confidence	4.48	0.71
Social security	4.31	0.64
Social conflicts	4.07	0.72
Lack of media information	4.00	0.83
Lack of social interaction	3.53	1.19
Transportation difficulties for women	3.36	0.68
Violence against women	3.08	0.97
Poor economic conditions	2.93	1.12
Lack of job opportunity for women	2.77	1.06
Lack of women organization	2.47	0.61

Similarly, Sadaf et al. (2005) depicted that caring for diseased animals was at the top with the highest weighed score of getting training and assistance from veterinary extension education staffs. Sailaja and Reddy (2003) also reported that this could be attained through effective training and extension programs specially designed and based on technological felt needs of the rural farm women to enhance poultry productivity. Poultry is the sub-sector of livestock.

When respondents were asked about that which factors hinder their participation in livestock activities, each individual had her own perception and point of view but according to the data in Table-1 Among those factors lack of self-confidence was on the top with highest mean value (M= 4.48) which is due to the low literacy rate of rural female in the study area. Self-confidence of an individual increases with the increase of educational level of that individual (Nosheen et. al., 2008). On the other hand lack of women organization is also a factor which inhibits the participation of rural women in different poultry production and management activities with lowest mean value (M= 2.47). Literature shows that in our society females were usually undesired child that's why rural people consider that it is useless to educate female child because they have to migrate in another family after marriage further more they have to face many difficulties while going out, talking to male other than blood relations, and in attending and social or training activities. Women involved in livestock activities have to face many problems like lack of inputs and information related to poultry management activities. Lack of education, poverty, male dominance, social setup and lack of confidence were the factors which hinder women participation in agricultural and livestock activities (Fabiya, 2007).

Figure 6 shows that participation of respondent were shed cleaning and other activities with mean of 1.76 and Std. deviation 0.796 as compared to other activities and rural women participate least in poultry raising and selling of eggs and meat (M= 2.22 and M= 2.32) respectively. These results are supported by the comments of rural women during qualitative data collection through in depth individual interviews as one of the respondents said that: "Poultry rearing is a difficult job to be carried out in the house as they spread lot of dirt everywhere in the house". The comments of rural women and results of quantitative

data confirmed the results reported by afzal (2009) who concluded that no doubt that poultry raring is activity carried out by women from centuries but as time passes females avoid to keep poultry at household level because due to poultry unsanitary situation is created.

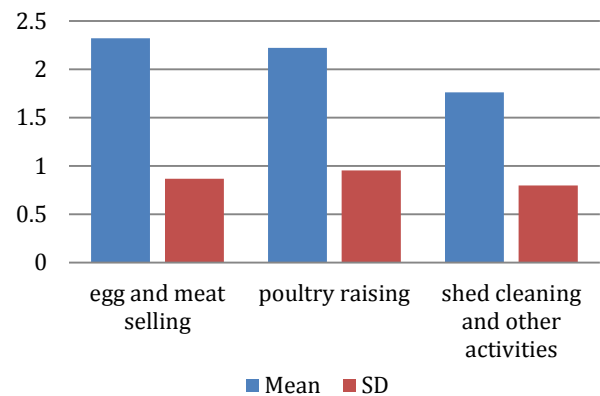


Figure 6. Involvement of rural women in livestock activities (Scale: 1= Always, 2= Rarely, 3= Never).

In the study area women were actively participating in poultry management activities but still they are facing many difficulties and constraints which hinder their maximum participation in the different poultry production activities. They didn't have any authority to take decision at household level and economy even in the areas where rural women are key provider of labor force because her participation is considered unproductive and un-organized (Green, 2000) due to lack of education, social and traditional norms, unavailability of government services and facilities (Habib, 2000; FAO, 2003; Ali, 2007).

## CONCLUSIONS

Rural women were in favor of the female poultry extension services, education and training session related poultry production. Educational level of the women was below the mark which also originated the need of trainings and advisory services. Through effective advisory services problems such as poverty, malnutrition and food insecurity also can be reduced. In this perspective it is recommended that literacy rate among rural women should be improved through non-formal extension education services that ultimately would raise their prevailing socio-economic conditions. The government should establish specific rural women training center at sub-division (tehsils) level in the country to enhance their level of knowledge in the poultry sector. Therefore, government should promote

the female extension officers, so that women farmers can easily get training and advisory services related to poultry production technologies especially, in Pakistan. In agricultural universities, special seats should be allocated to females in extension education departments. As early as possible, training should be started for females in poultry and dairy enterprises. The government should also provide credit facilities for rural women and introduce the Cyber extension as video conference regarding poultry production.

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