

## Assessing Employment of rural women and its effect on other empowerment

Sharareh Khodamoradi<sup>1</sup> and Mohammad Abedi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Agricultural Extension Education, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

<sup>2</sup> Department of Agricultural Management, Islamic Azad University, Qaemshahr Branch, Iran

\*Corresponding author: [abedi114@yahoo.com](mailto:abedi114@yahoo.com)

**Abstract:** Women form great part of total workforce that needed for agriculture part at universe, as one of the intangible factors at agriculture economy. So, statistics that was represented in relation to extent of women's activity is very lower than real extent. Because in this statistics, mostly, seasonal jobs, part time job, no wage job and their housekeeping activities, aren't considered. rural women, have different roles and duties such as husband, mother, crops producer, participate at ranching activities, planting, maintaining, harvesting, processing, marketing and preparing food. Rural women maybe venturing to culture cash products, while cultivating subsistence products and if they have no farm land, they have to work for others instead receiving wage. We can consider such women as agriculture propagator, production expert and even in some case as policy maker. Other than activity at agriculture field, women's participation at rural development is critical and is considered in order to supply adequate and needed food.

[Sharareh Khodamoradi and Mohammad Abedi. **Assessing Employment of rural women and its effect on other empowerment.** Life Science Journal. 2011;8(2):222-226] (ISSN:1097-8135). <http://www.lifesciencesite.com>.

**Keywords:** empowerment, rural women

### Introduction:

Rural women constitute about half of the world's population and in the world production supply they have energetic communion and constitute a great part of agriculture workforce. They constitute% 50 of the workforce and they participate in the production of half of the foods in the agriculture section. As an example the rural women constitute about 70 to% 80 of agriculture workforce in sub-Saharan Africa, %65 in Asia, %45 in Latin American & Caribbean, %80 in Nigeria & Tunisia and %80 in India, but their role in production system is the men's supplements roles and this causes a big responsibility inside their mother & wife duties and it takes a great time and energy of them. Studies in this field show that women spend about two thirds of their time for production, management & organize of their house as the men spend only one third of their time for such things. (Varzegar & Azizi, 2001).

Although we are familiar with the rural women's role in the village and family's economic, but they direct & indirectly start a new economic relation, with finding modern jobs & financial independency. Catching loan from financial organizations has forced them to have economic schematization for loan reimbursement and to have intellectual economic behaviors. So after that rural women become active in economic activities. In rural traditional economic, women only have productive role and they don't have any role in economic planning, providence and they don't pay any attention to profits and losses. But in this new condition, for

managing affairs in best way, the women have to be active in all of the affairs from production to dispense and also in others economic aspects. In other words, women will not be a productive only; they will contribute in managing of economic activities and will find various economic behaviors. . (Araghzadeh, 2002).

Importance of women issue at Iran especially rural area, at one side face with fast population growth and mass of unemployed at process of access to rural growth and development, and at other side with limitation of facilities and productive resources. Rural women at all production level of agriculture products and livestock productions work alongside men and generally, development is multidimensional process and contains different economic, social, cultural and political dimensions. Women's participation at this process is active and affective participation, and main aspect of this participation was its economic dimension for rural women. Rural women have key role as a producer at agriculture activities, rural sources and services at rural area. rural women most efficient women of society and among people who are active at productive occupations, so it is obvious that attention to rural women as a strong arm at rural development can follow positive and undeniable affects, in this purpose (Lahsaeizadeh, 2000).

Rural women are considered either directly by producing livestock and agriculture products and rural industries and either by help to agriculture part as workforce and their share at third world countries is far more than other countries. Usually statistics

about women's share at agriculture productions is less than real extent because largely, at these statistics seasonal job, part time job, no wage and housekeeping activities were not considered. Nevertheless, they are forces for creating revolution and potential resources to progress rural economy and increase growth rate of food production (Nawab Akbar, 1997).

Women's productive activities has affective role to increase revenue, rural family welfare, and its consequents is: foods status improvement, health, preventing irregular migration, literacy enhancement and development of rural family social status. Despite clearness of affective women's role at production, economy of village and country, they don't enjoy proper social base and they were deprived of educational and welfare programs especially at rural and nomadic area (Banihashem, 1999). Thus women and their roles should be considered particularly in order that they would find that first they are important and efficient; second they have educational needs and many technical gaps; third they shouldn't forget efforts for enabling themselves. As girls and women's discussion and solving their historical lag and restoring their social right are important and necessary, it is sensitive and accurate equally, because dominant patriarchal cultures at rural societies, put women at lower status. So that at some societies, women's duties are just upbringing and reproduction and maybe they are considered as workforce, and they are deprived of decision making and opining at family and society environment. (Samadi Afshar, 2004).

Global researches show that women played critical and important role at agriculture and now at most countries, they form major workforce of this part. In spite of importance of women workforce at different systems of agriculture, they have fewer access to development resources, compare to men. although during past two decades, various programs has been performed to enable women at agriculture, but due to different problems, gained success was very fewer than required extent. One of major problem in this filed is inadequate and inappropriate access to extensional services. Low efficiency of agriculture extension systems to provide services for rural women dosen't just refer to structure and function of these organizations and systems, but refer to other issues including research and cultural barriers in this field. However, one of essential needs to extend agriculture is, determining appropriate ways and approaches to educate women at every region or country (Fami 2000). at many past decades, significant global efforts were done to provide educating how to access information, appropriate and effective technology for female farmers that led

to positive effects on producing agricultural crops and consequently increasing family welfare (Janice Jiggins and et al, 2003).

Indeed, at many development programs, women couldn't apply theories and their own basic concepts. Problems such as lack of women's access to farm, credits, suitable educational and extensional services, exist at many areas, yet. (Paknazar, 2000).

In recent years, the point was well clear that a major share of the income of rural households are obtained through the women activity, and sometimes even share of women income in the household economy is more than the share of men. For example, in 2000, about 854 million women that include 32 percent of the workforce of the world are active economically and their major activity in third world countries are in the agriculture sector and 60 percent of cultivated rice, 90 percent produce vegetables and, 50 percent cotton and oilseeds, 30 percent had affairs and gardens, 90 percent silkworm related activities and 65 percent of rearing livestock-related activities and handicrafts have the highest proportion (Emadi, 2001). This shows that the role of women as agricultural work force, not only isn't less than men but they have greater share in the process of planting, cropping, and more importantly in the sale of crops and livestock and a research specialized that 50 percent of food global production activities were owed to women.

Difference at levels of policy making, investing and receiving salary for equal activity are universal phenomena. extent of women's participation at economic activities, extent of women's activity at economic activities, and is confirmation on lack of adequate attention to women's affair and their added value, because rural women work alongside men, at all levels of producing agriculture crops and livestock products and generally all affairs, and also spend their little leisure time for handicrafts such as rugs and carpets and etc. so it is necessary to establish self acknowledgement fields, directing women's economic and social ability and programming to attract their participation at different activities. At rural area, women have more significant role on family economy and inside activities and cause economic prosperity of society. yet, women couldn't gain their real position as active citizens who have talent for participation at economic, politic, social and cultural arena at most countries, especially developing country, and still their activities in economic calculations aren't considered, and they be considered as intangible workforce. Disappointing estimation about number of active rural women and underestimate about extent of their participation at economic activities is confirmation on lack of adequate attention to women's affairs and their added

value. they are major force to create revolution and potential sources to progress rural economy and increasing extent of growth rate of producing food productions, although traditionally, farming and ranching, has been male profession, but women's role was never restricted to house and family, so they are active outside (farming, ranching, forestry and ... ) other than inside activity (Balali, 2005).

since , rural women take different responsibility and roles such as producers of crops , ranching and keeping poultry, children education, housekeeping, supervising family economy and managing it, collecting firewood, weaving carpet, so illiterate women who haven't possibility to utilize mass media properly too, wouldn't able to do their duties and roles and also wouldn't be affective to develop rural societies. So importance of education is very critical for rural women especially extensional educations. Approximately in most UN reports, women has been considered as greatest deprived group at human societies, while at global level, about two third of all affairs is done by women. But only one third of all recorded affairs relates to women. And also just 1% of proceeds of estates and assets of world belong to women and two third of illiterates of world are women, however they form 50% of workforce at agriculture part and they produce half of foods at all over the world. So, educating women is important because of these reasons:

- 1- women's historical roles at agriculture development
- 2- rural women as mother and manager of home
- 3- rural women as decision maker at home and outside activities such as agriculture and ...
- 4- rural women as productive factor at agriculture part and rural industry
- 5- rural women as affective member of society for participation at rural development

Since, goal of extension base, is empowering human of society and also this issue that women have basic role at producing different agricultural productions and rural industries, it is impossible to develop rural societies without considering rural women. (Deputy of extension and system operation Ministry of Agriculture jahad, 2000).

Aside from the economic role of women that clearly has been made in the past decades, the vital role of women in social and cultural dimensions of development process in rural areas has remained hidden from the polls. They train the next generation of farmers and teach them the next generation necessary knowledge. A Chinese proverb says, "If training a man, just training a man but if you teach a woman you teach a family." Women are local

knowledge and local educators themselves, in preparing and providing food, health treatments and cultural values are the next generation (Fami, 2001). Women as the first group are known to have paid agricultural work, and evidence shows that women farmers have been the first. Important factor causing women's participation in agricultural activities has been, among them we can mention the following (Fami, 2001):

A - Seasonal agricultural employment, and intensified the need for labor in certain seasons.

B - Men migrate to find better jobs and to assume responsibility for home and farm and agricultural work and its management by women:

In some countries men migrate to cities, or on bringing those to wage jobs have led to women's responsibility for 30 to 40 percent of agricultural plants and are responsible, in some areas this figure reaches 70 percent (lahsaeizadeh, 2000).

C - Effect of cultural - social conditions on women work:

Sociological experience shows that kinship networks status and community practices determine that who and in which areas women can have activity and employment. Several Kinship networks provide different economic roles for women based on age, marital status and their place in father and husband family (Movahedi, 2005).

#### **Empowering rural women:**

Empowerment is capacity that woman can obtain in cultural and social environment, for economic independency and self reliance, by controlling over emotional decision making and far from violation. Empowering means, evolution and developing activities through non governmental organizations (NGOS) that lead empowerment to improve economic dimensions. (Amiri, 2000)

Enabling is process that, during it, people of society do activities to overcome barriers of advancement that finally cause their domination to determine their own density. The term "enabling" means overcoming fundamental inequalities. So it is different from self-reliance.

Enabling, enables individual to overcome any problematic condition and consider barriers and problems as part of life and positive campaign. Finally, enabling provides energy to overcome most intellectual barriers and external problems at private life (Balali, 2005).

Thus, among all what have been said, it is possible to present suitable definition of enabling women, as follows:

"Process of explaining women about themselves (and also men about them) for instances that they must or want to do, and growth of their

willingness and courage until they reach to needed competency “(management of rural and tribal women).

it should be noted here , that major factor which should be considered about women’s ability , is eliminating individual and social barriers , and finally preparing field of economic and social participation for women at all fields . purpose of women’s participation , is because of their dominance on all affairs of village including decision making process , organizations , forums , enterprising posts and ... that involve , participation at all social and economic dimensions (Moazami and Heidari, 2005).

### Conclusion & discussion:

If rural women could provide a job for them by getting credits, loan and other financial convenience, through their income they can get self-reliance or financial independency and we will see social, cultural & economic change in village. The question here is that if these changes have positive or negative aspects in the village? It's natural that every change in social phenomenon has both positive and negative aspect, but which is Important here is that which aspect is more than the other and it depends to different condition in various societies. In our rural society there is an especial social & cultural kind that it's outcome maybe different and in some case inconsistent. With these actions rural women could be in idealistic economic condition and they could live with out dependency to their husband's income. In most of the villages in Iran there is patriarchy in the families which is not acceptable for the most of the rural people and groups. When rural women became financially independent, it's acceptable to see its cultural & social outcomes.

Giving the right that women make decision, independency to their family, increasing the cultural knowledge among them& making relation with new institutions, having independency in making decision about marriage, occupation, migration & something like this are the right that women have got it. One of the issues that government should pay attention to is rural development issue especially at undeveloped countries. in this countries due to lack of proper policy making to improve quality of people life level of these areas, villagers migration to cities has increased considerably and led to urbanization growth and emergence of problems and also psychological, social, cultural and economical abnormalities especially at agriculture and ranching part. Also method for growth and rural development growth, require research at this field which can help government in order to economic, social and cultural programming and policy making. Creating local

organizations and regional institutions with affective women’s attendance and villager participation to solve problems are among important and affective substances that should be considered in regional programming. at developing and changing process of developed economy system of agriculture, value of women’s activity changed as form of money which previously was as no wage workforce at family , and was given to her. Other than agriculture part (i.e. industry and public services) which are main field of women’s work, rural women’s participation is very important. The most important issues about women’s social and political participation are participating at programming, decision making, performing decisions and valuing results.

Women at most countries, have low access to economic resources at the field of economic activity. They should reinforce them at this field by supplying economic facilities. Another part that changed women’s attendance at economic affairs is agriculture activities. Opportunities which they gain at this part can have important impact on economic function and related social relations.

Same discussions were presented about identifying women’s role on environment changes (especially in preserving natural sources) that related to women’s life and job. Women’s access to agriculture credits, because increasing and improving their efficiency at agriculture. Women’s membership at cooperatives, also help them to receive facilities in order to supply needed inputs of agriculture, sale productions and make some production with aim of increasing efficiency. Most of researches found that women’s education is related to their agriculture efficiency. Indeed, years which women used educational programs, related to their productions meaningfully. So, by identifying their needs, demands and interests and also by determining their issues, resources and preferences, we should prepare proper extensional and educational programs for them.

### \*Corresponding Author:

Mohammad Abedi  
Department of Agricultural Management, Islamic Azad University, Qaemshahr Branch, Iran  
E-mail: abedi114@yahoo.com

### References:

1. Amiri, Soodabeh. Female centered sustainable human development. Journal of Agricultural and Development Economics, 2000, No. 9.
2. Araghzadeh, M. institutions active in the field of providing financial services to rural women. Conference Proceedings rural women micro-credit. (Volume II), 2002. 167-153.

3. Banihashem, F. Rural women, education, association and participation. Jihad Journal village, 14 years, No. 310, 1999, p. 21.
4. Balali, L. Mission Trip Reports samples producing rural women (rural women's efforts Affairs Ministry of Agriculture) to India and meeting with the board of directors and senior managers National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) self-employment Women's Association (SEWA), and the Empowerment Institute rural women (CARE), 2005.
5. Deputy of extension and system operation Ministry of Agriculture jahad (2000). Evaluate the present status of rural women, the second volume. Tehran: Publication righteous village.
6. Emadi, M. H. Women and political participation. Center for Women's Participation President, Publishing Olive Leaf, 2001.
7. Fami. Sh. Analytical process to determine the educational needs - extension of rural women (Part I). Jihad Magazine, 2001, No. 243-242.
8. Janice jiggins , samanta R.K. , and olawoye, J.E. ,(2003). Improving women farmers access to extension services, in: improving agricultural extension, a refrence manual. Swanson B.E.,Bentz, R.P.and sofranco,A.J.(fds), FAO,rome.
9. Lahsaeizadeh, A. Sociology of rural development. Tehran: Publication Publication Days, 2000, p. 58.
10. Moazami, M, Rahimi A. and Azam tayefe Heidari. "Coverage and sustainability of micro-credit programs, case study of rural women micro-credit fund" Research Center for Rural Women and Rural Affairs Ministry of Agriculture, 2005.
11. Movahedi, R. (2005). Women farmers and extension activities effectiveness. Monthly Jihad, No. 249-248.
12. Nawab Akbar, F. The role of rural women in the past decade. Journal of Agricultural Economics and Development, conference papers, women participation and Agriculture 1400, Journal No. 3, Publishing Ministry of Agriculture, 1997, P. 186.
13. paknazar , F. S. (1379). Major factors affecting the agricultural extension workers in the central province among rural women in farming year 79-78. MSc thesis, Tehran: Islamic Azad University, Science and Research.
14. Samadi Afshar, S. Factors affecting rural women's participation in training programs and extension services in agriculture in West Azarbaijan Province 82-81. MSc thesis, Islamic Azad University, Science and Research, 2004.
15. Varzgar, sh. and azizi. M. Evaluation of labor force participation of rural women in cotton production and its related factors in the region and dome of Gorgan, 20.

2/22/2011