

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Role of Women in Spate areas of Sindh Province

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Spate:

- Spate is known as Rod-Kohi in persian language, (Rod means river)(Kohi means Mountain)In local Sindhi language spate is called Nai.
- In spate system, the flood water is diverted through natural mountainous channels to the fields.
- The Spate areas of Sindh Province are located in hilly tract, locally known as Kohistan in Khirthar Rnge, Badshah Sultan/Ubhan Shah range in Nara region, and Nagarparkar area in Thar region of Sindh.

Spate and Women

- Women participants in the spate activities associated particularly with males in spate activities like farming, livelihood, social and humanities
- The main earning from agricultural production or through spate farming.

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- Women of spate area plays a significant and vital role in agriculture with a participation rate of about 60% in a number of on-farm activities.
- However, livestock rearing is also common on small scale. Besides this, about 10-12% women of spate area are earning by making handicrafts goods through cottage industry.
- The role of spate women in different activities as surveyed observed and described as:

The role of women in different activities on daily basis in spate area is summarized in Table

S.No	Activity	Maximum Daily Working Hours
1	Agriculture	08
2	Livestock/poultry rearing	03
3	Children care	01
4	Fetching water and Fuel wood	02
5	House hold chores and earning skill activities	04
6	Rest	06



- The women in spate area are almost half of the rural population (47.5%) plays a significant role through involving in various activities. These women work longer than men do. Above table reveals that a spate women work about 18 hours a day on various economic activities and household chores. This may be because of their tolerance.

Agriculture:

- Agriculture is the main activity of rural women in spate area. In this activity they spent about 8 hours daily.
- Men and women undertake most agricultural tasks together.



- Women contribute to almost all identified crop tasks like collecting and spreading of farm yard manure in the fields, seedbed preparation, sowing or transplanting, weeding, threshing, winnowing, crop harvest or picking and post harvest field operations..



- Spate women, from an average farm family remain extremely busy during both farming seasons i.e. Rabi and Kharif in cultivating the crops.

- **In the low rainfall duration when crop production is not sufficient to meet subsistence needs of the households, men have traditionally sought employment in the non farm sector.**

Consequently, women have to take over a substantial burden of the work in agricultural production.

Livestock:

- Spate women are involved in rearing and caring the animal husbandry activities including poultry.
- She carried out a wide range of tasks such as making feed concentrates, feeding, collecting fodder, grazing, cleaning animals and their sheds, making, drying and collecting dung cakes for fuel purpose,
- Collecting dung as farm yard manure/organic matter for applying in the fields to maintain the level of organic matter or fertility in the fields.
- Besides these, milking and processing of variety of dairy products such as curd, ghee, lassi, and eggs from poultry are sent for selling in the local market through their men or themselves.
- Women also take care for sick and pregnant animals. She and their children are also responsible for collecting fodder and grazing animals outside.



Other Tasks:

- Before floods women digging the small ditches surrounding their homes and filling all the extra pots, pitchers to collect and conserve the flood water for livelihood activities like drinking, washing and using in wash rooms.
- Fetching water and fuel wood for home consumption is also the responsibility of a woman.
- Besides this, she is also responsible for food preparation, house cleaning, cloths washing and other day to day household activities.
- **A spate woman spent 3-4 hours for livestock (Animal) activities but she hardly spent one hour for her own children's look after.**



- In drought duration, when there is no work left for agricultural activities, some spate men seek job in urban areas where as the women work as labor force on building and road construction and other works locally such as baan, broom, hand fan and mat making from the leaves of palm trees for running the home expenditure for food and other necessities.
- The spate woman also generates income by making various handicraft goods, however not more than 10-12% women are involved in this activity as this is a technical job.



- From above facts it is evident that spate rural women are playing an important significant role in economic activities, helping their spouses in agricultural activities, livestock rearing and doing day to day chores of house hold for their families.
- In addition to this, few spate women, particularly widows and divorced are involved in cutting and selling fuel wood, operate small shops and take an active part in community affairs.
- **Despite, most of the rural families are living below poverty line.**

DIFFICULTIES OF SPATE WOMEN:

The main difficulties or problems faced by spate women in spate area are as observed:

The existing sources of water are fast depleting, therefore, in this situation a spate woman has to wait for long hours to collect water for domestic purposes. This practice is not only a pains taking but wastage of time also.

Education institutions particularly for girls were either not available or were in poor condition, because of this, the literacy of women in the area was much below than men as compared. A literate women can trained and educate her children to be a good and responsible citizen of the country.



- Health of women in spate area is compared to man, was found badly affected. This might be due to drinking water, as people and animals drink water from the same pond or reservoir. Consequently, diarrhea, skin diseases, eye infection, gastro, stomach pain, fever, and vomiting like diseases were common in women and children
- In addition to this, lack of public health units and high priced medicines and no existence of maternity homes, have aggravated the health situation of spate women and children.
- Besides the above mentioned difficulties, some of the women in spate area were associated with the cottage industries and make beautiful handicrafts, but they get a very less return or net income from the handicrafts because of non existence of proper marketing system in the spate areas. Thus, this situation badly affected the earning of poor women in the area for their livelihood.

RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS:

- The new governance and advocacy programmes in the area does provide a good entry point for piloting such a response, with the object of women getting education over their basic rights and obligations.
- In spate area, rainwater must be conserved. For this purpose small and delay action dams and reservoirs should be constructed. In addition to this, modern techniques of rainwater harvesting should also be introduced among the people of the area.
- The government should install deep tube wells and introduce public water schemes in the rural areas, so that availability of clean water could be ensured for drinking and household purposes to the population of the area throughout the year.

- To overcome the health problems of spate women, basic health units and maternity homes should be established in the areas where sufficient medicines, vaccines, surgical and other equipment along with operation theater, and well experienced medical staff should be provided.
- For the treatment of livestock diseases, a veterinary hospital along with necessary medicines, vaccines and well experienced doctors, and other staff should be established.
- To promote cottage industry on commercial basis, women community and cottage centers along with proper marketing system should be established so that proper price of handicraft could be obtained by the poor women of their work done. Besides this, to increase the literacy rate in the rural areas, education centers and school for boys and girls should be established. .

To implement the above recommendations, government and non government organizations (NGO) should play their role effectively so that the difficulties being faced by the rural women in spate irrigated areas could be eliminated.

Thank You