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The Roles of Rural Women on Agricultural Labor Conscriptions in Ethiopia: The Case of Delanta District, South Wello Zone

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Abstract

Agriculture is the predominant economic activity which is characterized by subsistence mixed-farming systems. The purpose of this study is to investigate gender division of labor in Ethiopia the case of Delanta District, South Wello. It has assessed the various ranges of activities that are performed by women and identified the overall drawbacks encountered by women. The survey conducted in six rural districts and 300 households by taking 225 women and 75 men in their residents. The interviewees were selected using stratified random sampling technique picking up 50 households from each rural district. The data were analyzed through descriptive statistics. The results have shown that women have primary role in gender division of labor in the study area. Women predominantly performed storage preparation (84%) and post harvest processing (81%), milk processing (83%), barn cleaning (61%) and care of new born animals (52%), cooking (94%), grinding (88.5%), fetching (80%) and collecting fuel-wood (75%). They are also performed equally with men weeding (53%), harvesting and collecting crops to threshing field (52%), threshing ground preparation (80%) and keeping crops from wild life (37%). Despite their crucial roles in agricultural sectors, women have been marginalized for so long. They have limited access and control of agricultural products, extension services and information. This is due to social, cultural and work discrimination. This discrimination, in turn, has made women to lose self-confidence in decision-making power. Thus, to strengthen and develop women with economic, social and political affairs, federal and regional governments, and other concerned bodies should take all appropriate measures to ensure women equality with men, without any discrimination. Women should also participate at all stages of project planning, implementation and assessment.

Keywords: *Agriculture; Division of Labor; Gender; Rural Women; Women*

Introduction

Women work in agriculture as farmers on their own account, as unpaid workers on family farms and as paid or unpaid laborers on other farms and agricultural enterprises. In agriculture the majority of women are food producers working on joint family farms and tending their own land for household food production while only a small percentage is independent farmers [1]. They are involved in both crop and livestock production at subsistence and commercial levels. They produce food and cash crops and manage mixed agricultural operations often involving crops and livestock farming. All of them are considered part of the agricultural labor force. The sustainable production of food is the pillar of food security. Women in developing nations play vital roles in maintaining the three pillars of food security- food production, economic access to available food, and nutritional security [2].

Women generate important contributions to the agricultural and rural economies of all regions of the world. However, the exact contribution both in terms of magnitude and of its nature is often difficult to assess and shows a high degree of variation across countries and regions. As per Sofa team and Doss [3] revealed that women comprise about 43% of the agricultural labor force globally and in developing

countries. The global average is dominated by Asia- within Asia, the sub-regional averages range from about 35% in South Asia to almost 50% in East and Southeast Asia. The Asian average is dominated by China, where the female share of the agricultural labor force has increased slightly during the past three decades. The female share in India has 30% and in sub-Saharan Africa 50% of the African averages range from just over 40% in Southern Africa to 50% in Eastern Africa.

Nowadays, about 60 to 80% of basic food stuff in Africa and more than half of all food in worldwide are produced by the smallholder of women farmers [1]. Women have relatively high overall labor-force participation rates and the highest average agricultural labor-force participation rates in the world. They accounted for about 70- 80% of food production in Sub-Saharan Africa [4]; they perform about 90% of the work of processing food crops and providing household water and fuel wood as well as the work of hoeing and weeding, 80% of the work of food storage and transportation from farm to village, and 60% of the work of harvesting and marketing of farm produce [5]. Cultural norms in the region have long encouraged women to be economically self-reliant and traditionally give women substantial responsibility for agricultural production in their own right. Regional data for sub-Saharan Africa conceal wide differences among countries.

When women are economically and socially empowered, they become a potent force for change. In rural areas of the developing world, women play a key role in running households and make major contributions to agricultural production. But the inequalities that exist between women and men make it difficult for women to fulfill their potential [6]. One untapped source of agricultural growth to help meet these needs could lie in reducing the bias against women in agriculture. In other words, the place of gender as a fundamental issue in assuring food security both at national, household and individual levels cannot be overemphasized. This is because increasing attention is now being paid to the gender dimension of poverty and development particularly in relation to the role of women in agricultural processes [7].

Rural women play key role by working with full passion in production of crops right from the soil preparation till post harvest activities. Their activities naturally comprise crops production, livestock ranching, food processing and preparation, fetching water and collecting fuel-wood, working for wages in agricultural or other rural enterprises, caring for family members and maintaining their homes [8]. Rural women particularly in the developing countries exercise hardship by undertaking triple roles, that is, productive role, reproductive role and community participation role in their everyday life.

The story of overworked women in the rural areas of the developing and underdeveloped countries of the world is too well known. Their wages are generally less because it is assumed that the efficiency of women's labor is poor compared to that of men [6]. Women work longer than men to achieve the same level of living. They rarely have access to the resources that would make their work more productive and ease their heavy workload. Overall, the labor burden of rural women exceeds that of men, and includes a higher proportion of unpaid household responsibilities related to preparing food and collecting fuel and water [9]. Labor intensive and time-consuming activities further hinder women's ability to improve their income-earning potential. Ultimately, it is not just women who are held back, but also their families, their communities and local economies. There is evidence that, as women participate more in market work under pressure of poverty their domestic labor is not substantially reassigned to men [10].

Statement of the Problem

The gender division of labor varies from one society and culture to another, and within each culture external circumstances influence the level of activity. Except in few most developed countries, women's efforts are not yet realized by society. Women's role in ensuring household food security remains largely unrecognized in policy and resource allocation, especially in developing countries. The voices and concerns of rural women are little heard at the national and global level [4]. Increasing female participation in the labor force has a positive impact on economic growth. Rural development in Africa cannot be imagined without the active participation of women.

Women are poor because they have fewer economic opportunities and less autonomy than men. Their access to economic resources, education and training and support services are limited. They also have very little participation in decision making. The rigidity of socially

prescribed roles for women and tendency to scale back social services have increased the burden of poverty on women [1]. The role that women play and their position in meeting the challenges of agricultural production and development are quite dominant and prominent. Their relevance and significance, therefore, cannot be overemphasized [11]. Similarly, Mondal [12] revealed that women have no power for decision making process, either inside or outside the home. However women perform all un-mechanized agricultural tusks and perform multiple tasks which add more burdens to them. Women workers in agriculture suffer from high illiteracy rate among them and drop out of schools. They have no proper knowledge about modern agriculture system. Women earn fewer wages, especially in joint informal and private sector. Therefore, women do not know their legal rights.

Women account for more than half of the work force by participating in different activities directly or indirectly. As was reported by FAO [9], and Devender and Krishna [11] women produce more than 44% of the total world food and 40% of the central Asia. They also produce between 60 and 80% of the food in most developing countries and are responsible for half of the world's food production. Their contribution in agricultural labor force in developed countries is 36.7% while, it is about 43.6% in developing countries. However, their role in the economy has often been underestimated, and their work in agriculture has been invisible for a long time. The contributions of women are often faced by gender-specific challenges to full participation in the labor forces, which may require policy interventions beyond those aimed at promoting economic growth and the efficiency of rural labor markets. Activities, resources and opportunities of people are significantly influenced by gender-that is, by the socio-economic and cultural dimension of being male or female [6].

The aforementioned moments are also more challenged the Ethiopian women farmers. They have constraints including lack of land for farming, limited access in communication between men and women and control of agricultural products, credit facilities, skill training, education, extension services and information, their contribution is not appreciated. In this sense, women are negatively influenced by traditional pattern and the previous economic policies. Most of them lounge in the margin of major development efforts and programs.

In rural areas of Ethiopia, women play the leading role in agricultural production, livestock rearing and cottage industries and remain busy from dawn to dusk to supply food to men in fields, fetch water, collect fuel wood, and manage livestock. Hitherto without the complementarities of women's work, such efforts and programs would barely work even though men own such assets and inputs as land, credit, seeds, livestock, technology and infrastructure.

As part of the Ethiopian women, the Delanta District rural women in North Wello share the female subordination and the overall problems that are faced by the Ethiopian women. These problems were analyzed in this study from the viewpoint of a population- geographic analysis in conjunction with the necessary solutions. The dominance of men in various income generating activities affects highly the economic empowerment of women. The purpose of this study was therefore to evaluate the activities of rural women and their participation in agricultural production to fulfill the food security of their family. More specifically to answer the question's what is the role of women in agriculture and household activities? in the study area.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to assess gender division of labor in agriculture and household activities as well as comprehend the major constraints to their empowerment. In line with this general objective, the following specific objectives were conducted by taking Delanta District of North Wello as a case study. The specific objectives of the study would be:

- To investigate the gender division of labor in agriculture and household activities; and
- To assess the main constraints faced by rural women involvements in agricultural works.

Research Questions

To achieve these objectives, the paper outlined the following research questions:

- What are the key roles of women in gender division of labor?
- What are the main constraints of women's participation in gender division of labor?

Materials and Methods

Description of the Study Area

Delanta district lies between 11° 29' 29.82" to 11° 41' 25.53" N and 39° 02' 19.19" to 39° 14' 05.04" E with an altitude ranging from 1500 to 3819 meter above sea level at the bottom of the valleys (Gosh Meda) and the top of the mountain (Mekelet), respectively. It is situated about 499 km north of Addis Ababa and 98 km northwest of Dessie town in South Wello Zone. The major landforms of the district comprise extensive plateaus, chains of hills with mountainous ridge, river-valleys and very deep gorges at the boundary. It is oval in shape with dendritic drainage pattern, steep ridges, and numerous convex hills at the plain area and gorges at the boundary.

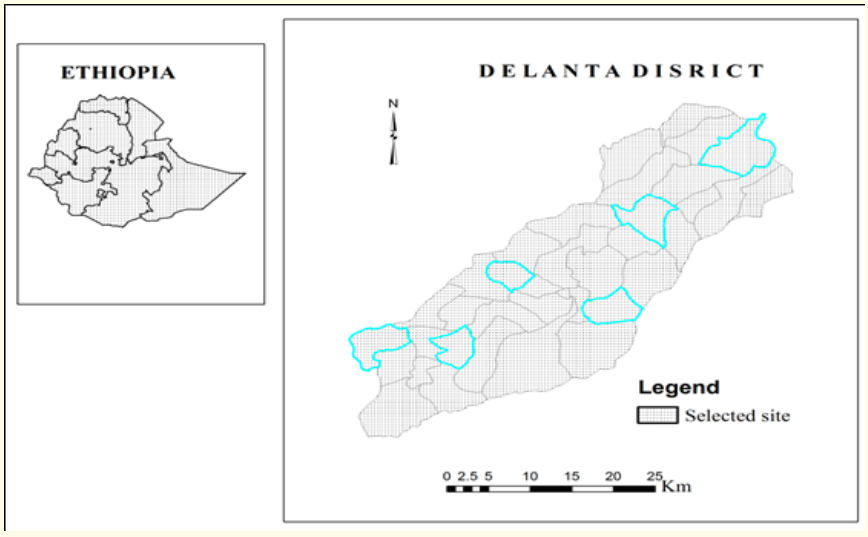

Figure 1: *Location map of the study area.*

Climate of the study area

According to traditional agro-ecological classification of Ethiopia, the study area falls in all the categories that basically correlate with elevation. These are Kolla (lowland), Woina Dega (midland), Dega (highland) and Wurch (very highland) (Table 1).

Traditional ACZ	*Kolla*	*Woina Dega*	*Dega*	*Wurch*
Elevation (m)	1500 - 1800	1800 - 2400	2400 - 3500	> 3500
Temperature (°C)	18 - 20	15 - 18	10 - 15	< 10
Rainfall (mm)	300 - 900	500 - 1500	700 - 1700	> 900
Dominant crop	Sorghum, maize	teff, maize, wheat	Barley, wheat	Barley

Table 1: *Traditional agro-ecological zones (ACZ) of the Northern Ethiopian highlands.*

The climate of the area is characterized by dry seasons (from October to February cold-dry and from March to June hot-dry) and wet season (from mid-June to September). The rainfall pattern is monomodal with peak periods from mid-July to early September. The fifteen

years (1999-2013) mean annual rainfall of the study area is about 812 mm of which 75-80% is received in summer (Kiremt) and 25-20% in the spring (Belg) seasons. The mean annual minimum and maximum temperatures of the same period are 6.8 and 19.6°C, respectively (Figure 2). Peoples living on upper topographic position their farming activities primarily depend on Belg rains, while those on middle and lower topographic positions rely on both the Kiremt and Belg rains. Nevertheless, there is small, erratic and unreliable rainfall and the area is prone to sporadic droughts.

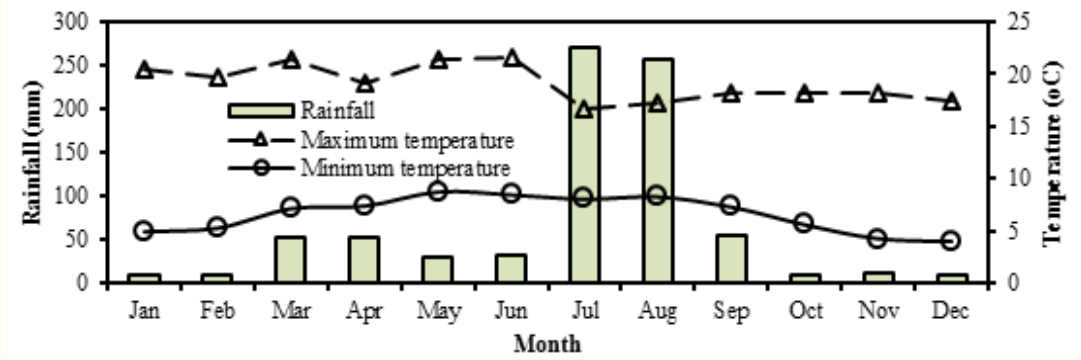

Figure 2: *Mean monthly rainfall, maximum and minimum temperatures of the study area.*

Geology and soils of the study area

Geology of the study area is characterized by the trap series of tertiary periods, similar to much of the central Ethiopian highlands. It is covered by Oligocene rhyolite and very thick ignimbrite units encompassing predominantly of alkaline basalt with numerous inter-bedded flow of trachyte. The granite, gneisses and basalt rock types exist in the area forming part of the basement complex and most of the soils are basaltic parent material. Soils of the study area are greatly influenced by topography with high surface runoff during the main rainy season. The soils are classified as Mazi-Pellic Vertisols, Mazi-Calcic Vertisols, Haplic Cambisols and Mollic Leptosols [13].

Land use systems and their coverage

According to WAOR [14], the total area of the District is 10,5678 ha stretching from lowland to highland, much of it being in the mid-altitude ranges dominated by plateaus and all of them were covered by LU/LC dynamics. Average land holding size is one hectare per household (0.75 ha for crop production and 0.25 ha for grazing). The land uses are both private (farming) and communal (grazing) land holdings which can be identified through land use patterns. The largest proportion of the land is currently unutilized which accounts about 45%. Cultivated and grazing lands are the major land use types in the study area. Agriculture is the predominant economic sector which engaged over 95% of the population [14]. The overall farming system was mixed both livestock and crop production and characterized by subsistence natures. It is strongly oriented towards crop production to sustain farmers' livelihoods and their major sources of traction for ploughing and threshing are oxen and horses. Crop residues and intensive grazing are major livestock feed resources in the area.

The common rainfed crops grown in the area are bread wheat (*Triticum aestivum L.*), food barley (*Hordeum vulgare* L.), faba bean (*Vicia faba* L.), lentil (*Lens culinaris* L.), grass pea (*Lathyrus sativus* L.), chickpea (*Cicer arietinum* L.), teff (*Eragrostis tef* L.) and sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor* L.) Moench. All these crops are managed using traditional agricultural techniques and equipment. Moreover, few types of vegetables, fruits, root crops and spices are also produced. Most of the arable land is under rainfed farming while very small area is irrigated at the valley bottom or around riverbanks to produce vegetables and fruits [14].

The natural woodland and vegetation of the study area has disappeared due to overgrazing, increasing demand for fuel-wood and conversion into cultivated lands. There are small patches of remnant natural forests found on farm boundaries and around churches. Planted

tree species like *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*, *Cupressus lustanica, Acacia saligna* and *Acacia decurrens* are common around homesteads and conserved areas. The *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* plantations are replacing the arable/cultivated lands and expanding on backyards, stream banks and gully sides.

Population size and distribution

As per CSA [15] projection revealed that Delanta was densely populated area its average family size of the district was five. The rural population constituted 96.5% of which males 51 and females 49% of the total population. The district was divided by 33 local districts those stretched into different agro-ecological zones. The people of the district did not usually produce food for year-round consumption even in a year considered to be normal climatically. This is due to over population, severe land degradation, land shortage and erratic rainfall.

Data Sources and Sampling Techniques

The researcher was conducted in several of sources and tools for data collection including primary and secondary sources, pilot test and various types of data collection procedures.

Data types and sources

Both the primary and secondary data were considered for this study. The primary data were conducted in household surveys which were administered through field observations, questionnaires, formal interviews and focal group discussion with rural women, men, women affair office and other concerned authorities. For this purpose, questionnaires were developed and provided to all key respondents. Most of the items were close-ended and some open-ended questions were also included due to accomplish qualitative information on the attitudes, beliefs and practices of the people. The secondary data from both published and unpublished documents of governmental and non-governmental organizations were dug out to supplement and strengthen the primary data. Historical, cultural, socio-economic backgrounds of the area were obtained by using secondary materials.

To check the appropriateness of the items in the instrument and to make necessary correction on the feedbacks obtained from the respondents, pilot test was administered by taking five men and fifteen women. Based on the pre-test results, some improvements were made in preparing the final questionnaires. Finally, 350 copies of the questionnaires were distributed to the key respondents and all of them were filled in and gathered.

Sampling techniques

The target populations were rural women and to know the attitudes of men towards women's job 25% of the total population were considered men. The sample size was 300 rural households of which 75% of women. One of the motives of the survey was to investigate variation in the patterns of agricultural works and coping mechanisms based on agro-ecological variations. To this end, five local districts were selected based on the above stated variations and to make the study manageable, 60 household was taken from each rural district using simple stratified random sampling techniques (Table 2).

Site name	NRP	Agro-ecological zone
Ferqaqe	50	*Kolla* (Lowland < 2100 m)
Kembeh dega	50	*Dega* (Highland > 2700 m)
Weyesequleho	50	*Dega* (Highland > 2700 m)
Tardate medihanialem	50	*Woina Dega* (Midland b/n 2100 and 2700 m)
Arka-Chinga	50	*Woina Dega* (Midland b/n 2100 and 2700 m)

Wetege-Aberkut	50	*Kolla (Lowland < 2100m)*
Total	300	

Table 2: *Site local of the study peasant associations.*

Source: Based on Field Survey

Methods of Data Analysis

The primary data have been analyzed and presented by using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The descriptive techniques include percentage, cumulative frequency, standard deviation, while the inferential statistical techniques used Chi-Square tests. The Chi-Square test was employed to see the association or homogeneity between the agro-ecological zones with reference to responses regarding agricultural works and coping strategies used by peasants during famine (scarcity of food) and its impacts.

Results and Discussion

Gender Division of Labor in Field Activities

In order to understand and analyze gender division of labor, that is the allocation of tasks between males and females, can usefully be categorized into two groups, namely, production in the field and inside the household. The division of labor in the study area is traditional. Meaning, some tasks are reserved for men and others for women. Children, depending on their sex, tend to follow their parents' occupations and learn from them. There is a clear gender and age based division of labor in crop production, animal husbandry, and household tasks.

Women's involvement in crop production

The flexibility or rigidity of the sexual division of labor can be ascertained at the community or household levels through a combination of direct observation (if time permits seasonal sampling survey), reliance on informants and structured interviews with individuals. Rural women generally work much longer hours than men. However, it is difficult to tell the exact time spent by women in agricultural activities. From the survey made in the study area, the author of this paper has come to understand that women spend more time in seedbed preparation, harvesting of crops, weeding, transporting, storage preparation, etc. These activities may be done either individually or through group works (wonfel and debbo). Women also prepare food and drinking water for the participants during group works (Table 3).

Activity	Women		Men		Both		Children		Total NRM
	NRP	%	NRP	%	NRP	%	NRP	%	
Field preparation for planting	32	10.5	206	68.5	38	12.5	26	8.5	300
Ploughing farm in animals	29	9.5	227	75.5	24	8.0	21	7.0	300
Carrying farm tools	21	7.0	243	81.0	21	7.0	15	5.0	300
Planting/sowing seeds	11	3.5	267	89.0	9	3.0	14	4.5	300
Keeping crops from wild life	48	16.0	48	16.0	110	36.5	95	31.5	300
Weeding unwanted plants	59	19.5	65	21.5	159	53.0	18	6.0	300
Cutting and gathering crops	33	11.0	98	32.5	156	52.0	14	4.5	300
Collecting crops to field floor	51	17.0	71	23.5	152	50.5	27	9.0	300
Storage container preparation	252	84.0	26	8.5	8	2.5	15	5.0	300
Threshing ground preparation	15	5.0	29	9.5	239	79.5	18	6.0	300

Transport yields to home	12	4.0	258	86.0	12	4.0	18	6.0	300
Storing process /post hasrvest	243	81.0	23	8	29	9.5	6	2.0	300

Table 3: *Gender division of labor in crop production.*

Source: Based on Field Survey; NRP = Number of respondents

As manifested in Table 3, men solely perform sowing (89%), transport yields to home (86%), carrying farm tools (82%), ploughing (76%), and land preparation (69%) while women assist their husbands in such activities. For example, women cover the seed with soil when the men sow, pull horses when ploughing is done, clear waste from the field and prepare threshing field. Both men and women are also working equally in threshing ground preparation (80%), weeding (53%), harvesting (crop-cutting like wheat, barley, faba bean, etc., and pulling like linseeds, lentil, grass pea, etc) (52%), collecting and transporting grains (crops) to threshing fields (51%) as was also reported by Abdelali-Martini [10] in the Middle East and North Africa.

In Delanta District, the expected and the most important occupation of the family members aged 10 years and above is farming. Employment outside agriculture is almost non-existent in the District. Agriculture is the key asset for subsistence farmers in the District (Table 4).

Types of activities		**Dega**		**Woina Dega**		**Kolla**		**Total**	
		NRP	**%**	**NRP**	**%**	**NRP**	**%**	**NRP**	**%**
	Act	37	74	82	82	47	94	166	83
Participated	Exp	41.5	-	83	-	41.5	-	-	-
	Act	13	26	18	18	3	6	34	17
Not participated	Exp	8.5	-	17	-	8.5	-	-	-
Total		50	100	100	100	50	100	200	100

Table 4: *The participation rate of women in crop production activities.*

Source: Based on Field Survey $\chi^2 = 7.23$; *C.V = 5.99;* $\alpha = 0.05$ *and df = 2; NRP = Number of respondents*

The questions come why are there differences of women's activities in agro-ecological zones? The reasons for the involvements of women differ in agro-ecological zones, and the nature of crops sown in the area. Some type of crops, namely teff, maize, sorghum, some pulses have never be sown in Dega areas but are commonly found in Kolla and Woina Dega areas. These types of crops need intensive labor forces, particularly the weeding season. The other reasons are farm size and household income level. The former largely determines the degree of women's participation in crop production. If the farm size is larger, it needs more household labor forces including women. In some cases, the households with high-income level tend to use hired labor, not demand for females labor. The participation of women in agriculture everyday jobs is high in all agro-ecological zones. The only difference is the extent of participation. Women in Kolla area are more involved than women in Woina Dega and Dega areas.

Women's participation in livestock production

Policies can influence the economic incentives and social norms that determine whether women work, the types of work they perform and whether it is considered an economic activity, the stock of human capital they accumulate and the levels of pay they receive. In Delanta District, livestock activity takes place hand-in-hand the crop production and all family members are participated. Livestock production is the main sources of income generation, as well as the pioneer of the wealth status in the District. As manifested in Table 5, women solely perform milk processing (82.3%), barn cleaning (60.7%) and care of new born animals (51.3%), while men assist animal feeding

(53%) and milking cow (51.7%). The herding of livestock in the area about 70.7% of the task was done by children as was also reported by Mihiret and Tadesse [16] that the majority of household activities are performed by wives.

Activity	Women		Men		Both		Children		Total NRM
	NRP	%	NRP	%	NRP	%	NRP	%	
Milking cows	78	26.0	155	51.7	50	16.7	17	5.7	300
Milk processing	247	82.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	53	17.7	300
Animal feeding	38	12.7	159	53.0	47	15.7	56	18.7	300
Cleaning animal waste/barn cleaning	182	60.7	9	3.0	8	2.7	101	33.7	300
Herding animals	20	6.7	47	15.7	21	7.0	212	70.7	300
Care of new born animal	154	51.3	39	13.0	48	16.0	59	19.7	300

Table 5: *Gender division of labor in livestock activities.*

Gender Division of Labor in Household Activities

The sexual division of labor cannot be fully understood without knowing how women and men within the household differ in their agricultural information and services. Employment inside the house is almost all done by females in the District. The situation of women in general indicates that they carried out the heaviest burden of family life responsibility, which includes feeding, housing, clothing, and breadwinner sharing (Table 6). Adult females (women) perform food preparation/cooking (86.2%), washing dish (87.8%), grinding grains (85.2%), fetching water (78.3%), preparing fuel-wood (62.3%) as was also reported by Mihiret and Tadesse [16] that the majority of household activities are performed by wives.

Activity	Women		Men		Both		Children		Total NRM
	NRP	%	NRP	%	NRP	%	NRP	%	
Fuel-wood preparation (collection)	187	62.3	42	13.7	23	7.7	49	16.3	300
Fetching water from pond/pipe	235	78.3	22	7.3	14	4.7	29	9.7	300
Washing dish and others	263	87.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	37	12.2	300
Washing family clothes	94	31.3	37	12.3	155	51.7	14	4.7	300
Cleaning household floor	247	82.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	53	17.7	300
Family care (animal herding	109	36.2	44	14.5	129	42.8	20	6.5	300
Food preparation/cooking	259	86.2	0	0.0	13	4.3	29	9.5	300
Grinding grains in hand	256	85.2	0	0.0	0	0	45	14.8	300

Table 6: *Gender division of labor in household activities.*

Source: Based on Field Survey

In all these activities children assist their mothers, particularly female children. Male children mostly herd animals, bird scared and crops protect from wild life. They are doing all these things with a backward technology where implements and tools are the most primitive. In most societies, reproductive tasks or tasks related to child bearing and care and maintenance of the household activities (cooking, fetching water and collecting firewood) are assigned to women. Moreover, women also manage community resources while men participate in formal community politics. In consent with the gender-responsive labor activities observed in this study, various studies [17-19] showed that every economy is dependent on the unpaid care economy, comprising cooking, cleaning, elder care, childcare and community-based volunteering. Unpaid work is heavily feminized, and the burden of unpaid work may increase or decrease as a result of ostensibly sustainable interventions.

Inhibition Women's Participation in Development Endeavors

Discussions so far have indicated that a number of social and cultural factors determine the extent of women's involvement in various activities. They are, for instance, excluded from deciding what crops to plant; purchase and sale of livestock, farm inputs, land plots, etc. The major decisions are usually made by husbands and in rare cases shared by both. The traditional sexual division of labor confined women to the domestic labor, including the entire range of food preparation, fetching water, collecting fuel-wood and caring for the family. All these are exclusively performed by women. They carry out heavier workload, and perform more time consuming tasks on field and in the household.

Women have extra-load than men because they participate in all activities (agricultural and domestic works). The division of labor in the study area is quite traditional. This is due to the socioeconomic and cultural constraints against women's involvement in decision-making power. Certain jobs are reserved for men and others for women. The results of the present study regarding major social constraints against women's involvement in decision-making power of the respondents given in Table 7 show that most of the respondents were illiterate (88%), low self confidence of women in making farm decisions (76%), women lack of knowledge about farming (58.7%) and 57.7% of women are only subordinate to male counterparts as well as poor access of farm information (48.9%). In consent with the low educational level of rural women a case study was observed in Nankana Sahib, Punjab district by Nazir., *et al*. [20].

Types of constraints	Low		Moderate		High	
	NRM	%	NRM	%	NRM	%
Educational level -Illiterate	9	3.0	27	9.0	264	88.0
Poor access to farm information/women are less informed than men	50	16.7	104	34.7	146	48.7
Traditional habit/cultural	63	21.0	125	41.7	112	37.3
Women are only subordinate to male counterparts	38	12.7	89	29.7	173	57.7
Low self confidence of women in making farm decisions	15	5.0	57	19.0	228	76.0
Lack of knowledge about farming	42	14.0	82	27.3	176	58.7

Table 7: *Major social constraints against women's involvement in decision-making power.*

Source: Based on Field Survey; NRP = Number of respondents

The other constraints which inhibit women's participation in development endeavors are heavy domestic workload, low time spent away from home, less freedom of movement than men and low educational status. If women are given more rights, taboos are broken, cultural attitudes towards them change, women's labor contribution could be appreciated. This could be one way by which we can do away with poverty, enhance food security and improve livelihood. Evidently, development, food security and poverty alleviation will not be truly achieved without rapid agricultural growth. Increasing of agricultural productivity is central to growth, income distribution, improved food security and alleviation of poverty in rural Africa [21]. In all of these, the rural woman plays a pivotal role and they are crucial to the overall success of efforts directed at agricultural development in rural areas.

Conclusion

The contribution of women to agricultural and food production is highly significant but it is impossible to verify empirically the share produced by women in the study area. Women's participation in rural labor markets varies considerably, but invariably women are over represented in unpaid, seasonal and part-time work, and the available evidence suggests that women are often paid less than men, for the same work. As seen above, women play a significant role in the agricultural labor force and in household activities, although to a varying degree. Women make up in any agricultural labor force over 50% in the study area. As a result their contribution to agricultural output is undoubtedly extremely significant, although difficult to quantify with any accuracy.

Rural women often manage complex households and pursue multiple livelihood strategies. Their activities typically include producing agricultural crops, tending animals, processing and preparing food, collecting fuel and water, engaging in trade and marketing, caring for family members and maintaining their homes.

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