

# Women's Strategic Partnership in Rural Sustainable Development

Mohammad Safakish

Master of Economic Sciences, Payam Noor Isfahan

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## ABSTRACT

Rural women have an important and decisive role in the process of rural development so that they are manufacturer of more than half of all food that are produced in rural area. Women really are economic managers of families and also they play a major role in matters relating to maintenance and husbandry animal, agriculture, horticulture, bee, caterpillar, handicrafts such as carpets, rugs, mats, needlework etc. In recent years, it is well known that major part of income of rural households owned by women. So that, sometimes share of women in the household economy is more than the share of men. So rural women are major forces for creation and development, a potential resource for promoting rural economy and maximize the rate of growth of food products. The present paper is concerned to explain strategic role of rural women's participation in rural sustainable development.

**KEYWORDS:** women's role, rural sustainable development, placement of women, women's participation

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Basically, rural development means fundamental transformation in all economic, social and human relations aspects in rural which gradually leads to increasing welfare of rural people. Now, participation of women in various social and economic activities in rural to achieve sustainable development goals is undeniable, because this large reserve plays a special role in agriculture, livestock, crafts production in addition to responsibility of almost all matters relating to administration of the house and children. According to the statistics, about 6.5 million rural women directly have an active presence in planting and harvesting of agricultural products. They run their task of marketing and marketing their own products and agricultural products in a good way even in local markets. In fact, agriculture developing is meaningless without participation of women and they always are development of agriculture precursor. In addition to housekeeping, they do the most difficult productive and agricultural activities circadian. Also, most of livestock and dairy industry activities are done by women in villages and they often are actively present in some agricultural and gardening products.

### -The Status of Rural Women

As a general belief, women as well as bear, fertile land. Woman is human and earth's mother. Female's central character is a reflection of her potential and actual abilities in gather, grow, protect, feed and vitalize [4]. According to many conducted studies, rural women are deprived of much of the agricultural work. On natural resources, women application can be researched by their role in water and soil. [2] Therefore, rural women can be accounted as initial natural resource managers and first guardians of natural environment. Rural women compared to men and the role of nature and nurture them in the near to medium, more interaction with their environment. To prevent destruction of forests and natural resources, they must act more for collecting fuel and other necessities that are usually supplied from nature [1]. According to FAO Research, more than 75 percent of the world's poorest countries that are almost a billion people live in rural areas and on the other hand, % 70 of the world's poor population are women. In total, three-quarters of the deaths of food and found poverty are about women and girls and poor are female, till be cottage, because poor women in urban area yesterday stranded rural migrants [11]. On the other hand, rural women are the most efficient and effective key elements in each village which are responsible for production in village and play a vital role in social and economic changes. In other words, estimates suggest that women are an important part of agricultural labor force in developing countries. At present, important role of rural women in daily and feature activities of villages in Asian countries is adopted by the United Nations and it is presented in global data. And this is despite the fact that unfortunately, they do not have good facilities, despite this important role. [9]

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\* **Corresponding Author:** Mohammad Safakish, Master of Economic Sciences, Payam Noor Isfahan

### **-Participation of Women and Rural Development**

Participation means involvement of people in their development, evolution, life and environment. Participation of villagers in rural development is presented as objective crystallization human appropriate behavior. Systemic approach to rural development effects participation phenomenon as a natural and completely fundamental issue and it knows participation of all segments of the rural men and women, young and adult as prerequisite for achieving development goals [8]. In other words, recently crucial role of human resources in development of countries isn't hidden for anybody. Human Resources is responsible for main contribution, among production factors for development i.e. natural resources and God's wealth, manpower, capital, management and technology. The dramatic changes in the past two decades in the world has led reducing gender inequalities integral part of the development process and one of the most important developments is changes in the needs of women in society [3]. Hence, participation of women can be considered as a major factor in success of programs and in this sense, women should be involved in shaping programs and feel that program belongs to them [7].

Around the world, particularly in developing countries women try alongside men in all sectors, including agriculture like other sectors of economy to continue dynamic survival of social structures and promoting effective functioning of service-production processes and do a significant portion of work. Despite the fact and with current emphasis that in the process of justice oriented sustainable development, partnership-based, human-centered and endogenous, there is on all human beings, especially women's empowerment. In development of programs and services women's groups have been overlooked, at least in comparison with men as they have been referred forgotten audience. Of course, global politics in rural development legislation has devoted more attention to women but still did not get needed place to rural development and agriculture's theories as integrated rural development programs consider social aspects commensurate with economic dimension and confirmed the fact that social aspects are direct and close tools for women to achieve greater levels of welfare. At the same time, given that agricultural form major activities in rural areas and vast majority of rural women are active in other activities. Therefore, in the context of rural development and agriculture is emphasis on improving quality of women as a huge human source, eliminate inequalities and improve situation of women's working in the economy [14].

### **-Women and Sustainable Development of Rural**

At present, the critical role of women has been cleared for international community in many issues related to development, such as food security, environmental sustainability, eradication of poverty, population control and social development. While not believe that women themselves nor others have considered it. But due to large share of rural women in agriculture unfortunately, this class is considered less in sustainable development projects and is still seen as invisible partners. In other words, some development experts believe that achieve to sustainable development goals is difficult without use of participatory approaches. Analytic and objective look at the placement of persons, men and women in the process of development and awareness of gender roles is an inescapable necessity in achieving goals of sustainable development. Checking economic situation of societies that desirable and acceptable balance in economic, social, cultural and even political activities isn't prepared for fair participation of women and men and fair opportunities to showing creativity and talent of people have not been established, development process is not successful and sustainable but comprehensive and sustainable development will be realized when women is considered as half of the population. On the other hand, women are active and tireless sponsors of inner economy in every country, especially in rural areas. They active and make, use of their professional capabilities and are very effective in economic and social are of life. Yet, despite these values most of people look at their participation humility. In fact, women as half of population in each location have a very important role in economic, social, cultural, political and environmental issues in sustainable development. Hence, they are crucial for planners and there is no different between men and women in term of planners, but in many ways, women have more sensitive and more important role [5]. So, participate women in programs and decision-making related to developing leads that they deliver their data and definitions that have gained during many years in their life environment to development planning and it finally can be crucial for sustainable rural development [7].

### **-Strengthening Participation of Women to Sustainable Rural Development**

Rural women are involved in different activities and observations show that now the main activities of women in rural areas include agriculture and horticulture, livestock, poultry, bees, silkworms, handicrafts such as carpet, rug, mat, needlework, etc. as well as house management activities and keeping children. The role of women in agriculture in the small farming units is impressive that their number is still too larger than operating units. Women's agricultural activities can be divided into following sections; land preparation, planting, harvesting, storage and sale of products and provision of nuts and processors. According to researches, activity and participation

of women in land preparation is less for their heaviness and agricultural machinery but, women help men to flat land in some parts of the country such as northern Iran, so their role at this stage shouldn't be ignored.

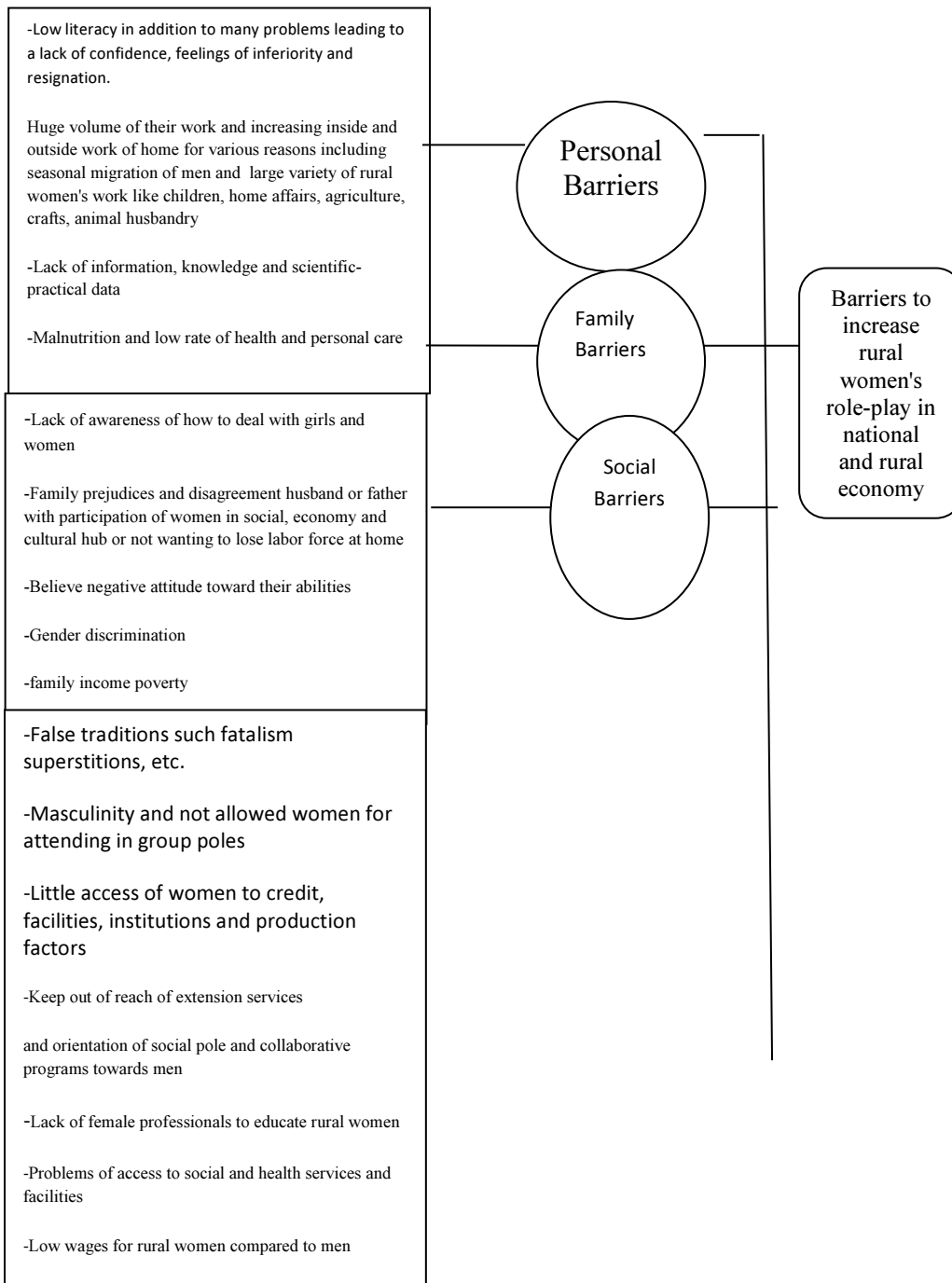
At harvest, the role of women is lesser but women have significant activity in cotton harvest, tea, fruit, thrashing and especially gleaning in some places.

Also, women should not be forgotten during storage and sale of products. In north local markets many examples can be seen that women offer their products to market. Dried preparation and processing industries, especially for household consumption is the main work of women. The results show women play a major role in the process of land preparation, planting, and harvesting crops and horticulture. Available statistics indicate that this group is involved in rice cultivation as %60, in vegetable production as %90, in cotton and oilseeds agriculture as %50 and in gardening as %30. Research results of center for research, planning and agricultural economic and agriculture of farmers represents the share of rural women in various stages of production horticultural crops in different provinces of the country. In general, the participation rate of women in agricultural activities across the country depends on cultural characteristics of area, type of exploitation system, combination of family, type of agricultural activity, natural characteristics of area and socio-economic factors. For example, in the northern parts of the country where rice cultivation is common and according to high volume of work, gender division of labor in a way that women are responsible for over 60% of all production steps. Also, in Gorgan and Rasht that 70 % cotton of country is produced there, landowners mostly use female workers because of the delicacy that cotton harvest act requires. The share of women in this case is charged more than %66. The role of women is remarkable in livestock and processed products for own consumption or for sale. Rural women keep at least one cow or some sheep at home to feed their families, especially in villages that still adhered to the modern livestock market and spending milk and yogurt and other dairy products their family. In addition, rural women are responsible for cleaning stalls, waste transfer, treatment livestock, animal feed, milking, preparation of livestock and produce and preparing fuels from livestock waste.

Also, maintenance of domestic poultry, bees and sericulture are with long history of rural women and despite the development of large modern units for these activities still, in most rural areas of the country almost all rural families have kept a few hens and roosters at home. It shows women's share of livestock in different provinces. It is important in positive impact on household income at result of saving cost of hiring workers and meets needed protein of country. Looking at percentage of women participation in breeding animals such as cattle, sheep and goats indicates this matter. Handicraft production in order to meet the needs of the family home has long been common in rural area. In a survey conducted, it was found that women have basic role at different stages of carpets and products work, including clip, wool wash, batting, spinning, coloring, balls of yarn, dog lying, and erect carpet, weave and lowering carpets and products. One hundred percent of the carpet weaving is done by women and clipping is often done by men.

In the process, women and men work together and in many regions, more than 80 percent of the work is done by women. Study results show that from 111 workers needed to produce one hectare of rice per year, 76 workers are women. Of course, this is higher than 80 workers at year in tea production. According to recent statistics of Rural Research Institute, the share of female employment in the care of livestock in different points of country is from 20 to 90 percent. For example, %100 of milking traditional farms is done by women in Esfahan, Markazi, Lorestan, Ilam also, more than %60 of clipping and milking rural and tribal cows is done by women in Mazandaran, Khorasan, Kahkiloye-v-Boyerahmad. 15 till 20 percent of employed in the agricultural industry and more than 80 percent of employed in production and tea industry are women.

**-Barriers to Increasing the Role of Women in Sustainable Rural Development**



Graph 1- Barriers to increase role of women in sustainable rural development

**2. CONCLUSION**

Obviously, without women in village, sustainable rural development won't realize, so their presence should be provided more than before and educate, promote and organize women must be placed in priority to achieve objectives of rural development that main strategies for socio-economic sustainable development be achieved with presence of women. Women's participation as a key element in achieving objects of rural development has special importance and necessity. Because participation of women along with men cause their spirit of self-esteem, self-

confidence and accountability are strengthened in them and always rely on them when faced with difficulties. Rely on Endogenous development patterns and self-help is an affair that is achieved only with the participation of women and result of participation of women in all aspects of economic, social, cultural and political life as one of the most important factors in achieving sustainable rural development has a fundamental necessity.

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