

The Role of Rural Women in Agriculture A case study of Algeria

دور المرأة الريفية في الزراعة: دراسة حالة الجزائر

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Abstract:

This paper provides evidence on the crucial role of women in agriculture and rural development. It presents the results of a research conducted 140 rural women in agricultural farms in western Algeria concerned women's participation in agricultural activities. This document re affirms that women make essential contributions to agriculture and rural enterprises across the developing world. Women are major producers of food, earners of household income

Keyword: Female participation, rural women, Western Algeria, Algeria, farm household, Algerian women

الملخص:

تهدف الورقة المقدمة الى ابراز دور المرأة الريفية في الاعمال الفلاحية و الزراعية و مدى مشاركتها في خلق المنتج الفلاحي . المقال هو عرض لنتائج دراسة استنبائية اجريت في الغرب الجزائري على 140 امرأة ريفية واكدت هذه النتائج المساهمة الجادة و الفعلية للنسوة في الانشطة الزراعية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المشاركة النسوية، المرأة الجزائرية، الغرب الجزائري، الجزائر، المرأة الريفية

Introduction:

Rural women play a pivotal role in supporting their households and communities .As well as their economic activities; they make contribution to the maintenance of their family.they have many roles and they have also responsibilities and knowledge that differ from those of men. As farmers, they plant, weed and harvest food crops and tend livestock. as caretakers, they look after children and relatives, prepare meals and manage the home. Many women earn extra income by working as wage labours, producing and selling vegetables (IFAD, 2011), and engage in off-farm activities to diversify their families' income (UN,2008). FAO's estimates show that women represent a substantial share of the total agricultural labour force, as individual food producers or as agricultural workers, and that around two-thirds of the female labour force in developing economies is engaged in agricultural work.¹

In Algeria, rural woman make critical contributions to household production and consequently to household food security. They contribute to agricultural work, para agricultural work and off-farm activities. (CENEAP, 2002 and CERAI, 2011).

In this paper, we aim to investigate rural women's contribution in agricultural activities and how they contribute to the house hold economy based on primary data collected through field survey of western Algeria. The paper is organized as follows; section I discusses the data and methodological issues. Results are produced in section II, while conclusions and policy recommendations are given in section III.

2-research methodology:

- **Objective of the research study:** To determine the contribution of rural women in agricultural activities .
- **Nature of research study:** Descriptive research.
- **Area of the research study:** Rural areas covering 09 wilaya² of western Algeria(wilaya of Béchar ,Tlemcen, Tiaret, Saida, Sidi Bel Abbes, Mascara,El Bayadh, Naama, Ain Temouchent).
- **Target respondent:** Rural women age 15 and older.
- **Sampling technique:** Non probability sampling technique.

¹ *FAO, Gender, Key to Sustainability and Food Security, Plan of Action: Gender and Development, Rome, 2003.*

² *Wilaya is the division of the country in Algeria.*

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- **Sampling method** : Convenience sampling method.
- **Sampling size** : 140 women.
- **Data collection method**: survey method.
- **Research instrument**: structured questionnaire (pilot study was carried out among 14 respondents which were not considered for further data analysis)
- **Statistical test applied**: descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) and correlation analysis through SPSS version 21.

3-Data analysis and major findings:

Age structure of respondents:

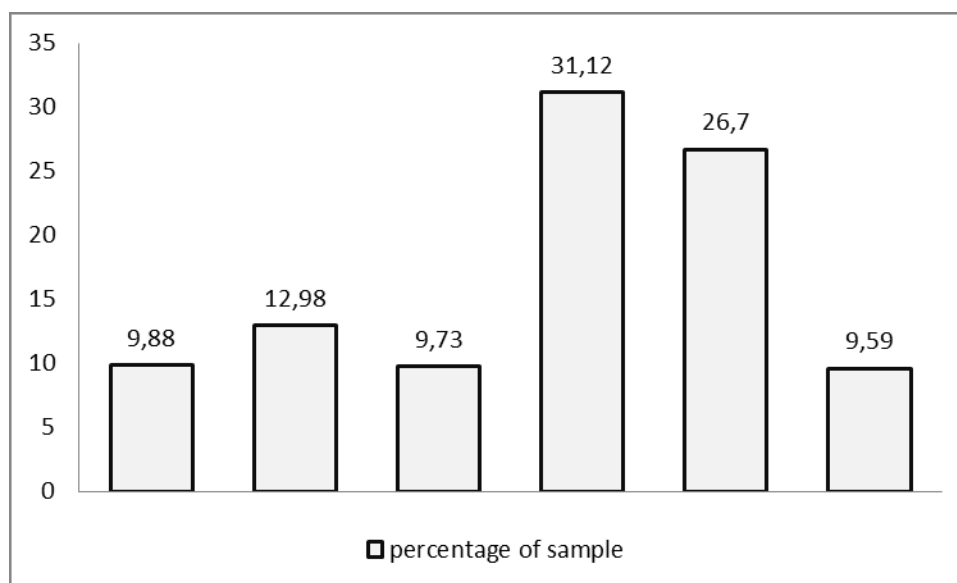
The analysis in terms of age makes it possible to advance the following conclusions:

Table n°01: Mean age of the surveyed rural woman

Mean age	Minimum	Maximum
37,00	15	76

Rural woman range in age from 15 to 76, with the mean age being 37. It is the category of age 35-44 which dominates with 31, 1% of respondents, followed by the category of old women between 45 to 54 with 26, 7% according to the following figure:

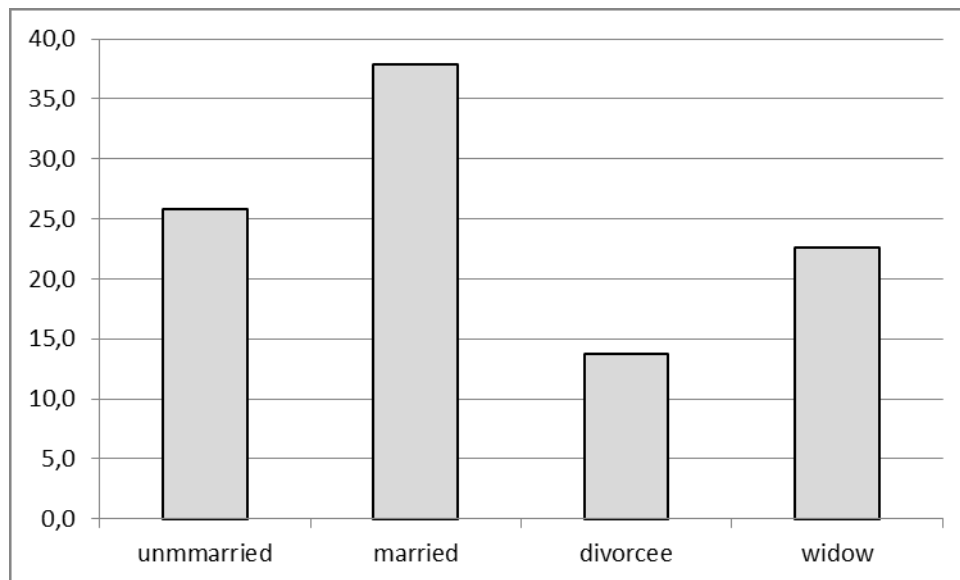
Figure n°01: The distribution of the respondents according to the age.



The marital status:

The figure n°2, us shows that the majority either 37.9% of respondents are married, or followed by the unmarried of (25.8%), 22, 6% respondents were Widow and 13.7%were divorcee.

Figure n°02: The distribution of respondents according to the marital status



The number of children:

The population of the women which has more than 10 children is of 1 1,2% (according to the figure n° 4); that which:

- The number of child between 7 and 9 is of 16, 1%; its majority is between 45 and 54 years (according to the following diagram);
- The number of child between 4 and 6 is of 1 3, 7%;
- The number of child between 1 and 3 is of 26, 1%; its majority is married between 35 and 44 years (according to the two following diagrams).

Figure n°03 the number of child of respondent.

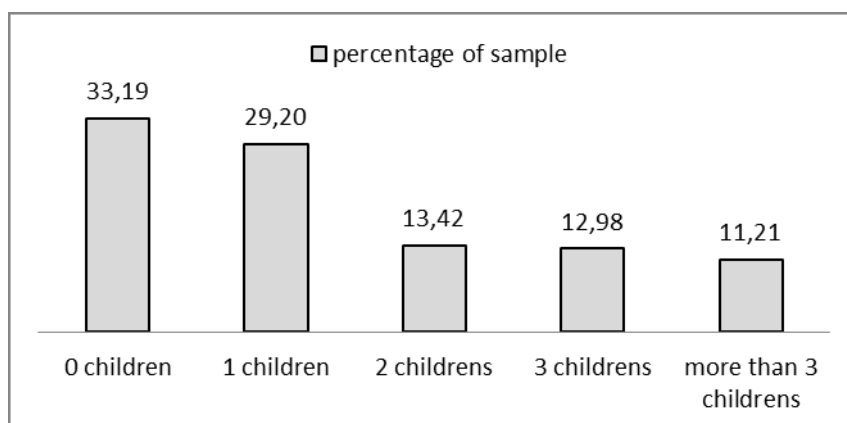
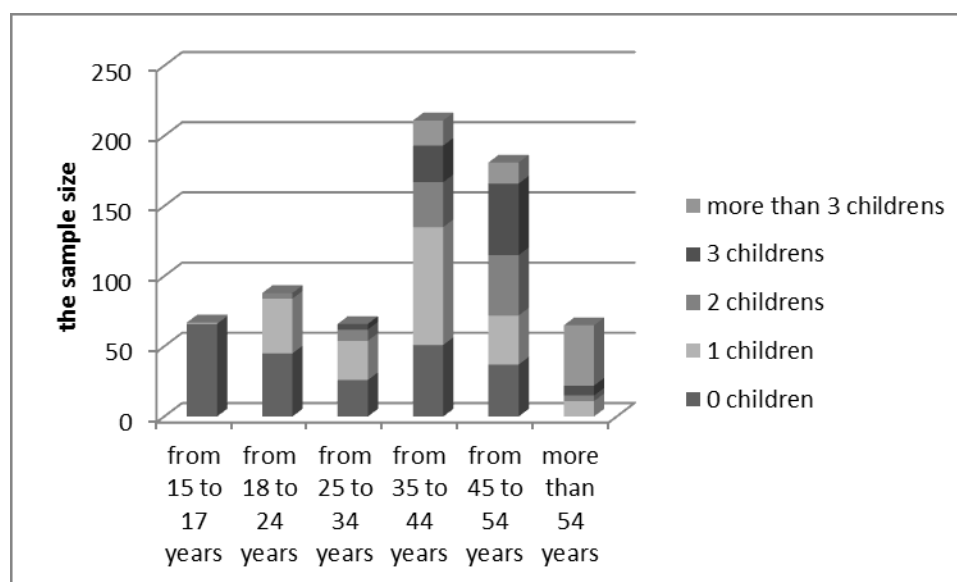


Figure n°04: The correlation between the age of respondents and the number of children



And the rest (32,9% of respondents) does not have a child and they are generally unmarried;

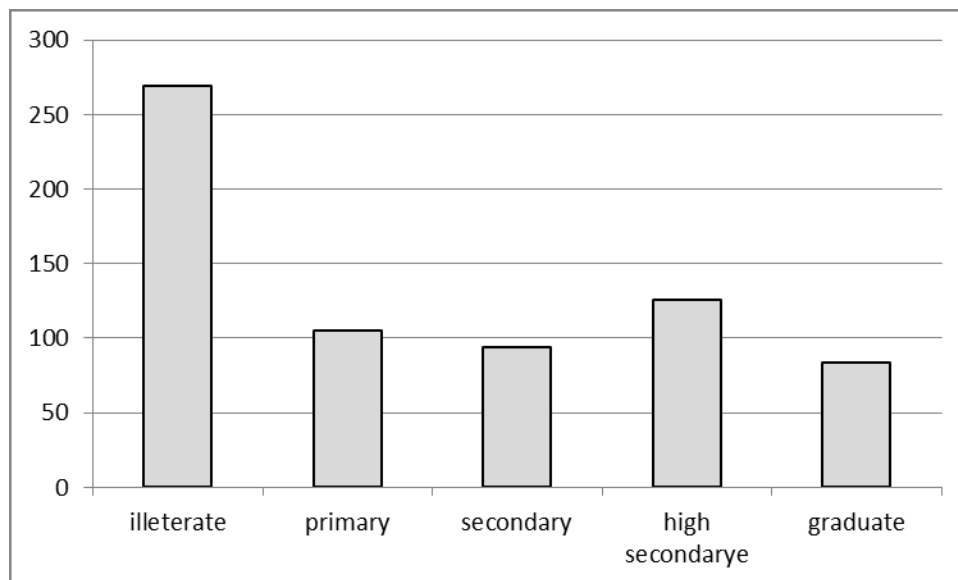
The educational level:

The analysis of the following figure, enables us to note that the illiterates represent 269 women is (39.7%) and who have:

- Primary level are 105 women is (15.50%).
- Secondary level are 94 women is (13.90%).
- Higher secondary level are 126 women is (18.60%).

- The number of the rural women having a graduate level is the weakest (84femmes) with a rate of 12.4%.

Figure n°05: the educational level of respondents.

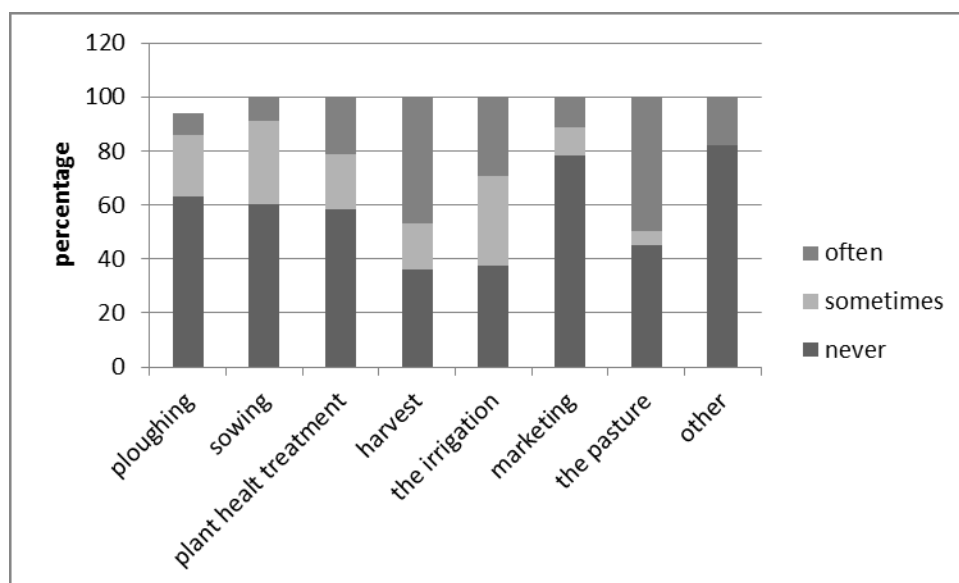


Generally the men as well as the women deal with the agricultural work. The men besides this work ensure the construction of the habitat. In dead season they generally deal of crafts and various activities.

The women as for them are also solicited in many fields. The participation of women with work of the ground varies from a Wilaya to another. It should however be noted that these women do not have plots of land to their own names. All work is done is in the field of the manager or other piece (family). The operations in which they take part are primarily road repair and harvest.

However, according to the reality of exploitation, they can take part in other operations.

Figure n °06: agricultural work



Ploughing:

It is the first operation of soil preparation which consists in cutting out (using a plough or other adapted equipment) the strip of land (more or less complete reversal). This operation, very hard is practised little by the women. It comes out from inquires that 8, 1 % of sample practises this activity. But in the event of insufficiency of hand' works, the young girls (between 15 and 20 years) and women intervene as herdsman in his execution with a rate of 22,6% of sample.

Sowing and road repair:

This technique requires an abundant and courageous labour. The women occupy an important place in achievement of this operation.

The rural women take part in the pulling up of the seedlings in seedbeds, transport towards the pieces and help their husbands (or the wage labour which can be also women) to mend them. The results of our investigation showed that 39.7% of the questioned women take part in this work; The rate of participation of the women to the various operations of sowing and road repair is the following: 81 interrogated women take part in pulling up and/or sowing /or transport of the young seedlings; 59 women take part in road repair itself.

Plant health treatment:

The women take part in this activity with a rate of 41.7% of the sample studied . The advanced reason is the insufficiency of labour in their exploitation. However other women take part in the plant health treatment part-time employee (especially in the wilaya of Naâma).

The irrigation:

The women of the sample often take part in this activity with a rate of 29, 5%; However, by insufficiency of labour certain women and young girls intervene for the irrigation with a rate of 33%.

The harvest:

Harvest indicates the whole of the agricultural work making it possible to the man to collect the plants, fruit and vegetables (the wheat for example) by gathering, mowing, pulling up, and to transport them to the shelter for more or less provisional storage (in a hangar, a cellar,) before consumption or transformation (family, artisanal or industrial). Harvest does not concern that intended products with the food, one speaks, for example, of “harvest” in connection with other natural products, for example the honey of the hives (in the area of Naâma, Ain Témouchent, Mascara, Saida, Sidi Bel Abbes), the truffles (in the area of Béchar) and the esparto (in the area of Naâma). Also, 63.9% of the questioned women intervene in this operation. The women prefer take part in harvest because it is with resulting from this operation that they can claim with an additional remuneration. That explains the great motivation of the women for this operation. This remuneration is done immediately in kind after work.

After harvest the manager also gives them a quantity of collected product (potato, tomato, grape, apples) varying from exploitation to another.

The marketing:

The marketing of the agricultural products makes it possible to carry out the transfer of a product, place of production instead of consumption. The questioned women take part in marketing of the agricultural products with a rate of 21.7% of the population; These women have in majority a relatively low educational level. Approximately 59% do not have any educational level (taught reading and writing). The trade of the agricultural products constitutes their main activity. They have a 39 years median age with on average 15 years of experience in the trade of the agricultural products.

The pasture:

This activity was dominated a long time by the women. And However, in spite of the daily difficulties, women continues to be interested of advantage in the practice of this activity. They practice this operation with a rate of 55% of respondents

The women take part in these various operations either as a labour family (on the field of family) or as a paid labour (field of another exploitation).

Women like family labour:

Under this condition, the rural women can take part in all the operations according to the need. For the typical case of road repair, they ensure pulling up and the transport of the seedlings of the seedbed the pieces; But in certain cases they take part in road repair itself.

Women like paid labour:

The work paid among women can be done in an individual or collective way. In several villages, have finds women who practise certain operations individually such as:

The Bee-keeping: there are 99 of respondents practise the bee-keeping for marketing and 184 women contribute to the operations of bee-keeping for the food self-sufficiency of the household.

The plantation and arboriculture: there are 161 of respindents practise arboriculture (fruit-bearing) and the plantation for marketing and 319 women use the plantation (medicinal herbs, trees of the fruits, etc) for the food self-sufficiency of the household .

The breeding: The breeding was a long time the best shape of savings of the peasants, this is why, one meets in each village of the parks of the sheep. it constitutes the main activity of the peasants. Farmers and unquestionable commercial practical this activity like means of capitalization of the incomes or economic activity (pasture fattening).

The sheep and goats are present in the families and constitute true savings (held in general by the women) at which one will resort during the years of bad harvest.

The women undertake various gainful activities which enable them to have animals; and in spite of the complexity of the subject we tried to examine closely, the practice of this activity by the women:

- 228 surveyed women practise the breeding for the food self-sufficiency of the household;

- 209 women practise the breeding for the trade;
- The livestock primarily consists of cattle and small ruminants (the cattle, the sheep, goats);
- The results got on the experiment of the women surveyed in practice of this activity, show an interest more and more crescent of the women.

Conclusion:

We must specify that our analysis is based on the data of a survey conducted in some wilaya of Algeria, and because of the great dimension of the country, there exist important disparities between various wilayas. The contribution to the rural income could vary from one wilaya to another. In addition, it would be interesting to study the differentiation of the effect of the not-agricultural activity according to various the sub-groups of the households. In addition, our analysis clarifies the effect of the various factors on the rural activity in the area selected. Firstly, our results reveal that the participation in the various activities is always positively related to the number of the people live in the same hearth. Secondly, our analysis confirms the significant role of education level in the participation in the rural activity. Lastly, the scarcity of land undoubtedly forms an important motivation so that the woman left the agricultural universe. Nevertheless, the women relatively rich in ground do not specialize inevitably in the agricultural production.

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