

TECHNICAL SESSION-1: POWER, POLITICS & PEOPLE

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Paper Title: Women's Empowerment: A Barrier or a Catalyst for Income Poverty and Time Poverty in Rural Pakistan
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Presenter: Shahzad Kouser

Abstract: Women's empowerment initiatives have important repercussion on women's income and time poverty. Rural women's unpaid domestic and care work incapacitates them to make unconstrained choices for paid farm work. Time use measures have proven somewhat effective in capturing rural women's contributions to crop production and household reproduction. Rural women involved in paid crop productive tasks could be due to a lack of agency or improved agency. However, the subtleties in women's decision and time-use agency are important. Adopting a Value Chain approach, this study assesses rural women's empowerment due to their involvement in pulses value chain (PVC) and then estimates its net impact on their income and time poverty. The study is carried out in three major pulse growing tehsils—Lawa, Talagang, and Chakwal - of district Chakwal, which is the main pulse growing rainfed region in the Punjab province of Pakistan. In these tehsils, the research team interviewed 120 women involved in PVC, based on a pre-tested and structured questionnaire comprising a 24-hour time use diary and 6 domains of women's empowerment. The study developed Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) using 5 dimensions of empowerment: production, resources, income, leadership, and time. The results of income-poverty model reveal that women's empowerment has substantially alleviated their income poverty, while the results of time-poverty model indicates that women's empowerment has aggravated their time poverty due to their double burden in productive and reproductive tasks. Moreover, the net impact of women's empowerment on their time poverty was about two times larger than that of their income poverty. This paper concludes that women's engagement in PVC activities improves their economic autonomy within the household but at the cost of their time poverty and suggests that policymakers need to compensate women's increased labour contributions.

Discussant: Prof. Dr. Muqarrab Akbar, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan