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PARTNERING FOR IMPACT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



THEMES

- New approaches to development research
- The realities of research partnerships
- Evidence, policy and practice
- Using research networks and alliances
- Does participatory research support sustainable development?



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PARTNERING FOR IMPACT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Innovative research is the focus of this issue. The papers, case studies and reports consider the results of research partnerships between academics, development practitioners, village communities and policy-makers in Australia and our neighbours. Most papers are selected from those presented at the international conference “Partnering for impact on sustainable development”, hosted by The University of Sydney, June 13-14, 2017, under the auspices of the Research for Development Impact (RDI) Network who also provided support for this publication.

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Women and marginalised group inclusion in Pakistan smallholder agriculture

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Inclusive engagement and adoption outcomes have become key concepts in international discussions on development with emphasis on providing employment and poverty reduction in developing countries. In particular, social inclusion has become a core framework in many aid-recipient countries and women's empowerment in particular now rates highly on the development policy agenda in countries such as Pakistan. This paper draws on the experience and outcomes of a Social Research Project (SRP) on *pro-poor collaborative* development in Pakistan that was part of a larger, multi-disciplinary program involving technical commodity-based projects (CBPs) in mango, dairy and citrus production and mango value chain development. The program was part of an Australia–Pakistan Agricultural Sector Linkages Program (ASLP) funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR). The SRP was introduced after the conclusion of ASLP Phase 1 (ASLP1) that involved only the CBPs. In ASLP1, the CBPs had focussed on economic growth in rural Pakistan through improved production techniques and improved value chains, but did not specifically focus on improving the situation for the rural poor and marginalised and hence did not seek to engage marginalised groups such as women and smallholder farm households. ASLP2 sought to remedy this by adding the SRP to the original four CBPs.

The aim of the SRP was to encourage and facilitate pro-poor collaborative development in Pakistan by undertaking the necessary social research to underpin the four CBPs. This initiative was to focus on two types of collaboration: (1) collaboration between the CBPs and target recipients in selected *focal villages*; and (2) collaboration with and among the four CBPs to exploit potential synergies. The SRP worked in a number of focal villages in the districts in which the four CBPs operated. The program operated in the provinces of Punjab and Sindh, but for the purposes of this paper we focus on Punjab because we now have longitudinal survey data for that region that show outcomes and impacts of the SRP (Spriggs and Chambers 2015).

We believe that an integrated and holistic approach to building capacity among marginalised and vulnerable groups leads to a greater chance of success for sustainable rural development, especially if interventions are collaborative and place-based. This paper explores the nuances and lessons learned from social and technical collaboration to enhance the engagement of marginalised groups, especially women in smallholder agriculture.

Marginalised groups

Of importance to Australian international researchers and aid workers was the announcement by Foreign Affairs Minister Julie Bishop at the National Press Club on 18 June 2014 that gender programs will be one of six foci, especially

the empowerment of women and girls through greater engagement in programs. Regardless of their objectives, she declared that 80 per cent of investments must 'effectively address gender issues in their implementation'. This message was reinforced recently by the Foreign Affairs Minister's address to the Australasian Aid Conference on 15 February 2017. 'The driver for addressing poverty reduction and expanding opportunities for people, businesses and communities will be economic development' (Australian Government 2017).

In most developing countries, women are among the poorest and most disadvantaged groups in society (Denton 2002) and Pakistan is no exception. The status of women in Pakistan is shaped by socio-cultural law prescribed by the Hindu traditions, Islamic social norms and the lack of policy for improvements (Punjab Commission on Status of Women 2016). Early marriage and family violence is common in rural areas (Ahmad and Murad 2010). The landless and those from a different ethnic or religious minority and those with disabilities constitute what is called the marginalised in society. As women in smallholder communities are disadvantaged by gender across all marginal groups they are the focus of this present paper.

Women face discrimination in access to education, health services, income generation opportunities, assets and productive resources (land and credit) and to services like agricultural extension (Talat and Rashid 2009; Nosheen 2010 and Farnworth and Colverson 2014). This disadvantaged position is reflected in Pakistan's rank of 143 out of 144 countries on the gender gap index measured on indicators of education, economic contribution, health and political representation (World Economic Forum 2016). This huge gender gap leads to the women's marginalisation, especially in rural areas.

Rural women provide 43 per cent of the agricultural labor force worldwide with their varying role from crop production to the post-harvest management of crops and livestock production (FAO 2011). They play a prominent role in seed preparation, collection and application of farmyard manure, husking maize, food processing, and storage (Taj et al 2012; Nosheen et al 2008 and Ahmad et al 2009) and subsistence livestock production (Ranjha et al 2009). Women in Pakistan are also important contributors and play multiple roles as unpaid workers at family farms, and low paid farm labor (Ahmad et al 2009). However, their contribution has never been reflected in GDP (World Bank, 2009) and so are considered passive members/workers in the traditional patriarchal farm and family system (Goheer 2003).

Prioritising women's concerns, priorities, and needs is vital for the development of the agriculture sector in Pakistan (Prakash 2003). It is evident from research that community-driven development projects, that actively

involve communities in planning, decision making, and investment resources, contribute more in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment (World Bank 2011). However, the review of community-driven projects by the World Bank, IFAD and FAO (2011:55) showed that '...there is abundant evidence that untargeted community-driven development can bypass women and the poor' as higher participation of women in some of the community development projects does not reveal the equal access and benefits to women. Therefore, the inclusion of small farming households and women requires innovative community engagement approaches like place-based community development focussing on women's needs and priorities (Iftikhar et al 2009).

SRP methods of inclusion were grounded in adult learning principles, especially those focussing on the agricultural priorities and issues of the target beneficiaries—change that was demand led rather than supply driven. Methods included using visual ethnographies to ascertain knowledge about and training needs for the value chain and marketing of relevant commodities. The establishment of community service centres by the SRP enabled a safe place for women to gather and to be trained.

We argue that collaborative engagement with researchers and local stakeholders (especially target recipients in focal villages in Pakistan) is a more successful strategy for the inclusion of women and marginalised groups than technical training of smallholders alone.

Analysis of the Impact of the SRP

The analysis used information gathered in a pre-ASLP2 (i.e. post-ASLP1) survey and a post-ASLP2 survey in three villages, one in each district where ASLP was operating. The pre-ASLP2 survey was undertaken in early 2012, while the post-ASLP2 survey was undertaken at the end of 2015, about six months after the completion of the SRP.

The villages were in the districts of Sargodha, Jhelum and Faisalabad and represented a similar spatial location with similar spatial characteristics. We refer to these villages as V1, V2 and V3 respectively. The three villages represented different levels of intervention by the Commodity-Based Projects (CBPs) and the Social Research Project (SRP). V1 benefitted from both the SRP and the CBPs, V2 benefitted from the CBPs but not the SRP and V3 was a control village which did not benefit from either the SRP or the CBPs.

The two surveys were conducted in 100 low-income households selected at random in V1 (34 households), V2 (35 households) and V3 (31 households). The surveys were by personal interview and involved the same households both at the start of ASLP2 and again after its conclusion. In each household, the male head of household and the female spouse were both interviewed separately. The surveys included questions related to household characteristics and their assessments and preferences on a variety of issues and the same questions were asked for both surveys. For the present analysis, we were concerned with their assessment of the impact of the Social Research Project of ASLP2 on the spouses.

Spousal involvement in household decision making

One possible impact of the SRP on women's empowerment concerns their role in decision making involving money. In both the pre-ASLP2 and post-ASLP2 surveys we asked female spouses a number of questions intended to elicit their perception of their role in seven types of decision-making in three broad categories including:

- (a) Household expenses
 1. Everyday household purchases (e.g. food)
 2. Large household purchases (e.g. TV)
- (b) Farm business expenses
 3. Purchase and sale of livestock
 4. Purchase and sale of farm inputs/outputs
- (c) Large irregular expenses
 5. Dowry
 6. Education
 7. Medical

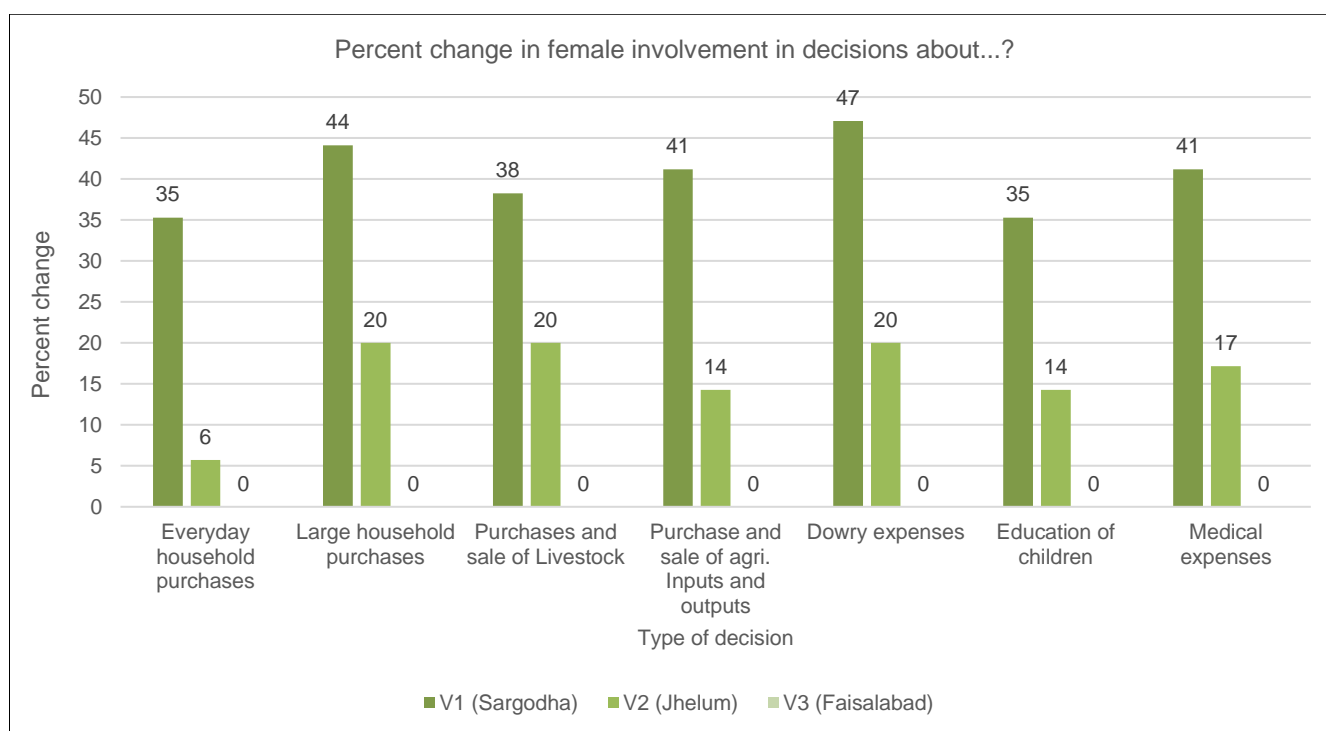
We asked: 'Who makes the decision about ...?' The spouse was given four choices:

- 1 = head of household,
- 2 = you (the spouse),
- 3 = both the head and spouse together, or
- 4 = other.

Figure 1 (see next page), shows the change in spousal involvement in decision making between the pre-ASLP2 and the post-ASLP2 surveys for the three villages and with regard to the seven types of decisions. The change is expressed as a percentage of the total sample size for the particular village. Thus, for example, in V1 (village in Sargodha) where the SRP and CBPs both operated, the change in spousal involvement in everyday household decisions was found to be 35 per cent out of a total sample size of 34. This was derived from an increase of spousal involvement from 17 in the pre-ASLP2 to 29 in the post-survey, an increase of 12.

As Figure 1 shows the per cent changes for all types of decisions increased the most in V1 where the SRP operated. There were smaller increases in V2 where the CBPs operated but not the SRP. In V3 we found no change in spousal involvement in decision making for any of the seven types of decision. For example, out of a total sample of 31 in V3, only 3 spouses were involved in everyday household decisions in the pre-ASLP2 and this number remained the same in the post-survey. Using t-tests of mean difference the average responses in V1 were found to be significantly greater than in V2 over all types of decision except type 3 (purchase and sale of livestock). For this type of decision, the average response in V1 was found to be significantly greater than in V2 only at the 10 per cent significance level. These results suggest strongly that the SRP had a positive incremental effect over and above the CBPs in enhancing female spouse involvement in household decision making.

Figure 1: Comparison of the involvement of female spouses in household decision-making between the pre-ASLP2 survey and the post-ASLP2 survey



Further, using similar t-tests and a 5 per cent significance level, the average responses in V2 were found to be significantly greater than in V3 over all types of decision except type 1 (everyday household purchases). These results suggest that the CBPs had a positive incremental effect compared to the situation where there was no ASLP2 involvement.

Usefulness of the Community Service Centre

One of the key innovations requested by SRP participants in the focal villages was the establishment of a Community Service Centre (CSC). The importance of place-based sites for the engagement of marginalised groups in a low trust society cannot be overemphasised. The CSCs serve as capacity-building hubs for target beneficiary groups focussing on:

- development activities;
- training activities for men, women and youth;
- training by partner country commodity based teams; and
- other service groups such as health workers and NGOs.

In the post-ASLP2 survey in V1, we asked respondents: ‘how useful is the Community Service Centre?’ The responses are summarised in Table 1.

As may be seen, the respondents were fairly positive about the usefulness of the CSC and the total responses were the same for both female spouses and male heads of household. Construction of the CSCs in each of the focal villages of the SRP has enabled villagers to have a common meeting place. Apart from skills training, value addition activities (particularly for females) and meeting with outside experts (e.g. health educators and financial advisors), the CSCs are also fora for social activities involving collaboration with

other households (i.e. bridging). The CSCs have also served as hubs to roll out activities from focal villages to four to five surrounding villages.

Table 1: Post-ASLP2 survey responses in V1 (Sargodha): ‘How useful is the Community Service Centre?’

According to...	Not at all	Somewhat	Very	TOTAL RESPONSES
Head of household (male)	1(3%)	17 (53%)	14 (44%)	32
Spouse (female)	1 (3%)	17 (53%)	14 (44%)	32

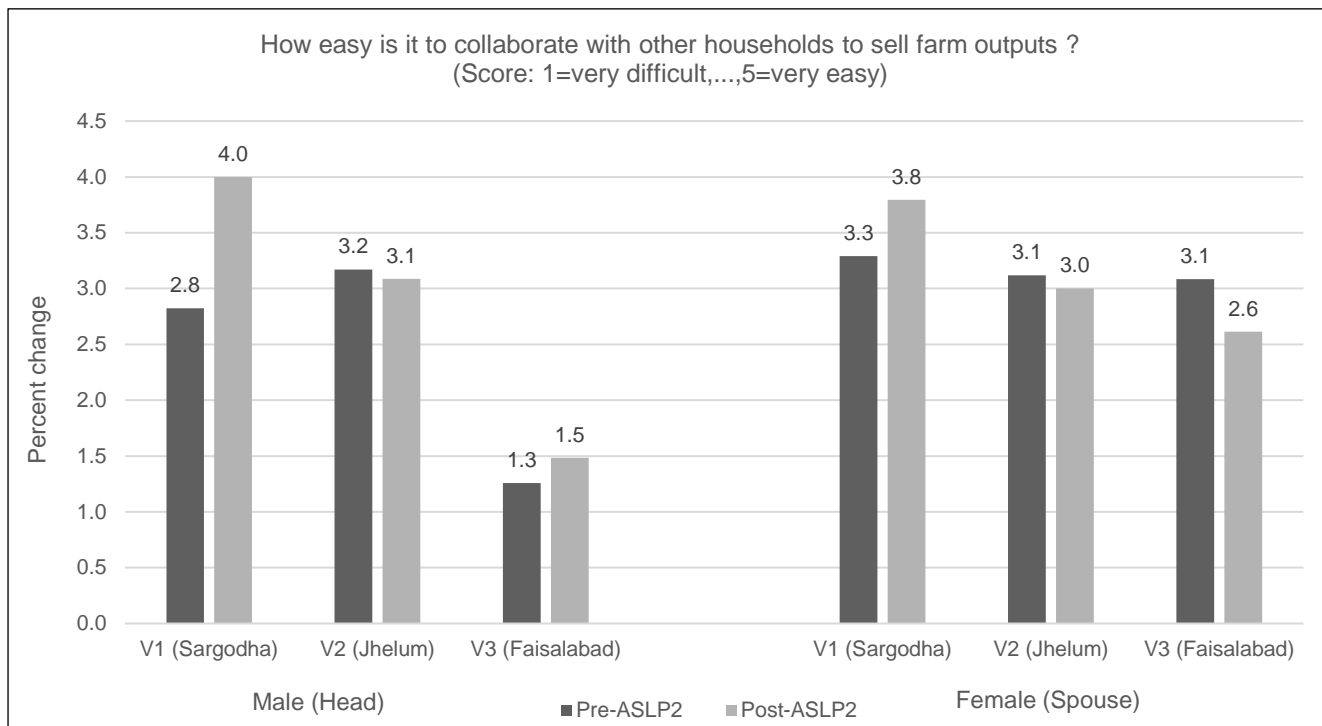
Some of the respondents to the post-ASLP2 survey commented:

- *Our children are spending their time in positive activities we feel that our families have become more productive.*
- *Social Research project gave skill trainings to my wife, now she is earning from vegetable nursery and I am working on farms.*
- *I received KG (kitchen garden) training, now I am growing vegetables in my home.*

Collaboration with others outside the household (bridging)

Bridging is an important way to achieve economic outcomes that are often not possible if working individually or within the household. Examples include joint selling of outputs, joint purchase of inputs and building a community

Figure 2: Comparison of willingness to collaborate with others between the pre-ASLP2 survey and the post-ASLP2 survey



storage facility. Unfortunately, as Qadeer (2006:237) suggests ‘...social trust has gradually eroded as a result of divergence of interests and increasing disparities and the state’s failure to endure safety and security for all citizens. By the 2000s, Pakistan has become a society of low trust’ and this makes bridging activities very difficult to achieve. In the pre-ASLP2 and post-ASLP2 surveys, we asked respondents in the three villages about their attitude to collaboration with other households to sell outputs together. The weighted average responses for each village are summarised in Figure 2 above.

The individual responses receive a score or 1 to 5 depending on the perceived level of difficulty in bridging with other households. Thus, a score of 1 indicates collaboration is perceived to be very difficult, a score of 3 is neutral (neither easy nor difficult) while a score of 5 indicates collaboration is perceived to be very easy. Consider first the result in village V3 (Faisalabad). Unlike V2 and V3, this village missed out entirely on ASLP (both ASLP1 and ASLP2). The results suggest that given the absence of ASLP, male (heads) viewed collaboration with other households to be relatively difficult and much more difficult than their spouses. This is consistent with other findings (Spriggs et al. 2017) that, *ceteris paribus*, females tend to find collaboration with others easier than their male counterparts. The relatively high weighted average response for V1 and V2 suggest that ASLP (both ASLP1 and ASLP2) has had a positive impact on male perception of the ease of bridging.

What is also particularly interesting is what happens between the pre-ASLP2 and post-ASLP2 surveys. The perception of ease of collaboration with other households has increased significantly for both male heads and their spouses in V1, a village which benefitted from the SRP.

However, this was not found to be the case in V2, which had benefitted from the CBPs but not the SRP. This suggests that the Social Research Project has had an additional impact on the perception of ease of collaboration with other households.

Did the ASLP2 program meet the needs of participants?

Finally, we wanted to get an overall assessment from the spouses on whether ASLP2 addressed their needs. The results of this assessment are provided in Table 2 (below) for both V1 and V2.

Table 2: Post-ASLP2 (female) spouses: ‘To what extent has ASLP2 addressed your needs?’

Village	Not at all	Partially	Fully	TOTAL RESPONSES
V1 (Sargodha)	5(15%)	13(38%)	16(47%)	34
V2 (Jhelum)	19(73%)	7(27%)	0(0%)	26

These results suggest that in V1, which benefitted from the SRP in addition to the CBPs, most spouses perceive that ASLP2 has met their needs fully or partially. However, in V2 where there were CBPs but no SRP, most spouses said the ASLP2 program did not meet their needs at all. The main unmet needs of spouses included:

- more help with agricultural value adding activities (e.g. making pickles);
- more help with non-agricultural economic activities (e.g. embroidery); and

- provision of health services (health training, set up a local health dispensary or medical facility).

Learnings from the Social Research project of ASLP2

It is clear from our analysis of results that in V1, the village in Sargodha where the Social Research Project (SRP) operated, there was a positive effect on the empowerment of women as compared to the villages where there were only commodity-based projects or no projects at all. Women in V1 (Sargodha) were more collaborative with each other, found the community service centre to be beneficial for meetings and smallholder training and were empowered to become more engaged with household decision making. The interventions of the SRP were grounded in adult learning principles that sought the engagement of marginalised groups in identifying their own socioeconomic needs, including in agricultural production, business and marketing and working together in a loose learning alliance to meet those needs. Where the SRP worked closely with CBPs, as in V1 (Sargodha), collaboration enhanced adoption outcomes. In ASLP2 the purview of the SRP was necessarily restricted, but by acknowledging cultural constraints and the cultural values of women and girls in particular, the building of community service centres provided safe and trusted learning places in a village.

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