

Poverty alleviation through agricultural development: A case study of date palm and vegetable farmers in Panjgoor District of Balochistan

Muhammad Asif, Dr. Mumtaz A. Baloch, Huma Zafar, Siraj Bashir

ABSTRACT:

Agriculture is the main source of earning for human beings and livelihood of 86% of the rural population in developing countries including Pakistan. Studies showed that agricultural development has significantly helped in reducing poverty. The objective of this study was to understand the impacts of agriculture in alleviating poverty in the Panjgoor district of Balochistan. The information was collected from 100 traditional and modern date palm and vegetable farmers. The Data was collected through household survey questionnaires, group discussions and, key informant interviews. Quantitative data was analyzed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), using descriptive statistics such as, frequency distribution, percentages, ANOVA and mean. Out of six major varieties of date, Mozati, Kahraba and among vegetable, okra and soybean played a significant role in improving the socioeconomic conditions (annual income, education and farm inputs such as, water, pesticides, fertilizer and labor charges) in the study area. Overall, modern farmers produced better production and income compared to the farmers engaged in traditional farming. In modern farming practices almost all varieties of date palm and vegetable produced better yield and income compared to traditional farming practices. Findings reflected that the decreasing water volume of kariz and farmers' poor economic conditions significantly affected the agricultural development which eventually influenced the farming practices, household income and livelihood. Insufficient inputs and common extension services could not do much in improving the agricultural practices to improve the socioeconomic conditions of small-scale farmers. There is an emerging need to rehabilitate the karizes, provide farmers with the required inputs such as, seed, technologies (trickle irrigation, pollination) grants and modern skills for agricultural development.

Keywords: Agriculture; Poverty; Date palm; vegetable; Practices; Panjgur; Balochistan