

# GENDER ASPECTS OF AGRICULTURE

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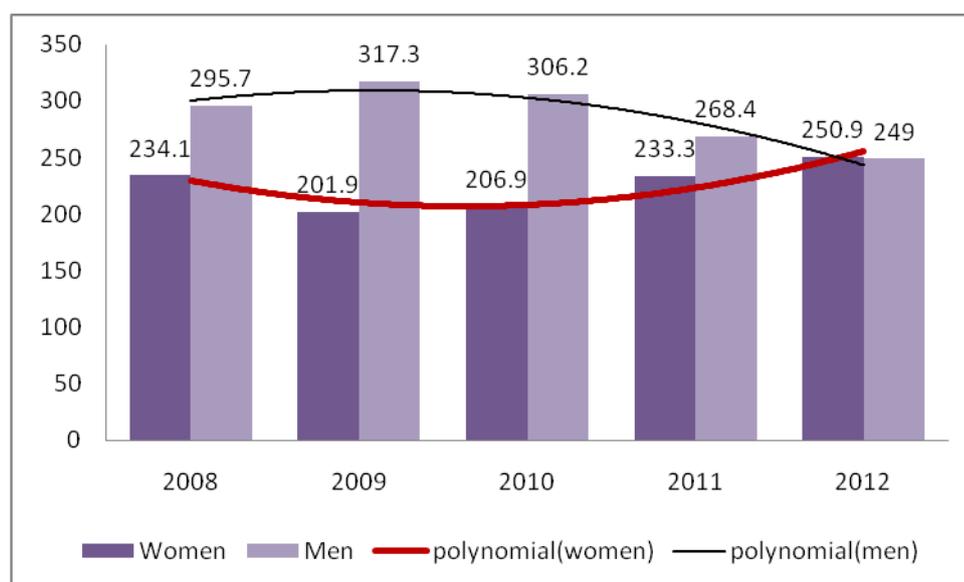
The situation of women is increasingly more difficult than that of men.



Particularly in rural areas women are mainly engaged in low-paid spheres of labor, including in agriculture, education, and health. Thus, totally 85.5 percent of women are employed in these fields, including basic share belonging to agriculture, which makes 75.1 percent. In its turn, the social and economic crisis and high unemployment rate among men that contributed to the decline in living

standards in the country have stimulated the activity in women employment. Women undertake the role of a breadwinner that was not peculiar to them earlier. This leads to an increase in economic activity of women. The number of women in the hired labor force, as well as women engaged in entrepreneurial activities is growing especially rapidly.

Diagram 1. Payroll number of employees in agriculture, total, thousand people<sup>1</sup>.



<sup>1</sup> Source – <http://www.stat.tj/ru/gender/gender-docs/>

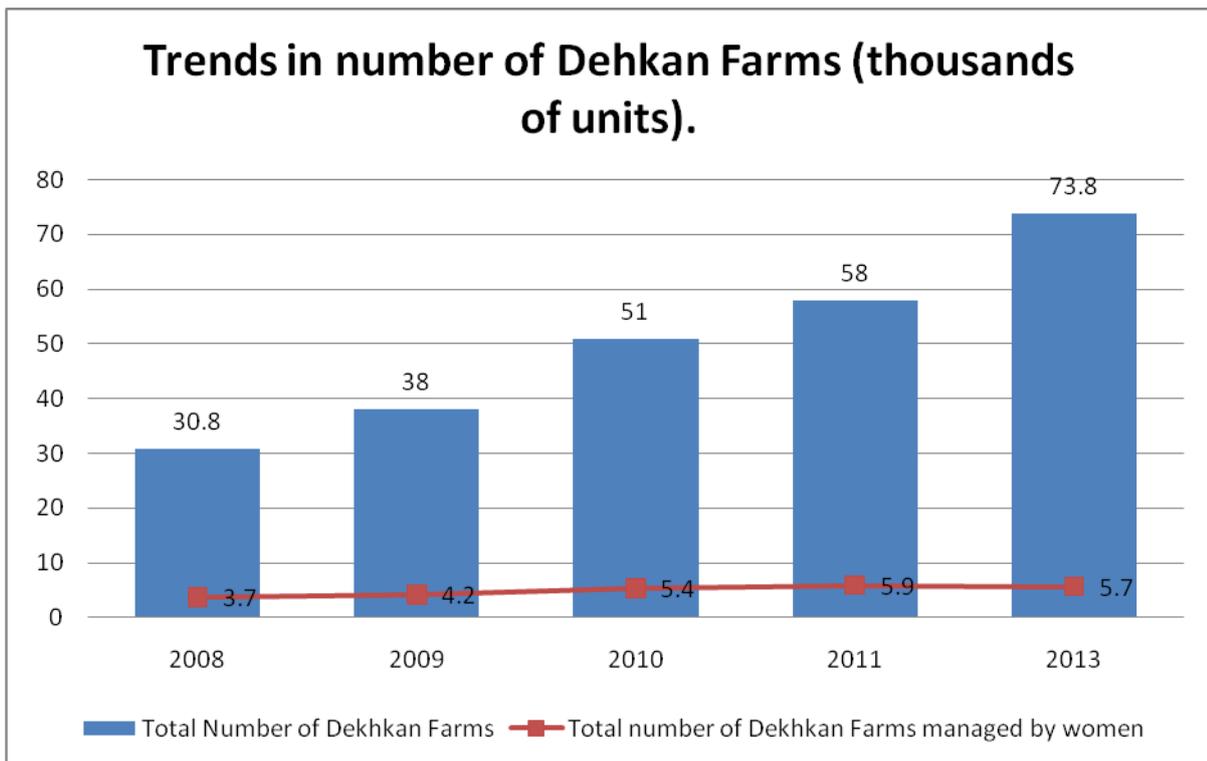
According to the NSO data (see Figure 1), the payroll number of women employed in agriculture in 2012 increased by 19.6 percent compared to 2009, and by 16.5 percent compared to 2009.

The socio-economic difficulties are the main motivator of women labor activity. Accordingly, the growth in the number of women employed in agriculture recorded during the period of 2009-2012 could stem from the impact of the global crisis in 2009, as a result of which there was an increase in prices for food and other strategic commodities.

The analysis shows that in the context of growth in women's employment in agriculture during the period under scrutiny, a decrease in the number of men employed in this field because of low wages, and their transition to more returning labor activities, their migration abroad in pursuit of a suitable employment is observed.

Women labor today is a cheap one. In many cases, they do not always understand that as members of the farm they are owners and equal members of peasant farms. Rural women need markets for their grown products. Lacking time and opportunity to sell their products themselves, their goods often end up with unscrupulous speculators from the market.

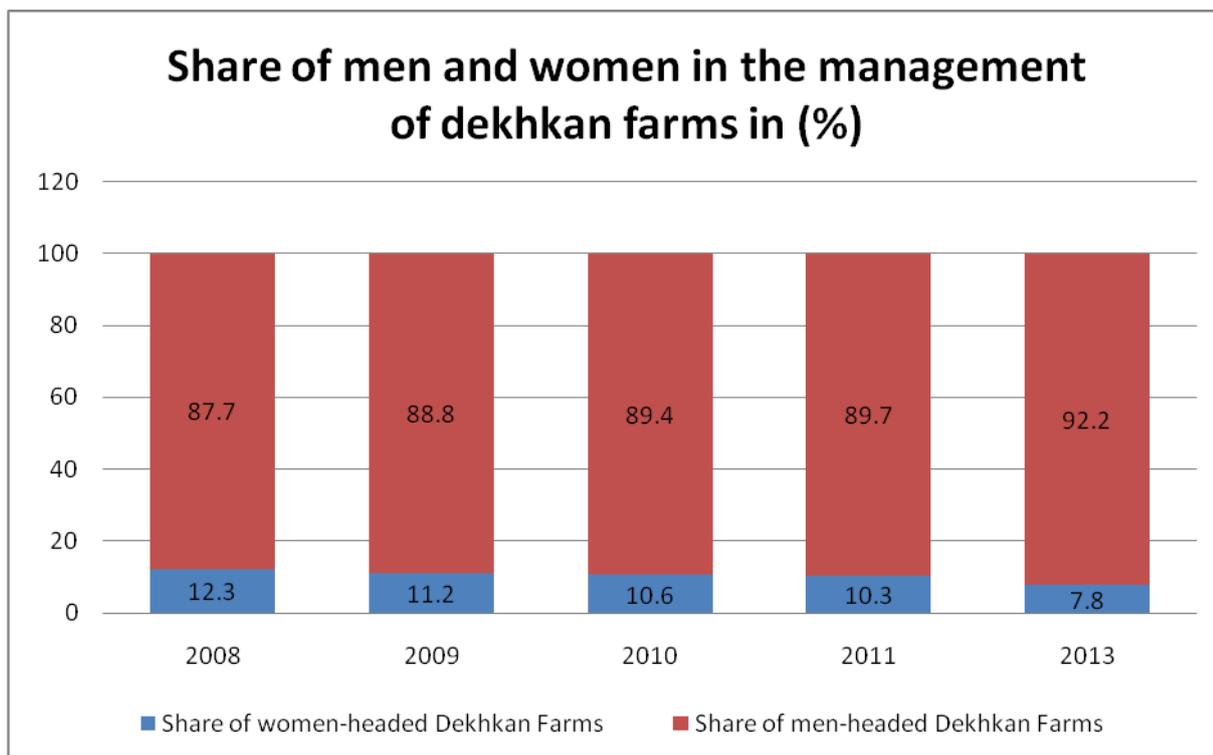
In the context of the reforms, the Government of the country has created an enabling legal framework in the field of improving the status of women in society and ensuring equal rights and opportunities for men and women that had a significant impact on the strengthening the women's rights and access to factors of production, and to the land in the first place. As a result of reforms in agriculture, many collective forms of dekhkan farms were transformed into smaller individual and household dekhkan farms. Accordingly, this process has contributed to raising the level of women's entrepreneurship, and in particular the increase in the number of dekhkan farms managed by women (Diagram № 2).



As statistics show, the number of women-headed dekhkan farms in 2012 made 7.8 percent of the total number of dekhkan farms of the country, which is 1.5 times more than in 2008. Despite this, in 2012 the decline in women entrepreneurship was recorded at the level of 0.9 percent compared to the indicators of 2011 due to inflationary processes (fall of the national currency, rising prices for fuel, food products, fertilizers, pesticides and other strategic goods).

Over recent years, from the total number of dekhkan farms registered in the country, according to official statistics, there has been a significant decline in the share of dekhkan farms headed by women (Diagram 3), that is naturally reflected in the increased number of male-headed dekhkan farms. This indicator reflects the real situation of women's reducing activity in the agricultural entrepreneurship. Over recent years, women are less interested in entrepreneurship in agriculture, particularly in the field of crop growing in view of its complexity and low return. Women entrepreneurs, who quitted business in agriculture, often switch to other types of activities, such as trade and service sectors.

**Diagram 3. Share of men and women in the management of dekhkan farms (%)**



However, according to official statistics shared participation of women entrepreneurs in the total production of agricultural products in recent years increased that stems from increased productivity of staple crops. According to the table below, you can see that over recent years the production of cereals, potatoes, vegetables, melons, fruit and grapes has increased remarkably that particularly contributes to national food security.

**Table 1. Production and crop yields in dekhkan farms headed by women in 2008-2012.**

*(ton; hundredweight from 1 hectare)*

Name of products	Year					2012 in % compared to 2008
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	
<b>Cereals:</b>						
-production	31183	65152	57196	36647	31396	107,0
-productivity	21,2	25,5	24,4	23,6	24,7	116,5
<b>Wheat:</b>						
-production	26245	55929	41325	31395	26057	99,3
-productivity	18,3	26,5	24,9	24,8	28,1	153,6
<b>Raw cotton:</b>						
-production	23088	24840	23774	20958	17800	77,1

<i>-productivity</i>	16,9	18,4	19,8	20,0	22,0	130,2
<b>Potatoes:</b>						
-production	6322	5905	3081	8339	8381	132,6
<i>-productivity</i>	212,0	154,0	179,2	187,8	204,4	96,4
<b>Vegetables:</b>						
-production	12865	20855	13768	22119	22115	171,9
<i>-productivity</i>	167,0	184,0	177,0	177,4	192,4	115,2
<b>Fruits:</b>						
-production	2655	2416	8646	3378	3292	124,0
<i>-productivity</i>	18,8	12,5	7,7	11,3	28,5	151,6
<b>Grapes:</b>						
-production	2910	2662	3562	2334	3441	118,2
<i>-productivity</i>	28,2	27,4	10,7	25,7	38,6	136,9

The volume of crop production, except raw cotton and wheat in 2012 compared to 2008 increased in average from 15.2 to 32.6 percent.

Experience proves that women have a significant contribution and huge potential in social and economic development of the country and particularly in the development of agriculture.

In this context, the Government of Tajikistan carries out extensive work on supporting and development of female entrepreneurship.

"The country has secured state funding for small interest-free loans to women entrepreneurs, as well as a network of micro-lending institutions also has been formed to provide loans to women and their families".

Statistics show that over the period of 2006-2012 the volume of loans to women entrepreneurs grows annually. Thus, in 2012 the volume of loans to women entrepreneurs increased by 544.4 million Somoni in comparison with 2006. Within 6 months of 2013, the share of small loans granted to women entrepreneurs compared with the same period last year, increased by 93.9 percent, representing an increase in 264.1 million Somoni. Also during the last seven years 5.3 million Somoni has been allocated from the state budget to 97 public organizations and 170 women entrepreneurs. In addition, as part of foreign aid projects, funds are allocated to support rural women, as well as the creation of centers for assistance, entrepreneurship training and emergency assistance to farms headed by women.

Currently, implementation of over 300 projects and programs to train women in small and medium business is underway in the country; more than 200 civil society organizations are working in the field of development of women's entrepreneurship. The number of women involved in different spheres of business activity in the country has reached more than 160,000 people.

Despite this, to support the development of women's entrepreneurship in agriculture today, it is necessary to solve a number of problems, which are caused by the factors, including: poor irrigation and land reclamation, low awareness of dekhkan farms about the culture of land use, farming practices, high interest rates on the financial and credit services, insufficient concessional long-term loans, poor material and technical base, lack of agricultural machinery and equipment, high cost of fuel and lubricants, mineral fertilizers and pesticides, insufficiency of agro-processing enterprises, inadequate supply system of quality seed materials, and adapted livestock breeds that are typical for the current agricultural situation in the country as a whole.

The solution of these problems in the near future should be a priority issue of the national development. Issues of women's entrepreneurship should be more clearly reflected in the development of strategic programs and policies at the national level and supported by appropriate resources. Responsible authorities need to ensure appropriate monitoring of the implementation of these strategies and make appropriate management decisions. This will significantly strengthen and empower women and their active role in social and economic life of the country and will dramatically enhance the development of entrepreneurship in rural areas.