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CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF CONFLICTS AMONG FARMERS IN PUNJAB, PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Current was designed to investigate the causes and effects of conflicts among farming communities. The study was conducted in three union councils of tehsil Chishtian district, Bahawalnagar. In each union council, there were 2–4 villages, and 25 respondents were selected from three villages through purposive sampling technique. Data were collected through an interview guide and pretested and validated interview schedule. Pearson correlation showed significant relationship at P<0.01. The analysis-based results showed that low education and large land size caused conflicts and adversely affected farming communities. Study suggested that conflict among farmers should be resolved through legal support and further research should be conducted to investigate multiple reasons of conflicts among farmers.

***Keywords*:** Conflicts, Causes, Effects, Farmers, Pakistan

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1. INTRODUCTION

Being an agrarian economy, poverty in Pakistan is linked to landlessness of farmers and small landholders. According to the World Bank (2009), 2% of families in Pakistan control more than 45% of all land, severely limiting agricultural efficiency and livelihood scenarios. Poverty is at the maximum (54%) among small landholders and the landless, observing that only 0.08% of Pakistani families own more than 2 ha of land and that insufficient land dispersal is the primary source of poverty in the rural area of Pakistan (Hanif et al. 2006' Usman et al. 2019). Their ancestors who were less productive, imaginative, and competitive were unable to pass down chances to own land to their beneficiaries. This limitation has made it harder for future generations to maintain a farming livelihood. As a result, fierce competition develops among farmers at all levels, especially at the farm level, to ambition (Birkhoff 1998).

Landowners naturally want to preserve their right to live and their right to relax in their own households. Farmers typically want to save their basic right to use their land in an unconstrained way and make a living (Wang & Zhang, 2017). Conflict is observed as a dynamic process that starts with an awareness of the incompatibility of thoughts, attitude, behavior, beliefs, norms, cultural values, principles, and opinions between farmers and unpredictable group sizes (Boh 2007).

Most conflict that arises at the farm level is due to the crop sharing system among farmers. In this system, conflict arises due to limited input, incompetent field work by tenants, less output, and disorganization (Ndelu 1998). In developing countries, this is the main cause of serious conflict. In some cases, murder may happen and then it leads to generation after generation. A conflict affects the lives of the families involved in both sides of an issue (Sambanis 2004). Acknowledging and understanding the causes of conflict and the culture of the conflict areas may help in conflict management and resolution. Several studies conclude that many conflicts among poor farm families in the underdeveloped areas are due to the dryness of agricultural land (Cupach et al. 2009). Unstable climate conditions disrupt the local economy and can result in the decrease of cattle, immigration toward water points, agribusiness, conduce to disturb, the dispersal of groups from their ancestor's land and on properties and to rearrange relationships between individuals over assets it became tactical (Jibo et al. 2001; Bakhsh et al. 2020).

Landlords in the underdeveloped areas are against the development of the small landholders or poor farmers, increasing the conflict among the two groups and increase poverty and unemployment of the local people (World Bank 2003). The present study is conducted to investigate the main causes and impacts of conflicts among the farming communities. The study is also aimed at providing a suggestion to effectively overcome the conflicts among the farming communities.

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2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Location

The study was conducted in Chishtian tehsil, Bahawalnagar, Punjab, Pakistan. Chishtian tehsil was selected purposively. Moreover, Chishtian tehsil is situated in southern Punjab, and it might be considered as one of the underdeveloped areas where farmers have multiple agricultural issues.

2.2. Research Design and Sampling

Chishtian tehsil consisted of 23 rural union councils. In each union council, there were 2–4 villages, and 25 respondents were selected from three villages through purposive sampling. Face to face interview was conducted after pretesting and validating the interview schedule. In the present study 75 respondents were selected for interview, an online survey calculator was used to identify the sample size for data collection among the total population with a standard confidence level of 90% and a margin of error of 9.5.

2.3. Analysis

Responses from farmers were analyzed through descriptive statistics using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Descriptive analysis including frequency distribution, mean and standard deviation was calculated. Inferential statistical analysis was used to calculate spearman correlation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Socioeconomic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 shows that about one-third (32.0%) of the respondents belonged to a young age group (up to 35), whereas about one-fourth (25.3%) of them belonged to a middle age group (>35-50. The results show that less than half (40%) of the respondents were illiterate, and more than half (60%) of the respondents were literate. From more than half (60%) literate respondents, 32% were below matriculation. The size of landholding in (acres) of the respondents of conflict affected farmers, and they were asked about their land. As the analysis showed that more than half (56%) of the respondents were small landholders, who have less than 12 acres, up to one third were medium farmers, who have a landholding size between 12 and 25 acres. The results describe the tenancy status of the farmers from which half of the respondents (53.3%) were owners of the land, and one-fourth of the respondents were owner-cum-tenants (26.7%). The results show that majority of the respondent were landowners. The annual income of the farmers shows that (41.3%) respondents were in the low-income category having up to 200000 annual incomes. One-third (30.7%) respondents were in the middle-income group having an annual income of 200000 to 400000 rupees and remaining (28%) respondents were in the higher income group, having above than 400000 rupees of annual income.

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Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of respondents

Age (in years)	Frequency	Percentage
Up to 35	24	32.0
>35-50	19	25.3
Above 50	32	42.7
Education		
Illiterate	30	40.0
Below Middle	24	32.0
Metric	13	17.3
Above Metric	8	10.7
Size of land holding (acres)		
Small farmers (<12)	42	56.0
Medium farmers (12-25)	22	29.3
Large farmers (>25)	11	14.7
Tenancy status		
Owner	40	53.3
Owner-cum-tenant	20	26.7
Tenant	15	20.0
Annual income (Rs.)		
Up to 200000	31	41.3
200001-400000	23	30.7
Above 400000	21	28.0
Total	75	100.0

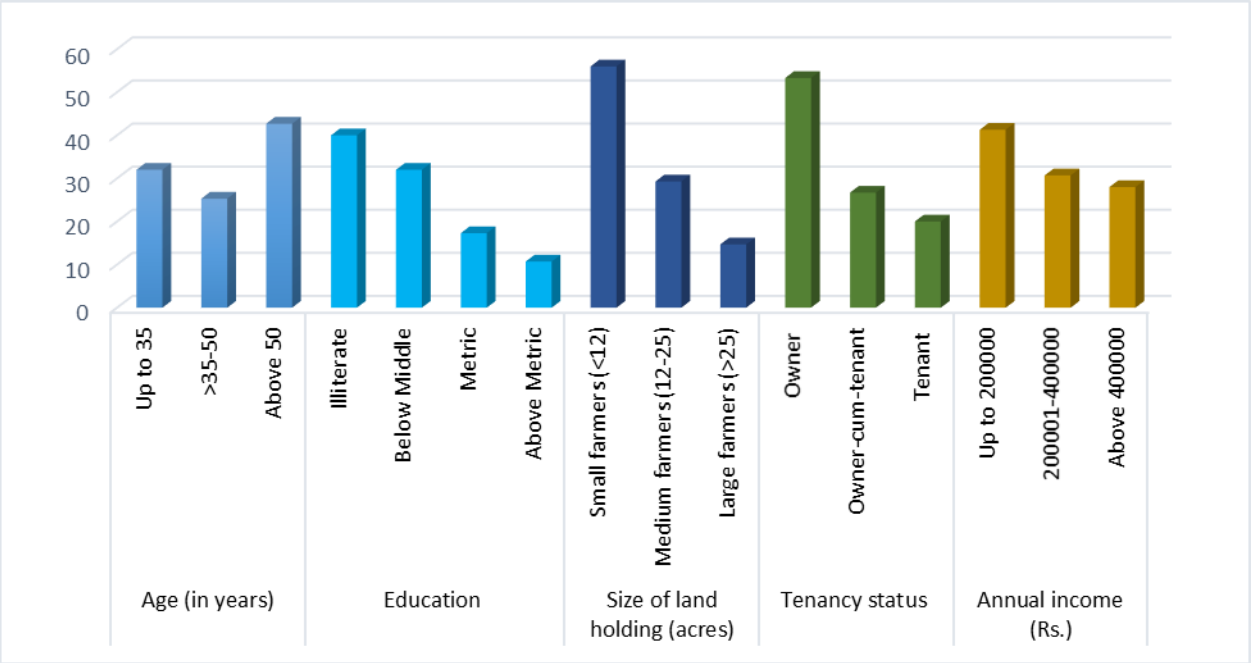

Fig. 1: Field data of socio-economic characteristics of respondents.

3.2. Cause of Conflicts

It is evident from the data given in Fig. 1 that intermarriage system, water distribution at farm level, and passageway among agricultural land were ranked 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, with mean values of 3.87, 3.76, and 3.67, respectively. Furthermore, burning of crops, crop destroyed by the animal, and agriculture loans (Fig. 2) were ranked 4th, 5th, and 6th with mean values 3.90, 3.70, and 3.89, respectively.

3.3. Effects of Conflicts

It is evident from the data given in Table 2 that conflict affect income distribution, affect daily routine, and lack of unity among farming community, which are ranked 1st, 2nd, and 3rd in the chart, with a mean of 4.00, 3.93, and 3.92, respectively. The factors "affect farm production," "affect family relations," "affect social relationship," and "wastage of time and money" is at rank order 4th, 5th and 6th with their mean vales 3.91, 3.90 and 3.89 respectively.

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"Extra expense," "cause legal cases" and "causes sicknesses are at 7th, 8th, and 9th positions according to their rank order with means 3.82, 3.78, and 3.76, respectively. "Cause depression," "promote child labor," and "cause murder" are at medium order 10th, 11th, and 12th with the mean 3.72, 3.71, and 3.69, respectively, and "affects child education" is at lower order, ranked 13th with the mean 3.65.

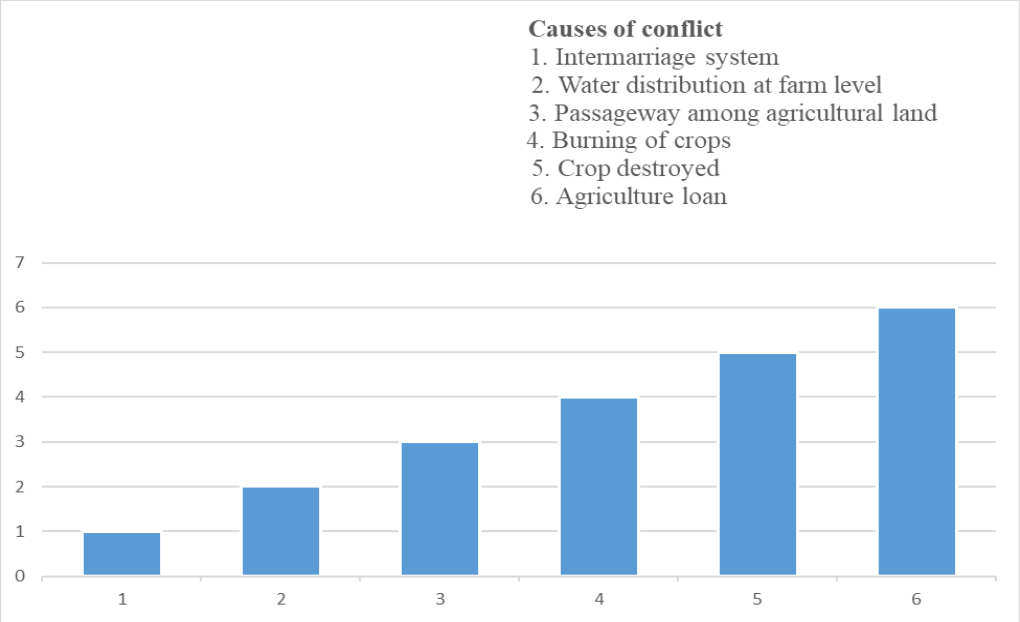

Fig. 2: Field data of causes of conflicts among the farmers.

Table 2: Effects of conflicts among farmers

Holistic effects of conflict	Mean	SD	Rank order
Affect daily routine	3.93	0.653	2
Affect family relations	3.90	0.930	5
Wastage of money and time	3.89	0.843	6
Affect social relationships	3.89	0.897	6
Cause mental depression	3.72	0.723	10
Lack of unity	3.92	0.749	3
Affect child education	3.65	0.790	13
Affect income distribution	4.00	0.764	1
Cause family breakup	3.76	0.764	9
Extra expense	3.82	0.691	7
Affect farm production	3.91	0.839	4
Cause legal cases	3.78	0.765	8
Cause murder	3.69	0.738	12
Cause sickness	3.76	0.831	9
Promote child labor	3.71	0.717	11

3.4. Correlation between Conflict and Demographic Characteristics

The results in Table 3 shows highly significant and negative correlation between education of the respondents and causes of conflicts with correlation coefficient (0.359). It means that educated respondents had less causes of conflicts compared to less educated respondents. The correlation coefficient (0.423) shows a highly significant and positive relationship between size of landholding of the respondents and causes of conflicts. It means large farmers had more causes of conflicts compared to small landholders.

Table 3: Correlation between selected demographic characteristics of the respondents and causes of conflicts

Variables	Correlation coefficient	P-value
Age	0.197	0.090
Education	-0.359	0.002**
Size of land holding	0.423	0.000**

*Significant at 0.05; ** Significant at 0.01

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3.5. Correlation between Demographic Characteristics and Effects of Conflicts

The results in Table 4 show a highly significant and negative relationship between education of the respondents and effects of conflicts with correlation coefficient (0.315). This means that educated respondents had lesser effect of conflicts. While results show correlation coefficient (0.405) shows a highly significant and positive relationship between size of landholding of the respondents and effects of conflicts. It means large farmers had more effects of conflicts.

Table 4: Correlation between selected demographic characteristics of the respondents and effects of conflicts

Variables	Correlation coefficient	P-value
Age	0.121	0.300
Education	-0.315	0.006**
Size of land holding	0.405	0.000**

*Significant at 0.05; ** Significant at 0.01

The conflict among farmers is destroying social stability as our results revealed that low education escalates conflicts between farmers. Our findings are in line with previous study that low education and difference in social rank created farmers-farmers conflicts (Ashraf et al. 2022; Usman et al. 2022). Moreover, farmers-farmers conflicts could damage state resources, educational system for next generation, civil rights and socio-economic and cultural values (Sabir et al. 2017). The size of land holding may or may not causes conflicts among farmers, farmers with large landholding is considered as big landlord in Pakistan. These farmers mainly face land boundary conflicts as our results demonstrated that size of landholding causes conflict among farmers. Our results are consistent with (Ashraf et al. 2022) that the agricultural land boundary caused conflicts among farmers. Furthermore, Adisa (2012) reported land use conflicts among farmers caused food insecurity at village and national level. On the other side non, agricultural stakeholders strive to use agricultural lands, such competition could increase land boundary conflicts. Education may improve patience and social bindings. Our findings showed that low education among farmers increased effects of conflicts as Aikaeli (2010) revealed our findings that high education reduced effects of conflicts and improved socio-economic status of farmers. Additionally, educational events and training seasons could play as vital role in creating awareness regarding current issues. The educational and training institutes need to provide problem-solving and evidence-based interventions as per regional/local requirements (Alotaibi et al. 2021). Another study is aligned with our findings that low education farmers with high income involved into conflict (Audu 2013). Furthermore, conflicts create social imbalance, destruction of property and bloodshed (Manu et al. 2014). Regarding landholding, our results showed that increases in size of land holding has effects of conflict. Our findings are aligned with Deininger and Castagnini (2006) revealed that land size effects crop yield of and use and declined future growth of farming community.

4. Conclusion

Current study provided understanding of causes and effects of conflict among farmers in Pakistan. The result showed that low education and size of land holding caused conflict among farmers. Although, findings revealed that legal institutional framework in study area required to improve in resolving conflicts. Moreover, educated farmers could pay a vital role in resolving future conflicts. Research provides valuable implication for legislation institutions. Implementation of suitable legislation in study area is crucial to reduce conflict among farmers. Moreover, there is a dire need to review current policies and legislations according to issues occurring among farmers. Awareness campaign should be launched such as social media and gathering at farmer's hubs to improve awareness of legal platforms. Current research was limited to Chishtian tehsil, Bahawalnagar and highly conflicted area was selected for survey. The findings may not be generalizable to other area. Therefore, similar research is recommended for other areas of Punjab, Pakistan that are highly involved in conflicts.

Conflict of Interest: Authors declare no conflict of interest.

Authors Contribution

Hassan Ahmad; data collection, Aqeela Sagheer; survey development, Shohaib Ahmad; final review, Bader Alhafi Alotaibi; data analysis, Abdulmalek N. Alsanhani; data curation and Muhammad Muddassir; results and discussion.

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