

PARTICIPATION OF RURAL WOMEN IN LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES IN BHILWARA DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The present study was carried out to ascertain the participation of rural women in livestock management activities. The sample consisted of 100 randomly selected rural women in Mandalgarh tehsil of Bhilwara district, Rajasthan (India). Personal interview technique was used for collecting data. Finding of the study shows that a majority of the respondents (70%) had medium and 26 percent of them had low participation in various activities related to livestock management. Few of the respondents (4%) had high participation revealing that livestock management is the female dominated activity.

INTRODUCTION

The contribution of women to national development in the current context and its potential is of greater significance. Involvement of Indian women in national progress at all levels is undisputable reality although the degree of involvement varies from time to time and region to region. The prosperity and growth of a nation depends on the status and development of its women as they not only constitute nearly half of the population, but also positively influence the growth of remaining half of the population. Women play significant and crucial role in agricultural and livestock development. Most of the works related to livestock management are looked after by rural women. There are a number of livestock management activities performed by women viz. chopping of fodder, feeding the animal, milking, preparation of milk product, cleaning of cattle shed, disposal of garbage to compost pit, making cow dung cakes, preparing compost, carrying manure to field etc. Despite women's considerable involvement and contribution, their role in livestock management has often been underestimated, undervalued and largely ignored. Moreover they are denied of most of the developmental activities. Therefore, the present investigation was designed to study the participation of rural women in livestock management activities especially in Bhilwara district of Rajasthan.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in purposively selected Mandalgarh panchayat samiti of Bhilwara district covering 4 villages namely Ladpura, Shayampura, Jojva, and Manpura selected purposively. For sample selection, a village wise list of rural families who possessed more than 3 milch animals was prepared. From this list, 25 respondents from each village making a total sample of 100 women were selected randomly. Interview technique was used for data collection. Frequency distribution, percentage, MWS were used to analyze data statistically.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Background information of the respondents

Data presented in Table 1 depicts that 44 percent of the respondents (44%) belonged to the age group of 31-45 years. While equal number of respondents (28%) belonged to the age group of 18-30 and 46-60 years. Majority of the respondents were either illiterate (68%) and 20 percent had education up to primary school level. Majority of the respondents (80%) belonged to other backward while 20 percent were from upper caste group. Regarding family structure, more than half of the respondents (56%) were from the joint family and rest 44 percent belonged to the nuclear family. Agriculture was the main occupation of majority of

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the respondents (70%) while service and business were the main occupation of 10-20 percent respondents and rearing of cattle were subsidiary occupation of majority of the respondents (58%). With regard to land holding, 36 percent respondents possessed more than 10 bighas and 26 percent had land holdings from 5.1 to 10 bighas, whereas 18-20 percent respondents possessed the land holding of 1 to 2.5 to 2.6-5.0 bighas. Majority of the respondents had medium herd size and 20 percent of them large herd size animals.

Table 1. Distribution of the respondents by their socio economic profile

			n = 100
S. No.	Variables	f/ %	
1	Age (years)	a) 18- 30 years	28
		b) 31-45 years	44
		c) 46-60 years	28
3	Education	a) Illiterate	68
		b) Up to Primary	20
		c) Middle school	10
		d) High school	2
4	Caste	a) ST/ SC	0
		b) OBC	80
		c) Upper caste	20
5	Family Type	a) Nuclear	44
		b) Joint	56
7	Family occupation	a) Agriculture	70
		b) Service	10
		c) Business	20
		d) Daily wage earner	0
8	Land holding	a) 1 to 2.5 bighas	18
		b) 2.6 to 5.0 bighas	20
		c) 5.1 to 10.0 bighas	26
		d) Above to 10.0 bighas	36
10	Livestock ownership	a) Small herd size	0
		b) Medium herd size	80
		c) Large herd size	20

Participation of Rural Women in Livestock Management Activities:

The study focused mainly on five major operations of livestock management. The findings of study are depicted in Table 2.

Fodder Management - Data presented in Table

2 depict that feeding of animals was female dominated activity in which 62 percent women individually or with the support of female (16%) participated. The MWS (3.40) also reflects the high participation of women. The male support was obtained in 34-54.8 percent of the families in growing, procuring and storage of fodder. On enquiry from them it was revealed that growing of fodder and grazing of animal were usually the responsibility of men folk. Similar observation was reported by Rathod et al. (2011), Vashishtha(2007) who revealed that most of the work related to feeding of cattle and preparation of cattle feed were performed independently by women.

Regarding health care and breeding - Table 2 depict that more than half of the respondents (56%) had independent participation in the activities concerning care of livestock. The MWS of 3.18 reflects high level participation of women in this activity. The male support was found in care of sick animals (52%). Whereas in breeding nearly half of the respondents (51.2%) did not participate. The reason for such findings might be obvious that whenever animal fall sick the common care and providing them general medicine or first aid is done by women folk, whereas during severe illness for veterinary services and taking animals to hospital is being done by men. Rural women were not performing most of the activities related to breeding of animal production except those which were related with the parturition of the animal. This might be due to less mobility, lack of skill and scientific knowledge, lack of information about veterinary treatment of the animals and social mores and taboos prevalent in the society. Similar observations were reported by AICRP (2011), and Jamal (1994), indicate that performance of women in breeding and health care activities was either very low or low respectively.

Management - The next major activity where women participated actively was management of livestock resources. According to Table 2, cattle shed and excreta management (both fresh and processed) were the activities performed by majority of the respondents independently (62-66%) and their MWS were 3.30- 3.38 that further confirm the findings. On enquiry from them it was revealed that cattle shed and excreta management was the

principle responsibility of rural female. The engagement of labour activity by majority of the families (84%) was not done. The reason behind this might be due to high cost of labour, and labour scarcity in the study area. Rathod et al. (2011) also revealed that women (86.66-90%) performed activities like milking, cleaning of animal shed, and disposal of cow dung or preparation of cow dung cakes.

Processing and Marketing - More than half of the women (58%) participated independently or with support of the female (30%) in processing of milk and milk products. A majority of them (68%)

also looked after the processed products at household level independently. But their participation in marketing related activities was less as compared to processing activities and their MWS were 2.76. The reason behind low participation of women in marketing activities might be due to illiteracy, less mobility, male dominance and social mores and taboos prevalent in the society. Similar findings were reported by Rathod et al. (2011) who revealed that a majority of farm women were involved in sale of milk and milk products and milk processing activities like butter preparation and ghee making.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents by their participation in livestock management activities

n =100						
S. No.	Activities	I f / %	JF f / %	JM f / %	NP f / %	MWS
Fodder management						
a.	Growing of fodder (n=84)*	26(30.9)*	10(11.9)*	46(54.8)*	2(2.4)*	2.71
b.	Procuring of fodder (n=100)	36	16	34	14	2.74
c.	Storage of fodder (n=100)	28	16	40	16	2.56
d.	Feeding of animal (n=100)	62	16	22	0	3.40
e.	Grazing of animal (n=80)*	35(43.8)*	0(0)*	20(25)*	25(31.2)*	2.56
Health care and Breeding						
a.	Care of livestock (n=100)	56	12	26	6	3.18
b.	Care of sick animal (n=100)	26	0	52	22	2.30
c.	Breeding of animal (n=86)*	16(18.6)*	0(0)*	26(30.2)*	44(51.2)*	1.86
Management						
a.	Cattle shed management (n=100)	62	14	16	8	3.30
b.	Excreta management (n=100)	66	12	22	0	3.38
c.	Engagement of labour (n=16)*	4(25)*	0(0)*	12(75)*	0	2.50
Processing and Marketing						
a.	Processing of produce (n=100)	58	30	12	0	3.46
b.	Retention of produce at household level (n=100)	68	32	0	0	3.68
c.	Marketing of produce (n=94)*	40(42.6)*	10(10.6)*	26(27.7)*	18(19.1)*	2.76
Financial activities						
a.	Management of revenue earned from sale of produce (n=94)*	42(44.7)	10(10.6)	20(21.3)*	22(23.4)*	2.76
b.	Credit / Loan (n=40)*					
a.	Source of procuring	0	0	21(52.5)*	19(47.5)*	1.52
b.	Amount of procuring	0	0	18(45)*	22(55)*	1.45
c.	Amount of repaying	0	0	18(45)*	22(55)*	1.45
d.	Mode of repaying	0	0	18(45)*	22(55)*	1.45

* = The figure in parenthesis denotes percentage, I= Independent, JF= Joint with female, JM = Joint with male, NP= No participation, MWS = Mean Weighted Score

Financial activities- Regarding financial aspects Table 2 shows that less than half of the respondents (44.7%) were participating in

management of revenue earned from sale of produce independently (MWS 2.76). The rural women perceived the activities of procuring and repaying

of loans/credits as the responsibility of men and hence only 45-52.5 per cent of women were involved in this activity. The reason behind this might be lack of information about existing financial services, complicated procedure of accessing loans, poor repayment capacity, consequences of not paying the loan/ credit, high interest rates and insecurity etc. all these create a troublesome situation for the women to get credit/ loan. The finding of the study gets support from Rathod et al. (2011) who revealed that majority of the rural women perceived the activities of getting loans/credits from the banks as responsibility of men and hence only 49.16 per cent of them were involved in this activity.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that women were playing crucial roles in most of the livestock management activities more than their counterpart and have proved that they work in livestock management in a better way than men since they had more affection and care with livestock. But due to ignorance they

may be lacking knowledge to use the technologies that can simplify their work in livestock management. There is thus an urgent need to educate women about livestock technologies and scientific management practices for increasing livestock production and management.

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