



Officium of Rusticus Women In Livestock Conditio: Gender Conspicuum

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ABSTRACT

In developing countries, women's role in livestock production varies from no role at all to a very high level of responsibility. Underestimating their contribution can jeopardize the success of development initiatives. Women livestock keepers worldwide must be recognized as the major actors in efforts to arrest the decline of indigenous breeds, crucial for rural food security and animal genetics, a new FAO study argues. Of the 600 million poor livestock keepers in the world, around two-thirds are women, whose men often have migrated to the cities. Women stay at home with the children and live by cultivating crops and keeping indigenous smallstock such as chickens or goats, and perhaps a cow. In most of the rural area of the India, women are actively involved in the livestock production activities. Present study was planned to investigate the role of rural women in the livestock production in Nainital district of Uttarakhand state. A multistage random sampling method was used to collect the data from 6 villages regarding the livestock production activities. Pre-testing was used to get relevant information and improve the interview schedule. Data from the 600 respondents was subjected to the analysis to obtain the frequencies; these frequencies were used for analysis of variance. Most of the families (73.07%) were intact with joint family system. Out of total 600 respondents, more number of wives (35.0%) participated in livestock production activities as compared to the husbands (20.0%).

Keywords : Livestock, farm families, contribution, rural women

INTRODUCTION

Worldwide gender division of labour shown that rustic women are most pivotal part of farming. Revenue from the sale of butter and cheese is the main source of income for women (Whalen, 1984). Though women contribute the least labour to intensified dairy activities, the milk and dairy incomes they collect are higher with intensive dairy than with traditional cattle farming, although the milk incomes collected by men are significantly higher than those of women (Shapiro *et al.*, 1998). This implies that there are different responsibilities and shared tasks. In most societies, milking, processing of milk, allocation of milk to different uses and care of pregnant animals, newborn calves and animals suffering from diseases or injury are the duties of women. Similarly, division of labour and responsibilities related to the rustic women have been examined by Vabi (1991) who concluded that male children are responsible for 67% and 45% of intra-seasonal movements of animals in south-western Nigeria and north-western Cameroon, respectively. In south-western Nigeria 38% of male household heads milk cows compared with 23% in north-western Cameroon. Compared to the 57% of the Fulani respondents in south-western Nigeria who indicated that boys milk cows, only 18% of the respondents in north-western Cameroon indicated that boys do this task. Of the Fulani grazers in southern Nigeria and north-western Cameroon, 75% and 73%, respectively, confirmed that their wives were responsible for processing milk. Furthermore, 54% of the grazers in south-western Nigeria and 33% in north-western Cameroon indicated that their wives sell dairy products. In the Nainital, district, the important factors that influence the gender division of labour in livestock production and the place where the animals are kept, the size of the area being farmed and the caste of the family. The material value of the animals and their use impinge on the decision-making powers in cattle farming. Women are involved in all cattle farming tasks if the animals are kept in the farmyard; larger farms do not involve women in these tasks. The more valuable the animals, the smaller the possibility that women could make decisions on their purchases and sales. If the animals serve a purpose

which is in the women's realm of responsibilities, e.g. feeding the family, her influence on decision making is greater than with animals that fulfill purely farming purposes, such as draft oxen (Martins, 1990). Gender division of labour and issues of access to resources and benefits can be understood better if studies are done using appropriate analytical frameworks or household models consistent with the socio economic context in which the producers operate. Furthermore, information on gender and livestock production is more meaningful if gender division of labour, responsibilities and access to resources and benefits in the whole farming system are fully understood. The present study was planned to recognize the role of rustic women and their spouse in the livestock production.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was performed in rustic circumference of Nainital, Uttarakhand. From each selected village 50 farm families were randomly choosed. The data were collected through a pre-tested interview schedule designed for this purpose. The gender in the studies related to the livestock production gives better understanding to formulate policies related to the farming systems and their involvement in livestock production (Feldstein and Poats, 1989). There are various methods to conduct this kind of studies, but for this study due to serious resource constraints case study method was adopted. Because the case study is also considered as interactive learning method using real scenario that focus on a specific issue, topic, or problem. For data collection, a systematic and well structured interview schedule was designed. In designing the instrument the orders of the questions was specially taken care of so that farmers may easily recall their memory and provide the required information with confidence. Practicability and workability of the interview was given priority for smooth running of the interviewing process. So, before implementation, the research instrument was pretested and modified keeping in view the workability and systemization of ordering of the information gathered. The collected data were edited and standardized by applying some statistical tests like range, consistency. Due to the nature of collected

information, the analysis part mostly comprised percentiles for frequency and averages of the information for central tendency delineation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Family system is a unit, and every family member plays a crucial and singular persona in the system. As such, it is not possible that one member of the system can change without causing a ripple effect of change throughout the family system. Family is the foundation of the society and division of labour between the husband and wife and the care of their offsprings is the most pivotal officiums of the family. The society has such family system known as civilized society. There are two varried family systems present in our society; one is joint family system and other nucleus family system. Family system plays a major role in the household and rusticarum activities. The family system determines the role of husband and wife in our society. The respondents were asked whether they shifted after marriage or lived with their parents and now how many members of family are there. In the social context only two family systems prevail i.e. joint and nuclear. In our culture joint family system exists due to low income level and limited resources available to them. The information attained from the respondents is presented in Table 1. Data regarding the family system revealed that most of the respondents were living in the joint family system (73.07%) However, 26.93% of respondents were living in nuclear family system. Observational data indicated that joint family system was mainly governed by the male and responsible for the rearing of the dependents. Rusticus women of the joint families were involved more in the home management and rusticarum activities. Joint family system helps to care each other and distribution of the off-farm and on-farm activities. The other variable studied was the social status of the respondents. Social status of the respondents divided them in joint and nuclear family system. The families having elite status prefer the nuclear system instead of joint one. Different activities, which are of daily routine, were selected for the responses from the husbands and wives who were selected as respondents of the study. Officium of rural women in livestock production was higher in activities such as fodder offering, cleaning of sheds, watering to the animals, milking, poultry raising, ghee and egg selling and raising of goats and sheep, whereas the role of husbands was higher in fodder cutting and transportation of fodder. Moreover, about 35% respondents did not associate themselves with the livestock production (Table. 2). It may further be depicted from the data depicted in Table 3 that the partaking of maritus in livestock conditio related activities averaged 14.33%, wives 33.77% and combined involvement averaged 7.69%. The data further revealed by analysis of variance and comparison of mean, the partaking level of husbands in these activities averaged 20% and 35% by wives, which was significantly higher than their husbands (Table 3a). Therefore, it may be concluded that more number of women (wives) participated in livestock production activities as compared to the number of male (husbands) respondents (Table 3b). Results of the present study are similar to the quondam work reported by Reddi (2003), Paul and Saadulah (1991), Chatterjee (1988), Riaz (1994), Sharma *et al.* (2007), Rajika and Smith (1997), Pal (2001) and RGB and UN (2001) which reported that majority of women in rusticus circumference were involved in the livestock production process. Rusticus women usually performed taking care of livestock. They collect fodder, clean sheds and process animal products. Women are often responsible in part or in whole for livestock activities, an integral part of farming systems in South Asia. Women are usually afforded greater identification in this sector than their role in crop production. Livestock not

only create income but it also provides fertilizers for plants, draft power for farms, food for humans and biomass fuel for energy. Across South Asia, women perform varying aspects of this sector. In Bangladesh, women feed livestock, clean sheds, secure them properly for the night, take care of their health and collect farmyard manure. In Nepal, both men and women perform fodder collection, grazing and milking but some activities, especially detecting illnesses of animals are women's responsibilities. In India, women's responsibilities related to livestock vary across regions. It may be depicted from the data depicted in Table. 2 that the partaking rate of rusticus women in livestock production activities was higher as compared to the partaking rate of male members. Table 3 revealed that fodder cutting and transportation of fodder were the role mostly performed by husbands, although, other all activities recognized in the Table 3 were acted by women. It can be finalized from the data that more number of activities related to livestock production were being acted by women as compared to men. However, the natures of activities acted by women were of delicate nature and the activities acted by men were very arduous and related to out of home chores.

Table 1. Family system of the respondents as reported by families

Family System	n	%
Joint family system	274	73.07
Nuclear family system	101	26.93
Total	375	100.00

Table 2. Contribution of rural women in livestock production activities

None of them	35%
Husband	20%
Wife	35%
Both	10%

Table 3a. Average frequency distribution of the respondents regarding the livestock production

Roles/activities	Respondents							
	Husband		Wife		Both		None of them	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Fodder cutting	281	69.07	170	42.11	82	19.33	219	56.47
Transportation of fodder	371	95.99	71	17.13	67	15.08	244	61.28
Offering fodder to the animals	117	28.13	226	57.01	111	26.89	299	75.48
Cleaning of sheds	65	16.07	359	89.77	25	5.80	305	77.06
Offering water to the animals	79	19.17	308	78.14	39	9.90	325	89.69
Milking	71	17.99	312	79.17	62	14.53	307	84.47
Poultry raising	19	4.87	399	101.12	72	17.27	259	82.55
Ghee and egg selling	32	7.07	439	112.86	22	5.31	255	76.59
Raising of goat and sheep	87	22.11	207	51.65	104	25.72	357	89.94

Table 3b. Means and Standard Deviation of the respondents regarding the role in livestock production

Role in livestock production	Total	Mean	SD
Husband	569.00	62.34	57.93
Wife	1259.00	138.59	57.29
Both	299.00	32.19	15.03
None of them	1299.00	143.09	19.59

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