

EXTENT OF WOMENS PARTICIPATION IN SMALL RUMINANTS' MANAGEMENT

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Abstract: Women's role in livestock production is no longer a matter of debate, the situation prevails that men still dominate decision making related to livestock technology adoption and market in rural areas. The present study was conducted in Bijapur district of Karnataka to know the extent of women participation in small ruminants management. Thirty small ruminant farmers who visited veterinary hospital in two blocks were selected randomly for the survey. The data thus collected through pretested schedule was tabulated and analysed using the SPSS 20.0 software. The study revealed that majority of the general management and feeding activities were mainly performed by women while most of the health care management activities and marketing / finance activities were carried out by men. The women were sidelined in major decision and finance oriented activities and activities involving mobility. Hence our future extension efforts should orient more and more towards women empowerment through training and field exposure.

Keywords: Womens participation, small ruminant management, empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

Livestock being the predominant agricultural activity in rural India is considered as key asset for most rural livelihoods and food security. Women provide much of the labour for livestock tasks in many developing countries and make significant contribution to food production, particularly in horticulture and small livestock (FAO, 1997). While women's role in livestock production is no longer a matter of debate, the situation prevails that men still dominate decision making related to livestock technology adoption and market in rural areas. Further, it is assumed that failure of policy makers and extension functionaries to acknowledge and make a distinction in which livestock activities are carried out by which family members in livestock production, has resulted in misfire of several livestock interventions resulting in failure of effective technology diffusion and adoption. Though, various micro level studies in India have highlighted women's significant role in dairy production, but very less attempt has

been made to record the extent of women participation in sheep and goat rearing activities. Hence this study with an objective to record the extent of womens participation in small ruminants management is an attempt in this direction.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The proposed study with an objective to assess the extent of womens participation in small ruminants management was conducted through cross sectional survey among the small ruminant rearers. Two blocks of Bijapur district of Karnataka state namely Muddebihal and Basavan Bagewadi were selected purposively as locale of the study. Thirty small ruminant farmers who visited veterinary hospital in each taluka were selected randomly for the survey and the care was taken to select only those small ruminant farmers having flock size atleast ten. The pre-tested schedule was administred to them to collect the data on few profile characters as well as gender wise participation in various small ruminant management activities. The data thus collected was tabulated and analysed with SPSS 20.0 software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Socio-economic profile:

Majority of the small ruminant farmers were middle aged (65.00%), illiterates (38.30%), belonged to medium sized family (66.7), small farmers (40.0%) and had agriculture (58.3%) as their major occupation followed by small ruminant rearing (25.0%). The mean age, family size and land holding were 42.27, 6.1 and 2.83 respectively. Small ruminant rearers were mainly middle aged which may be because of prevalence of migration of young aged and better educated towards urban areas in search of alternative employment opportunities. Similar findings of age, education and family size were reported by Tanwar *et al.*, (2008), and Praveena *et al.*, (2014). The findings with respect to land holding are in contrast to findings of Veeranna *et al.*, (2004), and Praveena *et al.*, (2014) who reported that majority of goat keepers are landless. However, similar findings were reported by Rout *et al.*, (2000) and Tanwar *et al.*, (2008) who stated that majority as small and marginal farmers with 1-5 acres of land.

With respect to their flock size, more than half (58.30%) had animals from 10-20, while around 30% farmers were having flock of around 20-30 and very few (11.70%) had more than 30 animals in their flock. These are in line with findings of Ramesh, D (2009). When asked about the reasons for keeping small ruminants, as usual for everyone it is source of income, while some opined manure along with Income (20.00%) and ceremony inadition to income (15.00%) as reasons for their rearing. This indicates the increasing dependence of

rural people on small ruminants for their source of livelihood. Further the analysis of the source of animals for replacement or initial rearing indicates that majority (33.40%) were dependent on either animal sandies or relatives & friends for initial animal purchase or replacement stock purchase followed by exchange among the farmers (23.30%), animal sandies & exchange among the farmers (23.3%) and from relatives and friends alone (20.00%). Though majority told animal sandies as one source of animal purchase, but more farmers invariably depend on exchange or getting from friends and relatives herds. It may be reason for inbreeding problems prevalent across the flocks in rural areas.

II. Extent of Womens Participation in Small Ruminant Management

General management: Many of the general management activities like collection and disposal of pellets (50.00%), care of pregnant animals (66.66%) and care of young ones (51.66%) were predominantly carried out by women while grazing (46.66%) is mainly carried out by men and cleaning of animals and sheds (41.66%) jointly by both men and women. Quite similar observations were made by Ahuja and Rathore (1987) who stated that women and children generally looked after the activities of tending of goats at home, keeping the place clean, milking, giving water and stall feeding.

Feeding Management: Providing feed and water to the animals (60.00%), preparation of concentrate feeds (48.33%), colostrum feeding (53.33%) were the women dominant activities while chaffing of fodder was mainly carried out by men alone (50.00%) or jointly (35.00%). Gautam (1998) also revealed that concentrates feeding, stall feeding and providing drinking water to goats were mainly done by rural women.

Health management: Per usual of table-2 indicates that male members were more involved in health care management activities like deworming (43.33%), taking animals to treatment (75.00%) and providing special feed and medicines to sick animals (80.00%). To certain extent, women may be assisting for restraining animals in deworming and drenching medicines, hence the joint participation was also indicated in the results. Comparatively lesser participation of women in health care management activities indicate the need for empowerment of women with knowledge and skill of first aid which will go a long way in the development of this sector.

Marketing and finance activities: Nearly more than three fourth respondents reported that taking animal to market (78.33%), participation in market dicisions (73.33) and getting credit and inputs (73.33%) were carried out by men indicating traditional domination of men in these activities. Very few women (less than 10.00%) participated in these activities also may

be because of their active involvement in Self Help Group activities. This calls for an immediate attention for the need of women empowerment regarding market and finance activities.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals that majority of the general management activities like collection and disposal of pellet, care of pregnant animals, care of young animals, preparation of concentrate feeds, feeding and watering for their animals and colostrum feeding were found to be highly women oriented activities while most of the health care management activities like Deworming of animals, taking sick animals for treatment and providing medicines and marketing / finance activities like taking animals to market, participation in market decision and getting credit inputs were carried out by men. Overall home based activities which are intensive labour oriented and drudgerious in nature were carried out by women while finance oriented and movement based activities are carried out by men. This indicates the sidelining of women in economic and knowledge intensive decisions. Hence our future extension efforts should orient more and more towards women empowerment through training and field exposure and this is the right time to inventorise the possibility of extending the extension and financial services at village level or at farmers doorstep for better women participation through decentralisation, public private partnership and use of advanced technologies.

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Table 1: Profile Characters of small ruminant farmers

Particulars	Frequency(N=60) [@]	Particulars	Frequency(N=60) [@]
Farmers Age (42.27 Mean + 12.09 SD)		Occupation	
Low	12 (20.00)	Agriculture	35 (58.30)
Medium	39 (65.00)	Small ruminant rearing	15 (25.00)
High	9 (15.00)	Animal husbandry	2 (3.30)
Family Size (6.1 Mean + 2.2 SD)		Labor	6 (10.00)
Small	12 (20.00)	Business	2 (3.30)
Medium	40 (66.70)	Education	
Big	8 (13.30)	illiterate	23 (38.30)
Land Holding (2.83 Mean + 2.20 SD)		Read and write	10 (16.70)
Landless	12 (20.00)	primary School	16 (26.70)
Marginal Farmers	12 (20.00)	high school	8 (13.30)
Small Farmers	24 (40.00)	Above SSLC	3 (5.00)
Large farmers	12 (20.00)	Reasons to keep small ruminants	
Flock size (20.80 Mean + 8.80 SD)		income	39 (65.00)
10-20	35 (58.30)	income+manure	12 (20.00)
20-30	18 (30.00)	income+ceremony	9 (15.00)
>30	7 (11.70)	Source for initial / repacement stock	
@Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentage		Relatives and friends alone	12 (20.00)
		Animal sandies + Relatives & Friends	20 (33.40)
		Through exchange with other farmers	14 (23.30)
		Animal sandies + through exchange	14 (23.30)

Table 2: Genderwise participation in small ruminant management activities

Management Activities	Frequency(N=60) [@]		
	Men	Women	Jointly
I. General management			
Cleaning of animals and sheds	20 (33.33)	15 (25.00)	25 (41.66)
Collection and disposal of pellets	13 (21.66)	30 (50.00)	17 (28.33)
Grazing of animals	28 (46.66)	17 (28.33)	15 (25.00)
Care of pregnant animals	12 (20.00)	40 (66.66)	8 (13.33)
Care of young one	13 (21.66)	31 (51.66)	16 (26.66)
2. Feeding Management			
Providing feed and water to the animals	13 (21.66)	36 (60.00)	11 (18.33)
Chaffing of fodder	30 (50.00)	9 (15.00)	21 (35.00)
Preparation of concentrate feeds	21 (35.00)	29 (48.33)	10 (16.67)
Colostrums feeding	15 (20.00)	32 (53.33)	13 (26.66)
3. Health management			
Deworming	26 (43.33)	7 (11.66)	27 (45.00)
Taking animal for treatments	45 (75.00)	9 (15.00)	6 (10.00)
Providing special feed and medicine to sick Animals	48 (80.00)	3 (5.00)	9 (15.00)
4. Marketing and Finance activities			
Taking animals to market	47 (78.33)	4 (6.66)	9 (15.00)
Participation in market decision (about no of animals to be sold and price)	44 (73.33)	6 (10.00)	10 (16.66)
Getting credit and inputs	44 (73.33)	6 (10.00)	10 (16.66)

@Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentage