

GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT: ROLES OF RURAL WOMEN IN LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION IN PAKISTAN

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Livestock contribute about 50% of the Agricultural GDP. In most of the rural area of the Pakistan 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 Teh. Faisalabad. A multistage random sampling method was used to collect the data from 8 villages regarding the livestock production activities. Pre-testing was used to get relevant information and improve the interview schedule. Data from the 768 respondents was subjected to the analysis to obtain the frequencies; these frequencies were used for analysis of variance. Most of the families (70.6%) were intact with joint family system. Out of total 768 respondents, more number of wives (37.5%) participated in livestock production activities as compared to the husbands (17%).

Keywords: Livestock, farm families, participation, rural women

INTRODUCTION

Livestock is the second important sub-sector of Pakistan's agriculture. It contributes about 50 percent of agricultural gross domestic product (GDP) and eleven percent of overall national GDP. Livestock raising is primarily a subsistence activity to meet household food needs and supplement farm incomes. Almost every rural household in the Punjab, Pakistan owns some livestock. The public sector involvement for increasing livestock productivity is insufficient. The private sector is generally encouraged to invest in production, processing and marketing of livestock and livestock products (GOP, 2008).

Majority of women in Pakistan's rural areas are involved in the livestock production process. Taking care of livestock is usually performed by rural women. They collect fodder, clean sheds and process animal products. Unfortunately their involvement in livestock management is undervalued and regarded as housework. Role of women in the household is traditional. The rural woman has a very busy work schedule. The rural woman's work included livestock and poultry care etc. without anybody's help (Nazli and Hamid, 2007; Reddi, 2003). Similarly, Riaz (1994) reported that women play a vital role in livestock and poultry management as part of their housework. Despite their considerable contribution in variety of work with in and out side home, women of Pakistan are neglected in major household decisions. Most of their work related to farm, poultry and livestock management is being considered as part of their housework and the amount of labour that they devote

for household maintenance is ignored in macro-economic planning. It has been reported (PARC, 2004) that majority of the rural females are engaged in fodder cutting, milking the animals and its allied functions has also been attributed to the women folks. Manure collection, preparing dung cakes and the maintenance of animal sheds are also the exclusive duties of rural women. Except grazing, women are involved in almost all livestock related activities starting from fodder cutting to milk processing. However, the level of involvement varies from one activity to other. Khushk and Hisbani (2004) reported that majority of rural women assist men folk in the fields also. Their joint efforts obtain better yield and more income. Women carry out indeed most of the caring activities of livestock. For example milking, milk processing, preparing ghee and feeding etc are considered women's responsibilities. The male took the herds to the pastures and carry them back home. Women play a vital role in poultry farming at household level. Ijaz and Davidson (1997) reported that the gender division of labour in livestock care and management was studied in nine selected operations. In operations like fodder cutting and grazing, male participation outnumbered that of females. In 41.4% and 51.7% of households respectively these tasks were reported to be performed by male members only. However, females exclusively performed fodder cutting (11.4%), fodder collections (11.4%) and grazing (10.1%) of households. Studies in other households, both males and females performed these tasks.

Worldwide gender division of labour revealed that rural women are most important 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 rural women have been examined by Vabi (1991) who concluded that male children are responsible for 68% and 46% of intra-seasonal movements of animals in south-western Nigeria and north-western Cameroon, respectively. In south-western Nigeria 37% of male household heads milk cows compared with 24% in north-western Cameroon. Compared to the 56% of the Fulani respondents in south-western Nigeria who indicated that boys milk cows, only 19% of the respondents in north-western Cameroon indicated that boys do this task. Of the Fulani grazers in southern Nigeria and north-western Cameroon, 76% and 74%, respectively, confirmed that their wives were responsible for processing milk. Furthermore, 54% of the grazers in south-western Nigeria and 32% in north-western Cameroon indicated that their wives sell dairy products.

In the Punjab Province of Pakistan, 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 identify the role of rural women and their husbands in the livestock production.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in rural area of Tehsil Faisalabad. From each selected village 48 farm families were randomly selected. 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 pre-tested 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 and some thumb rules. Due to the nature of collected information, the analysis part mostly comprised percentiles for frequency and averages of the information for central tendency representation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Family system is a unit, and every family member plays a critical and unique role 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 children is the most important functions of the family. The society has such family system known as civilized society. There are two different family systems exist in our society; one is joint family system and other nucleus family system. Family system plays a major role in the

household and agricultural activities. The family system determines the role of husband and wives 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.

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

Family system	n	%
Joint family system	271	70.6
Nuclear family system	113	29.4
Total	384	100.0

Data regarding the family system revealed that most of the respondents were living in the joint family system (70.6%) However, 29.4% of respondents were living in nuclear family system. Observational data indicated that joint family system was mainly headed by the male and responsible for the upbringing of the dependents. Rural women of the joint families were involved more in the home management and agricultural 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. Role 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 37% respondents did not associate themselves with the livestock production (Fig. 1).

It may further be depicted from the data presented in Table 2 that the participation of husbands in livestock production related activities averaged 16.67%, wives 36.63% and combined involvement averaged 8.91%. The data further revealed by analysis of variance and comparison of mean, the participation level of husbands in these activities averaged 17 and 37% by wives, which was significantly higher than their

husbands (Table 2a). 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 2b).

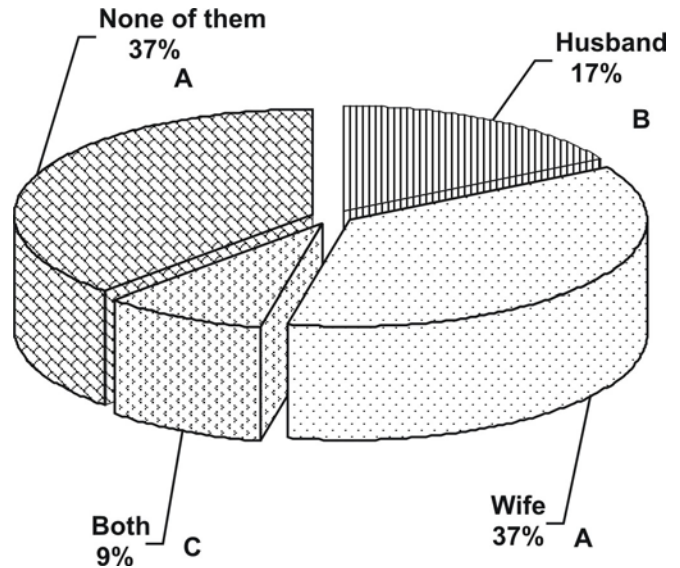


Figure 1. Participation of Rural women in livestock production activities

Results of the present study are similar to the previous work reported by Nazli and Hamid (2007), Reddi (2003), Paul and Saadullah (1991), Chatterjee (1988), Riaz (1994), Sharma *et al.* (2007), Harshipender and Gupta (2006), Rajika and Smith (1997), Pal (2001) and RGB and UN (2001) which reported that majority of women in rural areas were involved in the livestock production process. Rural 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 recognition in this sector than their role in crop production. Livestock not only generates 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 Pakistan for instance, it is woman who makes the feed, collects fodder, cleans animals and their sheds, makes dung cakes, collects manure for organic fertilizers, pumps milk, processes animal products and markets them. Women also play important role in rural poultry farming where they apply their own methods of rearing birds. In Bangladesh, women feed livestock, clean sheds, secure them properly for the night, take care of their health and

Table 2a. 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	284	73.96	174	45.31	86	22.4	224	58.33
Transportation of fodder	375	97.66	75	19.53	70	18.23	248	64.58
Offering fodder to the animals	119	30.99	231	60.16	115	29.95	303	78.9
Cleaning of sheds	69	17.96	363	94.54	28	7.3	308	80.2
Offering water to the animals	84	21.88	312	81.25	43	11.2	329	85.68
Milking	75	19.54	317	82.56	65	16.92	311	80.99
Poultry raising	23	5.99	405	105.47	76	19.79	264	72.76
Ghee and egg selling	34	8.86	445	115.89	25	6.51	264	68.75
Raising of goats and sheep	89	23.18	210	54.69	108	28.13	361	94.02
Total	576.00	150.00	1266.00	329.69	308.00	80.21	1306.00	340.10
Mean	64.00	16.67	140.67	36.63	34.22	8.91	145.11	37.79
SD	59.96	15.61	59.34	15.45	16.09	4.19	21.63	5.63

Table 2b. Means and Standard Deviations (SD) of the respondents regarding the role in livestock production

Role in livestock production	Husband	Wife	Both	None of them
Total	576.00	1266.00	308.00	1306.00
Mean	64.00	140.67	34.22	145.11
SD	59.96	59.34	16.09	21.63

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.

Unfortunately their involvement in livestock management is undervalued and regarded as housework. Progeny tested bulls should be provided to improve the production of their animals. Special ration should be formulated to enhance the production. Veterinary Officers of the area should arrange the workshops for vaccination to prevent their flock and herd from the diseases.

It may be depicted from the data shown in Fig. 1 that the participation rate of rural women in livestock production activities was higher as compared to the participation rate of male members (husband). Table 2 indicates that fodder cutting and transportation of fodder were the role mostly performed by husbands, whereas, other all activities identified in the Table 2 were performed by women. It can be concluded from the data that more number of activities related to livestock production were being performed by (wives) as compared to men (husbands). However, the natures of activities performed by women were of soft nature and the activities performed by men were very hard and related to out of home tasks.

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