



Participation of Rural Women in Dairy Activities

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ABSTRACT

A survey based study was carried out to know the participation of rural women in various activities at Hoshiarpur district of Punjab state. A simple random sampling technique was used in the selection of dairy farm women using interview schedule by personal interview for sample size of 150 rural women in Mahilpur and Bhunga block of Hoshiarpur district. The data revealed that the participation of majority of women was high in activities such as cleaning of cattle shed, watering, milking, feeding the animals and disposal of cow dung. The farm women participation was least in dairy related record maintenance, getting loans or credits from the banks, taking animals for grazing, fodder collection and harvesting the fodder crops. Thus there is need to educate them about scientific management practices for increasing livestock production.

Key Words: Women, Participation, Dairy Activities.

INTRODUCTION

The significant contribution of women in crop production, horticulture and post harvest technology and particularly in dairy husbandry is well known. A cattle rearing is a diversification from existing agricultural activities. Largely, rural women are engaged in this activity. These rural women, besides doing hard household chores, also undertake the taxing job of cattle rearing (Vallapureddy, 2013). Their role in dairy activities ranges from grazing, collecting, cleaning animal sheds to processing of milk and livestock products that enables poor and landless families particularly farm women to earn income using common properties. The day to day activities performed by women are crucial inputs for economic returns that a household earns through live stock production either directly through sale of livestock and livestock products. Despite the fact that women in India do most of the work in animal husbandry yet their contribution has largely been ignored and inadequately acknowledged. They always remain invisible workers. In view of all these points, it was considered relevant to quantify the women's work in the field of dairy farming.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in two blocks i.e.

Mahilpur and Bhunga block of Hoshiarpur district. Families owning three cattle heads were selected for study. A sample of seventy five families was selected randomly from each block. Thus the total sample comprised of 150 families. One female member shouldering the responsibilities in dairy management from each family represented the study sample. The data were collected personally with the help of structured interview schedule. Data collected were statistically analyzed with the help of frequency and percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It was observed (Table 1) that majority (66.0 %) of respondents were from lower middle age group followed by young (18.6 %) and upper middle (15.3 %) age group. This implies that younger and upper middle age group women were less involved in dairy activities. Results on education showed that majority of respondents were having education up to secondary (28.0 %) followed by primary (26.0 %), higher secondary (22.6 %), illiterate (16.6 %) and college educated (6.6 %). It means that highly educated women are not adopting innovations in dairy farming.

It was also observed that mainly of respondents belonged to joint family whereas 48.6 per cent respondents belonged to nuclear family.

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This means dairy enterprise mostly run in joint families.

Results on marital status showed that majority of respondents were married followed by unmarried (9.3 %), widow (7.3 %) and divorced (4.0 %). While looking at the occupation result showed that majority (60.6 %) respondents were from agriculture as occupation followed by home makers (24.0 %), labour (11.3 %) and service (4.0 %). It was evident (Table 1) that majority of the respondents (51.3 %) had low income followed by medium (38.6 %) and low (10.0%). The study

revealed that 35.3 per cent farm women families had marginal land followed by small farmers (32.0 %). It was also observed that 14.6 per cent were large farmers and 11.3 per cent were landless. Regarding herd size, 51.3 per cent families had small live stock holding whereas 26.0 and 26.6 per cent were in medium and big category respectively.

Participation of women in different activities

The study emphasized mainly on five major operations of dairy farming. The findings of the study were depicted in table 2.

Feeding and watering: The study revealed that most of the work regarding watering the animals, storage of feed and fodder, feeding the animals and mixing green fodder with roughage were the sole responsibility of the farm women. Similar results were reported by Chayal *et al* (2009). Most of the respondents (84.6%) were involved in soaking of concentrates, chaffing the fodder (37.3%), harvesting & fodder & carrying harvested fodder (38 %) and fodder collection (34.6 %). While less involvement (6.6 %) was found in taking animals for grazing.

Management: Another major dairy activity where women participated actively was the management of livestock. The study revealed that 95.3 per cent women were involved in disposal of cow dung followed by milking activity 93.3 per cent. The work of cleaning of animal shed and washing and grooming of animals were also performed by women. However, participation of women in maintaining milk records (58.0%) was found lower than all other management activities.

Health care: The study revealed that 98.6 per cent rural women were engaged in health care of pregnant animals. The study also revealed that care of sick animals was exclusively performed by farm women. The findings were in conformity with the findings of Rathod *et al* (2011). The study reported that women were involved in care of new born (65.3 %), deworming (55.3%) taking animals for treatment (52.0%) and vaccination (30.6%). Only 16.6 per cent women were interested in maintaining health record.

Processing and marketing: Participation of women in processing and marketing was not so much appreciated. The women rarely participated

Table 1. Socio-personal profile of rural women. N=150

S. No.	Characteristics	No.	Percentage
1.	Age		
	Young (18-30 years)	28	18.6
	Lower middle (31-45 years)	99	66.0
	Upper middle (46-60 years)	23	15.3
2.	Education		
	Illiterate	25	16.6
	Primary	39	26.0
	Secondary	42	28.0
	Higher secondary	34	22.6
	College	10	6.6
3.	Family type		
	Joint	77	51.3
	Nuclear	73	48.6
4.	Marital status		
	Married	119	79.3
	Unmarried	14	9.3
	Widow	11	7.3
	Divorced	6	4.0
5.	Occupation		
	Agriculture	91	60.6
	Labour	17	11.3
	Service	6	4.0
	Home makers	36	24.0
6.	Income		
	Low	77	51.3
	Medium	58	38.6
	High	15	10.0
7.	Land		
	Landless	17	11.3
	Marginal	53	35.3
	Small	48	32.0
	Large	22	14.6
8.	Herd Size (Number)		
	Small (2-3)	77	51.3
	Medium (4-10)	40	26.6
	Big (Above 11)	33	22.0

Table 2. Distribution of respondents on the basis of their participation in dairy farming. N=150

Sr.No.	Activities	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Feeding and watering		
	Taking animals for grazing	10	6.6
	Fodder collection	52	34.6
	Chaffing fodder	56	37.3
	Soaking of concentrates	127	84.6
	Mixing green fodder with roughage	135	90.0
	Feeding the animals	137	91.3
	Harvesting the fodder crops	57	38.0
	Storage of feed and fodder	140	93.3
	Watering the animals	146	97.3
	Carrying the harvested fodder	57	38.0
	Maintaining feed record	18	12.0
2.	Management		
	Cleaning of animal shed	133	88.6
	Washing and grooming of animals	107	71.3
	Disposal of cow dung	143	95.3
	Milking	140	93.3
	Maintaining milk records	87	58.0
3.	Health care		
	Care of sick animals	126	84.0
	Vaccination /Medication 0	46	30.6
	Care of new born	98	65.3
	Care of pregnant animals	148	98.6
	Deworming	83	55.3
	Taking animals for treatment	78	52.0
	Maintaining health record	25	16.6
4.	Processing and marketing		
	Processing of milk into milk products	97	64.6
	Sale of milk	111	74.0
5.	Miscellaneous		
	Making cowdung cakes	122	81.3
	Getting loans/credit from banks/cooperatives	40	26.6
	Maintenance of account and financial record	18	12.0

in milk processing and making different milk products like ghee, butter, khoa etc. to earn more. They emphasized to supply milk to milk collection centres or neighbourer. They felt that preparation of milk products is more taxing job. Other perception was that these activities required more time. Hence only 64.6 per cent women took up processing on small scale only. They preferred to produce milk products for only household consumption. The study also revealed that 74.0 per cent women were involved in sale of milk activity.

Miscellaneous: Majority of women were ignorant about record maintenance and hence, it was observed that only 12.0 per cent women maintained financial records in diary or on a piece

of paper. Similar findings were observed by Yadav *et al* (2005) with regard to maintenance of record. Women perceived the activity of getting loans/credit from banks/cooperatives were solely responsibility of men and hence only 26.6 per cent women were actively involved in this activity. Majority (81.3 %) of women were also found to be involved in making cow dung cakes activities due to the reason that cow dung cakes are used as fuel to save expenditure .

CONCLUSION

Though women play a significant role in dairy farming but their control over live stock and its products is very minimal. The income incurred from dairy animals neither remains in hands of

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women nor the decision making regarding sale and purchase of the various items required in a dairy unit. Hence, there is an urgent need to develop technologies which will help them to minimize drudgery and physical exertion which ultimately affects their physical and psychological well-being.

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