Socio Economic Profile of Rural Women and the Role of Animal Husbandry Intervention in a Suicide Affected District of Kerala

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ABSTRACT There have been reports of farmer suicides in the Wayanad district in the south Indian state of Kerala and an investigation was undertaken to assess the socio economic profile of rural women and explore the possible role of animal husbandry in this district. The three taluks in Wayanad district were purposively selected from which a total of 103 women from self help groups functioning under the government sponsored poverty eradication programme were selected at random. Data was collected using a pre tested interview schedule in October 2006. Nearly one third of respondents indicated that their primary occupation was agriculture with some animal husbandry component. Availability of latrine, type of roof and walls of home, as well as domestic source of water were the three variables which used in this study to determine the quality of life of the sample population. Nearly 15 per cent of women did not have separate latrine facilities on their homestead and nearly seven per cent lived in make shift houses. More than half of the respondents were in the age group 25 – 35 years and their average yearly income was reported by them to be Rs 3768. Over three fourths (75.7%) of these households kept livestock along with crops. The paper emphasizes the importance of exploring alternate employment and income generating activities such as animal husbandry in order to improve the socio economic conditions of these women since the family background variables have a vital role in the development of personality traits in children which could affect quality of human capital in the future generation of the district.