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Gender Analysis in Participation and Decision Making Pattern in Small Ruminants Production System - Tamil Nadu

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ABSTRACT A research on gender in sheep and goat keeping was conducted in Namakkal district of Tamil Nadu to assess gender roles in participation and decision making. Data was collected from the sample size of 233 respondents using a well structured pretested interview schedule. The study revealed that most of the regular activities in sheep and goat keeping were performed by women while the occasional activities by men, although, women participated to a certain extent. Decisions on all the regular activities were taken independently by women. It could be concluded that there existed a definite division of labor among males and females in performing sheep and goat keeping activities and independence in decision making both by men and women with regard to sheep and goat keeping activities.

INTRODUCTION

In India, about 833 million people constituting 68.84% of the population live in rural areas, of which 405.17 million, that is, 48.6% are women (Dash and Srinath 2013). Livestock rearing has become a major livelihood strategy among rural farmers, especially for small holders. Small ruminants play an important role in the livelihood of small and marginal farmers, not only in terms of providing food and nutritional security but also as mobile bank during the period of financial crisis. Large ruminants are less preferred by the landless and marginal farmers as they demand relatively large investment and higher maintenance cost (Lavania et al. 2006).

India supports 16.1% of the world's goat population and 6.4% of its sheep (FAOSTAT 2013), making it among the highest livestock holding countries in the world. Together, the goat and sheep rearing households constitute 15% of the total number of households in the country (GOI 2012). Further, the gender responsible for small ruminant production system varies from region to region and depends upon family type, culture, religion, stage of economic development, species of predominant animals reared and population pressure. Even though, the men and women involved in participation and decision making of small ruminant's production activities it is necessary to find out the percentage of contribution made by men and women. In view of this, the present study was taken up in Tamil Nadu state to highlight the gender perspective in small ruminants' production activities viz., participation and decision-making.

METHODOLOGY

Namakkal district of Tamil Nadu was purposively selected for the study. Namakkal district comprises of 15 blocks. Out of these, two blocks, one under irrigated area and one under rain fed area were selected, based on the highest livestock density. From each of the selected blocks, 3 villages having high, medium and low livestock population were selected. By using proportionate random sampling method, 60 livestock farmers comprising landless agricultural labourers, marginal, small and large farmers were selected from each village. Among the 360 selected livestock farmers, only 233 farmers were found to have small ruminants and all the 233 farmers constituted the sample. Data was collected from the respondents using a well structured pretested interview schedule. The statistical measures have been used to summarize data including frequency, percentages and Chi-square test.

RESULTS

Gender Wise Participation in Sheep and Goat Keeping Activities

The gender wise participation of the farmers in occasional and routine sheep and goat keeping activities is depicted in Table 1. Most of the occasional activities in sheep and goat keeping

Table 1: Gender wise participation in sheep and goat keeping activities

Goat keeping activities	*Only female*		*Both male and female*		*Only male*		*Hired labour*		*Not performing*		χ^2-*value*
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*	
Occasional											
Construction of shed	59	25.32	57	24.46	91	39.06	9	3.86	17	7.30	138.73**
Flushing of doe/ewes	74	31.76	46	19.74	83	35.62	4	1.72	26	11.16	
Care during kidding	95	40.77	47	20.17	84	36.05	4	1.72	3	1.29	
Care of new born kids	95	40.77	48	20.60	85	36.48	4	1.72	1	0.43	
Deworming of goat/sheep	73	31.33	43	18.45	90	38.63	4	1.72	23	9.87	
Vaccination	72	30.90	41	17.60	92	39.48	3	1.29	25	10.73	
Treatment of sick animal	80	34.33	48	20.60	99	42.49	2	0.86	4	1.72	
Sale of goat/sheep	58	24.89	55	23.61	114	48.93	0	0.00	6	2.58	
Purchasing of feed from market	54	23.18	42	18.03	96	41.20	2	0.86	39	16.74	
Purchase of replacement stock	53	22.75	44	18.88	100	42.92	3	1.29	33	14.16	
Daily											
Cleaning of shed	105	45.06	88	37.77	33	14.16	4	1.72	3	1.29	32.78NS
Collection of fodder	101	43.35	85	36.48	35	15.02	5	2.15	7	3.00	
Taking goat/sheep for grazing	109	46.78	82	35.19	34	14.59	4	1.72	4	1.72	
Watering	110	47.21	87	37.34	32	13.73	4	1.72	0	0.00	
Feeding of marketing stock	101	43.35	84	36.05	35	15.02	4	1.72	9	3.86	
Feeding of breeding buck/ram	94	40.34	79	33.91	37	15.88	3	1.29	20	8.58	
Care of pregnant does/ ewes	107	45.92	80	34.33	33	14.16	4	1.72	9	3.86	
Identification sick animal	103	44.21	84	36.05	35	15.02	4	1.72	7	3.00	

**significant at < 0.01 level of probability
NS Non significant

viz., sale of goat/sheep (48.93 per cent), treatment of sick animal (42.49 per cent), purchase of replacement stock (42.92 per cent), purchasing of feed from market (41.20 per cent), vaccination (39.48 per cent), construction of shed (39.06 per cent), deworming (38.63 per cent) and flushing of doe/ewes (35.62 per cent) were mostly performed by men, although, women participated to an extent of 24.89 per cent to 19.74 per cent. Care during kidding and care of new born kids were mostly performed by women (each 40.77 per cent).

However, regular activities in sheep and goat keeping viz., watering (47.21 per cent), taking sheep/ goats out for grazing (46.78 per cent), care of pregnant does/ewes (45.92 per cent), cleaning of shed (45.06 per cent), identification of sick animals (44.21 per cent), collection of fodder (43.35 per cent), feeding of marketing stock (43.35 per cent), feeding of breeding buck/ram (40.34 per cent), were performed mostly by women, but there was also a joint participation of men along with women to a certain extent was noticed (33.00 to 38.00 per cent). A negligible 3.86 per cent of the respondents employed hired labour for construction of shed while 7.30 per cent of the respondents housed the animals in open space.

Taking animals to hospital, purchase of feeds and sale of sheep/goat needed traveling, at least, few kilometers from home might be the reason for higher involvement of men when compared to women. Involvement of women in daily activities is more than men indicate that sheep and goat keeping is predominately a women oriented enterprise. Mohanasundarraj and Tripathi (2011) also supported the findings stating that the prominent contribution of women was more in indoor goat farming activities as compared to their spouse. The Chi-square value was found

Table 2: Gender wise decision making in sheep and goat keeping activities

Goat keeping activities	*Female*		*Male*		*Joint*		*÷²-value*
	F	*%*	*F*	*%*	*F*	*%*	
Occasional							
Construction of shed	43	18.45	124	53.22	66	28.33	187.05**
Flushing of doe/ewes	81	34.76	37	15.88	115	49.36	
Care during kidding	105	45.06	73	31.33	55	23.61	
Care of new born kids	107	45.92	75	32.19	51	21.89	
Deworming of goat/sheep	65	27.90	112	48.07	56	24.03	
Vaccination	63	27.04	115	49.36	55	23.61	
Treatment of sick animal	75	32.19	103	44.21	55	23.61	
Sale of goat/sheep	49	21.03	120	51.50	64	27.47	
Purchasing of feed from market	50	21.46	101	43.35	82	35.19	
Purchase of replacement stock	44	18.88	112	48.07	77	33.05	
Regular							
Cleaning of shed	112	48.07	21	9.01	100	42.92	24.38*
Collection of fodder	106	45.49	30	12.88	97	41.63	
Taking goats for grazing	110	47.21	48	20.60	75	32.19	
Watering	121	51.93	24	10.30	88	37.77	
Feeding of marketing stock	104	44.64	32	13.73	97	41.63	
Feeding of breeding buck	101	43.35	34	14.59	98	42.06	
Care of pregnant does/ewes	118	50.64	28	12.02	87	37.34	
Identification sick animal	109	46.78	25	10.73	99	42.49	

**significant at < 0.01 level of probability
*significant at 0.05 level of probability

to be highly significant for less than 0.01 level of probability for occasional activities indicating that there was definite division of labor among males and females in performing occasional sheep and goat keeping activities.

Gender Wise Decision Making in Sheep and Goat Keeping Activities

Decision was taken mostly by men in majority of the occasional activities like construction of shed (53.22 per cent), sale of goat/sheep (51.50 per cent), vaccination (49.36 per cent), deworming of goat/sheep (48.07 per cent), treatment of sick animal, purchasing of feed from market (43.35 per cent). Joint decision was more in the activities of flushing of does and ewes (49.36 per cent) and purchasing of feed from market (35.19 per cent) as depicted in Table 2.

Decisions on all the regular activities, viz., watering (51.93 per cent), care of pregnant does/ewes (50.64 per cent), taking goats for grazing (47.21 per cent), identification sick animal (46.78 per cent), cleaning shed (45.06 per cent), feeding of marketing stock (44.64 per cent), collecting fodder and feeding of breeding buck/ram (43.35 per cent) were taken independently by women. More involvement of women in these activities might be the reason for women taking independent decisions. Chi-square value was highly significant for the occasional activities in decision making for less than 0.01 level of probability and significant at 0.05 level of probability for regular activities indicated that there is independence in decision making by men and women with regard to sheep and goat keeping activities.

DISCUSSION

Rural women manage multifaceted household activities and perform various livelihood strategies. However, the foremost concern is that many of these activities are not effectively recognized and acknowledged appropriately in spite of the fact that they are most important and essential to the household food security and welfare (Lal and Khurana 2011). Women in rural areas, take up various roles from managing the household chores to taking care of children and livestock. Their roles vary considerably between and within regions and are changing rapidly in many parts of the world, primarily where economic and social forces are transforming the agricultural sector. The situation needs to attract more attention if the males migrate to cities and the entire burden needs to be managed by women. However, many of these activities are

not defined as "economically active employment" in national accounts but they are essential to the well-being of rural households. Despite women's involvement in day to –day care, livestock management is still considered a man's role by livestock planners and decision makers because the work that women do is seldom recognized (World Bank 2009).

As seen in this study, women play a significant role in both participation and decision making of the sheep and goat keeping activities, although, to a varying degree they share their responsibilities with men. Consequently, their contribution to livestock production is undoubtedly extremely significant, even though they are constrained by mobility in performing the occasional activities. Thus, to enable and empower women to participate in development process, policies and programs, it is necessary to develop an institutional mechanism that could help women to involve in capacity building process to make them in involving all small ruminant production activities. This would not only help them to strengthen their knowledge and skills but also help them develop their entrepreneurial qualities.

CONCLUSION

It could be concluded that women play a predominant role in goat farming activities in Tamil Nadu. Capacity building programs may increase their knowledge and skills, and may also create opportunities for self employment and entrepreneurship among rural women. This would result in utmost involvement of women in participation and decision making of occasional activities and eventually empower the rural women in their family as well as in their society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As women participation and decision making is medium to high in most of the important activities of small ruminant production, it is recommended that special attention needs to be paid by extension agencies to equip them with knowledge and skills that is required for accumulation of human capital and expansion of human capability.

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