FACTORS INHIBITING THE PARTICIPATION OF RURAL WOMEN IN LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION ACTIVITIES


ABSTRACT

In Pakistan, rural women play multi-dimensional tasks to reduce food insecurity as food producers and food processors. However, their participation in these activities is very limited. A study was conducted at the Institute of Agriculture Extension and Rural Development, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Pakistan during the year 2011 to determine the factors that inhibit the participation of rural women in livestock production activities. The research area of study was tehsil Samundari which consists of 28 union councils. From these, one rural union council was taken as a unit. From whole union council, two villages were selected through simple random sampling and from each village 25 women involved in livestock activities were selected as respondents, making a sample size of 50 respondents. Interview schedule was used as a quantitative data collection instrument. The qualitative data were collected by conducting focus group discussions, in-depth individual interviews and key informant interviews. Five points Likert scale (1=to some extent, 2=below average extent, 3=an average extent, 4=above average extent and 5=too much extent) for factors inhibiting participation and three points Likert scale (1=always, 2=rarely and 3=never) was used to determine involvement of respondents in livestock management activities. The quantitative data were analysed through computer software SPSS and qualitative data were analysed through content analysis technique. The results showed that majority of women involved in livestock activities was of middle age (66%) and illiterate (42.0%). Participation of respondents was high in selling of milk and milk products with mean value of 1.26 and SD 0.66 as compared to other activities. Rural women had minimum participation in poultry raising and selling of eggs/ghee having mean value of 2.22 and 2.32, respectively. It is concluded that females are active participants in livestock activities but the factors like lack of confidence, social security, low literacy level in village, social conflicts and lack of media information inhibit their participation in livestock activities.

KEYWORDS: Rural women; social security; literacy rate; medial information, social conflicts; livestock production, Pakistan.

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INTRODUCTION

Like other developing countries of the world, Pakistan has agro-based economy which consists of two sectors livestock and crop production. Both these sectors contribute 21 percent to country’s GDP. These also generate 45 percent of country’s total labour force and provides livelihood to 60 percent rural population (3).

Livestock is an important sub-sector of Pakistan’s agriculture based economy which is also known as black gold of Pakistan (17). It contributes 55.1 percent to agriculture value added, 11.6 percent to national GDP and 13 percent to foreign exchange earnings (3). This sub-sector provides raw material to industry such as hides, skin, wool, animal hairs and bones. It is also a rich source of nutritional food like meat, milk and eggs which is used to make many other by-products (16).

Role of women in livestock sector is worthwhile because many livestock management activities take place in or around their homes (19). Women take part in livestock activities like cleaning of animals, cleaning of shed, watering of animals, making of dung cakes, and providing fodder to livestock (12) in addition to house hold activities (15). Raising of poultry, goat and sheep is totally under the control of rural women and they have not to consult their male counterparts for decision making. Role of women in national economy vary from nation to nation, locality to locality and region to region according to social norms and values (21).Women are facing many problems as they have less opportunities and do not have decision making rights due to male dominance society which negatively affect their role in every field of life especially in agriculture and livestock sector. Rural women of Pakistan work with full devotion and dedication and they spend maximum time of their daily life for livestock management activities (12). Women face more problems in livestock management activities having less opportunity to attend training and educational sessions related to livestock management (1) and also negligible extension services (6). In spite of their contribution in livestock production, they have still more potential to attain food security and food sovereignty in the country. However, other factors also hinder their maximum participation in crop and livestock production and management activities, which need to be explored (1).

The present study was designed to investigate the extent of participation/involvement of rural women in different livestock management/activities and also to identify the factors that hinder the participation of rural women in these activities.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was conducted at the Institute of Agri. Extension and Rural Development, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Pakistan during the year 2011. Tehsil Samundari of district Faisalabad was selected as study area which consists of 28 union councils, from which one rural union council was taken as unit. From that union council two villages were selected through simple random sampling and from each village 25 women involved in livestock activities were selected as respondents, making a sample size of 50 respondents. Interview questions on five point Likert scale (1 = to some extent, 2 = below average extent, 3 = an average extent, 4 = above average extent, 5 = too much extent) were prepared to collect the quantitative data regarding factors that inhibit their participation in livestock management activities, while three point Likert scale (1 = always, 2 = rarely, 3 = never) was used to determine their participation in such activities. The qualitative data were collected through focus group discussion meetings and key informant interviews. The quantitative data were analysed using SPSS software. The ranking of different activities performed by rural women and factors that inhibit their participation, was calculated on the basis of mean value. On the other hand, qualitative data were analysed using content analysis for discussion and drawing conclusions and recommendations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Extent of participation in livestock activities

The data (Table 1) showed that participation of rural women in the study area was high in selling of milk and milk products with mean of 1.26 and SD 0.66 as compared to other activities. Minimum participation of rural women was found in poultry raising (M = 2.22) and selling of eggs (M = 2.32).

Table 1. Extent of involvement of rural women in livestock activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egg and ghee selling</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>0.867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry raising</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>0.953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shed cleaning</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>0.796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raising of sheep</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>0.839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take part in food preparation</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>0.755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making of dung cakes</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>0.814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milking</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>0.641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selling of milk and milk products</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>0.664</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Scale: 1 = Always, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Never)

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The present results agree to those of earlier workers. Younas et al. (22) observed that women take responsibilities of cutting fodder, cleaning shed, milking dairy animals, poultry care, processing of animal’s products and looking after the livestock. Taj et al. (20) also noted that livestock care and management activities like cleaning of sheds, cleanliness of animals, milking, fodder cutting, chopping and feeding, watering, bathing of animals, dung collection and making dung cakes, collection of FYM and health care were mostly undertaken by rural women. As livestock sector is an important component of rural economy, it not only serves as source to buy food and generate income (6) but also provides animal protein, which is basic element of nutrition (10). Among 90 percent rural families having livestock in Pakistan; primary medication, animal care and marketing of animal produce are exclusively undertaken by rural women (11) but majority of rural women works under the supervision of males or assists them (14). On an average they spend more than six hours per day as compared to men who spend about three hours per day on livestock care and management activities. Similar results have also been noted in present study particular about poultry raising as one of the respondents said,

“Poultry raising is the difficult job to be carried out in the house, as it spreads lot of dirt everywhere in the house”

These results also confirmed the findings of Jamal (13) who concluded that poultry raring activity is carried out by women from centuries but as time passes females avoid keeping poultry at household level because it creates insanitary situation.

Factors inhibiting rural women participation in livestock management activities

The results showed that in study area rural women were actively participating in different livestock management and care activities but still they face many difficulties and constraints which hinder their maximum participation.

The data (Table 2) revealed that among different factors, lack of self-confidence was on the top with highest mean value (4.48) followed by social security (4.31), literacy rate (4.10), social conflicts (4.07), and lack of media information (4.00) hindering the women participation in livestock production and management activities. The lack of self-confidence is due to low literacy rate of rural females in study area. Self-confidence of an individual increases with the increase of educational level (18). On the other hand low payment for women labour is also a factor which inhibits the participation of rural women in different livestock production and management activities with
Factors inhibiting women participation in livestock activities

Table 2. Factors that inhibit women participation in livestock activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of self confidence</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social security</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall low literacy level in the village</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social conflicts</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of media information</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of social interaction</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation difficulties for women</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence against women</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor economic conditions</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of job opportunity for women</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal matrilineal rules</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of women organization</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of legal, economic and political literacy</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women job in less valued disciplines</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women work not recognized</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low payment of work for women</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scale: (1 = to some extent, 2 = to below average extent, 3 = to an average extent, 4 = to above average extent, 5 = too much extent).

lowest mean value (2.25). Regarding low wages to women in our rural areas an old rural female said,

“All rural women in village work under the supervision of a male individual and they work for whole day in the field but they are paid a little wages as compared to male person, and so the women bound to work on this low wages to feed family because of high prices of basic commodities of life”.

During focus group discussion one of the participants responded that:

“We, the women are silent contributors of national economy but there is no recognition of our work, we don’t have self confidence which is mainly due to lack of educational and training facilities. So it is more suitable for us to stay at home and manage our livestock but when we go out for such activities we have to face many problems”.

Another participant during focus group discussion said,

“We remain busy in different daily life activities like child care, daily house management, different crop and livestock management but there are least educational facilities and opportunities for us. All focus on these opportunities revolves around male members. Further social and cultural norms of our society are also one of the factors which is responsible for less participation of rural women in different economic activities”.

Literature shows that in Pakistan society, birth of daughter is usually considered undesirable that’s why rural people think useless to educate females because they have to migrate to another family after marriage.

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Further they feel shy while going out, talking to male other than blood relations, and attending social or training activities. Women involved in livestock activities have to face many problems like lack of inputs and information related to livestock management activities (18). Lack of education, poverty, male dominance, social setup and lack of confidence are the factors that hinder women participation in agricultural and livestock activities (5). Women in rural areas of Pakistan do not have any authority to take decision at household level and their participation is considered un-productive and un-organized (18) due to lack of education, social and traditional norms, unavailability of government services and facilities (2, 4, 8, 9, 20).

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that women in study area actively participated in selling milk and milk products with mean value of 1.26 at Likert scale. Poultry production related activities like selling of egg/ghee and poultry raising were minimum participated with mean of 2.32 and 2.22, respectively. Among different inhibiting factors lack of self confidence was the major factor with highest mean (4.48). On the other hand low payment of work for women had the least mean value (2.25) among these factors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Access of rural women to new technology and information should be ensured so that they may be able to work shoulder to shoulder with their male counterparts for social and economic activities not only at household level but at national level. They should be equipped with latest knowledge regarding livestock management and care which is lacking in rural women.
- Extension system should be strengthened and female extension workers be hired for persuasion of rural women to engage them in development course of action.
- Government, NGOs and private agencies should start awareness and training programmes for women related to livestock so that they may get acquaintance and latest information about livestock management activities.

REFERENCES


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