
ROLE OF INDIAN WOMEN IN LIVESTOCK FOOD PROCESSING

NAGAMALIKA. E, PRATHYUSHA. K, VEENA. D' OBULA REDDY.B

Abstract: The present study was aimed to discuss briefly about the participation of women in Livestock Food Processing sector. The percentage of female main workers and female marginal workers is 16.8 and 6.26 respectively. Of the female workers, 34.55 per cent are cultivators, 43.56 per cent are agricultural labourers, and 4.65 per cent are engaged in livestock, forestry and fishery operations. Of the female marginal workers 47.91 per cent are cultivators 41.43 per cent are agricultural labourers and 1.64 per cent are engaged in livestock, fisheries and forestry. Remaining 17.62 per cent female main workers and 9.02 per cent female marginal workers are in non-agricultural sector.

Key words: agriculture, female workers, fisheries, livestock.

Introduction: India accounts for 2.4 % of the world's geographical area and 4 % of water resources, with 17% of the world's human population and 15% of the livestock population. Agriculture is an important sector of the Indian economy. It accounts for 14% of the National GDP and about 11% of total exports. About half of the population still relies on agriculture as it's principal source of income and as a source of raw material for large number of industries.

Status Of Women In Agriculture And Livestock Sector: India's livestock sector was one of the largest in the world and important sub sector of agriculture. India has 56.7% of the world buffaloes, 12.5% cattle, 20.4% small ruminants, 2.4% camel, 1.4% equine, 1.5% pigs and 3.1% poultry. In 2010-11, livestock generated outputs worth Rs 2075 billion (at 2004-05 prices) which comprised 4% GDP and 26% of the agricultural GDP. Women are the back bone of society in India and can be considered as an important human resource in Indian Livestock Sector. They play a very crucial role in agriculture as well as it's allied operations. Generally women participate in farming and livestock farming operation as as farmers, co -farmers, family labor, and wage labors and in some organized sectors as mangers of farms. Their role in livestock production was often referred as helpers to the male head of household but their enormous contribution in livestock sector remains imperceptible. They generally contribute more labour inputs in areas of fodder cutting, watering and cleaning of animals and their sheds etc. It was observed that the women are involved in almost all aspects of livestock production, with exception of herding and marketing. Out of the total marginal workers of the country women are upto ninety percent. Rural women engaged in agriculture form 78 percent of all women in regular work. The traditional gender division of labour ensures 30 per cent lower wages to women when compared to men. Total employment of women in organized sector is only 4 per cent. A recent study conducted by Women and Population Division of FAO revealed that 70 percent of agricultural labour, 60-80 percent of household food production labour, 100 percent of basic food stuffs processing labour, 80 percent of food storage and transport labour and 90 per cent of water and fuel wood collection labour and 90 percent of household

labour are women workers in developing countries. Of the total Indian population, 31.39 percent are main workers and 3.49 per cent are marginal workers. The percentage of female main workers and female marginal workers is 16.8 and 6.26 respectively. Of the female workers, 34.55 per cent are cultivators, 43.56 per cent are agricultural labourers, and 4.65 per cent are engaged in livestock, forestry and fishery operations. Of the female marginal workers 47.91 per cent are cultivators 41.43 per cent are agricultural labourers and 1.64 per cent are engaged in livestock, fisheries and forestry Remaining 17.62 per cent female main workers and 9.02 per cent female marginal workers are in non-agricultural sector. Thus in India women forces are overwhelmingly engaged in agriculture both as main and marginal workers and played a pivotal role from ancient times.

Status Of Women In Animal Food Processing And Allied Sectors: India's food processing (FP) sector covers activities such as agriculture, horticulture, plantation, animal husbandry and fisheries. It also includes other industries that use agriculture inputs for manufacturing of edible products. The major segments of the FP industry in India includes Dairy, Fruits & Vegetables, Grains & Cereals, Fisheries, Meat and Poultry and consumer foods along with their major products. Even though the Indian FP sector is a large one, it is still at a nascent stage. The processing level of food produce is very low in India compared to other countries of the world. Only about 2% of the total food produce in the country is processed. While the level of processing is higher in dairy (about 35%) and marine products (26%), it is very low in fruits and vegetables (2.2%). Women play important role as producers of food, managers of natural resources, income earners, and caretakers of household food and nutrition security. **Milk:** India ranks first in buffalo milk production with 6, 51, 40,000 Metric tons and second in cow milk production with 5, 74, 00,000 Metric tons (FAO, 2011). According to a report of World Bank (1991), it has been estimated that 86% of total rural women are working for various agricultural operations. Women accounted for 93% of total employment in dairy production in India. The role and contribution of women members of every rural family to dairying is not documented although known too well in rural India as significant.

Meat: India ranks first in carabeef production with 15,02,820 metric tons, 1st in beef production with 10,86,511 metric tons, chevon production of 599335 metric tons ranking at 2nd place and mutton production of 293421 metric tons ranking 5th in production (FAO, 2011). Women to a conspicuous level are involved along with men in meat processing and marketing sections of meat industry and play an important role in maintenance of hygienic practices in slaughter houses and also in packaging of meat and meat products.

Poultry and eggs: India stands 6th in poultry meat production accounting for about 22,06,199 Metric tons and 3rd in egg production with a production of 34,90,000 Metric tons. Poultry keeping was one of the most appropriate income generating activities in rural especially in backyard rearing of poultry. Rural poultry farming in India is mostly backyard farming which contributes about 40% of national egg production. Women are actively involved in different sections of poultry farming and back yard poultry rearing is entirely in the hands of women.

Fish: Fish and fish products have presently emerged as the largest group in agricultural exports of India, with 5.2 lakh tons in terms of quantity and Rs.7,200 crores in value. This accounts for around 3% of the total exports of the country and nearly 20% of the agricultural exports. More than 50 different types of fish and shellfish products are exported to 75 countries around the world. India stands in 3rd position in fisheries and 2nd in Aquaculture constituting about 4.4% of the global fish production. This sector contributes to 1.1% of the GDP and 4.7% of the agricultural GDP. Almost 60 percent of the personnel involved in fish and shell fish processing and marketing are women.

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Department of Livestock Products Technology,
NTR C.V.Sc, Gannavaram.