

ANALYSIS OF ROLE OF WOMEN IN SMALL RUMINANT PRODUCTION SYSTEM IN EAST GODAVARI DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

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Abstract: Small Ruminants (Sheep and Goat) play a very important role in the lives of households in developing countries. This is because small ruminants provide the easiest and most readily accessible source of credit available to meet immediate social and financial obligations. Women play significant roles in the domestic and national socio-economic development of developing countries like India. They own livestock especially small ruminants like sheep and goats since these animals are smaller and easier to handle compared to cattle. Rural women are involved in the raising or rearing of small ruminants – sheep and goats especially around homes by feeding them kitchen wastes or at most times leaving them to graze on surrounding herbs and shrubs, cleaning of the animals and their sheds. The purpose of this study was to examine the role of women played in small ruminant production rearing system in four mandals of East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh, India. From this study it was observed that according to their socio economic profile 39.00% and 25.50% of the women were aged between 31-40 and 41-50 respectively, 84.50% of them were illiterate and 67.50 % were married.

Keywords: *Women, Socioeconomic Characteristics, Managemental activities, East Godavari district.*

Introduction: Women in developing countries perform various functions in the livestock industry and contribute positively to economic development of the country since they are involved in more than 80% of the agricultural activities. The rural women play a significant role in Animal Husbandry and are directly involved in most of the operations relating to feeding, breeding, management and health-care of the livestock. Women carry out numerous activities in livestock production including sheep and goats [4, 6].

Sheep and goats are among small livestock kept by farmers with limited financial resources for poverty alleviation in many developing countries like India. They are a unique type of animal sector and serve as a source of revenue [1, 5] for small holder farmers who cannot afford to maintain large ruminant livestock like cattle. Sheep and goats are animals that are favorites for the poor because they are cheap to manage and they mature early and breed readily, therefore increase in number quickly [2]. They have small body size, and reach slaughtering weights early. They can easily thrive under poor conditions and are more drought tolerant than animals like cattle. These characteristics make small ruminants such as sheep and goats easy to keep for many people. In the “rain-fed agro-ecosystems” of India, sheep and goats have been reported to help the management of risks incurred in growing crops during poor rainy seasons and providing income to ensure economic stability for mixed farming families as well as supporting the keeping of large ruminants [3].

Small ruminants are of economic importance to small-holder farmers and especially women. The total income share of small ruminants tends to be inversely related to size of land-holding, suggesting that small ruminants are of particular importance for landless people especially women. Women are often not entitled to own land and since agriculture (crop production) provides only seasonal employment, rearing small ruminants would provide employment and income as a subsidiary

occupation.

Rearing of small ruminants like sheep and goats would have lasting effects in bringing about social change by improving the income of the landless labourers. The ruminants provide their owners with a vast range of products and services. Very often, there are no banking facilities in rural areas and an easy way to store cash for future needs is through the purchase of sheep and goats. In fact, in some areas, small ruminants have been described as the ‘village bank’. Small ruminants play an important role in ensuring rural women’s financial security and women are better managers of household resources than men. Thus, an improvement in the financial security of rural women through rearing small ruminants would inevitably translate to better living conditions for households.

With this background a survey was conducted to analyze the role played by women in rearing of small ruminants.

Objectives Of The Study:

This study has been done with the following specific objectives:

1. To analyze the socioeconomic profile of women engaged in rearing of small ruminants in the four mandals of East Godavari district.
2. To identify appropriate activities played by women in small livestock rearing and management.

Methodology: The research is, descriptive in nature, based on the primary and secondary data that had been collected from various sources as per the requirement. The total number of households in the selected four mandals possessing sheep and goat were tabulated in table No 1. Among these households 200 women were selected, 50 per each mandal by adopting simple random technique and information pertaining to their socio-economic profile and different managemental activities employed in rearing small ruminants were gathered using a structured questionnaire. Simple percentage and weighted average tools were used in this

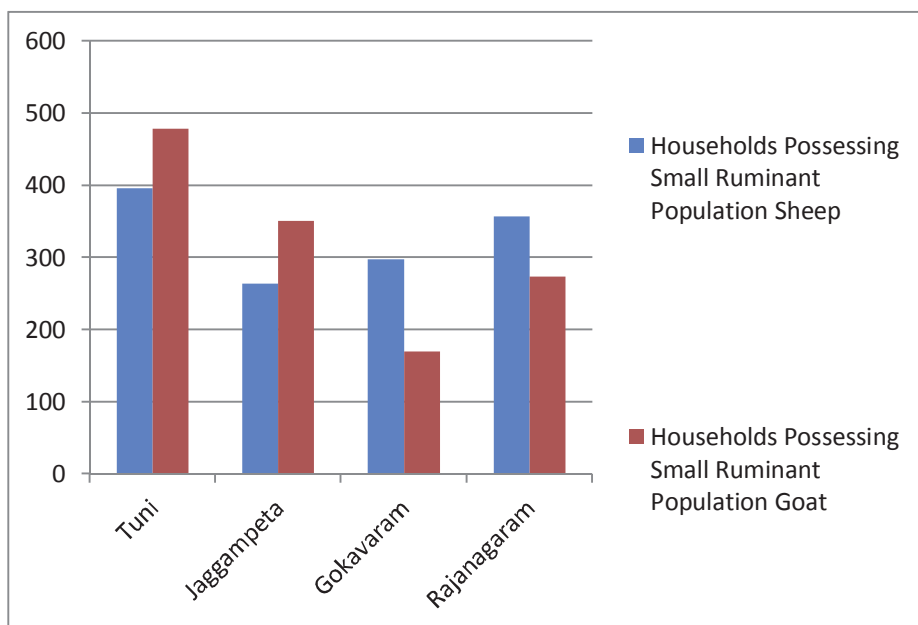
study.

Results And Discussion: The information regarding the households possessing the small ruminant population in the selected mandals and also the total number of small ruminants in these

mandalsweretabulated. The information collected from the women involved in rearing of small ruminants from the questionnaire was assembled and tabulated below as socioeconomic profile and women engaged in various managemental practices of rearing small ruminants.

Table 1: The total number of households possessing small ruminant population in the selected mandals

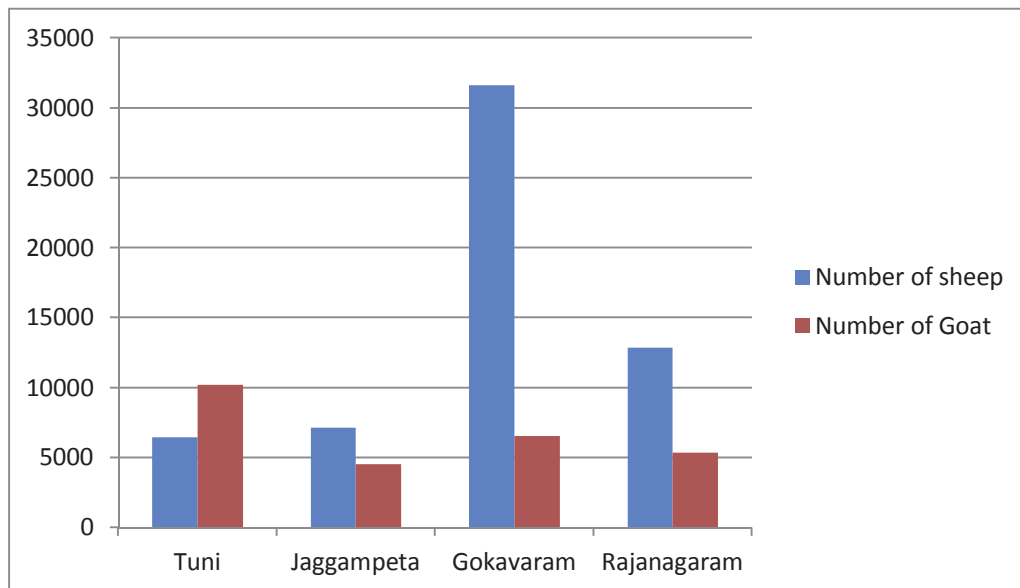
Mandals	Households Possessing Small Ruminant Population	
	Sheep	Goat
Tuni	396	479
Jaggampeta	264	351
Gokavaram	298	170
Rajanagaram	357	274
Total	1315	974



Source: DAHD, East Godavari, AP.

Table No 2: The number of small ruminant population in the selected mandals.

Mandals	Number of sheep	Number of Goat
Tuni	6442	10207
Jaggampeta	7157	4543
Gokavaram	31608	6534
Rajanagaram	12882	5342



Source: DAHD, East Godavari, AP.

Managerial activity	Number of women involved out of total respondents	Percentage
Feeding at home	156	78.00
Grazing	29	14.50
Cleaning of sheds	144	72.00
Cleaning of animals	127	63.50
Breeding of animals	43	21.50
Health care of animals	78	39.00
Marketing of animals	31	15.50

From the above results it was observed that according to their socio economic profile 39.00% and 25.50% of the women were aged between 31-40 and 41-50 respectively.84.50% of them were illiterate and 67.50% were married. According to Table no.3 it was understood that women were engaged in a variety of managerial activities like Feeding, Cleaning, Breeding, Health care and Marketing of animals and from this it was obvious that women were involved in all sorts of rearing activities of small ruminants as similar to men.

Conclusion: Women play significant roles in domestic and national development because they own and

manage livestock. Small Ruminant production systems are small-scale by nature, and incorporate a degree of flexibility that enables them to be adapted to changes in family circumstances and easily managed by the women. Women particularly from rural families dynamically exploit their environment to maintain or improve family welfare through small ruminant production. The education of most women in sheep and goats was found to be moderate and they are engaged in multiple roles of managerial activities similar to men. Thus women involvement in all sectors of animal husbandry particularly small ruminants is of great importance in meeting social and economic needs.

Age (in years)	Number	Percentage
<30	29	14.50
31-40	78	39.00
41-50	51	25.50
51-60	23	11.50
>61	19	9.50
Educational qualification		
Illiterate	169	84.50
Primary	31	15.50
Secondary	-	
Graduate	-	
Marital status		
Married	135	67.50
Single	21	10.50
Widowed	44	22.00
Type of family		
Joint family	107	53.50
Nuclear family	93	46.50

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