

PARTICIPATION OF RURAL WOMEN IN SHEEP MANAGEMENT

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Abstract: A study was conducted to analyze the participation of rural women in sheep management in West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh where four villages were taken from Nallajerla taluka. Fifty respondents were drawn randomly from the shepherd families. The data was collected through a pretested interview schedule. The collected data was scored, tabulated and analyzed using suitable statistical methods. The study concluded that majority of women participated in feeding of animals (68.00%) followed by sanitary and yard management (58.00%) regularly. A less per cent of them participated in breeding of animals (4.00%) followed by shearing of wool (12.00%) purchase or sale of animals (18.00%), (20.00%) of sale of produce (meat/ wool/ intestine/ leather) and cleaning of sheep (28.00%).

Keywords: *Management, Sheep, West Godavari, Women*

Introduction: India's livestock sector is one of the largest in the world. It has 56.7% of world's 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% of the GDP and 26% of the agricultural GDP. The total output worth was higher than the value of food grains. India has huge population of different species of livestock. In 2007 there were 199 million cattle, 105 million buffaloes, 72 million sheep, 141 million goats, 11 million pigs and 649 million poultry birds.

Sheep provide much needed livelihood support to the landless and weaker sections and hold considerable potential for commercialization. A stable sheep population in the last two decades produced around 40 million kg wool annually, of which only 4 million kg is of fine quality. Goat population grew faster than any other species of livestock and has been a major source of meat. Gainfully participation of women in the process of growth and modernization of the livestock sector would necessitate promoting gender sensitive institutional, legal and technological change that promotes productivity, excellence and competitive advantage.

Role of Women in Sheep Production Management: In India livestock production is largely in the hands of women. In fact animal husbandry is becoming feminized. The share of women in the total agricultural workforce increased from 70.5% in 1993-94 to 76.6% in 2004-05. This proportion is as high as more than 90% in states like Punjab and Haryana where animal husbandry is more commercialized and engages more than 40% of the total agricultural work force. Most of the animal farming activities such as fodder collection, feeding, watering, and health care, management, milking and household-level processing, value addition and marketing are performed by women.

The rural women have a special place in this sector. They play a significant role in animal husbandry. Women constitute 71% of the labor force in livestock farming. In Dairying, 75 million women are engaged as against 15 million men, while in case of small ruminants, the sharing of work with men is almost equal. Decisions

in livestock production lie with men while those of feeding and milk production, breeding of animal and fodder cultivation lie with women. Although, women are involved in most livestock operations, their knowledge level is low. Women's typical role within a livestock production system is different from region to region, and the distribution of ownership of livestock between men and women is strongly related to social, cultural and economic factors. Generally, it depends on the type of animals they raise. In many societies, for example, cattle and larger animals are owned by men, while smaller animals – such as goats, sheep, pigs and backyard poultry kept near the house – are more a woman's domain. When the rearing of small animals becomes a more important source of family income, ownership, management and control are often turned over to the man. Women play an important role in livestock management, processing and marketing, acting as care providers, feed gatherers, and birth attendants. They are also involved in milk production, although not all women control the sale of milk and its products. Identifying and supporting women's roles as livestock owners, processors and users of livestock products while strengthening their decision-making power and capabilities, are key aspects in promoting women's economic and social empowerment and consequently provides a way to enable rural women to break the cycle of poverty.

Women are typically responsible for milking ewes, processing and selling milk products, providing feed/fodder and water, caring for newborn lambs/kids and sick animals. Young girls are also involved in the grazing of goats and sheep, whereas married and young women are responsible for household activities.

Importance of Sheep Production management: Livestock production particularly small ruminant production is an important source of income for the rural poor in developing countries. It enables poor and landless farmers to earn income using common-property resources, crop by-products that would otherwise become waste; use land that has no other sustainable agricultural use. Livestock products are an important source of nutrients. The addition of milk and

meat to the diet provides protein, calcium, vitamins, and other nutrients that are lacking in their usual diets. Besides providing food, the driving force behind increased livestock production, they have other valuable uses. Livestock remain the most important if not the sole form of non-human power available to poor farmers. The poor, in particular, use fertilizer from livestock operations. Livestock also store value and provide insurance for people who have no other financial market available to them. Skins, wool, fat and other resources are used as inputs in other industries.

The present study mainly aims in analyzing the role of rural women in sheep management practices.

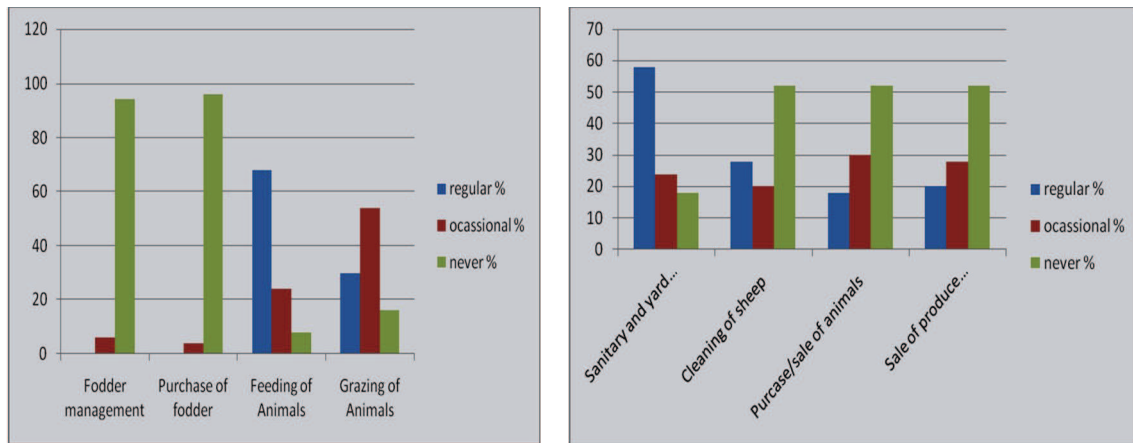
Methodology: This study was conducted in West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh state. Four villages were taken for the study from Nallajerla taluka. Fifty respondents were drawn randomly from the shepherd families. The data was collected through a pretested interview schedule. The collected data was scored, tabulated and analyzed using suitable statistical methods.

Results and Discussion: It was noticed from table. 1 that majority of the respondent participated in feeding of animals (68.00%) followed by sanitary and yard management (58.00%) regularly. This clearly showed that since women are involved in household activity they can do this work regularly along with household chores. A less per cent of them participated in breeding of animals (4.00%) followed by shearing of wool (12.00%) purchase or sale of animals (18.00%), (20.00%) of sale of produce (meat/ wool/ intestine/ leather) and cleaning of sheep (28.00%).

Women never participated in purchase of fodder (96.0%) and breeding of animals (86.00%). This might be due to the reason that the male members of the family do these activities. These activities are carried out by the females when male members are not attending. Majority of them had not participated in fodder management and purchase of fodder (94.00%) may be because they do not spend any money for purchasing of fodder as well as fodder management but they graze the animals in the fields of the farmer.

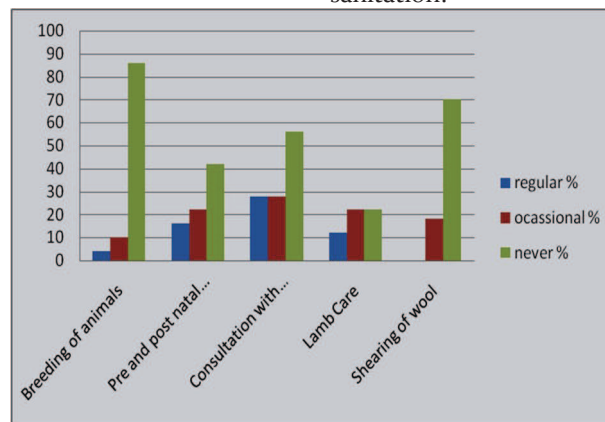
Activities	Regular		Occasional		Never	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Fodder management	-	-	3	6.0	47	94.0
Purchase of fodder	-	-	2	4.0	48	96.0
Feeding of Animals	34	68.0	12	24.0	4	8.0
Grazing of Animals	15	30.0	27	54.0	8	16.0
Sanitary and yard management	29	58.0	12	24.0	9	18.0
Purchase/ sale of animals	9	18.0	15	30.0	26	52.0
Breeding of animals	2	4.0	5	10.0	43	86.0
Sale of produce (Meat/wool/ intestine/ leather)	10	20.0	14	28.0	26	52.0
Pre and post natal management	18	36.0	11	22.0	21	42.0
Consultation with Veterinarians regarding sick animals	8	16.0	14	28.0	28	56.0
Cleaning of sheep	14	28.0	10	20.0	26	52.0
Lamb Care	28	56.0	11	22.0	11	22.0
Shearing of wool	6	12.0	9	18.0	35	70.0

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Women participation in Feeding Management:

Women participation in Marketing and sanitation:



Women participation in Breeding and health care:

Conclusion: Small ruminants like sheep and goats contribute to the livelihoods of millions of rural poor in most of the developing countries of the Asia. Sheep production has witnessed excellent growth over the years despite a negative campaign against them for their perceived adverse impact on vegetation, forest and grazing lands. Small farmers and landless agricultural laborers are increasingly relying on small ruminants for meeting their cash requirements. Sheep are well integrated in the farming systems of the small and marginal farmers of India who find in sheep and goats a

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