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Participation of rural women in animal husbandry activities

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Abstract

The study was conducted in Bhawarna and Baijnath blocks of Kangra District of Himachal Pradesh. A sample of 125 farm women who were actively involved in animal husbandry activities was taken from randomly selected ten (five from each block) villages by population proportionate random sampling technique. The data were collected with the help of interview schedule. The results revealed that these farm women participated more in making decisions like, animal breeding practices, feeding of animals, care of sick animals, animal dung management and preparation of various milk products. On the other hand their active physical involvement was also noted in cutting / chopping the fodder, giving feed / fodder to the animals, care of pregnant female animals and young calves, disposal of animal dung, milking and preparation of a variety of milk products. These women were poorly involved in some animal health care activities, dehorning the calves, sale purchase of animals, feed and milk products and keeping the farm record etc.

Keywords: Women in animal husbandry, decisions in animal husbandry, animal husbandry activities, interview schedule.

Introduction

Agriculture as a dominant sector plays a multifarious role in the all round development of our country. Farming is the major source of livelihood of more than seventy per cent of our human population (Singh *et al.,* 1996) where in women are playing an important role since ages in various out door as well as indoor farm activities including animal husbandry. About two third of the manual labour in farming is shared by rural women (Singh *et al.,* 1996) and are heavily loaded with multiple responsibilities. Involvement of the Indian rural women in various animal husbandry activities has also been a long standing domestic tradition. Thakur (1988) reported a high level of participation of Himachali women in tending cattle shed, dung disposal, fodder collection and milking of milch animals. Kanwar and Kherde (1994) also revealed women's participation in preparation of milk products. Simultaneous to their physical participation the women also have a right to participate in making various animal husbandry farm decisions. Gupta (1992) reported that women played a decisive role in housing of animals, care of newly born calves and their feeding. Similarly Sheokand *et al.* (1999) reported the involvement of farm women in making decisions in sale/purchase of animals and milk/milk products etc. Therefore keeping this in view it becomes desirable to assess their existing nature of involvement in various animal husbandry activities, so that their poor/weak work efficiency area/activities can be identified, improved as well as recognized by the concerned women empowerment agencies and accordingly this study was conducted with its following main objectives:

I. To know the extent of participation of farm women in making decisions about animal husbandry activities.
II. To ascertain the extent of participation of farm women in animal husbandry activities.

Material and Methods

The study was conducted in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh. Out of the total fourteen blocks of this district, two blocks namely Bhawarna and Baijnath were selected randomly and further five villages from each block were chosen randomly for this study. From these villages a list of only those households maintaining at least one milch animal at least since last five consecutive years was prepared. Then sample of 125 farm women who were actively involved in animal husbandry operations regularly, was taken through population proportionate random sampling

technique. The list of various expected animal husbandry activities was prepared and got validated from the concerned experts and the data were collected with the help of specially constructed an interview schedule.

Results and Discussion

The results of the investigation are given as under:

a) Involvement of farm women in decision making

It is clearly noted from the table 1 that the farm women participated with other family members in making decisions about whether the female milch animals be get inseminated by natural or artificial service as well as the stage / period at which it should get performed, with mean score value of 2.44. They also participated more in deciding the feeding young calves (2.56) and quantity (2.53) as well as type of feed (2.15) to be given to the animal reared by them. But they were found to be involved less in growing the fodder crops. The data further revealed that these women relatively remained more active to make decisions about the treatment of sick animals (2.34) and to care the pregnant female milch animals. The more involvement in the mentioned feed / fodder and animal health care activities might had been due to their old aged or traditional female sentiments as well as human relations or attachments with these domestic animals. Gupta (1992) also pointed out the decisive role of the women in feeding the young calves. The farm women also expressed their high extent of involvement in deciding about dung management (2.93), type (2.49) and number (2.63) of animals to be reared at their farm and preparations of various milk products. This might be due to the existing potential capacity of their animal farm, sources as well as their traditional knowledge and skill to prepare these domestic products. Further their involvement in making the decisions like sale / purchase of animals, milk fixing sale rate and dehorning as well as deworming the young calves was noted as poor which perhaps might be due to their poor knowledge and interest about these men oriented farm affairs etc.

b) Physical involvement of the farm women in animal husbandry operation

It is indicated by the table 2 that these farm women participated more in cutting/ chopping (2.94), giving fodder (2.79) and feed (2.76) to their animals. Their high extent of participation was also noted in some animal health care activities, *viz.,* care of pregnant female animals (2.98) and newly born calves. Milking of milch animals was also another regular indoor/domestic activity of these farm women and was supported by Thakur (1988). It was interesting to note that all the farm women covered in this study were highly and regularly involved in disposal of animal dung and preparation of all possible type of milk products like, ghee, dahi, cream and cheese etc. at their own. This perhaps might be due to their inherited or gained knowledge, experience and skill regarding such domestic preparations. Similar findings were also reported by Kanwar and Kherde (1994). The results further revealed poor participation of these women in some of the breeding and health care activities like, getting the animal vaccinated and taking them to health centre for which perhaps the veterinary clinic etc. might be distantly located. Further low extent of participations was also noted in silage/ hay making, dehorning/deworming, marketing of animals, milk products, feed, and keeping of the farm records etc. Lack of required knowledge and skill of these women might have been the reasons for such poor participation.

Conclusion

The study revealed a poor involvement of farm women in making decisions regarding fodder growing affairs, dehorning/deworming of young calves and sale/purchase of animals etc. and need to be motivated for their free and frank involvements in making such decisions. Further these women participated actively in providing fodder, feeds to animals and care of pregnant and young calves etc. the high extent of involvement of these women was also noted in milking the milch animal and preparing the domestic milk products. It is suggested that these actively involved activities of these farm women further needs to be diagnosed to assess their training needs and further to improve their potential involvement and efficiency in various animal husbandry activities. Similarly the areas / activities of their poor involvement may also be attended by the extension and training agencies to improve their involvements in various animal husbandry activities.

Table 1. Extent of participation of farm women in making the decisions about animal husbandry activities

Sr.No	Activities	Mean Score	Rank	Extent
A.Breeding				
1.	Getting the natural service / artificial insemination done in cow/buffalo	2.44	8	High
2.	Stage of getting natural service / artificial insemination done	2.44	8	High
3.	Castration of male animals	1.26	20	Low
B.Feed and Fodder				
4.	Area under fodder crop	1.52	17	Low
5.	Type of the fodder crop grown	1.75	14	Low
6.	Growing single / mixed fodder crop	1.58	16	Low
7.	Nature of feed for animals	2.15	10	High
8.	Quantity of feed t o be given	2.53	6	High
9.	Feeding the young calves	2.56	5	High
10.	Preparation of balanced feed	1.94	13	Medium
11.	Preparation of silage / hay	1.48	18	Low
C.Health Care				
12.	Treatment of sick animals	2.34	9	High
13.	Care of pregnant animals	2.92	2	High
14.	Deworming of young calves	1.22	21	Low
D. Miscellaneous				
15.	Sale and purchase of animals	1.19	23	Low
16.	Dehorning the young calves	1.21	22	Low
17.	Source of drinking water for animals	1.66	15	Low
18.	Type of animal to be kept	2.49	7	High
19.	Number of milch animal to be kept	2.63	3	High
20.	Marketing of milk	2.06	11	Medium
21.	Nature of preparing the milk products	2.59	4	High
22.	Marketing of milk products	2.04	12	Medium
23.	Fixing the sale rate of milk	1.39	19	Low
24.	Dung management	2.93	1	High

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Table 2. Extent of participation of farm women in animal husbandry activities

Sr. No	Activities	Mean Score	Rank	Extent
A.Breeding				
1.	Getting the natural service/artificial insemination done in cow/buffalo	1.95	12	Low
2.	Getting the male animal castrated	1.06	22	Low
B.Feed and Fodder				
3.	Cutting the fodder	2.94	4	High
4.	Chopping the fodder	2.94	4	High
5.	Giving fodder to animals	2.79	6	High
6.	Preparing the feed	2.45	9	Medium
7.	Giving the feed	2.76	7	High
8.	Preparation of silage/hay	1.94	13	Low
C.Health Care				
9.	Taking animal to health centre	1.76	15	Low
10.	Getting the animal vaccinated	1.90	14	Low
11.	Care of pregnant animals	2.98	3	High
12.	Care of newly born calves	2.99	2	High
13.	Deworming of calves	1.18	18	Low
14.	Spraying of animal; sheds against ticks	1.16	19	Low
D.Miscellaneous				
15.	Bathing the milch animals	2.28	10	Medium
16.	Cleaning the shed	2.11	11	Medium
17.	Getting / doing the dehorning	1.13	20	Low
18.	Giving water to animals	2.52	8	High
19.	Milking the animals	2.90	5	High
20	Taking the animal in/out of shed	1.76	15	Low
21.	Disposal of dung	2.99	2	High
22.	Preparation of ghee	3.00	1	High
23.	Preparation of cream	3.00	1	High
24.	Preparation of dahi	3.00	1	High
25.	Preparation of cheese	3.00	1	High
26.	Preparation of butter	3.00	1	High
27.	Marketing of milk	2.11	11	Medium
28.	Marketing of milk products	1.62	16	Low
29.	Sale / purchase of animals	1.09	21	Low
30	Purchase of animal feed	1.39	17	Low
31.	Keeping record	1.00	23	Low

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