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Studies on the Participation of Women in Decision Making about Dairy Occupation in Parbhani District of Maharashtra State

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A B S T R A C T

The knowledge and skill of women dairy occupation and their participation in decision making certainly affects their efficiency in work and in the development of dairy enterprise. It is there felt necessary to determine the extent of participation of farm women in the dairy occupation. A cattle rearing is a diversification from existing agricultural activity. Largely, rural women are engaged in this activity. These rural women, besides doing hard household chores, also undertake the taxing job of cattle rearing. Therefore by considering the above the present investigation was carried out in Parbhani district to assess the participation and decision making of rural women in dairy farming activities. To achieve the objective of the present investigation four tehsil and from each tehsil by conducting personal interview data from 100 dairy women farmers were collected. From the investigation it can be seen that no women take decision without the permission of their spouse for selling the animals. For milk consumption at home a whole decision is taken by the spouse therefore no women found who take their own decision. It is seen from the investigation that activities like quantity of milk to be used for home consumption and type of milk product to be made from surplus milk was decided by the farm women themselves, although respondents also reported that they were taking decisions in consultation with their spouse with regard to quantity of milk to be used for home consumption.

Introduction

It is widely accepted that the development processes in India in the last few years have contributed to the growth of poverty by promoting economic and gender inequalities and thus have degraded the environment. The fact that environmental degradation has affected women's lives in ways different from men is well established now. Women have been identified as main victims of

overall ecological degradation by many environmentalists, and this has been mainly attributed to the fact that they are responsible for producing, processing and gathering food, fetching water and carrying fuel wood (Krishna, 1996). Venkateshwaran (1992) points out that their conservative approach is not something inherent, arising

out of their being women, but because of their role and work tasks. The close association between women and natural resources exists because of their social and economic roles which have for generations required them to provide food, fuel, and fodder from the surroundings. Except ploughing, women carry out almost all crop production tasks to help their men folk (Chandra, 1981). The linkage between these sectors is well understood by women as they work between sectors and perform multiple tasks. Foreign travellers were invariably struck by the importance of women in rural economic life, unlike male-dominated European agriculture (Kennedy, 1886). Women's work and knowledge is thus central to bio-diversity conservation and sustainable utilisation of resources in hill agriculture. But despite this, as farmers, they remain invisible (Shiva, 1993).

The knowledge and skill of women dairy occupation and their participation in decision making certainly affects their efficiency in work and in the development of dairy enterprise. It is there felt necessary to determine the extent of participation of farm women in the dairy occupation. A cattle rearing is a diversification from existing agricultural activity. Largely, rural women are engaged in this activity. These rural women, besides doing hard household chores, also undertake the taxing job of cattle rearing (Vallapureddy, 2013). Therefore by considering the above the present investigation was carried out in Parbhani district to assess the participation and decision making of rural women in dairy farming activities.

Materials and Methods

For the present investigation sample population was selected from the Parbhani districts of Marathawada region. 5 Villages

selected from each Tahsil and from each village 20 respondents were selected. In this way for the present investigation 100 respondents were selected. The survey research design was used for data collection. The interview schedule constructed for the research was used to collect the information regarding Feeding, Management, Breeding, Health care, processing and marketing of milk, miscellaneous etc. from these respondents. The collected data tabulated and analyzed accordingly.

Results and Discussion

The present investigation focused mainly on six major operations carried out by dairy women farmers. The result obtained during present investigation are depicted in Table 4.17. The study revealed that most of the work regarding Feeding and watering of animals was the sole responsibility of the women. They were responsible for the tasks like taking the animals for grazing, fodder collection, chaffing and storage of fodder etc. In Poorna tehsil of Parbhani district all the activities regarding Feeding and watering were done only by women therefore out of 25 dairy farmers 19 (76%) women dairy farmers were engaged in Feeding and watering the dairy animals. The next major activity where women participated actively was management of livestock. Rural women participation in Breeding activities was found to be least among all the selected activities due to social mores and taboos in society. The study revealed that 20 per cent of farm women were actively involved in Breeding of animals. The study revealed that 12 per cent rural women were engaged in health care of animals. Participation of women in processing and marketing activities was not much appreciated. In the study area only 8% women were involved in processing and marketing of milk and milk products.

Table.1 Distribution of the women on the basis of their participation in dairy farming in various tehsils of Parbhani district N=25

Sr. No.	Name of the tehsil	Activities	Number	(%)
1.	Poorna	Feeding and watering	19	76
		Management	18	72
		Breeding	5	20
		Health care	3	12
		Processing and marketing	2	8
		Miscellaneous	3	12
2.	Gangakhed	Feeding and watering	21	84
		Management	23	92
		Breeding	1	4
		Health care	2	8
		Processing and marketing	1	4
		Miscellaneous	2	8
3.	Palam	Feeding and watering	19	76
		Management	23	92
		Breeding	2	8
		Health care	2	8
		Processing and marketing	1	4
		Miscellaneous	3	12
4.	Parbhani	Feeding and watering	23	92
		Management	23	92
		Breeding	1	4
		Health care	2	8
		Processing and marketing	1	4
		Miscellaneous	4	16
5.	Overall	Feeding and watering	21	84
		Management	22	88
		Breeding	2	8
		Health care	2	8
		Processing and marketing	1	4
		Miscellaneous	3	12

In Gangakhed tehsil of Parbhani district the activities regarding Feeding and watering were done by women therefore out of 25 dairy farmers 21 (84%) women dairy farmers were engaged in Feeding and watering the dairy animals. The next major activity where women participated actively was management of livestock (92%). Rural women participation in Breeding activities

was found to be least among all the selected activities due to social mores and taboos in society. The study revealed that 4 per cent of farm women were actively involved in Breeding of animals. The study revealed that 8 per cent rural women were engaged in health care of animals. Participation of women in processing and marketing activities was not much appreciated. In the

study area only 4% women were involved in processing and marketing of milk and milk products.

In Palam tehsil of Parbhani district the activities regarding Feeding and watering were done by women therefore out of 25 dairy farmers 19 (76%) women dairy farmers were engaged in Feeding and watering the dairy animals. The next major activity where women participated actively was management of livestock (92%). Rural women participation in Breeding activities was found to be least among all the selected activities due to social mores and taboos in society. The study revealed that 8 per cent of farm women were actively involved in Breeding of animals. The study revealed that 8 per cent rural women were engaged in health care of animals. Participation of women in processing and marketing activities was not much appreciated. In the study area only 4% women were involved in processing and marketing of milk and milk products.

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Overall performance of Parbhani district showed that the activities regarding Feeding and watering were done by women therefore out of 25 dairy farmers 21 (84%) women dairy farmers were engaged in Feeding and watering the dairy animals. The next major activity where women participated actively was management of livestock (88%). Rural women participation in Breeding activities was found to be least among all the selected activities due to social mores and taboos in society. The study revealed that 8 per cent of farm women were actively involved in Breeding of animals. The study revealed that 8 per cent rural women were engaged in health care of animals. Participation of women in processing and marketing activities was not much appreciated. In the study area only 4% women were involved in processing and marketing of milk and milk products.

The women rarely participated in milk processing and making other milk products like ghee, butter, khoa etc. the present investigation is in consonance with the findings of Gupta *et. al.* (1986), Rangnekar *et. al.* (1992) and Rathod, *et al.*, (2011). Table 4.22 depicts the activities of rural women in dairy farming. Similar findings were reported by Jain and Verma (1992). The work of animal shed construction, grooming of animals were also performed by women which is in accordance with the findings of Puri (1971) who revealed that preparation of feed, grazing and washing of animals were mostly carried out by women. It was observed that respondents majorly participated in milking of animals followed by their involvement in cleaning of milking utensils.

Women actively participated in construction of animal sheds with locally available resources. The study revealed that women performed activities like Milking, cleaning

of animal sheds and disposal of cow dung or preparation of cow dung cakes. The present investigation shows that 77% were involved in such a farm activities. Similar findings were observed by Jain and Verma (1992). The farm women to the tune of 75.83 per cent women were involved in the construction of animal sheds which was also reported by Toppo *et. al.*(2004). Similar findings were reported by researcher Yadav *et. al.* (2005). The study also reported that farm women took animals for Artificial Insemination while rural women took the animal for natural service. Similar findings were also reported by Singh (2003). These findings are in conformity with findings of Tripathi and Bhanja (2000). The women in their late middle and old age actively participated in health care as they had learnt the things by seeing and out of experience. Most of the respondents interviewed were of the view that they require lot of training and knowledge with regard to the health care aspects. These results are in confirmation with the results of Adhikari (1987) and Bhurtel (1996). The health care of animals was solely performed by women in the study area. The study revealed that rural women were engaged in health care of animals. The findings are in conformity with the findings of Rangnekar *et. al.* (1992). Similar findings were reported by researchers Tripathi and Bhanja (2000). Participation of women in processing and marketing activities was not much appreciated. The women rarely participated in milk processing and making other milk products like ghee, butter, khoa etc.

The women felt that preparation of milk products added to their existing labour. They also perceived that women required more time for processing of milk and hence, only few women took up processing on only small scale. They produced milk products like ghee, butter and khoa only for their

household consumption. Similar findings were reported by Toppo *et. al.* (2004). These findings are in consonance with the reports of researchers Tripathi and Arya(1995). Majority of the farm women in study area were ignorant about record maintenance and hence, it was observed that only 52.5 per cent of respondents maintained records in the form of small book or piece of paper. Similar findings were observed by researcher Yadav *et. al.*(2005) with regards to record maintenance. Similar findings were recorded by researcher Devaki (1999).

Conclusions

From the investigation it can be seen that no women take decision without the permission of their spouse for selling the animals. If they want to sell the milk only 4% women took decision for selling the surplus milk. However they cannot take decision regarding the selling the milk product therefore only 4% women dairy farmer found who took decision regarding the same activity. For milk consumption at home a whole decision is taken by the spouse therefore no women found who take their own decision. It is seen from the investigation that activities like quantity of milk to be used for home consumption and type of milk product to be made from surplus milk was decided by the farm women themselves, although respondents also reported that they were taking decisions in consultation with their spouse with regard to quantity of milk to be used for home consumption. The respondents said it was a collective decision for whether the surplus milk to be sold or processed for product making. Being the homemaker and housewife, the farm women have to look into and cater to the nutritional requirements, needs and tastes of other family members. This might be the probable reason of involvement of the farm women in

decision making process with regard to quantity of milk to be used for home consumption and type of milk product to be made.

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