

CONTRIBUTION OF RURAL FEMALES TO LIVESTOCK CARE AND MANAGEMENT

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The present study aimed to assess the contribution of rural females to livestock care and management activities in salt-affected area of Satyana (Faisalabad). Simple random sampling method was used to select 107 female respondents. The analysis indicated that caste, education, income and family type had no significant relationship with the extent of female participation in livestock care and management activities.

Key words: livestock management, rural females

INTRODUCTION

Livestock play a very significant role in the economy of Pakistan. About 85% of traction power for cultivation and over 40% transportation in rural areas are provided by livestock. Most of them bring cash money to the farm families and provide protection against the social depressions. Livestock sector provides employment opportunities to the livestock producers in the rural areas. Livestock and poultry provide the food products of high nutritional values such as milk, beef, mutton, poultry meat and eggs. Besides food products they also provide industrial raw products like wool, hair, hides, skin, casings, blood and bones (Ijaz, 1993).

General observations concerning rural family life and available studies show that the male members are mainly responsible for cultural practices and raising of crops, while besides the household responsibilities, the females are said to actively participate in livestock care and management. Women can play a vital role in this direction if properly trained and motivated in this field. Livestock raising can be a source of supplementing family income and improving nutritional level of family. Management and care of livestock include bringing fodder, feeding, milking, milk processing, housing, cleaning the animals and their sheds and disease control of animals. In rural areas majority of housewives are supposed to be engaged in care and management of livestock especially dairy animals.

Freeman and Wai (1988) reported that in North West Frontier province and Punjab province of Pakistan, livestock rearing was largely a women job. Twenty percent women spend much of their time in feeding and watering animals, cleaning animal sheds, preparation of ghee and selling animal products. They further reported that women participation in livestock operations such as bringing fodder and removal of weeds from the crops was very low. Ijaz

and Davidson (1987) reported that the gender division of labour in livestock care and management was studied concerning nine selected operations. In three operations such as fodder cutting, fodder collection and grazing, male participation outnumbered that of females. In 40.8, 41.4 and 51.7% of households respectively, these tasks were reported to be performed by male members only and female members did not participate. However, females exclusively performed fodder cutting in 11.4% households, fodder collection in 11.4%, and grazing in 10.1% households. In the remainder of households, these tasks were performed by both males and females.

The present study was undertaken to investigate the participation of rural female members in livestock care and management in a salt-affected area of Faisalabad namely Satyana. The objectives of the study were the contribution of rural females to livestock care and management and to study the economic impact of livestock production on respondent's families.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study was conducted in the salt-affected area of Faisalabad which comprised four villages near Satyana. In order to select a representative sample, a list of all families having at least one milch animal was prepared from the selected villages using simple random sampling method and female heads of households were identified for collecting the necessary data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is evident from Table 1 that majority of the female respondents (92.5%) participated in livestock care and management activities, while only 8 out of 107 did not participate due to the following reasons: 2.8% because of caste problem, another 1.9% due to illness and 1.9%

had servants. The remaining 0.9% indicated the disliking by their husbands. These findings show that majority of rural females look after their animals.

Table 1. Frequency distribution of female members participating or not in livestock care and management

Participation	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	99	92.5
No (reasons)	-	-
Caste problem	3	2.8
Illness	2	1.9
Availability of servants	2	1.9
Husband dislikes	1	0.9

About participation of rural females in salient operations pertinent to livestock/dairy animal management, the respondents indicated that only 12.1% participated in fodder cutting for animals, whereas 75.5 did not do it and 4.5% did it occasionally. Regarding feeding, watering and housing the animals, it was found that 77.6, 83.2 and 81.2% respectively of the respondents helped in these operations regularly. In the same order 14.0, 14.0 and 11.2% respondents occasionally participated in these activities. The rest, a very small percentage, did not participate at all. As high as 81.3 and 89.7% of the respondents milked the animals and cleaned their sheds. Some families reportedly employed female labour for cleaning the animal sheds. Milk processing and making of dung cakes (for fuel purposes) was handled by 100 and 93.5% respondents. Female labour was also employed by some families for making dung cakes.

Almost half of the respondents indicated that on average they spent 3-6 hours daily in performing various operations in respect of care and management of their animals. A little less than one-third of the respondents reported that 6-10 hours daily are spent by them in taking care of their animals. The remaining respondents, probably being more efficient, could take care of their animals in 1-3 hours daily. Of course, they were involved in selective activities only. The data indicated that average daily sale of milk per household was 6.62 litres which according to the average modest price in rural areas meant an average

daily income of Rs. 75 per household. Most of the families of respondents were also preparing and selling ghee at an average rate of 1.5 kg per household per month, which meant an additional income of at least Rs. 250/-. In addition, the respondents indicated that on average the sale of animals provided an income of Rs. 11400/- per annum for their respective families.

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