

Farm Women's Life in Livestock Management, Health and Empowerment

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted among the rural farm women of Kamrup District of Assam in connection with their livestock management, health and empowerment. A purposive random sampling technique was used from the exhaustive list of the villages obtained from the offices of the BDO and Panchayats to select the farm women where ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) members in the Department of Health and Family Welfare under NRHM (National Rural Health Mission) were in action. Data pertaining to these areas were collected through a specially constructed pre-tested, reliable and valid interview schedule by personally approaching the rural farm women. Then the data such collected were compiled, tabulated and processed by calculating frequency, mean standard deviation and range and multiple correlation analysis. Based on the results conclusions and inferences relating livestock management, health and empowerment were drawn. It was found that by and large all the rural farm women were satisfied with regard to animal husbandry, own health and empowerment. Further the three areas i.e. animal husbandry, health and empowerment of the rural farm women were highly and positively correlated to each other.

Key words: Rural farm women, Satisfaction, Livestock management, Health, Empowerment, ASHA, NRHM.

Success, sanctity and solidarity of any society remain in balance till there is realization of satisfaction. Satisfaction is the feeling of pleasure that one gets when he/she achieves or obtains something of excellence, credit, success or achievements. In the present context it is the fulfilment of a desire or need with respect to the areas of livestock management, health indicators and the areas of empowerment in totality, which were considered vital for the rural farm women. Success or failure are the two faces of the same coin and are also integral ingredient of life situation. People are of the general opinion that they come and go, but it is the satisfaction which gives the greatest joy. Such satisfaction counts if positive, progressive and prompt actions in life situations are considered in long term ladder. Thus satisfaction becomes a part of life in each and every matter of work one does (Pattanaik, 2000). It is again the satisfaction, which drives, dictates, or dedicates the further course of action in life. It was under such circumstances that levels of satisfaction of rural farm women engaged in livestock rearing were measured against livestock management, health and

empowerment. Further, it was felt necessary to have an integral study on the interrelations of rural farm women possessed among of livestock management, health and empowerment so that progressive changes in rural life are ensured.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted among the rural farm women of Kamrup District where ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activists) of the Department of Health and Family Welfare under National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) were employed and who had at least one dairy animal to take care of and earning from the produce of that animal. While selecting the women for data collection first of all the list of the ASHA workers in the district was worked out. Depending upon the descending number of estimated livestock possessed, members of rural farm women under each ASHA; respondents were covered at the rate of at least five women farmers falling under each ASHA for data collection. All efforts were made to cover first five women "attempted and contacted basis" as respondents.

If failed in first attempt then it was followed by collection of data from other women fulfilling the mandate of randomness. Scoring of the variables was carried out on the basis of the feelings the respondents had on livestock management, health and empowerment. The respondents were asked to put their agreement by placing a tick mark against the three major areas in any of the degrees ranging from “very much” to “much”, “somewhat” and “not at all” with their respective scores of 3, 2, 1 and zero respectively. As such the minimum and maximum obtainable scores were 0 and 9 respectively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As shown in Table 1, in the present study the mean value of satisfaction was 5.39 and SD of 1.59 out of the total obtainable score of 9 where it ranged from three to nine. Therefore, it was indicative of the fact that the rural farm women at large were relatively satisfied. When the respondents were categorized on the basis of mean and standard deviation, it was found that 64.00 per cent of the respondent occupied medium group of level of satisfaction followed by 23.00 per cent in the higher group and 13.00 per cent in the lower group of level of satisfaction. Even in this frequency distribution, it could be said that as high as 87.00 per cent of the respondents were by and large satisfied. This indicated that the rural farm women in Kamrup district in the context of livestock management, health and empowerment were relatively in pleasing state of mind. This was rather a difficult proposition to understand against the backdrop of fact that the rural women farm expected better yield from their livestock which they never got and therefore, income from animals was less. Still they were satisfied. This might have been due to their self content kind of nature which might have arose out of lack of exposure and education to the rural farm women under which condition, they were relatively satisfied. The finding was similar to that of *Gupta (2009)*. Further it could also be because of one simple reason that animal husbandry and the activities relating to them including the daily schedule of housewives were all classical and cultural affairs rather than any highly competitive economic endeavor (*Paris 1992*). That they could keep attachment with their cultural traits by way of livestock management, they might have been happier lots. However those high senses of having better level of satisfaction could be treated as an encouraging fact and positive angle for making better livestock plans

an execution in Kamrup district of Assam. But before going for any blanket policy, it was also important to know about the areas where their response patterns were different.

Table 1. Frequency distribution of rural farm women on the level of satisfaction.

Variable	Mean	S.D.	Range	Low	Medium	High
Satisf- action	5.39	1.59	3-9	13 (13.00)	64 (64.00)	23 (23.00)

Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentage

Also Table 2 revealed that the distribution of rural farm women in “very much”, “much” and “somewhat” degrees in Kamrup district were 10.00 per cent, 58.00 per cent and 32.00 per cent respectively in case of livestock management, 14.00 per cent, 37.00 per cent and 49.00 per cent in case of empowerment respectively and 21.00 per cent, 51.00 per cent and 28.00 per cent respectively in case of health. From the above findings, it could be concluded that the rural farm women were best satisfied with their health, followed by livestock management and then empowerment. The higher satisfaction of rural farm women

Table 2. Frequency distribution of rural farm women on different levels of satisfaction.

Satisfaction	Very much	Much	Somewhat	Not at all
Livestock	10	58	32	0
Management	(10.0)	(58.00)	(32.0)	(0.0)
Empowerment	14	37	49	0
	(14.0)	(37.0)	(49.0)	(0.0)
Health	21	51	28	0
	(21.0)	(51.0)	(28.0)	(0.0)

Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentage

with regard to health was understandable – as there was profuse emphasis for keeping the health of women and children in rural areas in Assam under top priority after the inception of NRHM in the Department of Health and Family Welfare. Same kind of result was also reported by *Das Gupta (1994)* and *Bettencourt, et. al. (2003)*. The next level of satisfaction of the rural farm women was with the livestock management. This might have been the strong feelings of the rural farm women that they could keep relation with their culture through animal husbandry and thereby they were satisfied. Women getting satisfaction with livestock management in rural situation was also reported by *Akter et. al. (2007)*. Empowerment obtaining the third preference might have been an outcome of the

negligence of the rural farm women to think lesser for their own upliftment. Such kind of result was also indicated by Anand (2001)

Table 3. Inter correlations among role played in livestock rearing, empowerment, health indicators and health status

Variable	Empowerment	Health indicators	Health status
Livestock rearing	0.21*	0.62**	0.59**
Empowerment		0.05	0.11
Health indicators			0.09

**Significant at 0.01 level of probability.

*Significant at 0.05 level of probability.

Table 3 showed that livestock rearing was positively and significantly related to empowerment ($r=0.21^*$, $p<0.05$) and positively and high significantly related to health indicators and one's own perception relating to health status. ($r=0.62^{**}$, $p<0.01$ and $r=0.59^{**}$, $p<0.01$ respectively)

The main idea behind looking for the relationship between livestock rearing, empowerment and health was that, the level of satisfaction again could be because of the other associated reasons than the atmosphere prevailed exclusively in livestock rearing. As seen the significant association among the different variables, it might be because of the fact that health sector in the state has gone far ahead with the implementation of NRHM precisely for more than last one decade or so. Further under the provision of NRHM every month in every village there is a village health and nutrition day getting organized, which provided lot of exposure and

knowledge to rural women relating to recent developments, contemporary events and important happenings-facilitating their empowerment. However, animal husbandry or livestock stood firmly on its traditional importance. So, in such meetings there must have been exchange of knowledge relating to animal husbandry as well in addition to so many contemporary issues. That brought the relationship among the three areas in rural farm women stronger. Relationship between health and empowerment or health facilitating empowerment was also revealed by Wallerstein (1992).

CONCLUSION

Rural farm women in Kamrup district of Assam in the context of Livestock management, Health and Empowerment were relatively satisfied. The elevated level of satisfaction, however was realized not because of their progress in terms of accelerated income from the livestock, but because of the fact that they could uphold the cultural and classical values in rural settings. The fact that the rural farm women showed good sense of satisfaction was mainly due to the accelerated activities in the health sector. That gave enough incremental benefits to the other sectors i.e. livestock management and empowerment, which were found to be positively and significantly related. Livestock rearing could be improved among the rural farm women, if the same is taken up in collaboration with other need based activities in other sectors.

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