Information needs of the Rural Women involved in Livestock Sector: A study form Jharkhand

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ABSTRACT

Women worldwide play important roles in livestock keeping and provision of livestock services. However, a number of challenges face the livestock sector, including ensuring food and feed resources, and livelihood security for poor smallholder producers and processors. Women are the backbone of our agricultural work force and their involvement in livestock management is a longstanding tradition. Despite this, their earnings are generally low and they lag behind men in decision making process. Keeping this fact in mind, the present study was conducted in Godda district of Jharkhand to know the scope of empowerment of rural women in livestock sector. The data was selected with the help of random sampling. Results indicated that women involved in livestock sector were mostly illiterate, belonged to lower strata of the society and had low to medium family education status. Majority of them were involved in rearing of cattle, buffalo, goat and poultry, most of which were directly purchased from the market. Although women were mainly involved in the livestock rearing and caring, they did not have adequate knowledge about scientific management practices. Knowledge regarding diseases and their management, feed and fodder, milk product processing was found to be lower than other aspects. Majority of them were not getting any information on animal husbandry from any formal source and none of them had ever undergone any training. The results clearly indicate her involvement of women in livestock rearing and decision making process, whereas they had poor knowledge as well as access to information. Thus the potential of livestock sector for employment generation and economic empowerment can be harnessed through strategic human resource development and promotion of livestock based enterprises among rural women of the district.

Key words: *Women, Livestock sector, Empowerment ;*

Empowerment of women is one of the key issues in the development-process of countries all over the world. Empowerment of women is a multidimensional concept. Women can be empowerment through many ways; broadly it may be agricultural or non-agricultural activities. Women worldwide play important roles in livestock keeping and provision of livestock services. However, a number of challenges face the livestock sector, including ensuring food and feed resources, and livelihood security for poor smallholder producers and processors. It is estimated that women compose around two thirds of the 400 million poor livestock keepers who mainly rely on livestock for their income (FAO 2011 and 2012). Thus it can be concluded that women are not only the backbone of the household but also for the agriculture and the allied sectors. Their contribution in agriculture and allied sector cannot be ignored. Despite their measure contribution in the development process still they are behind the curtain of the development process. Their involvement in livestock sector is a longstanding tradition. There is a need to empower the women not only economically, but also technically, socially and the most important through skills and knowledge. Keeping this in view, the present study was conducted in Godda district of Jharkhand to know the scope of empowerment of rural women in livestock sector.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in Godda district of the Jharkhand state covering 100 women respondents as women are more involved in livestock sector from purchasing of livestock to rearing, caring, feeding and marketing. The data was collected with the help of structured interview schedule through random sampling.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Personal profile: Personal profile of the respondents is presented in Table -1. It is evident from the table that majority of the respondents' belonged to old age group (47%), followed by middle (30%) and young (23%). Majority of the family was male headed (86%) and remaining (14%) were female headed. The reason of female headed family was the death of the husband (05%) and the outside working of the husband (09%). With regard to caste majority of them belong to OBC caste (51%) followed by SC (37%) and General (12%). Majority of the respondents (96%) were belonged to joint family followed by nuclear family (04%). A very slightly higher than three fourth of the respondents (76%) have medium family size followed by large (14%) and small (10%). Majority of the respondents (69%) were illiterate followed by primary (22%), middle (06%) and high school (03%). Regarding education status of the respondents 46 per cent respondents belonged to medium category followed by high (41%) and low (13%). Majority of the respondents (65%) were having both girls and boys, followed by 26 per cent respondents have only boys and nine per cent respondents have only girl child.

Table 1. Personal profile of the respondents (N=100)

Characteristics	Category	No.	%
Age	Young (upto 32)	23	23
	Middle (33 to 42)	30	30
	Old (43 and above)	47	47
Head of the family	Male	86	86
	Female	14	14
Reasons of	Death of the husband	05	05
the female head	Outside working	09	09
Caste	General	12	12
	OBC	51	51
	SC	37	37
Family type	Nuclear	04	04
	Joint	96	96
Family size	Small (upto 4)	10	10
	Medium (5 to 7)	76	76
	Large (8 and above)	14	14
Education	Illiterate	69	69
	Primary	22	22
	Middle	06	06
	High school	03	03
Educational	Low (upto 0.67)	13	13
status of Family	Medium (0.68 to 1.57)	46	46
	High (1.58 and above)	41	41
No. of children	Only girls	09	09
	Only boys	26	26
	Only girls and boys	65	65

Economic profile : Table-2 depicts the distribution of the respondents according to their economic profile viz, family occupation, land holding, type of house, monthly income and livestock holding. Regarding family occupation, it can be discussed from the table that out of 100 respondents 53 per cent were taken agriculture as primary occupation and 29 per has taken animal husbandry as primary occupation, remaining respondents were labourer (08) and any other (10%). As regards land holding, most of the respondents (39%) fall in the category of marginal (less than 2.5 acres) and 18 percent fall in the landless category. 25 per cent respondents have small land holding followed by medium land holding (12%) and large land holding (06%). Majority of the respondents (66%) have pucca house followed by mixed type house (29%) and kachha house (05%). 67 per cent respondents have monthly income from Rs. 10,000 to 15,000 followed by Rs. 10,000 or below (15%), Rs. 15,000 to 20,000 (12%) and above Rs. 20,000 (06%). Livestock holding shows that majority of the respondents have goat (272%) followed by cattle (22%0, buffaloes (131%) and poultry (102%). Here, it can interpreted from the from the findings that majority of the respondents have low small ruminants.

Table 2. Economic profile of the respondents (N = 100)

Characteristics	Category	No.	%
Occupation	Agriculture	53	53
	Animal Husbandry	29	29
	Labourer	08	08
	Business	00	00
	Service	00	00
	Any other	10	10
Land holding	Landless	18	18
	Marginal (Less than 2.5 acres)	39	39
	Small (2.5 acres to 5.0 acres)	25	25
	Medium (5.1 to 10 acres)	12	12
	Large (Above 10 acres)	06	06
Type of house	Kachcha	05	05
	Kachcha-pucca (mixed)	29	29
	Pucca	66	66
Monthly income	Rs. 10,000 or below	15	15
	RS. 10,001 to 15,000	67	67
	Rs. 15,001 to 20,000	12	12
	Above Rs. 20,000	06	06
Livestock holding*	Buffaloes	131	131
	Cattle	225	225
	Goat	272	272
	Poultry	102	102

*Multiple livestock holding

Innvolvement in livestock rearing: Table 3 shows the percentage of the respondents who are involved in the livestock rearing. It is clear from the table that not a single respondent was involved in single livestock rearing, they were involved whether both cattle and buffalo, both goat and poultry or any other. Majority of the respondents (38%) were involved in both cattle and goat rearing followed by both cattle and buffalo rearing (33%). Remaining were involved in both goat and poultry (12%) followed by both buffalo and poultry (09%) and both cattle and poultry (08%).

Table 3. Percentages of the respondents involved in livestock rearing (N = 100)

Livestock categorization	No.	%
Only cattle	00	00
Only buffalo	00	00
Only goat	00	00
Only poultry	00	00
Both cattle and goat	38	38
Both cattle and poultry	08	08
Both goat and poultry	12	12
Both buffalo and poultry	09	09
Both cattle and buffalo	33	33

Trainings received : Stugy depicts the training received pattern of the respondents. It is very surprising fact that although respondents were involved in livestock sector, but they never received any formal type of training from any training institute on any livestock rearing aspects. Either they are depending on their family members for their support in livestock management or they developed experience through practices. Besides it, they also earn knowledge through sharing with themselves for the livestock matters.

Information sources and their pattern of use by respondents: Table 4 shows the information source utilized by the respondents. It is very clear from the table that still cent per cent women access the information from their relatives (100%), neighbours (100%), followed by TV (36%) and Radio (29%).

The same table also gives the detailed information on the information source utilization pattern. Cent per cent women respondents are utilizing relatives and neighbours always to get the information on livestock matters. The sources utilized by the respondents are Radio, TV, newspaper, livestock inspector etc. It is also important to know that cent per cent respondents are never asked any matter related to livestock to any KVK specialist. The most probable reason of this might be there is lack of trainings to women on livestock or there is no/less priority to women to informed/trained on the livestock issues. The utilization pattern of newspaper and agricultural magazine by the women respondents also shows that majority of them never utilized these information sources. The most probable reason of this might be due to illiteracy of the respondents and hence they have to depend on others say family members, neighbours etc. to avail the information on livestock from the literature.

Knowledge profile of the respondents: Knowledge profile of the respondents includes the knowledge of the respondents on the different aspects of livestock rearing like feed and fodder, disease and health management and milk and milk product processing. It can be reiterate form the table that regarding feed and fodder majority of the respondents (72%) were having low knowledge followed by medium (26%) and high (02%). With respect to

Table 4. Information sources utilised by respondents involved in livestock sector (N = 100)

Sources	Always	Sometimes	Never	Style of information taking		
				Alone	With Friends	With Family
Radio	—	29	71	—	—	29
TV	—	36	64	—	—	36
News paper	—	16	84	—	—	16
Livestock inspector	—	05	95	—	—	05
VAS/ Vet. doctor	—	10	90	—	—	10
KVK SMS	—	00	100	—	—	00
Agricultural magazines	—	05	95	—	—	05
Medicine shop	—	08	92	—	—	08
Seed/fertilizer shop	—	15	85	—	—	15
Relatives	100	00	00	—	—	100
Neighboures	100	00	00	—	—	100

disease and health management, again more than half of the respondents (57%) were belonging to low category followed by medium (28%) and high (15%). 68 per cent respondents were falling into low category of knowledge on milk and milk product processing followed by medium (26%) and high (06%). The findings show that respondents were having very knowledge on different aspects of livestock rearing although they are contributing maximum in this sector. This problem can be well taken by giving priority and trainings to the women on different aspects of livestock regularly.

Table 5. Knowledge profiles of the respondents regarding different aspects of livestock rearing (N = 100)

Characteristics	Category	No.	%
Feed and fodder	Low	72	72
	Medium	26	26
	High	02	02
Disease and health	Low	57	57
management	Medium	28	28
	High	15	15
Milk and milk product	Low	68	68
processing	Medium	26	26
	High	06	06

Information needs of respondents related to animal husbandry: Table 6 provided the details information on the information needs of the women involved in livestock sector. It is evident from the table that cent per cent women want information on Credit/subsidy schemes, Milk products and their preparation, marketing of milk and milk products, marketing of sheep/goat/pig/poultry, Livestock insurance scheme and Agencies providing livestock health services. It is necessary to understand that rearing livestock is not only important but management of the livestock products is also important. So information on the issues like, production and marketing of the livestock products and its value addition is also a very crucial area where information provision and trainings are required by the women.

Majority of the women (89.00%) told that information about the high yielding breeds of cattle, high yielding breeds of buffalo (90%) and good breeds of bullocks for ploughing (76%). With respect to health management 89 per cent respondents shared that they want information on the general health management to prevent diseases followed by Vaccination of animals for prevention of diseases (67%), Diseases of animals and their control (67%). It is important to note that the information on artificial insemination is less demanded by the women as this is the area are where their male partners are getting information and due to social stigma, it is understood that

Table 6. Information needs of respondents related to Animal husbandry*

Areas	Highly	Moderately	Less	Not
High yielding breeds of cattle	89	11	00	00
Good breeds of bullocks for ploughing	76	24	00	00
High yielding breeds of buffalo	90	10	00	00
Good breeds of goats	34	48	10	00
God breeds of sheep	00	00	00	00
Good breeds of Pig	00	00	00	00
Good variety of poultry for backyard farming	66	28	06	00
Artificial insemination	00	15	45	40
Feeding management of animals	80	20	00	00
General health management to prevent diseases	89	11	00	00
Housing management for animals	72	28	00	00
Vaccination of animals for prevention of diseases	67	33	00	00
Diseases of animals and their control	67	33	00	00
Credit/loan/subsidy schemes for starting livestock enterprise/farm	100	00	00	00
Milk products and their preparation	100	00	00	00
Marketing of milk and milk products	100	00	00	00
Marketing of sheep/goat/pig/poultry	100	00	00	00
Livestock insurance scheme	100	00	00	00
Record keeping	26	15	59	00
Agencies providing livestock health services	100	00	00	00

*Frequency and percentage is same as N = 100

it is the responsibility of the male partner to handle this factor. About 66 per cent respondents were said that information on good variety of poultry for backyard farming is also needed so that in case of any big loss in cattle sector, the loss can be incurred from the minor livestock rearing. Not a single respondent was asked for the information on the pig rearing or the sheep rearing, as not a single respondent was rearing the sheep and pig rearing was less preferred occupation in their culture. It is also good to not that majority (72%) respondents want information on housing management for animals. Only 26 per cent respondents asked for highly needed information on record keeping because generally, record keeping is done by their male counterpart and also illiteracy is a major barrier for the rural women to keep the records proper. So, it can be summarize from the table those women who are involved in livestock sector wants all type of information related to livestock sector starting from breed type to record keeping and marketing.

Relationship between knowledge of rural women with independent variables : Below Table -7 represents the relationship between knowledge of rural women on livestock rearing with independent variables. It is evident from the table that the variables age and caste are negatively correlated and significant at 5% level of significance with the knowledge of rural women regarding different aspects of livestock rearing. The variables like education of respondent, educational status of the family, family type and family size are positively correlated and significant at 5% level of significance with the knowledge of rural women regarding different aspects of livestock rearing. It can be reiterate from the finding that knowledge on livestock rearing is not a matter of age as knowledge of any practice can be developed through proper training and awareness with focus on skill development. In the same line, belonging to particular caste, education of respondent, educational status of the family, family type and family size also does not a matter of knowledge with livestock rearing. In the present finding, education of the respondent was also not found coefficient with knowledge on livestock rearing as all the studied respondents were illiterate. Knowledge on any aspect livestock rearing is very much affected by training, awareness and skill development etc.

Table 7. Relationship between Knowledge of rural women on livestock rearing with independent variables

Variables	Correlation coefficient
Age	-0.037
Caste	-0.129
Education of the respondent	0.023
Educational status of the family	0.159
Family type	0.098
Family size	0.227

Significant at 5% level of significance

CONCLUSION

The results clearly indicate there is higher involvement of women in livestock but poor knowledge as well as access to information. Besides, it women also want information on all aspects of livestock rearing so it becomes the responsibility of the extension worker or the scientists to train the women timely on the livestock rearing and make them empowered in this field as well besides other field so that the concept of sustainability can get a better stand. The potential of livestock sector for employment generation and economic empowerment can be harnessed through strategic human resource development and promotion of livestock based enterprises among rural women in this sector.

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