

Research Paper :

Participation and time spent in dairying activities by members of dairy cooperatives

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in Haryana State, India on a sample of 200 members of dairy cooperatives, comprising of 100 men and 100 women drawn from 10 villages of two-districts viz. Hisar and Mahendergarh. The gender analysis of extent of intergender involvement in twenty two dairy operations revealed that women were more involved in feed related activities, maintenance and dung management but in animal disease and management both men and women were equally involved occasionally while in marketing men had high involvement. Among six major dairy activities on the basis of weighted mean score (WMS) and ranks, it was revealed that participation varied between these activities on gender basis with women participation being higher in care and maintenance related activities, carried out mainly indoor and men with marketing and animal disease and management, carried out mainly outdoor. The total mean time spent by men in the six major activities, 2 hours 35 minutes and for women is 4 hour 21 minutes per day confirming that women spent more time than men in dairy related activities every day.

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In our country a mixed crop-livestock farming system is generally practiced. Most families keep a few cattle for food, nutritional security, income, status and wealth. Indian women along with men counterparts are extensively involved in numerous operations in crop and animal husbandry. Women have extensive workloads with dual responsibility for farm and household production, processing and care. In an Indian Himalayas study (1988) it has been documented that a pair of bullocks works 1064 hours, a man 1212 hours and a woman 3485 hours in a year on a one-hectare farm, a figure that illustrates women's significant contribution to agricultural production.

Livestock sector is emerging as an important facet for agricultural growth and is also considered as a potential sector for export earning. Today, India ranks number one in production of milk. This sector contributes nearly 25 per cent to the gross value of agricultural output at the national level and is a potential enterprise (Tiwari and Sharma, 2007). Livestock development is emerging as a major rural development activity and more so as an activity which is likely to benefit women directly (Ramkumar *et al.*, 2004; Chaudhary, 2005).

Today in India, there are 75,000 dairy cooperative societies, spread all over the country with a membership of 10 million. The farmer in the village is now assured of a better future due to these cooperatives (NDDB, 2005). The vast majority of the dairy cooperative membership is assumed by men and lately women dairy cooperatives

are being established. Rural farmers in the state of Haryana are engaged in varied agro-based activities, as land is a limiting factor. Dairying is the best suitable alternative in this situation for ensuring regular marketing of their produce, timely payment and other benefits (Grover and Sethi, 2005; Birthal and Taneja, 2006). In Haryana, milk producers have formed 4650 dairy cooperative societies at village level out of which 730 are women cooperatives (Gayatri, 2005).

Livestock patterns differ widely among ecological zones and socio-political systems. Women are not only centrally involved in milk production, but also in collection, processing and marketing of dairy products, roles which were often overlooked by development programmes (World Bank, 1991). Despite considerable involvement and contribution, women's role in livestock production has often been underestimated or, worse ignored. Gender-blindness is partly the result of a paternalistic bias, but also of the attitudes of women themselves, who may have been conditioned by their culture and society to undervalue the worth of the work they do. During the last decade, the gender issues have attracted the attention of many researchers, as well as that of government agencies. Keeping this in view the present investigation was undertaken to study the gender analysis of profile of members of dairy cooperatives, their participation and time spent in dairying activities.