

A study on extent of involvement of rural women in agro based enterprises

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ABSTRACT : The present study was conducted with 240 rural women who were engaged in both vegetable cultivation and livestock in 24 villages of three agro climatic zones of Assam, to know the extent of involvement of rural women in vegetable cultivation and livestock rearing. Data were collected personally by interview method. The findings revealed that majority of rural women had high involvement in vegetable cultivation and livestock rearing followed by medium and low involvement. The result of the study showed that the involvement of rural women in vegetable cultivation was significantly and positively related with marital status but not with age, caste, education, land holding, family occupation, family type, family size, organizational membership, socio economic status and mass media exposure. The findings revealed that the involvement of rural women in rearing of livestock was significantly and positively related with family occupation, family type and family size whereas there is no significant relationship between involvement of rural women in rearing of livestock and age, caste, education, land holding, organizational membership, socio-economic status and mass media exposure.

KEY WORDS : Involvement; Rural women, Agro-based enterprises, Vegetable cultivation, Livestock rearing

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INTRODUCTION

Rural women are involved in multiple occupations ranging from unpaid family labour to self-employed in their home or village or outside to generate income for themselves. Women are involved in a wider range of different agro based enterprises. Their direct and indirect contribution at the farm and home level along with livestock management operations not only help but also

led to increase in family income. It has been revealed that nearly 84 per cent of economically active women are engaged in agriculture and allied activities and greater numbers of women in India are not simply housewives but they are farmers too. Their participation in home and farm activities is dependent upon social, cultural and economic conditions in the area. It also varies from region to region and even within a region, their

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involvement varies widely among different family systems, caste, class and socio economic status. Thus, to through light on the real picture of involvement of rural women in agrobased enterprises the present study was undertaken.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in twenty four villages of three agro climatic zones of Assam. Three zones were purposively selected considering the maximum number of rural women engaged in different agro-based enterprises. From each zone Jorhat and Dibrugarh District of Upper Brahmaputra Valley Zone, Udalguri and Darrang District from North Bank Plain Zone and Kamrup (M) and Kamrup (R) District of Lower Brahmaputra Valley Zone were selected randomly. One sub-division from each district, one block from each subdivision, four villages from each block were selected by using simple random sampling method. Thus, twenty four (24) villages were selected for carrying out the present research study. Moreover, from the record of the blocks two agro-based enterprises in which majority of the Self Help Groups (SHG) were credit linked were selected. Thus, cultivation of vegetable crops and rearing of livestock including dairy, goatery, piggery, poultry and duckery were finally identified as prominent agro-based enterprises for the study. So, ten women who were mostly engaged in both vegetable cultivation and livestock rearing from each village from 24 villages were included as respondents for the study. The respondents were interviewed with the help of well structured interview schedule and analyzed by using suitable statistical techniques like, mean, frequency, percentage, standard deviation and correlation.

OBSERVATION AND ASSESSMENT

The results obtained from the present study are summarized below according to objectives of the study:

The data presented on Table 1 reveals that majority (52.92%) of the rural women were belonged to middle aged group *i.e.* within the age group of 31-40 years. As regards to marital status a large percentage of the rural women were married (70.83%). Findings also revealed that 49.56 per cent of the rural women were from OBC category and in case of education 8.33 per cent, 26.67 per cent, 28.75 per cent, 15.83 per cent, 2.92 per cent of rural women had the formal education up to primary level,

middle school level, high school level, higher secondary level and graduate level, respectively. Findings also revealed that 55.83 per cent of rural women belonged to the category of marginal farmer. In terms of family type majority of the rural women (79.17%) belonged to nuclear family. In case of family size majority of rural women (67.09%) belonged to small family size, and farming was the major family occupation (63.75%) of the rural women. In respect to the organizational membership every rural woman was having membership in at least one organization. Nearly 54.17 per cent of rural women belonged to middle socio-economic status followed by low (34.42%) and high (10.42%) categories of socio economic status.

Extent of involvement of rural women in vegetable cultivation:

The data presented in Table 2 indicates that majority of rural women were involved independently in cleaning of harvested crop (88.33%), seed cleaning (87.08%), grading of harvested crop (86.25%) and seed collection from harvested crop (83.33%). Furthermore, it appears from Table 2 that the rural women participated jointly in compost pit making (76.86%), storing of harvested crop (64.68%), seed treatment (62.50%), nursery raising of seedlings (50.42%), harvesting (45.00%), land preparation (48.75%) and mulching (44.17%).

The findings further shows that 40.83 per cent rural women had high involvement in vegetable cultivation followed by medium involvement (35.84%) and a low involvement (23.33%).

The data in Table 3 reveals that the involvement of rural women in vegetable cultivation was significantly and positively related with marital status and there is no significant relationship between involvement of rural women in vegetable cultivation and age, caste, education, land holding, family occupation, family type, family size, organizational membership and socio-economic status.

Extent of involvement of rural women in rearing of livestock:

The division of labour according to their involvement in different stages of rearing of livestock was considered in the presented study. The data presented in Table 4 indicate that majority of rural women were involved independently in providing daily feed (82.08%), cleaning of shed (79.16%), care of sick animals (74.58%), vaccination (70.83%) and disease control measures

(60.42%). Furthermore, it appears from Table 4 that the rural women participated jointly in purchasing of feed (70.83%), marketing (58.33%), purchasing of breed (49.99%), collection of raw material for shed making (45.83%) and identification of site (45.41%). It might be due to the availing loan in their respective names for which they were bound to actively participate in rearing

of livestock.

Fig. 2 shows majority (42.50%) of rural women have high level of involvement in rearing of livestock followed by 35.00 per cent have medium level and 22.50 per cent have low level of involvement in rearing of livestock. It may be due to their high interest in earning income through rearing of livestock for supplementing their family for

Table 1 : Personal and socio-economic characteristics of the rural women

Sr. No.	Characteristics	Category	Frequency (n=240)	Percentage
1. Personal characteristics				
	Age	Young (19-30 years)	83	34.58
		Middle(31-40 years)	127	52.92
		Older(41 to 52 years)	30	12.5
	Marital status	Unmarried	46	19.17
		Married	170	70.83
		Widow	24	10
2. Socio- economic characteristic				
	Caste	ST	30	12.50
		SC	32	13.33
		General	59	24.59
		OBC	119	49.58
	Education	Illiterate	19	7.92
		Can read and write	23	9.58
		Primary school	20	8.33
		Middle school	64	26.67
		H.S.L.C.	69	28.75
	Land holding	H.S.S.L.C.	38	15.83
		Graduate	7	2.92
		Marginal (Below 1.0 hectare)	134	55.83
		Small (1.1 – 2.0 hectare)	65	27.08
		Semi Medium (2.1 – 4.0 hectare)	31	12.92
	Family size	Medium (4.1 – 10.0 hectare)	10	4.17
		Small (up to 5 members)	161	67.09
		Medium (6-8 members)	56	23.33
		Large (9 and above)	23	9.58
	Family type	Nuclear	190	79.17
		Joint	30	12.50
		Extended	20	8.33
	Family occupation	Daily wage earner	10	4.17
		Independent profession (mason, carpenter, electrician, mechanic)	17	7.08
		Farming	153	63.75
		Business	39	16.25
		Service	21	8.75
	Organizational membership	Membership of one organization (SHG)	240	100
		Membership of more than one organization	30	12.6
		Office bearers in organization	120	50
	Socio-economic status	Low	85	35.41
		Medium	130	54.17
		High	25	10.42

better living

The finding in Table 5 reveals that the involvement of rural women in rearing of livestock was significantly and positively related with family occupation, family type and family size and there is no significant relationship between involvement of rural women in rearing of

livestock and age, caste, education, land holding, organizational membership and socio economic status

Conclusion :

The study reveals that the involvement of rural women in different activities of vegetable cultivation and

Table 2 : Distribution of rural women according to extent of involvement of rural women in vegetable cultivation (n=240)

Activities	Type and extent of involvement (%)					
	Independent		Joint		No involvement	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Land preparation	15	6.25	117	48.75	108	45.00
Layout of plot	13	5.42	102	42.50	125	52.08
Compost pit making	12	5.04	183	76.86	45	18.9
Fencing	4	1.68	3	1.26	233	97.86
Buying of seeds	12	5.04	74	31.08	154	64.68
Seed treatment	7	2.92	150	62.50	83	34.58
Nursery raising of seedlings	21	8.75	121	50.42	98	40.83
Transplanting/Planting/sowing of seeds	178	74.76	62	25.24	-	
Intercultural operations						
Irrigation	59	24.58	61	25.41	120	49.99
Weeding	145	60.42	95	39.58	0	0.00
Earthing up	96	40.32	100	42	44	18.33
Mulching	90	37.50	106	44.17	44	18.33
Drainage	96	40.32	100	42	44	18.33
Pruning/training	86	35.84	98	40.83	56	23.33
Application of fertilizer	83	34.58	105	43.75	52	21.67
Application of manure	154	64.16	86	36.12		
Application of plant protection measure	96	40.32	100	42.00	44	18.48
Harvesting	102	42.50	108	45.00	30	12.50
Cleaning of harvested crop	212	88.33	28	11.67		
Grading of harvested crop	207	86.25	33	13.75		
Storing of harvested crop	86	36.12	154	64.68		
Seed collection from harvested crops	200	83.33	28	11.67	12	5.00
Seed cleaning	209	87.08	31	12.92		
Marketing	24	10.08	29	12.18	187	78.54

Table 3 : Relationship between extent of involvement in vegetable cultivation and selected independent variables (n=240)

Sr. No.	Independent variable	'r' value
1.	Age	0.196
2.	Marital status	0.241 *
3.	Caste	0.045
4.	Education	0.114
5.	Land holding	0.133
6.	Family occupation	0.161
7.	Family type	0.18
8.	Family size	0.116
9.	Organizational membership	0.059
10.	Socio-economic status	- 0.120

** = Correlation is highly significant at the 0.01 level (2- tailed)

* = Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 – tailed)

rearing of livestock are high. So, it can be concluded that in spite of engagement in household works most of the rural women dedicate their valuable service in earning income through agro based enterprises more particularly through vegetable cultivation and rearing of livestock for

supplementing their family income for better living. This finding might help the extension workers, development professionals to plan their economic empowerment program of rural women through vegetable cultivation and rearing of livestock. Similar work related to the

Table 4 : Distribution of rural women according to extent of involvement in rearing of livestock

Activities	Type and extent of involvement					
	Independent		Joint		No involvement	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Identification of site	37	15.42	109	45.41	94	39.17
Collection of raw material for shed making	24	10.00	110	45.83	206	85.83
Construction of shed	59	24.58	98	40.83	83	34.58
Selection of Breed	118	49.17	62	25.83	60	25.00
Purchasing of breed	59	24.58	120	49.99	61	25.41
Purchasing of feed	32	13.33	170	70.83	38	15.83
Providing daily feed	197	82.08	43	17.91	0	0.00
Cleaning of shed	190	79.16	50	20.83	0	0.00
Vaccination	170	70.83	70	29.16	0	0.00
Care of sick animals	179	74.58	61	25.41	0	0.00
Disease control measures	145	60.42	95	39.58	0	0.00
Consultation with doctor	97	40.42	14	5.83	129	53.75
Marketing	79	32.92	140	58.33	21	8.75

Table 5 : Relationship between extent of involvement in rearing of livestock and selected independent variables

Sr. No.	Independent variable	'r' value
1.	Age	0.169
2.	Marital status	0.004
3.	Caste	0.17
4.	Education	0.07
5.	Land holding	0.209
6.	Family occupation	0.221*
7.	Family type	0.256 *
8.	Family size	0.243 *
9.	Organizational membership	0.199
10.	Socio-economic status	-0.035

** = Correlation is highly significant at the 0.01 level (2- tailed)

* = Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 – tailed)

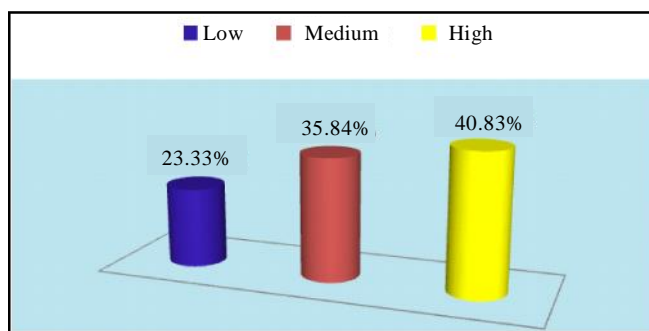


Fig. 1 : Overall involvement of rural women in vegetable cultivation (%)

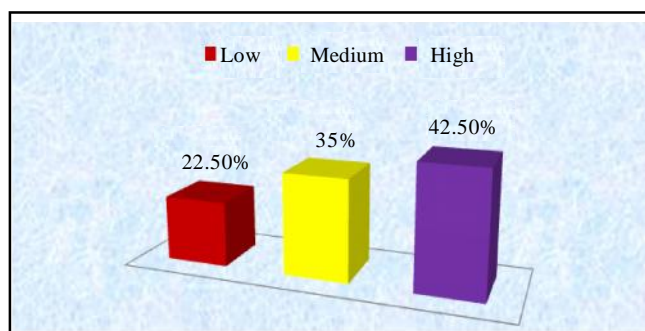


Fig. 2 : Overall involvement of rural women in rearing of livestock (%)

present investigation was also done by Bagaraja (2013); Goel (2014); Antwal *et al.* (2015) and Gopalkrishnana (2013).

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