



GUJJAR WOMEN IN BOVINE ECONOMY: A CASE STUDY OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

Dr. Virender Koundal

Assistant Professor , Department Of Economics ,
University Of Jammu.

ABSTRACT

In Himachal, rural women constitute the largest group of people working on agricultural and animal husbandry activities. They spend a lot of time not only in managing their homes but also managing their animals but most of the time their contribution remain unrecognized. Therefore, an attempt has been made to know the role of women in bovine economy of Gujjars in Himachal Pradesh.

The study was conducted in two districts of H.P namely Kangra and Chamba. Similarly from tehsils lists of each selected districts, two were selected randomly for the study purpose namely, Nurour, Jasoor, Tissa and Chamba. Similarly, from tehsils nomadic and semi nomadic families were selected randomly for the study. All the households whose occupation was animal husbandry were taken as respondents making total sample of 100.

Respondents' different socio-economic conditions showed that most of the nomadic women who were participating in the dairy activities were illiterate, older age, rearing smaller as well as larger herds. Their role in various animal husbandry operations were preparing feed for animals, providing water to the animals, cleaning animal shed, grazing animals, milking, marketing milk and milk products, cutting and bringing fodder etc.

It shows that Gujjar women play pivotal role in managing home as well as animal husbandry. Their contribution in the bovine economy is more prominent than their male counterpart but most of the time their contribution remain unrecognized, underestimated or ignored.

KEYWORDS: Animal Husbandry, Bovine Economy, Nomadic, Animal Husbandry Operations.

INTRODUCTION

Animal husbandry in Himachal Pradesh plays a very major role in the development of Himachal Pradesh economy. The livestock sector has registered a growth rate of 2.37 per cent per annum during the period 2004-05 to 2010-11. The contribution of livestock sector has increased from 1597 crore in 2004-05 to 1990 crore in 2010-11 (**kumar, Lal and Priyanka, 2012**). At present, livestock contribute about 28 percent to the agricultural sector and 15.27 percent in the GSDP for 2007-08 at current prices (**DE&S Report Govt. H.P, 2011**). So it means Livestock production is an integral part of Himachal economy and plays a vital role in the state economy. For this Gujjars contribution is very significant, they raise buffaloes and are pastoral in few districts of the state. Their economy mainly depends on the products of their flocks and the use of natural pastures around the year (**Bhasin, 1988**).

Women are involved in livestock production activities. In animal husbandry nomadic Gujjar women play multiple roles. Women take care of animal production. Their activities vary widely ranging from care of



animals, grazing, and fodder collection, cleaning of animal sheds to processing milk and livestock products (**Bogohain and Akand, 2011**). In livestock management, indoor jobs like milking, feeding, cleaning, etc. are done by women in 90% of families while management of male animals and fodder production are effected by men. Women accounted for 93% of total employment in dairy production (**World Bank, 1991**). They spend a lot of time not only in managing their homes but also managing their animals, but most of the time their contribution remain unrecognized. Despite their considerable involvement and contribution, women's role in livestock production has often been underestimated or, ignored. Therefore, an attempt is made to know the role of nomadic females in animal husbandry operations.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in two districts of Himach Pradesh namely Kangra and Chamba. Similarly from tehsil lists of each selected district, two were selected randomly for the study purpose viz Nurpur and Jasor from Kangra district and Tissa and Chamba from Chamba district for the study. Similarly from tehsils nomadic families were selected randomly for the study. All the nomadic households whose occupation was animal husbandry were taken as respondents making total sample of 100. Few independent variables namely age, family size, annual income and livestock size were selected along with the dependent variable i.e. time spent of nomadic women in animal husbandry. The data were collected through interview. Statistical methods used for drawing inferences were percentile, frequency, mean etc.

FINDINGS

Table-1 Distribution of respondents according to Age groups

Age	Tehsils in Kangra District		Tehsils in Chamba District		Total
	Nurpur	Jasoor	Tissa	Chamba	
Young (17-34)	6 (24%)	3 (12%)	1 (4%)	7 (28%)	17
Middle (35-40)	11 (44%)	9 (36%)	10 (40%)	8 (32%)	38
Old (Above 40)	8 (32%)	13 (52%)	14 (56%)	10 (40%)	45
Total	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	100 (100%)

Source: Survey Data

Age: Table-1 reveals that majority of the nomadic respondents in the study area varies from middle age group to older age group. This trend is noticed in Jasoor, Tissa and Chamba tehsils, respectively whereas in Nurpur majority of the respondents are belonged to Middle age group. However, in total sample, maximum respondents were from older age group followed by middle.

Table-2 Distribution of respondents according to Position in the family

Position in the Family	Tehsils in Kangra District		Tehsils in Chamba District		Total
	Nurpur	Jasoor	Tissa	Chamba	
Head	1 (4%)	-	3 (12%)	1 (4%)	5 (5%)
Other	24 (96%)	25 (100%)	22 (88%)	24 (96%)	95 (95%)
Total	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	100 (100%)

Source: Survey Data

Respondents' position in the family: Respondents position was estimated in terms of either head or others and the results revealed that more than 95 percent Gujjar women were not heading the family. However, the table-2 indicates, women belonged to Tissa tehsil were heading more family than other tehsils.

Table-3 Distribution of respondents according to Family size

Family Size	Tehsils in Kangra District		Tehsils in Chamba District		Total
	Nurpur	Jasoor	Tissa	Chamba	
Small (less than 5)	6 (24%)	11 (44%)	18 (72%)	3 (12%)	38 (38%)
Medium (5-7)	7 (28%)	12 (48%)	6 (24%)	16 (64%)	41 (41%)
Large (more than 7)	12 (48%)	2 (8%)	1 (4%)	6 (24%)	21 (21%)
Total	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	100 (100%)

Source: Survey Data

Family size: The Table-3 also reveals that different category of family size differs in different area. In Tissa tehsils, majority of the respondents were having small family size whereas in Nurpur tehsil, majority was of larger family size. However, in Jasoor family size varies from medium to small and in Chamba tehsil family size varies from medium to large.

Table-4 Distribution of respondents according to Family type

Family Type	Tehsils in Kangra District		Tehsils in Chamba District		Total
	Nurpur	Jasoor	Tissa	Chamba	
Nuclear	16 (64%)	24 (96%)	25 (100%)	20 (80%)	85 (85%)
Joint	9 (36%)	1 (4%)	-	5 (20%)	15 (15%)
Total	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	100 (100%)

Source: Survey Data

Family type: Irrespective of tehsils, majority of the respondents were belonged to nuclear family. It shows that Gujjar community is also supporting nuclear family system.

Table-5, Distribution of respondents according to herd size of buffalo

No. of Buffaloes	Tehsils in Kangra District		Tehsils in Chamba District		Total
	Nurpur	Jasoor	Tissa	Chamba	
Less than 5	12 (48%)	13 (52%)	8 (32%)	15 (60%)	48 (48%)
5-10	10 (40%)	10 (40%)	15 (60%)	8 (32%)	43 (43%)
More than 10	3 (12%)	2 (8%)	2 (8%)	2 (8%)	9 (9%)
Total	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	100 (100%)

Source: Survey Data

Herd size: Table 5, indicated that the respondents of Tissa tehsil maintains a 5 to 10 herd size (60%) but in other areas viz. Nurpur, Jasoor and Chamba nearly, 50 percent of the respondents reared less than 5 herd size in respect of their buffalo possession. It has also found that 9 % of the families reared more than 10 flock size as evident from the aggregated data.

Table-6, Distribution of respondents according to respondent's education

Respondents Education	Tehsils in Kangra District		Tehsils in Chamba District		Total
	Nurpur	Jasoor	Tissa	Chamba	
Illiterate	22 (88%)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	22 (88%)	94 (94%)
literate(Traditional)	-	-	-	-	-
Primary	2 (8%)	-	-	2 (8%)	4 (4%)
Middle	1 (4%)	-	-	1 (4%)	2 (2%)
Matric and Above	-	-	-	-	-
Total	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	100 (100%)

Source: Survey Data

Respondent's Education: The level of education of nomadic Gujjars in both the districts was quite low (6%) for want of proper facilities. Majority of the respondents of the study area, were illiterate. No respondent from Jassor and Tissa were obtained education at any level. This table also reveals that nomadic women Gujjars (4 %) also had received education up to primary level and middle level (2%).

WOMEN IN ANIMAL HUSBANDRY ACTIVITIES:

Table-7, reveals that the average time spent by the respondents women in preparing feed for animals by the Gujjras women of Nurpur, Jasoor, Tissa and Chamba were 38, 37, 28 and 18 minutes, respectively. Interestingly women Chambai tehsil did not spent much time for this activity indicated the practice was not a job for women in this tehsil. In this aspect, women from Nurpur tehsil spent more time in preparing feed than other tehsil's. In case of grazing animals received almost similar pattern of time spent by all the respondents in all areas. The total data shows that on an average, the respondents spent 20.25 minutes for this task. Similarly, in case of cutting and bringing fodder is concerned 19, 34, 7 and 10 minutes spent by the female. Providing water to the animal differs slightly among the respondents of different areas. Average time spent on providing water to the animals was 21.25 minutes. In case of cleaning animals, the respondents of Jasoor tehsil spent minimum time i.e. 9 minutes whereas respondents of Chamba tehsil spent maximum time (20 minutes). The mean time spent for the activity was 13.75 minutes. Time spent on cleaning of animals shed was similar in case of Chamba and Tissa tehsils which was about 18 minutes. However, Maximum time spent by women belonged to Jasoor.

Milking of the animal was found to be another important activity where most of the women participated. Gujjar women from Nurpur and Jasoor area spent about 21 minutes approximately whereas women from other tehsils spent little lesser time (about 15 to 16 minutes). In respect of selling milk and milk products, time spent was different according to the distance covered. Average time spent on selling was 40 minutes.

Table-7: Participation and Time spent of Nomadic Gujjar women in different animal husbandry Activities

S. No.	Activity	Nurpur mean	Jasoor mean	Chamba mean	Tissa mean	Total mean
1	Preparing feed for animals	38	37	18	28	30.25
2	Grazing Animals	32	24	16	9	20.25
3	Cutting and bringing fodder/grass	19	34	10	7	17.50
4	Providing water to the animals	23	24	20	19	21.50
5	Cleaning animals	14	9	20	12	13.75
6	Cleaning animal shed	22	26	18	18	21
7	Milking	21	21	16	15	18.25
8	Selling milk	40	30	50	40	40

Source: Survey data

CONCLUSION

It shows that nomadic Gujjar women play pivotal role in managing home and animal husbandry in particular. Women's contributions in few animal husbandry activities are more prominent than their male counterpart. Therefore, it can be said that success of livestock enterprise depends on both male and women Gujjars and any approach for upliftment of livestock economy demands to focus both the parties.

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