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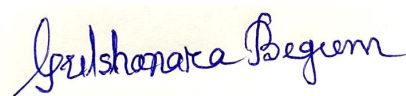
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(Gulshanara Begum)

## ABSTRACT

A study entitled “Livelihood sustainability of rural women through livestock enterprises was conducted in the purposively selected Goalpara district of Assam in order to i) find out the socio-economic profile of rural women participating in livestock enterprises, ii) to study their nature and extent of participation in livestock management and production activities, iii) to estimate the impact of livestock enterprises in livelihood sustainability and iv) to study their role in enhancing food security through livestock products. The sample to the study was constituted by 350 rural women 175 each from tribal dominated and non tribal village selected at random from the comprehensive list of form women prepared from twenty randomly selected villages of the district. Secondary data for the study were gathered from review of literature, reports prepared by different govt. departments, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Agricultural Research Station, Bank and Financial Institution and some non-govt. organizations, while the primary data were collected by the researcher herself personally with the held of a pretested reliable and valid interview schedule.

The findings of the study revealed that majority of the rural women were middle aged (25-45 yrs.), read upto middle school having medium level of family education and medium sized nuclear family (3-6 members). Majority of them participated in training programs on livestock of upto 3 days (64.28%) and had agriculture as their primary occupation. An overwhelming majority of them produced milk of upto 5.20 liters annually (85.17%), meat of upto 679 Kg. annually (91.14%) and eggs 753 nos. annually (95.43%). In respect of income from livestock jointly of them (90.57%) fell in medium category (Rs. 4290 – 44632 annually), whereas 64.29 percent had also medium income from other sources (Rs. 23406.07 – Rs. 26454.00 annually). Consequently, 90.00 percent of them medium total income from all sources (Rs. 10736 to 85040). Majority of them had medium level of social participation (68.86%), mass media exposure (74.00%), extension contact 79.14%), participation in decision making in livestock management and marketing (72.00%) and knowledge in improved livestock farming (68.29%). Majority of the rural women participated in decision making in respect of their involvement in breeding, feeding and treatment of animals.

The non-tribal women had significantly higher family education, smaller size of land holding, larger family size, higher milk yield, lower meat production, higher mass media exposure and extension contact, higher level of participation in decision making in livestock management and marketing and lower level of knowledge in improved livestock farming than their tribal counterpart. However, they did not differ significantly in respect of income from livestock. Some of the socio-economic factors of rural women were found to have significant impact on livestock production. These were extension contact, mass media exposure, knowledge in improved livestock farming, family size, participation in decision making in livestock management and marketing, land holding etc. The non tribal women spent longer time in livestock related activities that too with higher frequency in comparison with the tribal women. But their natural participation almost similar, which was long participation or joint participation with husband or in-laws.

The study also revealed significant association of participation of rural women in livestock related activities with household food security. Further 90 percent of the rural women in the study area belonged landless and marginal farm families and irrespective of their ethnicity realized the role of livestock enterprise in livelihood sustainability. But the non-tribal women had perceived higher level of livelihood sustainability. In the same manner, non tribal women had perceived higher level of household food security through livestock products, lastly knowledge in improved livestock farming, improved management participation in livestock related activities had significant association with livelihood sustainability for rural women.

# CONTENTS

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
<b>I</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH DESIGN</b>	<b>1-23</b>
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Concept and definitions	4
1.3	Objectives	17
1.4	Hypothesis	18
1.5	Methodology and data collection	18
1.6	Justification for undertaking the study	22
1.7	Chapterization	23
<b>II</b>	<b>PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA, GOALPARA DISTRICT OF ASSAM</b>	<b>24-36</b>
2.1	Study area: Goalpara district of Assam	25
2.2	Historical background of Goalpara district	25
2.3	Geographical features and agro ecology of Goalpara district	26
2.4	Administrative features	28
2.5	Demographic pattern of Goalpara district	30
2.6	Demography of Assam	30
2.7	Economy of Goalpara district	30
2.8	Identification of agro eco-situations (AES)	31
2.9	Land utilization and irrigation facilities	32
2.10	Village level infrastructures related to health and sanitation	32
2.11	Infrastructures and support services in agriculture, storage facilities, transporting and marketing	33
2.12	Household, household amenities	33
2.13	Workers profile	33
2.14	Agro processing unit, sericulture and fisheries sectors	34
2.15	Extension reforms in agriculture and allied sectors	34
2.16	Infrastructures and support services in livestock sector	35
2.17	Livestock resources and livestock products in the district	35

<b>III</b>	<b>REVIEW OF LITERATURE</b>	<b>37-59</b>
3.1	Socio-economic profile of the women participating in livestock enterprises.	38
3.2	Livelihood sustainability of women through livestock enterprises	43
3.3	Livestock enterprises	54
<b>IV</b>	<b>LIVESTOCK WEALTH AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO INDIAN ECONOMY</b>	<b>60-69</b>
4.1	Livestock wealth, products, and contribution in India	61
4.2	Livestock sector its various components and livestock products in Assam	63
4.3	Contribution from livestock sector in Goalpara district	69
<b>V</b>	<b>SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILES OF RURAL WOMEN PARTICIPATING IN LIVESTOCK ENTERPRISES</b>	<b>70-120</b>
5.1	Age	70
5.2	Education (self)	73
5.3	Family's educational qualification	74
5.4	Family type	76
5.5	Possession of cultivable land	77
5.6	Possession of total land	78
5.7	Classification of the respondents of the basis their land sizes	79
5.8	Family size of respondents	80
5.9	Participation in training programme of livestock and poultry	82
5.10	Primary occupation of the respondents	84
5.11	Milk yield of the respondents	85
5.12	Annual meat production by the respondents	87
5.13	Egg production by the respondents annually	88
5.14	Livestock possession of the respondents	89
5.15	Species- wise livestock possession	91
5.16	Income from livestock	92
5.17	Income of the respondents from sources other than livestock	93
5.18	Total annual income of the respondents	95
5.19	Social participation	96
5.20	Mass media exposure of the respondents	97
5.21	Extension contact	98

5.22	Participation in decision making in livestock management and marketing	99
5.23	Knowledge in improved livestock farming	101
5.24	Mode of participation in decision making in livestock management and marketing	103
5.25	Awareness of the respondents towards govt. programme for livestock development	106
5.26	Distribution of the respondents on the basis of their receipt/non receipt of govt. subsidies through bank linkage/other financial institutions for livestock	108
5.27	Relation and analysis of socio-economic variable of the respondents with their total livestock population	108
5.28	Regression analysis of socio-economic variable of the respondents on their livestock population	110
5.29	Relation analysis of socio-economic variable with milk production	111
5.30	Regression analysis of the socio-economic variable on milk production	112
5.31	Relational analysis of socio-economic variable with egg production	113
5.32	Regression analysis of socio-economic variable with egg production	114
5.33	Relational analysis of socio-economic variable with income from livestock	115
5.34	Regression analysis of socio-economic variable with income from livestock	117
5.35	Relational analysis of socio-economic variable with meat production	118
5.36	Regression analysis of socio-economic variable with meat production	120
<b>VI</b>	<b>NATURE AND EXTEND OF PARTICIPATION OF FEMALE LABOUR IN LIVESTOCK ENTERPRISES</b>	<b>121-146</b>
6.1	Improved livestock management practices	122
6.2	Involvement in vaccination practices in different species	125
6.3	Concentrate feeding in livestock and poultry	127
6.4	Deworming of livestock and poultry	129
6.5	Pregnancy diagnosis by the help of veterinarian	129
6.6	Fodder cultivation	130
6.7	Length of time spent in activities related livestock enterprise	132
6.8	Level of participation in livestock related activities	133
6.9	Frequency of female participation activity wise.	135