

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.