

Gender Mainstreaming through Livestock Entrepreneurship

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ABSTRACT

Women share of workforce in agriculture, livestock, forestry and fishery is more than 50 per cent in all states. Despite considerable involvement and contribution of women in the society, gender inequalities exist in access to technologies, credit, information, inputs and services including land and livestock and their contribution is rarely acknowledged. Participation of women in economic activities is now emerging as a universal phenomenon. Social and economic empowerment through entrepreneurial skill of women is the key factor for overall development of any country. Challenges usually faced by women entrepreneurs in India include low literacy rate (60% of women are still illiterate), visualized role of women as confined to household activities only, lack of access to resources, lack of motivation, lack of support from family members, lack of suitable infrastructure, lack of marketing facilities and lack of proper storage facilities in rural areas. Besides these, they are also plagued by low risk bearing ability, lack of information regarding new technologies, lack of training, lack of finance and other social and cultural constraints. The present paper is an attempt to highlight the interwoven nexus of gender mainstreaming, women empowerment, livestock and rural women. The paper also suggests some of the approaches to develop women entrepreneurship in livestock sector.

Keywords: Aquaculture, Dairy, Entrepreneurship, Gender, Livestock, Poultry

INTRODUCTION

India is an agriculture based country and livestock sector is an integral component of it. It is a source of food, income, employment and foreign exchange. For small income producers, it provides draught power and organic fertilizer for crop production; serves as store of wealth and means of transportation as well (Garcia *et al.*, 2006). About 90 per cent of livestock is owned by small farmers and landless rural households. These small holders, especially the landless livestock holders, are extensively dependent on income from the sale of milk and animals to meet their daily household expenses. Even in the mixed farming systems, livestock is the main source of income for rural households and a source of productive employment for the poor. The livestock production is largely in the hands of women and they are performing

phenomenal work in the rural areas (Waters Bayers, 1985).

Most of the livestock activities are incomplete without the assistance of women. Economic Survey 2017-18 says that with growing rural to urban migration by men, there is 'feminisation' of agriculture sector, with increasing number of women in multiple roles as cultivators, entrepreneurs, and labourers. In fact animal husbandry is becoming feminized and they contribute 60 to 80 per cent of labour in the animal husbandry (Younas *et al.*, 2007). They undertake various activities of livestock management such as fodder collection, grazing of animals, care of animals, feeding, watering, and health care, management, milking, cleaning of animal sheds etc. Their involvement in the post-harvest operations like household-level processing, value addition is the exclusive

responsibilities of women. They also prepare cooking fuel by mixing dung with twigs and crop residues. So one can say rural women remain busy from dawn to dusk in various agricultural activities and livestock management.

Women constitute around 50 per cent of the global population. A large number of women around the world are unwaged. The world economy suffers a lot because of a disproportionate opportunity for women at work places. In India, concept of gender sensitization is of recent origin. Women have become aware about their rights and situations and entered in different fields of business. They have established their own successful business empires. They are contributing towards the growth of economy and improvement of their socio economic conditions, however, their participation in decision making activities is minimal (Nain and Kumar, 2010). Government of India has given due importance to gender sensitization and women empowerment in the country (Borkar *et al.*, 2017)

Gender Mainstreaming and Women Empowerment

Gender mainstreaming is an approach to policy-making that takes into account both women's and men's interests and concerns. The concept of gender mainstreaming was first introduced at the 1985 Nairobi World Conference on Women. Women have undergone a radical transformation from merely a homemaker to a dynamic multifaceted personality contributing to the socio-economic growth worldwide. As per NSSO, the present share of workforce in agriculture, livestock, forestry and fishery is more than 50 per cent in all states. Despite considerable involvement and contribution of women in the society, their contribution has not been duly acknowledged. Significant gender inequalities also exist in access to technologies, credit, information, inputs and services probably because of inequities in ownership of productive assets including land and livestock. The process of creating this knowledge and awareness 'of' and responsibility 'for' gender among professionals enabling them to address gender issues in appropriate and most effective ways is called 'gender mainstreaming'. Mainstreaming is not about adding a "woman's component" or even a "gender equality component" into an existing activity. It goes beyond increasing women's

participation; it means bringing the experience, knowledge, and interests of women and men in any policy, programme, reform or activity or any developmental agenda.

Similarly, women empowerment refers to the creation of an environment for women where they can take decisions of their own for their personal benefits as well as society. It is an active, multidimensional process which enables women to realize their potential and powers in all spheres of life including economic empowerment. Economic empowerment is nothing but making women aware about their role /importance in economic development and provide them space for attaining financial independence and account their significant contributions in an enterprise.

Livestock and Rural Women

In India, women in animal husbandry and livestock sector constitute 69 per cent of the labor force as against 35 per cent in crop farming (Economic Survey 2002-03). They form the backbone of agriculture and allied activities, comprising the majority of agricultural labourers and play a significant and crucial role in agriculture and livestock developmental activities. Livestock production is largely in the hands of women. In fact animal husbandry is becoming feminized Women do a bulk of livestock related activities like fodder collection, feeding, health care of animals, watering, milking and household level processing (Planning Commission, 2012). Women accounted for 93 per cent of total employment in dairy production (Qureshi *et al.*, 2016). Depending upon the economic status, women perform the tasks Such as fodder collection, feeding, watering, and health care, management, milking and household-level processing, value addition and marketing etc. are performed by women. Despite of their significant role and considerable involvement and contribution in livestock management and production, women's control over livestock and its products is negligible and there is significant gender inequalities exist in access to technologies, credit, information, inputs and services probably because of inequities in ownership of productive assets including land and livestock. Therefore, there is a need to correct gender bias in livestock sector, veterinary education, research and service delivery systems as to enhance the effectiveness of women-oriented livestock development programs.

Developing women entrepreneurs through livestock sector

Right efforts on from all areas are required in the development of women entrepreneurs and their greater participation in the livestock based entrepreneurial activities. Some efforts which can be taken into account for effective development of women entrepreneurs in livestock sector may be considering women as specific target group for livestock based developmental programmers, vocational training to women community enabling them to understand the production process and production management including management skills, encouraging women's participation in decision-making enhancing professional competence and leadership skills, removing psychological causes of failure like lack of self-confidence and fear of success, continuous monitoring and improvement of animal husbandry related training content, capacity building in marketability and profitability of products and continued counselling through committed NGOs, psychologists, managerial experts and technical personnel to existing and emerging livestock women entrepreneurs

Gender Mainstreaming through Livestock Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneur associated to livestock farming / business, production of livestock related raw materials and livestock related processing industries is considered as livestock entrepreneur. In other terms, a person who is linked directly or indirectly to the animal husbandry or livestock sector is referred as livestock entrepreneur. Since the dairy industry has become more consumer oriented due to health consciousness and increase in purchasing power leads to development of innovative practices of organized retailing, supply chain management, balanced product portfolio, product development. It leads to increase demand for milk and milk products in recent years. Dairy farming is one of the important enterprises which dominate the economic activities of the woman in the rural areas of India. Women accounted for 93 per cent of total employment in dairy production. Depending upon the economic status, women perform the tasks of collecting fodder, watering, feeding and other animal management activities. Therefore, it serves as a profitable

enterprise for rural women as they are well aware about animal behaviour and production characteristics. Women can be guided for small scale dairy farming and commercial dairy business. They can start their own dairy farms by rearing small number of animals and with proper business plan, scientific management and care can ensure maximum production and profit from dairy farming business. If woman has to expand her dairy enterprise on a commercial basis successfully, she has to adopt new and modern dairy farming tools, time and energy saving tools/ drudgery reducing technologies, etc. Also specific entrepreneurial skills of dairy and poultry farmers need to be recognised and capacity building interventions need to be initiated for their socio economic upliftment (Gupta *et al.*, 2013). As there is more than 60 per cent fodder deficit in India, they can also start seed /fodder banks in the potential areas. Women can combine together, purchase fertile land and produce quality fodder and supply them to the nearby livestock farmers. For this they need to undergo specialized trainings from various organisations.

High demand for goat and its products with potential of good economic returns have been deriving many progressive farmers to take up the goat enterprise on a commercial scale. Goat is mainly reared for milk, meat, sale of breeding stock as an income source. This versatility allows the producer to plan and operate a more stable economic production unit. In many parts of the India, some of the goat breeds are raised for fiber, meat, and milk and cheese production. In general, the role of women in goat keeping is very significant in the rural families and goat is the most important means through which rural women are able to contribute meaningfully to the cash needs for her and their family members. Most of the activities like sale/purchase of goat, grazing of goats, feeding and watering, care of kids, cleaning of pen and household maintenance, milking of goats, health management and breeding management of goats were performed mainly by women. Thus, goat rearing is the most useful way of women's earning those who stay at home. Among the livestock livelihood, goats are more economical than cattle as they are less investment oriented. An increased level of adoption of technologies and availability of good quality breeding stock would be

essential to make the commercial goat farming more successful. Simultaneously, emerging favourable market conditions and easy accessibility to improved goat technologies are also making this enterprise a profitable venture for these women.

Poultry farming is another important livestock activity for rural women as it generates cash income and provides employment opportunities and improves household nutrition. Rural women are primarily responsible for the care and management of the bird under backyard poultry systems. Poultry rearing has significant advantages over other livestock activities to rural women, because: it is easy to manage and can be taken up under diversified agro-climatic conditions. It can provide quick returns and constant source of income throughout the year, as it enjoys good market demand and prices. Backyard Poultry Farming (BYPF) enhances women's social status and decision-making power in the household by increasing women's income and can be used as a tool to reduce poverty in rural areas. The BYPF rearing had shown a remarkable impact on women's livelihoods across the country. Since women got to deal with different people while purchasing and marketing birds or eggs, these women slowly gained confidence. Various centrally and state government sponsored schemes are promoted for empowering the BPL families mainly the women farmers eg. National Livestock Mission (NLM), Rural Backyard Poultry Development (RBPD) which covers beneficiaries from BPL families to enable them to gain supplementary income and nutritional

The Indian aquaculture is mainly male-dominated and that is largely because it involves fieldwork, travel and living in remote areas. But it has increased significantly with the emergence of fish processing as a growth area within the manufacturing sector in the past years. A recent FAO study found that women's involvement in rural aquaculture had led to a 10- 20 per cent increase in fish production and almost all women fish farmers shown a significant improvement in their socioeconomic conditions. Women play a major role in aquaculture production as labourers and managers of the production process: fishing, processing and marketing. Women form the core of the industrial fisheries labour force through their involvement in postharvest or processing activities. The involvement

of women in these activities generates supplemental income to support their families. Some of the government agencies, NGOS, NABARD, NFDB have identified several fisheries technologies, which could facilitate women to become entrepreneurs and enhance their incomes. The various fields that can be chosen by women entrepreneurs in this sector are mainly composite fish culture prawn culture, integrated fish culture along with horticulture and animal husbandry, backyard hatcheries, fish-feed manufacturing, fish marketing (wholesale/retail), fish processing and packaging, value addition, net mending/repairs, ornamental fish farming etc. Financial support to these enterprises is provided by NABARD through a rural credit system which provides capital for short-term production/marketing activities, and medium term and long-term loans for technically feasible and financially viable projects through State Cooperative Banks, State Cooperative Agriculture, and Rural Development Banks, Regional Rural Banks and Commercial Banks.

Approaches and Strategies for Gender Mainstreaming through Livestock Sector

Lack of access to credit was a major constraint for poor women workers to develop any economic activity. Public banks were not adapted to these women who were mainly illiterate, had no collateral and little knowledge about how to use or manage credit efficiently. Rural Bank or cooperative-type bank are the right choice that targets poor women from the informal sector. Its main objective is to help women come out of poverty by providing them with financial services adapted to their situation and capacities. These Bank designed financial products to meet the women's needs and the bank created a door-to-door service so that savings could be collected regularly without requiring the women to travel to the bank. The services provided by the bank help women avoid exploitative moneylenders build their own savings, assets and learn about financial and business management. Along with this awareness should be created about various credit facilities, financial incentives and subsidies through various channels. Government and NGOs offered various schemes and opportunity to the rural entrepreneurs. But, they are unaware of these schemes and opportunities due to their illiteracy. So they should to be educated by

the conducting workshops and seminars related to their business. Financial institutions like ICICI, SIDBI, IDBI, IFCI, and SFC should also be encouraged to provide finance to rural entrepreneurs with low rate of interest and limited collateral security with liberal terms and conditions. Simultaneously, rural women could be motivated to avail finances from these kinds of institutions for starting the entrepreneurial activities.

The SHGs are voluntary associations of people formed to attain some common goals. Members in SHG agree to save regularly and convert their savings into a common fund and to use this common fund for management and business activities. The biggest problem with the SHGs is increasing substantially in rural areas as majority of them are unorganized. These groups are mobilizing thrift deposits, but unable to receive timely, matching and revolving funds to generate employment activities to earn their livelihood. To overcome these constraints SHGs are being actively promoted by government of India through Ministry of Rural Development and Employment, RBI, NABARD, DRDA, Line Departments of State Governments, NGOs, etc at various capacities. NABARD has been working as a catalyst in promoting and linking more and more SHGs to the banking system. Simultaneously the SHG should be promoted to adopt latest technologies to thrive in various market and that could be only possible if they are provided with extension and training support on a sustained manner. Therefore, there is a need for the extension workers, researchers and technologists to provide a helping hand to them.

Women dairy Cooperatives (WDC) may serve as good option for rural women to become more empower as they are authorised to make their own decision outside the home. Most of the women dairy co-operatives in India are based on the principle of maximization of farmer profit and productivity through cooperative effort. This pattern, known as the Anand Pattern, is an integrated cooperative structure that procures, processes, and markets produce. (Datta and Ganguly, 2002). The dairy activity is now largely based upon a three tier system under which, the primary village cooperative societies of women are linked with district union and state federation which are guided

by the national co-operative dairy federation in India. For e.g. Gujarat Co-Operative Milk Marketing Federation – AMUL, Karnataka Milk Federation – NANDINI, Rajasthan Co-Operative Dairy Federation– SARAS, Bihar Milk Federation– SUDHA, Tamil Nadu Co-operative Milk Producers’ Federation Limited–Aavin.

A Producer Organisation (PO) is a legal entity formed by primary producers, viz. farmers, milk producers, fishermen, weavers etc. A PO can be a producer company, a cooperative society or any other legal form which provides sharing of benefits among the members. As small producers are not able to harness the benefit of economies of scale. Besides in livestock marketing, there is a long chain of intermediaries who very often work non-transparently leading to the situation where the producer receives only a small part of the value that the ultimate consumer pays. Therefore, through aggregation the groups of women producer can avail the benefit of economies of scale. They will also have better bargaining power vis-à-vis the bulk buyers of produce and bulk suppliers of inputs. Promoting Livestock based producers organization run by women ensures investment of various stake holders involved in animal husbandry sector to improve the production and profitability. Creation of a separate label for women’s products which can give women greater recognition for their work, and develop a sense of pride and ownership of their products. Similarly, Promotion of value addition to the livestock products such as milk, egg, meat, and fish has huge profit potential. Value of the products get increased many folds during processing, and thereby provide excellent returns. Women can start their own milk parlour, where they can sell processed milk and milk products like flavoured milk, khoa, ice cream, paneer, shrikhnaad, curd, gulabjamun, whey milk, ghee etc. or meat centre where fried chicken, chicken, mutton keema, etc. could be sold. Marketing of these value added products could be done in their own brand name and they can start chain of parlours/hotels thereafter. Women may also opt for converting farm wastes (dung, urine, wasted fodder etc.) especially of local or deshi cows to produce biogas, vermicompost plant elixirs and pesticides etc. and sold as products that have higher market values. NABARD provides financial support to these POs through “Producers Organisation

Development Fund". Government of India provides budgetary support to these POs for its Equity Grant and Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme for the Farmer Producer Company. For creation of storage and other agricultural marketing infrastructure under the Integrated Scheme for Agricultural Marketing (Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India), FPOs are eligible to get higher subsidies. CAPART, Ministry of Rural Development also operates schemes through which support for some activities can be obtained by the PO.

Understanding the market and preparing it to respond to emerging market trends would be the prime instrument for enhancing the women livelihood opportunities in the livestock sector. Rural women entrepreneurs are facing tough competition from the large scale organizations and urban entrepreneurs. The women producers are not collective in their approach for marketing their products because they are too widely scattered and mostly uneducated. The women entrepreneurs are heavily dependent on middlemen for marketing of their products who pocket large amount of profit. Government should take steps to provide market information of different products and finance to the rural entrepreneurs at concessional rates. They should be encouraged to have a regular income by providing market-related and technical support and identifying local and national marketing opportunities. Innovative technology should be publicly announced in order to get its acceptance among the rural entrepreneurs. Access to infrastructural and storage facilities and means of transport are other means of marketing to be supported to these women in rural areas. Integrated marketing services should be provided to the rural producers through exploring, developing and establishing first the internal (local market) and then the national market for their products. Various models like rural haat, trade fairs, livestock fairs etc facilitate linkages with markets and private companies should be promoted for showcasing their products. The promotion, protection and branding of women products is an important strategy to increase female participation and benefits within an organization. The various market charges recovered from livestock dealers were registration fee, sales tax, toll tax and certificate charges are to be made at concessional rates.

Information about support system is a must for an enterprise. In short-term it is the information which helps in sound decision making. The information could be on infrastructure facilities, incentives available, financial tie-ups, availability of raw materials, tax concessions, etc. Innovative institutional and operational mechanisms and business models need to be developed to enable small-scale producers, especially women, to seize market opportunities along agricultural value chains, while taking into account issues of gender-based power inequalities and access to choices and resources. As livestock products are intrinsically difficult to trade because they are perishable, so require freezing, canning, drying, or processing of some sort to allow adequate shelf life to send to distant markets. Provision of State of Art- Abattoir cum meat processing plants and cold storage facilities at field level, establishment of custom hiring centres for the women, availability of quality inputs in bulk through authenticated sources can promote more women entrepreneur in this sector. Regional feed-fodder banks needs to be encouraged for milk production in summer months when most Indian cattle and buffaloes go dry.

One of the most significant barriers faced by Indian women is their low level of literacy as education is key to achieve self-reliance and fight poverty. Building women's capacity, especially leadership skills, is crucial to build women's self-confidence. Various organizations have been developing tools and methodologies for strengthening the capacity of women to ensure that gender goals can be achieved and sustained in the long run. Capacity development enables women to access information about various organizations and to become members, and to participate more actively in their activities as well as decision making processes. On-farm technical trainings and extension services including trainings on veterinary health care, clean milk production, improved feeding practices involving local feed resources, better breeding and animal husbandry integrating the helpful traditional practices. In addition they also need the skills to run their own business. These include accounting skills, managerial skills and, marketing skills. Marketing management skills should be improved among the rural entrepreneurs to face the problems of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship development cell

should be established at all the villages level to provide guidance and counselling to motivate the rural entrepreneurs regarding the use of modern technology. Training institutions supported by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India (www.rural.nic.in) also impart skill and capacity building training which can be made use by these women entrepreneurs. To develop entrepreneurship development individual's motivations and aspirations trigger it and their entrepreneurial competencies, adoption of best practices and facilitative socioeconomic factors play sequential role in reaching agnpreneurial success (Singh *et al*, 2016). As such the practical convergence needs to take place.

Governments play an important role in creating the enabling environment so that effective, inclusive and gender equitable organizations can flourish and act as important contributors to poverty reduction and the achievement of food security. An enabling environment will be a gender sensitive one when policies and legislation that directly or indirectly recognize that women and men from various social groups have differentiated roles and priorities; and therefore, adopt the appropriate measures so that all rural women and men can participate in, and benefit from emerging opportunities (FAO, 2000). Therefore various schemes and plans of government for the encouragement of women entrepreneurs should be strongly executed at different levels. Policies should be flexible to facilitate local circumstances. The nature of enterprises to be established in rural areas must be conducive to those areas in economic, social and environmental terms. Rural enterprise policy should cover all types of rural enterprise. There should be consistency and co-ordination with respect to the choice of rural enterprise locations.

Approaches to Develop Women Entrepreneurs in Livestock Sector

Right efforts on from all areas are required in the development of women entrepreneurs and their greater participation in the livestock based entrepreneurial activities. Considering rural women as specific target group for livestock based developmental programmers, helping women farmers to identify their production,

processing & market related constraints through awareness, exposure, exchange of information through other women farmers, extension officers and other stakeholders, establishment of continuous contact with women farmers to provide knowledge and information, empower and facilitate to demand and access services; redress their concerns & grievances; and capture ground reality for use in policy making and improving delivery through; Farmers portal, Kisan Call Centres, Common Service Centres, Short message services and Community radio stations etc. Assisting women farmers to make best use of livestock technologies and good practices of improving livestock produce through capacity building has to go a long way. Linkages with information source, new technologies and market related information such as, demand, supply and prices has a role to play. Knowledge generators (public & private, formal & informal systems) need to develop specific knowledge portals for capturing, collating and disseminating knowledge through all channels including print and electronic media, farm journals, regular meets etc. Test all indigenous technical know-how (ITKs), identify women farmer innovators, recognize their skills and leverage for field extension as farmer consultants on the philosophy of 'Farmers Field Schools' for the women farmers and introduction of ICT in delivery of extension messages and market information to the women farmers/entrepreneurs. A mechanism may be put in place to provide weekly/ daily personalized information (thru SMS/MMS) to the women farmers through Veterinary Universities/ Departments of Animal Husbandry/ KVKs. Path-breaking methods such as Kala Jathas, Extension Buses can be tried to deliver the message effectively on a large scale. The e-procurement of inputs and services required by the women farmers may be promoted to give them negotiating power to get the livestock inputs at the most competitive rates without transaction costs. Road side display models milk and meat products for the existing and emerging livestock women entrepreneurs may be promoted. Networks of women entrepreneurs and their proper linkage in the Research-Extension-Farmer-Market loop need to be ensured for the existing and emerging livestock women entrepreneurs. No doubt the group approach and synergising the efforts of all stakeholders have always yielded better results (Singh *et al.*, 2014). Proper motivation supported by

technical backstopping by research institutes, forward and backward linkages for financial needs, learning-by-doing, supported by network collaboration may enhance the competitive potential of new entrepreneurs. Although information and knowledge are important asset in an enterprise, but the economic evaluation of such knowledge along with the desirable psychological traits of the potential entrepreneurs need to be supported and motivated through examples, role models, expert opinion and counseling (Nain *et al.*, 2015). Focus need to be on nutritional value and new or unknown products for which technical skills and ability of the women entrepreneurs need to be sharpened. Extension Agencies and Women Farmers' Organizations have a bigger role to play.

CONCLUSION

Gender mainstreaming and gender sensitization is a challenge but through livestock based enterprises / ventures in rural area can help to meet these challenges. These enterprises not only enhance national productivity, generate employment but also help to develop economic independence, personal and social capabilities like; economic empowerment, improved standard of living, improvement in leadership qualities, involvement in solving problems related to women, decision making capacity in family and community, build-up self confidence, increased social relations, political participation, increased participation in various developmental programs and enhance awareness etc. amongst rural women. Livestock women entrepreneurs may contribute significantly in rural and economic development in India. However, lacks of suitable gender mainstreaming and gender sensitization policies, supportive network, financial and marketing prospects may hamper their entrepreneurial activities. National policies should be resolute in tackling this issue and local bodies should ensure the implementation of these policies at the community level and at last but not the least the rural women needs to be motivated to take up entrepreneurship as a career, with training and sustaining support systems providing all necessary assistance.

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