



Research Article

RURAL WOMEN'S ROLE IN AGRICULTURAL AND ALLIED ACTIVITIES: A STUDY OF KADAPA DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

In the history of human development, woman has been as important as man. In fact, the status, employment and work performed by women in society are the indicator of a nation's overall progress. Without the participation of women in national activities, the social, economical or political progress of a country will be stagnated. Agriculture is the predominant source of livelihood for almost 60% of the population-both at the National level and at the State level and also Agriculture can be an important engine of growth and poverty reduction. Women are farmers, workers and entrepreneurs, but almost everywhere they face more severe constraints than men in accessing productive resources, markets and services. The present study explores women's role in Agriculture and agricultural allied activities of Kadapa. Andhra Pradesh is the one of state in South India. The state spread over two geographical regions, namely Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema. The Rayalaseema Region consisting the districts of Chittoor, Kadapa, Anantapur and Kurnool. In Kadapa district, as per 2011 census, 66.03 % population of Kadapa district lives in rural areas of villages. The total Kadapa district population living in rural areas is 1,903,337 of which males and females are 959,693 and 943,644 respectively. In rural areas of Kadapa district, sex ratio is 983 females per 1000 males. Gender wise, male and female literacy stood at 74.72 and 51.49 percent respectively. In total, 1,062,356 people were literate of which males and females were 630,940 and 431,416 respectively. Dairying is an occupation that supports the livelihoods of many women, especially the rural poor in Kadapa. Livestock plays an important role in supporting women and in improving their financial situation and women are heavily engaged in the sector. Dairying provides regular cash income for the household, which is used especially on food and education of children. Dairy farming plays significant role in sustaining the rural livelihoods, although the phenomenon of farmer's suicides, migration, malnutrition /ill health are widely prevalent in rural Kadapa district.

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INTRODUCTION

Animal Husbandry is one of the rapidly expanding sectors, playing a significant role in the rural economy by providing gainful employment to a large number of small/marginal farmers and agricultural labourers and raising their economic status. The economic support programs like distribution of Mulch animals, sheep and poultry units have come to the rescue of the beneficiaries, particularly scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and economically backward sections of the society. The activities of the Animal Husbandry Department have been oriented towards the health of livestock and increased production of milk, meat and eggs and to provide adequate bullock power for agricultural operations. The schemes of the Animal Husbandry Department have been formulated in pursuance to the well-laid National policies to improve the

Livestock production, to fight protein hunger and to improve nutritional standards of human population. Also provide technical support for the maintenance livestock and improvement of livestock breeds. Thus, Animal Husbandry Department has been rendering the services to all the sections of people, in particular weaker sections of society and playing a vital role in the rural development by generating an additional source of income and employment, by protecting their valuable livestock. Bovines play a very important role in the development of the rural economy of India. This is particularly true of Andhra Pradesh where 73% of the total population live in rural areas. There are 20 million cattle and buffaloes which pull carts and Plough, produce milk and are an asset to their owners by providing employment and income. The organized milk procurement through the integrated milk project was initiated in Andhra Pradesh from 1970 onwards. The present study explores women's role in the context of livestock participation in Kadapa district. Andhra Pradesh is the one of

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state in South India. The state spread over two geographical regions, namely Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema. The Rayalaseema Region spread over the districts of Chittoor, Kadapa, Anantapur and Kurnool.

Objectives

The following are the specific objectives of the present study:

- To study the role of women in agriculture and agricultural allied activities, especially in livestock production in Kadapa district
- To study the census of livestock in Kadapa district as species wise

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study is based on secondary data by Department of Animal Husbandry, Kadapa district, Journals and Handbook of Kadapa district.

Profile of the study area

Kadapa district is the extreme southeastern district of Andhra Pradesh situated within the geographical coordinates of 13043' and 15014' of northern latitude and 77055' and 79029' eastern longitude. The altitude varies from 269 to 3787 meters above sea level. The District is bounded on north by Kurnool District, on the south by Chittoor District on the west by Anantapur District and on the east by Nellore District. Total Geographical area of the District is 15,379 Sq.Kms. with 3 Revenue Divisions, 51 mandals, 790 Gram Panchayats, 972 Revenue Villages and 4954 Habitations. As per the 2011 Census the population of the District is 2882469 of which the Rural Population is 1903337 and the Urban Population is 979132. The density of population in the District is 188 per Sq.Km. As per 2011 census the total female population in the district is 14.52%. The Scheduled Caste Population is 465794 and Scheduled Tribe Population is 75886 in the District. The Majority of the people here are depending on Agriculture only. The major crops in the District are Paddy, Groundnut, Sunflower, Cotton, Betel leaves and Horticultural crops like Mango, Papaya, Banana, Lemon and Oranges. The gross cropped area in the District is 4, 25,113 hectares; out of this gross irrigated area is 165087 hectares.

Women's role in Agriculture and allied activities in Kadapa

Women comprise half of the rural population. And the livestock sector offers tremendous opportunities for improving household incomes through women's participation.

But the livestock sector needs stronger institutional support for more credit and upgrading women's livestock farming skills. Livestock is an important sub-sector of the agricultural economy and contributes close to 50 percent of the agriculture income and 10.6 per cent of the GDP. By strengthening and expanding micro-credit support programs, encouraging private sector participation and targeting a rural women's role in livestock management, the lot of rural women can be improved. The women have suffered because their role in rural economy has never been fully appreciated. Micro studies reveal that women undertake a wide range of activities on the farms and at home. Their involvement in farm work, especially in the post-harvest operations is enormous. After the harvest, drying, cleaning and storage of grains are the exclusive responsibilities of women. Livestock provides jobs not only to men, but also to 50 percent of women of their family in the agricultural sector. The fields of improved feeding, management, vaccination and processing of dairy products need to be addressed more effectively. Any effort for alleviation of poverty without active participation of women is destined to fail. Unless women are allowed to exploit their potential, the rural scene will remain unchanged. Though women are an inbuilt component of the country's economy, their share in economic benefits, opportunities and access to resources is not commensurate with their feats. Livestock rearing is largely a woman's task. The entire number of Agriculture women Workers in Kadapa district as per 2011 Census 2.44 when compared to state that is 142.94.

And according to estimates, the time devoted by them in livestock related activities ranges from three to five hours per day. Women take responsibility for cutting fodder, cleaning sheds, milking dairy animals, processing animal products and looking after the health of the herd. Livestock and dairy development department should launch more development schemes focusing on the socio-economic development of women folk. The women trained in livestock production activities will help increase milk and meat production at the national level and raise household incomes. In Kadapa district women plays a crucial function in different activities like manufacture of several industrial plant. In the year of 2012-13, 74 women workers have participated in the manufacture of food products and beverages. From 2009-10 to 2012-13, increasing trend was observed in the manufacture of dairy products from 8 to 19 women workers. And besides the women's participation of rice milling is also increased by 203 in the year of 2012-13. Women played a significant role not just in the production of livestock but also various sectors in Kadapa district that is complied by the below table:

Table 1. The participation of Women workers in Agriculture and agricultural allied activities of Kadapa district

S. No	Description of Work	Number of Women workers			
		2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
1	Manufacture of Food products and Beverages	79	39	65	74
2	Manufacture of Dairy products	8	10	15	19
3	Manufacture of Rice milling	100	102	107	203
4	Manufacture of Glass products	5	5	5	7
5	Manufacture of Silk and Cotton ginning	15	20	50	64
6	Manufacture of bakery products	38	38	30	38
7	Manufacture of refined Petroleum products	47	54	61	63
Total		292	214	333	408

Source: District Hand Book of Kadapa District 2010-11 and 2012-13

Development of Livestock production in Kadapa district

Agriculture provides stable income and employment to many rural agriculture families and livelihood to scores of landless farm and non-farm women labourers giving them economic gains. Women are the backbone of the village economy of rural India. Women take up different works to eke out their livelihood and the majority of the rural women depend on agriculture, which is the major unorganized sector in India. Many of these labourers are landless belonging to lower social and economic status.

Women provide nearly 60% of livestock farming labour. As per Livestock census 2003, 2007 and 2012, the total cattle population was increased by 19.09%. There was an increase of 61.69% in crossbred cattle and 26.63% in nondescript cattle. Adult female crossbred cattle were increased by 63.75% between 2003 and 2007, buffalo population by 23.25%. There was an increase of 83.06% in graded buffalo's population and 39.13% in nondescript buffaloes. The number of adult female graded buffaloes was increased by 35.48%. And the total livestock population in the district is 2198 in 2003 census and 2312 census in 2007 and 3537 in 2012 census.

Table 2. Livestock and Poultry Population of Kadapa district

S.No	Item	2003 Census	2007 Census	2012 Census
1	Cattle	162	170	152
2	Buffaloes	612	508	457
3	Sheep	974	1132	1399
4	Goats	371	470	453
5	Horses & Ponies	0	0	31
6	Donkeys	2	1	23
7	Camel	0	0	0
8	Pigs	12	9	89
9	Mules	0	0	0
10	Rabbits	0	0	0
	Total Livestock	2198	2312	3537
	Total Poultry	1496	1633	2989

Source: Department of Animal Husbandry, Kadapa and District Hand Book of Kadapa District 2012-13

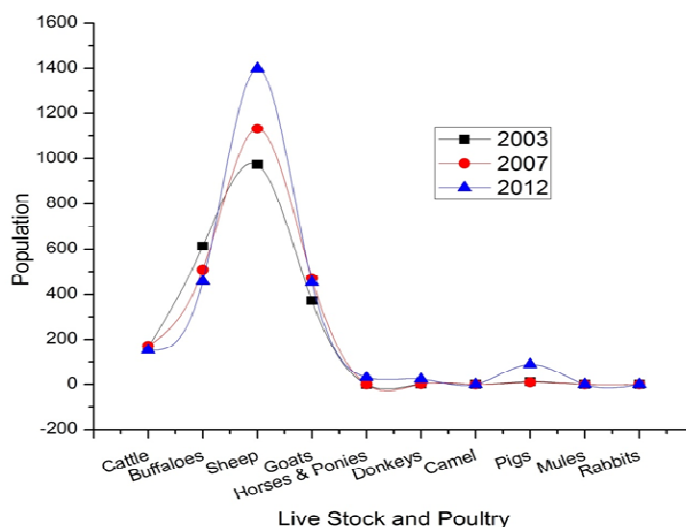


Figure 1. Graphical Representation of Livestock and Poultry Population of Kadapa district

The role and status of women are alternate in the process of agrarian social transformation due to the technology of cultivation. The disaggregated pattern of development has varied impact on women members of every region, group, class and caste. In this background, it is pertinent to analyze the condition of women across the floors of rural transformation consequent upon the technological and agricultural development. Take out a few surveys carried on here and in that location, no serious study is practiced to explain this social phenomenon. An attempt is made in this study the women labour, especially in agricultural fields of Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh. The livestock development has attained the status of an Agro-based industry generating economic growth, gainful employment and livelihood to many weaker sections in the district. Small and marginal farmers and landless poor contributing to 62% of total milk production own 70% of livestock in Kadapa.

The total poultry production also increased by 2989 as per 2012 census.

Conclusion

Agriculture dominates female employment in many parts of Kadapa District. Women's possibilities in agriculture are, however, hindered by formal and informal rules restricting their opportunities for more productive employment and income. Women's access to land is hindered in many countries by formal and traditional rules, although several countries are reforming landownership. As a consequence, women frequently face difficulties in recruiting workers and getting recognition for improving production, as they are not the rightful possessors of the country. Women also often face restrictions in relation to ownership of cattle and to control over water resources. When women were targeted as beneficiaries, it was

generally in their reproductive capacity or as targets of welfare interventions. Small, dispersed "women-specific" projects, or project components focusing on their productive role in agriculture, remained isolated from national agricultural planning and policies.

Recommendations

Face the impact of economic crisis on agriculture growth (food production) which affect also Kadapa rural women, a new policies including women well-being issues are necessary:

- Strengthening the role of women in agriculture and ensuring work for a growing number of women is one step to help economies to get back on track.

- By increasing agricultural productivity, governments serve to rear yield and lower food prices.
- Moreover, growth in agricultural productivity and Livestock production food prices is important in determining, food protection, salary levels and competitiveness in the economic system as a whole.

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