



International Journal of Home Science

ISSN: 2395-7476
IJHS 2017; 3(3): 457-460
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www.homesciencejournal.com
Received: 28-07-2017
Accepted: 29-08-2017

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Role of Gujjar women of Gurugram (Haryana) in dairy activities

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Abstract

The present study has been undertaken with the aim know about the activities performed by tribal women of Gurugram; and to determine the extent of participation of tribal women in dairy activities. The sample of the present research consists of 120 tribal household, 40 each from Bandhwari, Baliyawas and Mohammadpur village area of Gurugram district. Purposive random sampling technique was used to select the sample. Questionnaire and Observation were the tools used to collect the data. The findings of the present study reveals that majority of the respondents perform almost all the activities. The Gujjar women carried out all of the dairy management operations such as bringing in fodder, providing drinking water, milking, cleaning of sheds, whereas breeding in animals, calving and the administration of medicines were shared activities with male family members. Also they were aware of different feed and feeding practicing, knowledge of various concentrates mixtures, fodder production and management practices required for dairy management but they lack technical knowledge about the same. From the findings, it could thus be concluded that tribal women perform different roles; they work in home and in dairy and contributed a lot in the tribal economy.

Keywords: Gujjars, tribal women, dairy, management

Introduction

According to Vincient A Smith's 'The Early History of India,' Gujjars are "allied in blood" to the Huns who poured into the Indian subcontinent after attacking the Kishan Kingdom of Kabul.

Majid Hussain's Geography of Jammu and Kashmir State argues that the Gujjars used to be inhabitants of Georgia (Gurjia), who crossed Central Asia, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and the Khyber Pass to reach Gujarat probably in the 5th and 6th centuries.

Another theory claims that Gujjars are related to the Rajputs who converted to Islam after losing in the wars with Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, and yet another that Gujjars are descended from Isaac himself.

In India, Gujjars are mainly concentrated in the north, across the states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra. Overall, they form 10 per cent of India's population.

Although the Gujjar diaspora is found across the world, Pakistan and Afghanistan have significant Gujjar populations. In Pakistan, they comprise as much as 20 per cent of the population.

Originally Gujjars are thought to be an Aryan tribe that entered India in parts of Gujarat and Rajasthan from the North West. Having been cattle breeders and milkmen, they were usually associated with herdsmen and shepherds. Traditionally, Gujjars are pastoral people with no fixed abode. However, a large number of Gujjars have now settled down in the state of Haryana and have taken to farming and combine agricultural work with animal-husbandry.

Gujjars of the state of Haryana are considered as simple, thrifty and industrious people. It is a common fact that the Gujjars are cultivators only in the plains but in the hills they are more into keeping cattle than following the plough.

Reasons for Setting of Gujjars in Gurugram (Haryana)

- ✓ The war of throne in Gujarat and adjoining states, resulting in fighting and exodus of Gujjars after their defeat.

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- ✓ The frequent earthquakes and intolerable secession in Gujarat, Rajasthan & neighbouring states.
- ✓ To explore new meadows and pastures for sustenance of life and cattle.
- ✓ In addition to above, after embracing Islam it was also imperative on their part to migrate to new Muslim dominated areas.

Gujjar Women

There is no doubt that the Gujjar women are much more hardworking as compare to females in other strata of society but unfortunately their life still passes through the darkness of illiteracy and backwardness. In Gujjar society where the majority of men folk are generally illiterate, the chances of women education are quite dim and black. It can be understood by the fact that for a population of 12 lacs, Gujjar women which constitute the 24% of total women population in the state. There is only one government girl's hostel in Jammu and Kashmir, situated in Jammu. Only 1 hundred girls are fortunate enough to board in the hostel.

Social Conditions

Socially, the condition of Gujjar women is not so good. They have to perform chores of the household from cooking to selling milk and helping their men at farming and cattle feeding. Among Gujjars, women and girls are supposed to tend themselves hard throughout the day and walk long distances with their children and household luggage on their backs, as they are nomads. Ultimately they get no time even to think of their social status.

Government Schemes and Gujjar Women

Though the central as well as the state Government had launched a number of programs and schemes for the betterment of rural as well as urban women like – Balika Samridhi Yojana; Swasti and Indira Mahila Yojana etc. but the Gujjar women are still unable to avail any benefit. Being far wavy in remote areas they hardly get any information regarding such schemes. The participation in social as well as in political institute is almost nil. More than 12 lacs Gujjar women are still unaware of their basic rights and pace of progress in the modern age were posing question mark over government and other agencies working for the welfare of claiming of social change in 21st century.

Justification of the Study

Although Gujjar women are quite aware of their duties and contribute their best for the betterment of the tribal society but are unaware of their rights, they serve as sacrificing beings for their families and society as well. They perform dual role, at home they do all the household chores and also work hard in dairy as it is their main occupation.

Reviewing the literature (Rangnekar, 1992; Shaijja, 1994; Rabbani *et al.*, 2004 and Roger, 1995), it has been found that women play a key role in animal based tasks like feeding and cleaning animals, chaffing the fodder, milking of cattle, making cow dung cakes and selling of milk in the market. The women in tribal society carry both indoor as well as outdoor activities. Looking at the above an ardent need was felt to study the participation of Gujjar women in dairy management practices, as not much work has been done in this field.

Research methodology

The present study was designed to find out the role of Gujjar women in dairy activities. The sample of the present research

consists of 120 tribal household, 40 each from Bandhwari, Baliyawas and Mohammadpur village area of Gurugram district. Only eldest married women participating in dairy were selected possessing minimum 5 milch cattles. Purposive random sampling technique was adopted to select the sample. An interview Schedule was framed on the basis of objectives of the present study. It was pretested on 20 families for the clarity of the tool. Before the data collection, rapport was established with the respondents and purpose of the study was briefed to them. The data was collected with the help of an Interview Schedule followed by Observations. After the data collection, coding was done and analyzed keeping in mind the objectives of the present study.

Results and discussion

Space for Table 1

Table 1 reveals that sweeping and cleaning were female dominated activities, about 33% of the respondents participate in these activities daily, 42.8% of them perform this activity in morning, 34.2% in afternoon and about 22.8% of them in evening. The time spent on this activity was less than 1 hour in a day, the other women members in the family also participates in the above mentioned activities; no male participation was found in these activities. Above 50% of the respondents perform the activity of fetching water from near by tube well or hand pumps daily in the morning and evening, the time spent on the above activity was less than 1 hour everyday, male members of the family especially the male child between the age group of 6-12 years were participating in the same with other female members of the family. About 50% of the respondents daily participate in cooking breakfast for their family daily. Majority (65.5%) of them spend 1-2 hours in cooking breakfast while 34.4% spend less than 1 hour.

86.6% of the respondents wash utensils daily, 38.4% of them perform it in morning, 19.2% in afternoon and 42.3% of them perform this activity in evening. Majority of the respondents (65.5%) spend 1-2 hours while 34.4% spend less than 1 hour in a day. About 33.3% of the respondents perform the activity of fetching fire wood from the nearby are or forest, 20% of them collect fire wood daily, while 50% of them collect twice a week and 30% thrice a week. Majority of them (49%) do this activity in afternoon, about 805 of them spend less than 1 hour while 20% of them spend 1-2 hours a day. Husbands, adult male, and children were also participating in this activity. 48.3% of the respondents wash clothes, out of which 6.8% of them perform this activity daily, while 51.7% of them perform twice a week and 41.3% thrice a week, about 13.7% of them perform it in morning while 51.7% of them perform it in afternoon, 10.3% of them spend less than 1 hour daily while 34.4% spend 1-2 hours and 26.6% spend 2-4 hours in a day. In case of cooking lunch, 33.3% perform daily in afternoon, majority (65.5%) of them spend 1-2 hours daily on this activity. About 40% of the respondents were participating in serving lunch daily in afternoon while 89.2% take less than 1 hour to prepare lunch and 10.7% takes 1-2 hours because of large family size. About 60% of the respondents participate in the activity of coking dinner daily in the evening; the time spent on the above activity was 1-2 hours. In the activity of serving dinner, 93.3% of the respondents perform it daily in evening; the time spent on this activity was less than 1 hour.

Space for Table 2

It is evident from the Table 2 that 50% of the respondents participate in the activity of bringing cattle feed to the farm

daily; almost 67% of them perform this activity in the afternoon and only 33.3% of them perform the same in the morning, however the time spent on this activity was less than 1 hour daily. Only 3.3% of the respondents perform the activity of chaffing the fodder daily in the afternoon for less than 1 hour, the reason of less participation of respondents was that only few of them were having chaffing machines, rest of them use uncut fodder for feeding animals. 50% of the respondents stated that they buy feed from the market; 66.6% of them perform the activity of buying feed daily while 26.6% of them perform the same activity twice a week, and only 6.6% of the perform thrice a week. 80% of them perform the same activity in the morning and 20% in afternoon and time spent on the above activities was less than 1 hour.

In case of taking the cattle out for grazing, only 33.3% of respondents perform it daily, 80% of them perform from morning till evening while 20% of them perform it from morning to afternoon. About 45% of the respondents said that they participate in the activity of providing feed and drinking water to the cattle in morning, afternoon and even in evening, and they take less than 1 hour for the above activities.

Bathing of animals before milking was done by 16.6% of the respondents daily, twice a day in afternoon and time spend on this activity was less than 1 hour. Milking of cattles was done by 96.6% of the respondents daily twice a day (in morning and in evening), majority of them (68.9%) spend 1-2 hours on this activity every day while 31% spend less than 1 hour a day. About 93.3% of the respondents perform the activity of cleaning cattle shed daily, out of which majority (82%) of them perform it in afternoon, 17.8% of them perform it in morning, 73.2.5 spend 1-2 hours and 26.7% spend less than 1 hour a day. In case of care and maintenance of cattle shed, 50% of the respondents perform it occasionally.

About 96.6% of the respondents participate in the activity of milk processing and preparation of milk products daily in morning and as well as in evening for 1-2 hours daily. 78.2% of them take care of calves daily for 1-2 hours. In case of providing medical aid to the cattles, only 16.55 of the respondents participate in this activity whenever requires. 66.6% of them keep an account of milk production every day in morning and in evening for less than 1 hour.

Selling of milk was done by 60% of the respondents daily, majority (66.6%) of them sell it from morning to afternoon

and the time spent was majority of the respondents was 2-4 hours. 50% of the total respondents keep an account of income and expenditure whenever the money was spent or profit was gained by selling milk in the market. Another study by Brench, 2004 observed that women in tribal society are responsible for milking and dairy processing they sell milk in the market and do perform other dairy activities as well.

66% of the respondents participate in the activity of making cow dung cakes daily, 50% of the perform it in morning and 50% of them in afternoon, the time spent on this activity was less than 1 hour in a day. FAO, 1997 in their study stated that women in northern India contribute in dairy as well as in agricultural activities. They graze the cattle on distant grazing lands, carries animals to water source for water, take care of young calves, milk the cattle, clean the animal shed.

Suggestions

- The study shows that Gujjar women do have knowledge of dairy activities but still they lack technical knowledge about the same so the government and non-government agencies should take effective steps to provide technical training to Gujjar women. Hence It was observed that special programmes were essential to train the tribal Gujjar women in scientific dairy farming.
- In order to bring awareness among Gujjar women regarding various educational facilities, health, loans, credit facilities and other welfare opportunities can be imparted with the help of extension worker through folk media.
- Conservative Gujjars need be ascetically educated to scientifically improve their breed of buffaloes. It can be concluded that Gujjars who live in gurugram contribute significantly to the rural and urban economy by providing milk and milk products. Being committed to their cultural tradition it is imperative that special attention need be provided to this tribe. so that they improve their socio-economic condition through improved dairy farming. Various developmental agencies should concentrate their efforts on dairy development for Gujjars. The introduction of high-yielding breeds of buffalo and cross-bred cattle could improve the economy of the Gujjars.

Table 1: Household Activities Carried Out By Tribal Women.

Activities	%age of work performed by respondents	How often			What time			How long		
		daily	Twice a week	Thrice a week	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	>1 hr	1-2 hrs	2-4 hrs
Sweeping and Cleaning	33.3	100	-	-	42.8	34.2	22.8	100	-	-
Fetching water	50	100	-	-	33.3	46.6	20	100	-	-
Cooking breakfast	50	100	-	-	100	-	-	34.4	65.5	-
Washing utensils	86.6	100	-	-	38.4	19.2	42.3	28.8	71.7	-
Fetching firewood	33.3	20	50	30	10	49	20	80	20	-
Washing clothes	48.3	6.8	51.7	41.3	13.7	51.7	-	10.3	34.4	26.6
Cooking lunch	33.3	100	-	-	-	100	-	34.4	65.5	-
Serving lunch	40	100	-	-	-	100	-	89.2	10.7	-
Cooking dinner	60	100	-	-	-	-	100	-	100	-
Serving dinner	93.3	100	-	-	-	-	100	100	-	-

Table 2: Dairy Activities Carried Out By Tribal Women

Activities	% age of work performed by women	How often				What time					How long		
		daily	Twice a week	Thrice a week	Occ	Morn	Afternoon	Evening	Mor to after	After to Even	Less than 1 hour	1-2 hrs	2-4 hrs
Bringing cattle feed	50	100	-	-	-	33.3	66.6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chafing the fodder	3.3	100	-	-	-	-	100	-	-	-	-	-	-
Buying the feed	50	66.6	26.6	6.6	-	80	20	-	-	-	100	-	-
Taking the cattle out for grazing	33.3	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	80	100	-	20
Providing feed and drinking water to cattle	45	100	-	-	-	100	100	100	-	-	100	-	-
Bathing the cattle	16.6	100	-	-	-	-	100	-	-	-	100	-	-
Milking of the cattle	96.6	100	-	-	-	100	-	100	-	-	31	68	-
Cleaning of cattle shed	93.3	100	-	-	-	17.8	82.1	-	-	-	26.7	73	-
Care & Maintenance of cattle shed	50	100	-	-	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Milk processing & preparation of milk products	96.6	-	-	-	-	100	-	-	-	-	-	100	-
Care of calves	78.2	100	-	-	-	100	100	100	-	-	-	100	-
Providing medical aid to cattle	16.6	-	-	-	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Keeping account of milk product	66.6	100	-	-	-	100	-	100	-	-	100	-	-
Selling of milk	60	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	66	33	-	16	50
Keeping the account of income & expenditure	50	66.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Making cow dung cakes	66.6	100	-	-	-	50	50	-	-	-	100	-	-

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