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Analysis of gender roles of Garo people of Meghalaya engaged in piggery

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Abstract

Pig production in North-East India is a popular venture. In the state of Meghalaya it is an important sub-sector having a long tradition of backyard production and a constantly growing level of consumption. In traditional Indian society, women's access to resource is mostly restricted because of the practiced social norms of patriarchy and this has institutionalized women's subjection in the family as well as in the society. But Meghalaya is the only matriarchal state of India. Hence, it becomes imperative to explore gender roles demarcation of the people engaged in various agriculture and related activities. Hence the study was conducted with the objective of 'Analysis of gender roles of Garo people of Meghalaya engaged in piggery'. The study was conducted under University funded research project (IRP). A total of 120 respondents (60 couples) were selected from four villages (random) from the two randomly selected blocks of West Garo Hills district, Meghalaya. But only those couples who were engaged in pig farming were considered for interview and data collection. Hence, the total no. of respondents for this study was 110 (55 couples). Women had a significant contribution in both the routine activities i.e. feeding chaff (87.27 per cent) and cleaning of sty (90.91 per cent), and the non-routine activities –selling of pigs/piglets (85.45 per cent). The activities like selection of breeds (49 nos.), collection/ buying of chaff (50 nos.), construction of sty (51 nos.) and disease management (43 nos.) are primarily carried out by young males while selling of pigs/piglets (47 nos.) are primarily carried out by young females. Two activities (feeding chaff and cleaning of sty) are exclusively feminine in nature and shouldered by the female members of the family. The routine activities of piggery are carried out by women while non-routine activities are primarily carried out by male members of the family.

Keywords: Gender roles, piggery, Meghalaya, Harvard analytical framework

Introduction

Pig production in North-East India is a popular venture which is mostly practiced by peasant farmers, men and women, in rural settings. Pig rearing is an integral part of rural life in Meghalaya. The natives of this region are ethnically and habitually accustomed to consume meat or meat products in their daily diet and pork is a much preferred meat, especially in the tribal communities, paving great potential for pig production. As per Basic Animal Husbandry and Fisheries Statistics (2014) ^[1], pig population in Meghalaya has seen a substantial increase (3.6 per cent) from the year 2007 to 2012. As a result, livestock population has also increased substantially (7.41 per cent) in contrast to the overall national population which has seen a decrease of 3.33%. Pig farming constitutes livelihood of rural poor belonging to the lowest socio-economic strata. In the state of Meghalaya it is an important sub-sector having a long tradition of backyard production and a constantly growing level of consumption.

Nowhere in the world women receive equal treatment as men. Therefore, the problem of gender inequality has been urgently felt. The cultural construction of woman's work and status in the traditional society is a big constraint towards equality and empowerment of woman. Empowerment is related with development process (Kaushik, 1992) ^[2]. For development, including others, the primary requisite is resource and therefore women's action should aim at access to resource and multiplying it for self-sufficiency. In traditional Indian society, women's access to resource is mostly restricted because of the practiced social norms of patriarchy and this has institutionalized women's subjection in the family as well as in the society. But Meghalaya is the only matriarchal state of India. Hence, it becomes imperative to explore gender roles demarcation of the people engaged in various agriculture and related activities. Empirical studies have revealed that women, in addition to their household activities, involve in agricultural activities of the family but their contribution, as workforce is never counted.

With these points in view the present study was conducted with the objective- to analyze gender roles of the Garo people of Meghalaya engaged in piggery.

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Materials and methods

The study was carried out in West Garo Hills district of Meghalaya State as a University funded research project, entitled "Gender Mapping of the People of West Garo Hills Engaged in Agriculture, Household and other Allied Activities". It was purposively selected because the college is situated in this district. There are six blocks in the revised map of West Garo Hills. Out of these, two blocks i.e. Gambegre and Rongram were randomly selected. From each block two villages were selected randomly. Since the study was carried out on "Gender Analysis", therefore equal number of male and female respondents was selected. Fifteen number of male and female each (couples) were randomly selected from each of the four selected villages. Thus the total sample size was 120 consisting of 60 male and female each. But only those couples who were engaged in piggery were considered for interview and data collection. Hence, the total no. of respondents for this study was 110 (55 couples). Gender roles were analyzed using Harvard Analytical Framework.

Data were collected from the respondents by using a structured interview schedule developed for this purpose as per Harvard Analytical Framework. The data so obtained were quantified and subjected to statistical analysis for drawing meaningful conclusions.

Harvard Analytical Framework or Gender Roles Framework or Gender Analysis Framework

The framework consists of a matrix for collecting data at the micro (Community and household) level. It has four (three used) interrelated components:

- i. **activity profile**-which answers the question, "who does what?", including gender, age, time spent and location of the activity

- ii. **access and control profile**-which identifies the resources used to carry out the work identified in the activity profile, and access to and control over their use, by gender

- iii. **analysis of influencing factors**- which charts factors that influence gender differences in the above two profiles

Data were collected from the respondents by using a structured interview schedule developed for this purpose as per Harvard Analytical Framework. The data so obtained were quantified and subjected to statistical analysis for drawing meaningful conclusions.

Results and discussion

Gender roles of rural people of West Garo Hills, Meghalaya engaged in piggery were analyzed using Harvard Analytical Framework consisting of 'Activity Profile', 'Access and Control Profile' and 'Analysis of influencing factors'. The results of the study were tabulated and presented for meaningful interpretation.

Activity Profile

The activity profile of rural women of West Garo Hills district of Meghalaya engaged in pig rearing has been presented in table no. 1. Data of this table depicts gender roles of Garo rural women engaged in piggery. From the results of this table it is inferred that the contribution of rural women was maximum in routine activities i.e. cleaning sty (90.91 per cent) and feeding chaff (87.27 per cent) followed by non-routine activities – selling pigs/piglets (85.45 per cent).

Among the non-routine activities, except for disease management and construction of sty, they had a significant contribution in other activities like selection of breeds (69.09 per cent) and collecting and buying chaff (47.27 per cent).

Table 1: Gender roles of Garo rural women engaged in Piggery

Sl. No.	Activity	Frequency (n=55)	Percentage
I	Routine		
1.	Feeding chaff	48	87.27
2.	Sty cleaning	50	90.91
II	Non-Routine		
3.	Selection of breeds	38	69.09
4.	Collecting & buying chaff	26	47.27
5.	Construction of sty	5	9.09
6.	Selling pigs/ piglets	47	85.45
7.	Disease management	15	27.27

Feeding chaff is a routine activity and the one which does not require much time and effort. The pigs/ piglets are fed whatever the kitchen waste is collected on a daily basis. Sty cleaning is done by the owners to maintain hygiene at home and safe environment for the animals as well other family members residing at home. Mostly the sty is constructed at the backyard of home.

Women play noticeable role in selection of breeds. Sine piggery is a major agro-based allied activity in Meghalaya and a feature of almost every poor rural household, therefore, women too have considerable knowledge and experience in this area. Collecting and buying chaff from the market and in and around the village is occasionally done by Garo rural women along with other household purchase.

Construction of sty requires considerable physical strength and hence is primarily carried out by their spouse or other male members of the family. Disease management is predominantly carried out by males as it sometimes require taking the animals to nearest Veterinary departments, or local

quacks for treatment of serious ailments.

Women have significant contribution in selling of pigs/piglets as can be seen from the data of table no.1. The pigs are reared for nearly a year, and then sold off for a price ranging from 5000-10000 per animal depending on the size and weight of the pigs, preferably during their major festival time i.e. Christmas.

Gender analysis of the respondents engaged in piggery with respect to gender and age was studied through Harvard Analytical Framework and the results presented in table no.2. It can be seen from the data of this table that all the activities of piggery are primarily carried out by young males and females of the family. Children and old people have little or negligible contribution in it.

Husbands have an upper hand over their wives in most of the non-routine activities like selection of breeds (49 nos.), collecting/ buying chaff (50 nos.), construction of sty (51 nos.) and disease management (43 nos.). While the wives dominate in routine activities like feeding chaff (48 nos.) and

cleaning of sty (50 nos.) and non-routine activities like selling of pigs/piglets (47 nos.).

As far as time spent per day in various routine and non-routine activities are concerned, it can be noted from the data of this table that the time spent by male and female in each of these activities are more or less the same except for the two non-routine activities i.e. collecting/ buying chaff and disease management. But since most of the routine activities are carried out by women, hence total time spent per day and overall contribution by them in all of these activities is much more than their counterparts who mostly do non-routine activities.

Most of these activities are carried out within a distance of 2-3 kms which the respondents cover by walk while few of the routine activities like feeding chaff, cleaning of sty and construction of sty are carried out from their homes at leisure along with other household chores.

Access and Control Profile

Access and control profile of the respondents engaged in

piggery is presented in table no. 3, categorized into routine and non-routine activities. The data of this table depicts that among the routine activities, access to feeding chaff is predominantly with female (51.82 per cent) but is controlled exclusively by them (40.91 per cent) whereas access to and control over sty cleaning is exclusively with females at 54.55 % and 65.45 % respectively.

As far as the non-routine activities are concerned, access to and control over selection of breeds (61.82 and 36.36 per cent respectively) and disease management (36.36 and 45.45 per cent respectively) lies predominantly with males. This data suggests that although percentage of access to selection of breeds is quite high (61.82 per cent) but the control over those resources is comparatively low (36.36 per cent). The reason for it is that women share the control over these resources as is also evident and supported from the data of table no. 1.

The access to collecting/ buying chaff is more or less equally enjoyed among 'exclusively male' to 'predominantly male' (36 and 37 per cent respectively) but the resources of it are 'predominantly' controlled by males (41.82 per cent).

Table 2: Gender Analysis of the respondents engaged in Piggery-Harvard Analytical Framework (Activity Profile)

Sl. No.	Activity	Male (n=55)			Time spent/day	Distance of activity from home (km)	Female (n=55)			Time spent/day	Distance of activity from home (km)
		Children	Young	Old			Children	Young	Old		
I	Routine										
1.	Feeding chaff	4	22	0	30 min	0 (at home)	2	48	1	30 min	0 (at home)
2.	Sty cleaning	0	4	0	1-2	0 (at home)	3	50	3	1-2	0 (at home)
II	Non-Routine										
1.	Selection of breeds	0	49	18	1 hour	5-6	0	38	5	1-2 hour	5-6
2.	Collecting /buying chaff	7	50	0	4-5 Hour	2-3	4	26	2	2-3 Hour	2-3
3.	Construction of sty	17	51	0	7-8 Hour	0 (at home)	0	5	0	7-8	0 (at home)
4.	Selling pigs/piglets	0	36	9	1-2	2-3	0	47	7	30 min	2-3
5.	Disease management	0	43	12	3-4 Hour	2-3	0	15	5	1-2 Hour	2-3

Table 3: Gender Analysis of the respondents engaged in Piggery-Harvard Analytical Framework (Access and Control Profile), (n=110)

Sl. No.	Activity	Access by Gender*					Control by Gender*				
		M	F	F/m	M/f	M/F	M	F	F/m	M/f	M/F
I	Routine										
1.	Feeding chaff	8 (7.27)	12 (10.91)	57 (51.82)	17 (15.45)	16 (14.55)	5 (4.55)	45 (40.91)	29 (26.36)	18 (16.36)	13 (11.82)
2.	Sty cleaning	2 (1.82)	60 (54.55)	38 (34.55)	4 (3.64)	6 (5.45)	1 (0.91)	72 (65.45)	28 (25.45)	6 (5.45)	3 (2.73)
II	Non-Routine										
3	Selection of breeds	21 (19.09)	6 (5.45)	12 (10.91)	68 (61.82)	3 (2.73)	37 (33.64)	12 (10.91)	12 (10.91)	40 (36.36)	9 (8.18)
4	Collecting/buying chaff	37 (33.64)	14 (12.73)	18 (16.36)	36 (32.73)	5 (4.55)	26 (23.64)	10 (9.09)	20 (18.18)	46 (41.82)	8 (7.27)
5	Construction of sty	48 (43.64)	4 (3.64)	4 (3.64)	49 (44.55)	5 (4.55)	55 (50.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (1.82)	52 (47.27)	1 (0.91)
6	Selling pigs/ piglets	18 (16.36)	24 (21.82)	23 (20.91)	25 (22.73)	20 (18.18)	23 (20.91)	28 (25.45)	36 (32.73)	15 (13.64)	8 (7.27)
7.	Disease management	37 (33.64)	14 (12.73)	12 (10.91)	40 (36.36)	7 (6.36)	35 (31.82)	10 (9.09)	8 (7.27)	50 (45.45)	7 (6.36)

* M = Exclusively male; F = Exclusively female; F/m = Predominantly female; M/f = Predominantly male and F/M = Equally female/ male

**= Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

As far as construction of sty is concerned, its access to and control over resources varies from 'exclusively male' to

'predominantly male' at 48-49 % and 55-52 % respectively. Access to selling of pigs/piglets is more or less equally

distributed among different categories but its control lies 'predominantly' with females (32.73 per cent).

It can be inferred from the data of this table that although access to resources is enjoyed by a particular category of respondent but the control over those resources may or may not be enjoyed by the same category of respondent and with the same magnitude of percentage.

Analysis of influencing factors

Gender analysis of influencing factors that pose constraints and offer opportunities to Garo people engaged in pig rearing were analyzed using Harvard Analytical Framework. The result of the study is presented in table no.4.

The factors that pose constraints in way of pig rearing are that

women neither have the skill nor the required physical strength to construct sty (87.27 per cent), due to matrilineal society, males have difficulty in decision making (61.82 per cent) and restraining or controlling pigs during illness is difficult for women (94.55 per cent).

The factors that offer opportunities for pig rearing are that due to matriarchal system, women have an upper hand in selling of pigs/ piglets (53.64 per cent) and is a low investment enterprise, hence an easy livelihood source for poor (95.45 per cent).

The identified constraints need to be addressed and overcome while further new opportunities should be explored to narrow down gender disparity and promote piggery as a means of livelihood for the poor.

Table 4: Gender Analysis of the respondents engaged in Piggery-Harvard Analytical Framework (Analysis of influencing factors) (n=110)

Sl. No.	Constraints	Frequency	Percentage	Opportunities	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Women neither have the skill nor the required physical strength to construct sty	96	87.27	Due to matriarchal system, women have an upper hand in selling of pigs/ piglets	59	53.64
2.	Due to matrilineal society, males have difficulty in decision making	68	61.82	Low investment enterprise, hence an easy livelihood source for poor	105	95.45
3.	Restraining or controlling pigs during illness is difficult for women	104	94.55			

Conclusion

The study on analysis of gender roles of the Garo People engaged in piggery has provided a blueprint of the gender issues existing in pig farming. Further, it has clearly shown the extent of involvement of the rural Garo people in different routine and non-routine activities of piggery, segregated by gender and age, in terms of activity, access and control profile. Hence, the results of this study will enable researchers and policy makers to take up these gender issues in piggery and to provide probable solutions to it.

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