SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD SECURITY OF WOMEN SELF HELP GROUPS THROUGH LIVESTOCK REARING

Thammi Raju Dhumantarao, M Deepa

Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Extension, Sri Venkateswara Veterinary University, Hyderbad, India

Women empowerment has been identified as one of the main strategies to tackle socio economic poverty. Self Help movement through savings has been taken up as a mass movement by women. It emerged as a primary tool of poverty alleviation and empowerment in Andhra Pradesh of India. Andhra Pradesh had highest number of Women Self Help Groups in India and is the potential state for livestock sector development. Women's role in livestock development is much more significant and more so in dairy farming. Livestock rearing is the major livelihood activity of women self help groups. Livestock production became central to 46% of Women Self Help Groups. The sustainability of WSHGs can be better understood by studying the livelihood status and the role played by the livestock. Hence the present is focused on the objectives -

1) to identify the livelihood status of members of the WSHG involved in livestock rearing activity and
2) to identify the role of livestock in the food and livelihood security of the members of WSHGs

The present study was taken up as part of DFID funded project in Mahabbonagar district of Andhra Pradesh. In order to achieve the above objectives, the field study focused on 283 respondents belonging to 20 WSHGs who are mainly dependent on livestock rearing of 20 villages of two mandals /blocks. Further the respondents were grouped into Better Off and Poor based on the members self ranking assessment.

The present study discussed the profile of selected WSHGs, livelihood status, food security and social capital and livestock production systems of the livestock dependent WSHGs.

The sustainability of Women Self Help Groups was mainly due to dependence on the livestock as an important livelihood activity which was revealed by the livelihood status and food security of WSHGs. There is a significant variation among better off and poor groups with respect to food security and livelihood status. Livestock components does not vary much among the better off and poor groups except the knowledge on dairy farming , accessibility and availability of veterinary services which requires suitable interventions to make WSHGs more sustainable.