



**Full Length Article**

# Analysis of the Role of Women in Livestock Production in Balochistan, Pakistan

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## ABSTRACT

Livestock is the most important sector in the economy of Balochistan. It is the main source of income for nomadic families specially. Nomadic families involve their women and children in the rearing of livestock. Generally, role of women in rural livestock can never be ignored. Women take care of feeding the livestock, cleaning the abodes and even in providing traditional cure from diseases. They are further involved in milking and milk processing, poultry, and egg selling. Women have a significant role in the development of livestock sector in Balochistan. Since livestock plays major part in agriculture sector, its role can be enlarged by allowing women to participate commercially in this field. In this regard, their services must be recognized. Balochistan constitutes two significant belts, Baloch and Pashtoon belt. Women, living in Baloch belt, are more active and agile to part her share in handling the livestock herds. On the other hand, women who are residing in Pashtoon belt also take part in livestock activities predominantly, which is within the boundary walls of house. The extent to which women have access to the benefits of livestock depends on men's approval. Role which women play in livestock marketing is best addressed by improving their access to livestock development activities in general. This paper is an attempt to highlight the role of women and to explore the problems they are facing in Balochistan. Paper also contains a survey work conducted by the author on two different areas of Balochistan, that is Pashtoon and Baloch belt this would ultimately evaluate the role of women in Balochistan.

**Key Words:** Livestock; Women; Sheep and goat; Balochistan

## INTRODUCTION

Women are performing phenomenal work in the livestock sector of Balochistan. Most of the livestock activities are incomplete without the assistance of women. But, unfortunately, their work never has been paid. Women's work in agriculture and pastoral production is considered essential in maintaining of these activities. Since most of this unpaid work, however it is often overlooked in official accounts. Statistics on female labor participation in Balochistan are therefore, inaccurate and misleading in livestock sector, hence, it must be interpreted with care. It often leads to gross underestimations of the magnitude and importance of women's work in livestock. In fact there is a large overlap between production and reproduction and tasks performed by women often support men's work and thus adds to household's income generation (UNICEF, 1995). The concept of women in agriculture development presupposes significance of women's contribution to the process of socio-economic development. Over the years women are playing vital role in Pakistan's agriculture economy as well as in the economy of Balochistan. This is truly remarkable in the depth of understanding of the way in which women in Balochistan living with out recognition,

without acknowledgement that they are contribution to their families well being and the income of the nation. This presupposition requires that the potential that the women possess should be fully and justly utilized for speedier and balanced development of human societies and women's role, both as productive and reproductive agents be recognized and reflected in policy formation (Nasira, 2000). Further, the impact of development on economic status of women is assessed in the context of contemporary ideals of equality. In Balochistan, small ruminant production is mainly based on rangeland grazing. There are large transhumance and nomadic sectors. Women are mostly involved in the production of livestock, providing labor and management but without having direct access to income generating or decision-making power on how the products are disposed. Evidently, the success of any livestock enterprise relies heavily on effective involvement of women, as they are closely involved in animal husbandry activities. In Balochistan, women are vulnerable to remoteness, resource degradation and marginalization.

According to the World Bank (1989) the 1980 census of agriculture gives a reasonably accurate indication of the extent of women's participation in the agricultural labor force of Balochistan. The census estimates that women

constitute 28.2% of all family workers in agricultural (crop & livestock) households. It is most probably higher for households involved in livestock sector considering the large contributions that women make in all activities which pertain to livestock in Balochistan. The type and extent of women's participation in Balochistan's livestock production varies according to the socio-economic setting. As Balochistan consists of arid and barren land, it receives very few rains in a year, sometimes none (Geological Survey of Pakistan, 2005). At the institutional level, structural adjustments are needed. Experienced female animal scientists need to be recruited into positions of influence and management not only as specialists but also in general and integrated rural development programs (Giles *et al.*, 1992). The assumption of researchers and policy makers in terms of women's so-called passive role in agriculture and categorizing them as part-time workers are often short-sighted and do not support the actual economy where women are active participants and play pivotal roles in agriculture (Ashwini, 2002). We should put more and more to pronounce women as part-time workers and must get the due reward for her services. Recent researches have pointed out that by ignoring women as vital contributors to the provincial economy, development processes have been slower and inequitable. However, it is heartening to see that this shortcoming is increasingly noticed (APO, 2004). Men should not be ignored but main focus on women as active players on the stage of economic development is certainly needed in livestock. There is evidence available now to show that women work for longer hours, contribute more than men in terms of total energy spent by the household members. According to surveys, a woman in rural areas has a working day of 10 to 12 h of which 6 to 7 h are devoted to productive activities and 4 to 5 h to household chores. In average working day of a common man is 20 to 30% less (National Family Health Survey, 1993).

Basically, there are three kinds of production systems in Balochistan; these are Nomadic livestock production system, transhumance livestock production system and sedentary production system. Nomadic women are very active and have more freedom to walk all the ways. Therefore, they play a greater role in livestock production than women of the transhuman tribes. Nomadic women also participate in livestock marketing as they sell as well as purchase the livestock from others. Cultural constraints such as *purdah* are less evident in pastoral communities where women have relatively greater freedom and mobility (Bonfiglioli, 1995). But it does not mean transhumance and sedentary women play no important role in livestock business. As a matter of fact, they are also considered the backbone of their families, because along the home chores they perform all livestock activities, which are possible at home. It is a matter of understanding that most of livestock activities are performed at home in Balochistan.

Poverty-stricken families often require the contribution of women to keep the family from destitution. As a result,

women from poorer households tend to play a greater role in livestock production than women from relatively well-off families. Whether the families are well-off or poor, women are the centers of livestock in the context to livestock activities.

Since there are two distinct distributions of Balochistan, Baloch and Pashtoon. Baloch women have relatively greater cultural freedom than Pashtun women do (Government of Balochistan, 1998). Therefore, Baloch women undertake a larger range of livestock-related tasks. Pashtoon women are normally limited to tasks that do not require them to leave the vicinity of their camps. But both have to play their role in almost all sorts of activities.

Women take part in most of livestock activities all over the world. Women are involved in most aspects of livestock production indeed; exclusively women undertake many livestock-related tasks (DeMaar, 1995). This shows their commitment to the livestock they care, not only at home but on the grazing fields. The objectives of the study were to document the role of women, analyze it for policy makers to diagnose constraints in livestock women facing and recommendations for livestock in Balochistan.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Primary Data is collected through survey technique. Formal questionnaire constructed to evaluate the population through random sampling. The results were then analyzed by using the simple statistical tool.

**Field study.** In order to evaluate the role of women in livestock of Balochistan, the author conducted the field study, which has given more insight to evaluate the role of women in Balochistan. Basically two areas are selected from Balochistan considering the different factors. As Balochistan is segregated into Pashtoon and Baloch population predominantly specially in livestock sector of Balochistan. Hence, Pashtoon area comprised District Loralai and District Ziarat which included the villages; Tehsil Bori village Pathankot, village Lashti and village Saggarr and village Pasra that is in Tehsil Sanjawi and District Ziarat. On the other hand from Baloch belt, District Noshki was selected to visit which include the village Dahak, in Tehsil and District Noshki. It is a vast area and famous for agriculture and livestock. It consists of nine to ten villages, constituting almost 5000 livestock families in the area.

**(a). Interview schedule and questionnaire development.** The data were collected with help of well-structured questionnaire and interview schedule. The questionnaire was prepared in the light of available literature. The questionnaire was circulated to the relevant stakeholder. It was pre-tested in the field and necessary modifications were made on the basis of feedback from experts. The interviews were held through pre-decided time schedule for data collection.

**(b). Analytical framework.** These analyses are to help

policy makers in the planning by providing estimates on the costs and returns of the enterprises (Harrington, 1992). Moreover, these estimates can be useful for producers and traders, as they plan their activities by considering the significant role of women. This information can be useful for several stakeholders.

**1. Herding the animals.** Traditional method of herding the animals is used in the area.

**2. Livestock**

1. Sheep and goat dominated throughout the area both in Baloch and Pashtoon belts.

2. Poultry looked like for domestic purpose whereas eggs were not only for domestic use as well as for sale on commercial level on very low scale.

3. Cattle reared for domestic use.

4. Camel, buffaloes and mule were rare in the area.

**3. Transportation.** Livestock transported through different means, mostly vehicles.

**Scheme of data collection.** Data is collected from pashtoon and Baloch areas equally important to livestock rearing in Balochistan.

**Significance of study.** This may be very important in formulating the strategies and policies all through the Balochistan in particular. When look into it from national level, this appears that there is disparities all over the Pakistan pertaining to women of this nation. I would say in South Asian countries have to understand the important role of women.

**Data collection in district ziarat and loralai.** Primary data is collected through the questionnaire. Two distinct areas were selected from Pashtoon and Baloch belt. In Pashtoon area selected population was from District Loralai and District Ziarat. These districts are potentially very important in the prospects of livestock. Majority of people are directly involved in rearing livestock as a business. Their livelihood is through livestock production, With Random sampling as two female volunteers were selected and necessarily trained by the author himself. Two hundred questionnaires were distributed randomly to seventy men, seventy women who also include girl child whereas sixty children below the age of 15 in District Loralai and Ziarat, Tehsil Bori village Pathankot, village Lashti and village Saggat and village Pasra that is in Tehsil Sanjawi and District Ziarat. Survey conducted by the author by his own means. Though there has been acute constraint of funds but author never lost the hope for the completion of task. Hence got the success to distribute questionnaire and collected the required data successfully to analyze. Work has been done promptly and with accuracy.

**Data collection in district noushki.** Noushki district is also very important. Livestock is the main stay of people living here for centuries. That was the reason, when drought occurred it was severely felt in this area. Though, there is not much water in the area, but inhabitants have been sustaining this business from centuries through natural postures in vast areas of this part of Balochistan. Collected

the data in the District Noushki was selected to visit for random sampling used with two trained female volunteers of the area. Dahak is large area and famous for livestock in Tehsil and District Noushki. It consists of ten villages, constituting almost 5000 livestock families in the area. Hence, two hundred people were distributed the sample, which comprise seventy women which also include girl child, seventy men and sixty children under the age of 15.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**(a). District ziarat and loralai.** Table I clearly shows the role of women in livestock products predominantly. Collected data is analyzed through manually and computer using statistical tools. On the basis of survey it shows tremendous activities, which women are performing in the field of livestock development. It is obvious that livestock is uprightly a family business, which needs special attention from the policy makers. Women participation can be accelerated by the development of livestock industry. Balochistan economy major depends on livestock that provide indigenous growth to this sector. In all livestock rearing activities the role of women is substantially important. When examined closely, it is obvious that the hardship of women including the child girl is beyond the limits. Notwithstanding their hardworking and diligence, they are not paid properly and most importantly their service never acknowledged. Immediate efforts are the call of the time. Women perform approximately 50% of livestock activities, while on the other hand men perform 38% of livestock chores, while the role of children is also noticeable.

**(b). District noushki.** The Result of survey is shown in the Table II. On the basis of survey the it appears that the bulk of women's work and time is invested in milking and milk processing in many nomadic and transhumant societies, the milking and the processing of milk are restricted to women. Incidentally, women work the longest hours in spring. Hence in Baloch belt women play a significant role in the livestock sector. Their contribution is greater than men. However, men, who decide about the extent of female control, own livestock. As a whole, women carry out more livestock production tasks than men. Women have to carry out their livestock production work in addition to their household duties, which include food preparation, child-care water collection, gathering firewood, milling grains, cleaning, sewing and embroidery. Marketing and processing of small ruminants in Highland in Balochistan is most difficult task (Mehmood *et al.*, 1991). It is due to no significant role given to them in these important areas and male have their own priorities.

**(c). Comparative study between pashtoon and baloch belts.** Table III shows the comparison of both belts of livestock families, it is obvious that women role is significance. They are involved in all activities of livestock.

**Table I. Shows the distribution of tasks between women (including child girl), men and children conducted in Loralai and Ziarat Districts**

Tasks	Women Including Girl child (%)	Men (%)	Children (%)
Milking	75	25	--
Feeding	50	40	10
Treating sick animals	20	80	--
Herding	30	40	30
Marketing	5	80	15
Slaughtering	--	100	--
Collecting fodder	20	30	50
Poultry care	85	5	10
Breeding	50	50	--
Cleaning Shelters	70	20	10
Converting manure into fuel	90	--	10
Processing milk	80	20	--
Processing wool	60	20	20
Sheering hair	60	20	20
Total	695 (50%)	530 (38%)	175 (13%)

**Table II. Shows the distribution of tasks between women (including child girl), men and children conducted in Noushki District**

TASKS	Women Including Girl child (%)	Men (%)	Children (%)
Milking	80	20	--
Feeding	60	30	10
Treating Sick Animals	80	20	--
Herding	5	90	5
Marketing	10	90	--
Slaughtering	--	100	--
Collecting Fodder	30	50	20
Poultry care	90	5	5
Breeding	20	80	--
Cleaning Shelters	70	20	10
Converting Manure into Fuel	95	--	5
Processing Milk	85	15	--
Processing Wool	80	20	--
Sheering Hair	20	80	--
Total	725 (52%)	620(44%)	55(4%)

**Table III. Shows Comparative analysis of Pashtoon and Baloch belts of women task**

TASKS	Women Including Girl child (%) in Pashtoon belt	Women Including Girl child (%) in Baloch belts
Milking	72	76
Feeding	50	60
Treating Sick Animals	20	80
Herding	30	5
Marketing	5	10
Slaughtering	3	4
Collecting Fodder	20	30
Poultry care	85	90
Breeding	50	20
Cleaning Shelters	70	70
Converting Manure into Fuel	90	95
Processing Milk	80	85
Processing Wool	60	80
Sheering Hair	60	20
Total	695 (50%)	725 (52%)

There are several areas where they are absolutely working as livestock worker. This shows the importance of their commitment to livestock in both sides of livestock belt.

Pashtoon women are as active in livestock activities as the women in Baloch areas. Women living in both belts facing tremendous difficulties to work with livestock, however, their performance is extremely noticeable and needs to be acknowledged.

### SUGGESTIONS

1. Women must be facilitated that they may be able to establish Livestock enterprises.
2. Women must be paid their share in livestock income.
3. Role of Women contribution regarding animal production and husbandry must be acknowledged and measurement must be taken to substantiate.
4. An important gap exists between the role of women in animal husbandry and her routine work. This gap must be acknowledged through initiating different policies.
5. Women Agrarian societies may become the most important in changing her life positively.
6. There is a dire need of extensive study on the household organization of agrarian societies with a focus on women role on livestock.
7. Women may have more knowledge and interest in the subject of veterinary science and animal husbandry than men. Therefore, they must be provided employment opportunities to work for rural women guide regarding livestock.
8. Educated women of pastoral areas must be provided scholarships for the education in livestock.
9. Livestock business must be initiated as profession, in this connection livestock department must be established at Women University in Quetta. Scholarship scheme, Diploma courses and trainings must be conducted at university level.
10. Trainings must be arranged for women at community level through female trainers extensively.
11. Women and education are complementary for each others; hence, appropriate measurements must be taken to build an educated rural woman.
12. Strengthening the capacity of rural women to manage and conserve the natural resource base at the household and the community level by raising their skills in protecting and judiciously managing their environment.
13. Creating and enabling environment that helps rural poor women's and communities' access to improve knowledge, skills and technologies especially in goat and sheep production systems in particular.
14. Short and intermediate term loans must be provided to women involved in livestock rearing activities on very relaxed conditions.

### CONCLUSION

Women living in Balochistan are playing an important role in livestock sector. They not only perform the home chores but also participate in agriculture related activities which are mostly related to livestock. They give fodder to livestock reside at home, milking the animals, take off different dairy products from milk, take care of livestock at

home, do weaving, cleaning shelters of livestock, converting manure into fuel, process wool and hair and so forth. Hence, there is an urgent need to commercialize their activities. By commercializing these activities, women would perform these activities with intense care and with professionalism, this would also lead to open many ways of development of Balochistan not only economically but also socially. Women in Balochistan contribute to all agricultural activities as well, contributing years of free labor without having direct access to income generated or decision making power how the product are disposed of. Anecdotal evidence collected over half a decade would suggest that the success of any livestock enterprise relies heavily on effective involvement of women as they are closely involve in animal husbandry activities. Women are more knowledgeable in livestock management and of related diseases because of working being in contact regularly with the livestock. Training is the need of all time to the women for rearing of livestock especially sheep and goat. The major hurdle in this connection is the traditional set up of Balochistan, where families are male dominated which does not allow the women to go outside and work on commercial basis. This is very noticeable in pashtoon dominant areas especially. Good thing is that now people are gradually coming out of their traditions which they considered hurdle in their development. Since, living in Islamic society, they are conscious about the *Parda* of their women. Advantageously, most of livestock activities can easily be performed within the boundaries of house but to educate the women home to home is rather difficult task due to diverse population. Women participation on commercial basis can bring economic revolution in Balochistan; fortunately, it is now realized by the elders and policy makers of this province.

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