

## A case study on the physical involvement of men and women in dairying \*

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The population of cattle and buffaloes in India is considered to be the largest in the world. The status of animal husbandry sector in Kerala cannot be compared with that of other states in India. Majority of cattle owners in the state maintain only one or two milch animals as an integral part of the mixed farming system. Most of cattle owners in the state who maintain animals for income belong to the low and middle income groups. They are utilizing family labour in the adoption of various management practices concerned with dairying. Women's involvement in Livestock production is a longstanding tradition in our country where domestic animals have been an integral part of family farming system. Some of the available studies indicate that in other states there is an appreciable contribution by women in certain aspects of dairying especially in rural areas. The present study was undertaken to assess the extent of physical involvement of men and women in dairy management practices.

### Materials and Methods

The milk producers' co-operative society, Vilanganoor was selected purposely for the study, considering the following points (a) Existence of

milk producers' co-operative society for more than 10 years. (b) proximity to the veterinary college and thereby more possibility for adoption of scientific practices- (c) Large number of membership in the society and collection of more litres of milk/day. (d) The willingness of the members to co-operate with animal husbandry activities which has been proved previously. At first, the list of entire members of the society was prepared. From the total list of members, a list of members who were current milk producers was prepared. From the above list 100 members were selected at random using Tippett's random numbers. Their households were the units of study. Thus the 100 members currently supplying milk formed the study sample. Six major aspects relating to dairy husbandry were selected based on package of practices recommendation by Kerala Agricultural University and discussion with experts in the University regarding the important aspects to be considered. Thus the physical involvement in the adoption of practices under the following aspects in dairying viz., selection, housing, feeding, milking, breeding and treatment, was considered. A score of 'four', 'three' and 'two' were assigned to 'always' 'often' and

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'sometimes' respectively and as core of 'one' for the non-involvement in each practice. A respondent's total score for physical involvement was found by adding up the scores obtained for all these six aspects. The respondents were classified into high, medium and low categories based on mean and standard deviation. 't'-test was applied to find out the difference if any between the physical involvement of husbands and wives in each of these aspects as well as in general.

### Results and Discussion

As far as the physical involvement is concerned 71 percent each of the husbands and wives were having medium involvement, 18 percent of the husband and 19 percent of the wives having low involvement and 11 percent of husbands and 10 percent of wives having high involvement as far as the aspects in general are concerned (Table 1). Though not much difference could be noticed in the distribution of the involvement categories, a significant involvement was shown (Table 2) in general by the husbands. Devadas (1975), Achanta (1982), Dinesh kumar and Singh (1983) Azad *et al.* (1985), Singh *et al.* (1987) and George *et al.* (1990) have reported that there is an appreciable contribution of women through their physical involvement in animal rearing. In the present study physical involvement of the husbands was found to be significant even though there was a sizable contribution by the wives (Table 2).

While considering the physical involvement of husbands and wives in the individual aspects selected for

the study it could be seen that there is an aspect wise variation between husbands and wives. Table 2 reveals that in the aspect of selection the mean score of involvement of husbands was 3.8 and that of wives 1.3. The involvement of husbands in this aspect was found to be significant at one percent level. Napal (1989) found that women play a great role in proper selection and purchase of animals during cattle fairs. This finding does not agree with that of present study. This may be due to the fact that during cattle fairs, the family members may be going together for selection and purchase of animals, while in the study area such cattle fairs are seldom as far as milch animals are concerned. As such, more often it will be the male members who will examine the animals to be purchased from the selling households.

As far as the aspect of housing is concerned, the mean score were 1.4 and 3.3 for the husbands and wives respectively in which the involvement of wives was found to be significant at one percent level. The report of Achanta (1982), Bhatnagar (1982), Nagpal (1989), Shashikala *et al.* (1990) and George *et al.* (1990) revealed that the involvement of women in practices connected with this aspect was more which is in accordance with the findings of the present study. During day time wives will be present at home more than the husbands and as such their physical contribution in adopting practices connected with housing became more which explains the above phenomenon.

Table 1 Distribution of respondents based on their extent of physical involvement in dairying

Sl. No.	Category	Husband		Wives	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	High (H-20 and above) (H-18 and above)	11	11	10	10
2	Medium (H-12 to 19) (W-11 to 17)	71	71	71	71
3	Low (H-up to 11) (W-up to 10)	18	18	19	19

	H--Husbands	W--Wives
	Mean	SE
Husband	15.0	4.0
Wives	13.4	3.4

Table 2 Results of 't' test applied to the physical involvement scores of husbands and wives

Sl. No.	Aspects in dairying	Husband		Wives		't' value (in absolute terms)
		Mean	S. E.	Mean	S. E.	
1	Selection	3.8	0.07	1.3	0.05	27.8280**
2	Housing	1.4	0.09	3.3	0.11	18.5491**
3	Feeding	1.5	0.01	3.1	0.12	10.1435**
4	Milking	2.0	0.13	2.4	0.13	2.312 NS
5	Breeding	3.3	0.12	1.5	0.09	11.7348**
6	Treatment	3.0	0.14	1.9	0.09	7.0213**
	Total	15.0	0.40	13.4	0.34	2.9513**

\*\* Significant at 1% level  
N. S. Non-significant

The practices under the aspect of feeding were also mainly done by the wives compared to the husbands (mean values 3.1 and 1.5 respectively) which were found to be significant at one percent level. This finding agrees with the findings of Bhatnagar (1982),

Nagpal (1989) and Shashikala *et al.* (1990). Presence of wives in the household during daytime compared to husbands explain the above effect.

In the aspect of milking there was no significant difference in the physical

involvement of husbands and wives (mean value 2 and 2.4 respectively). In the studies of Bhatnagar (1982), Nagpal (1989) and Shashikala *et al*, (1990) the practices relating to this aspect were found to be done by women, which is in partial agreement with the findings of the present study.

In the aspect of breeding the involvement of husbands was found to be significant at one percent level (mean values 3.3 and 1.5 respectively). Similarly the involvement of husbands was significant at one percent level in the aspect of treatment. (mean values 3 and 1.9 respectively).

While examining their contribution in individual aspects selected for the study, it could be seen that in the aspects of selection, breeding and treatment the involvement of husbands was significantly high, whereas in the case of housing and feeding the involvement of wives was significantly high. But in the case of milking, there was no significant difference in physical involvement of husbands and wives. This indicates that the involvement of wives is more in practices which are adopted within the households except in milking where there was an equal contribution. For the proper adoption of other three aspects, outside contacts are required for which the husbands contributed more.

#### Summary

A study was conducted in 100 households to assess the extent of physical involvement of men and

women of the family in different aspects of dairying, at Vilanganoor, a village near Thrissur. It was revealed that in housing and feeding of cattle which are adopted within the household, a fairly good involvement of women was noticed. In selection, breeding and treatment of animals which require outside contact, involvement of men was significantly higher. There was no significant difference between men and women in their physical involvement in milking of animals.

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