

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OVER RESOURCES

M. MILCAH PAUL & P. RADHA RANI

Research Scholar, Department. of Resource Management & Consumer Sciences, College of Home Science, Saifabad,
Hyderabad, Telangana, India.

ABSTRACT

Gender differences are a common phenomenon in the rural areas of India. Due to the patriarchal society in the country, women are facing a lot of discrimination and inequality. Resources are an important requirement for any individual to survive. Due to the gender inequality and discrimination, women have a lesser access and control over resources. This study was taken up to study the availability of resources (Income, Food, clothing, household appliances and Animal resources) in the selected rural households. The gender differences existing in the households with regard to access and control over the selected resources was also studied. The study displayed some positive and also negative results. The results were favouring women in the case of income, food and clothing resources; whereas the results were in the favour of men in the household appliance category and income.

KEYWORDS: Gender, Differences, Access, Control, Resource

INTRODUCTION

In almost any country in the world, mainly in the developing countries, women and men have different means for access to critical economic resources. Their level of control and decision making power also vary from each other. This affect their lives in different ways, and results in the gender inequality in a society. (FDRE, 2002).

Resources are one such elements that are required for the human development. Any work can be done with the help of some or the other resource. There are different types of resources. Be it a household resource or a resource used for occupational work, each of them play their role in helping an individual to carry out their work. Among the resources, economic resources are one of the important resources which are required for growth and development of any individual.

This study focusses on the income, food, clothing, household appliances and animal resources. All these resources are required at the household level and are required for human survival and comfort.

Objectives of the study

- To study the resource availability in the selected rural households.
- To assess the existing gender differences with regard to the access to the resources.
- To analyse the gender differences existing in the control of the resources.

Methodology

An exploratory research design was adopted to conduct the present study. The location selected for the study was Aurepalle and Dokur villages of Mahbubnagar district, Telangana, India. 66 households from Aurepalle village and 46

households from Dokur village were randomly selected for the study. The principle couple (head of the household and spouse) who takes the decisions related to the household issues were selected and interviewed. The sampling technique used was Simple Random sampling technique.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The resources were divided into income, food, clothing, household appliances and animal resources. The results gained in the study are discussed under the following heads:

- Resource availability in the selected households
- Gender differences in the access to and control over the resources

Resource Availability in the Selected Households

The results showed that 99.10 per cent of the households had income availability which is earned by men, and 77.67 per cent had availability of income earned by women. The results also displayed that the number of men who earned income was high compared to women. In the houses where there is no income earned by men, those houses were generally headed by women.

All the households had food and clothing resources. Majority (91.96%) of the respondents had household appliances like Television, Refrigerator, Stove, Sewing machine, Fan, Light, etc. Not all resources were available in the households, but two or three appliances are present.

Regarding the animal resources, out of the households who have them; about half of the total respondents (50.00%) had meat obtained from the goats and poultry they grew, followed by eggs (36.60%), milk and milk products (25.00% each), dung (25.00%) and wool (1.78%). Milk was sold to other people in the village or sold to the milk centres. Eggs, dung and wool were used for their household purposes.

Gender Differences in the Access to and Control Over the Resources

The results regarding the gender differences in the access to and control over the resources can be seen in the Table 1 displayed below. There are few gender differences seen in the access and control over resources were obvious from the results. Regarding the income earned by men, they had an upper hand in maintaining, using and deciding about their own income. All the women who earned income (77.67%) had access and control over their income. Very few of the women had access (36.30%) and control (33.92%) towards the income of their spouse. Very few (25.00%) of men had access and control over the income earned by spouse. It is good to note that the women are empowered economically as they had control over the money they earned. It is good to see that the number of women who had access and control over their spouse's income is more compared to men. As women were involved in buying things required for households, they had access and control towards the income earned by the family. Some of the female respondents said once her husband gives his income to her, she can use it on her own, but she cannot take her partner's income without his permission. This clearly showed that there were few gender differences existing in the access and control over income.

Cent percent of the respondents had access to food and clothing resources. There were minor differences seen in the control over food and clothing resources. Women had a major role in controlling food and clothing resources. As women cooked food for the family and selected clothes for the family members, they had an upper hand in controlling

about the food and clothing resources. The results obtained were in accordance with the study conducted in AICRP (2009-14) which concluded that women had greater access and control over food resources.

Equal access and control was seen for animal resources. All the respondents had the ability and power to use or sell or donate the animal resources like eggs, meat, dung, milk and milk products etc., without taking the permission of their spouse. Grace (2005) also found the similar results in her study.

Men had a greater access and control over appliances used in the household, when compared to women. Men had the ability to sell when they felt that there was no use with the product. But in some households, women need to take permission from men in order to sell the product and vice versa. There were also some households where women could sell the appliances like stove without the permission of their husband as they were the ones who used to cook food, own and use the appliance frequently.

There were no gender differences seen in the access and control over animal resources. Both men and women had the right to use the resources gained from the animals and they also had the right to use them or give them to their friends or neighbours depending on their wish or requirement. On the whole, these were some of the gender differences seen in the access and control over different resources in the surveyed households. The results explained in the above paragraphs were similar in the case of village wise analysis and on the whole too. The results obtained were in accordance with another said which concluded that men had greater access and control over resources when compared to women (AICRP Report, 2009-14).

Table 1: Availability of resources in the selected households, Gender differences in Access to and Control over Resources

Resource	Availability	Access		Control	
		Men	Women	Men	Women
Income					
Income earned by men	111 (99.10)	111 (99.10)	41 (36.30)	111 (99.10)	38 (33.92)
Income earned by women	87 (77.67)	28 (25.00)	87 (77.67)	28 (25.00)	87 (77.67)
Food	112 (100.00)	112 (100)	112 (100)	59 (52.67)	112 (100)
Clothing	103 (91.96)	112 (100)	112 (100)	84 (75.00)	112 (100)
Household appliances	111 (99.10)	103 (91.96)	87 (77.67)	97 (86.60)	81 (72.32)
Animal Resources					
Milk	28 (25.00)	28 (25.00)	28 (25.00)	28 (25.00)	28 (25.00)
Milk Products	28 (25.00)	28 (25.00)	28 (25.00)	28 (25.00)	28 (25.00)
Meat	41 (36.60)	41 (36.60)	41 (36.60)	41 (36.60)	41 (36.60)
Wool	56 (50.00)	56 (50.00)	51 (45.53)	56 (50.00)	51 (45.53)
Dung	2 (1.78)	2 (1.78)	2 (1.78)	2 (1.78)	2 (1.78)

On the whole there were few gender differences seen even in the access and control of resources. Men had a slightly greater access and control over the resources like income and household appliances. Women had a slightly greater access and control over the resources like income, food and clothing. Equal access and control was seen in men and women with regard to animal resources.

CONCLUSIONS

Gender inequality remains pervasive and is a barrier to growth and poverty reduction. Gender disparities tend to be greater in low income rural households and communities and developing countries. The results of this study also proved that there were few gender differences in the rural households selected for this study. But this study results defied the negative opinion that men always have an upper hand in access and control over the resources. This is a positive achievement gained in the study. The study results gave a way to recommend that the individuals and families have to be educated to reduce the existing gender inequalities in resource access and control, mainly in the rural families, so that the concept of gender equality and empowerment is achieved.

REFERENCES

1. AICRP report. 2009 -14. Home Science Extension department. Acharya N.G Ranga Agricultural University, Hyderabad. Andhra Pradesh.
2. FDRE. 2002. Ethiopia: sustainable development and poverty reduction program, MoFED, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
3. Grace, J. 2005. Rural women's access to land and livestock in Badakhshan, Bamyan and Kabul Provinces. Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit Report. Pp: 21-25.