
Women Participation in Poultry Production. The Case of Ada'a, Lume and Akaki, East Shewa, Ethiopia

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ABSTRACT: *Women play essential roles in agriculture; providing inputs, working in the farm, generating off-farm income and doing the unpaid house chores, but often the gains go to the husband and children. Ethiopia is representative of countries where village poultry plays a dominant role in total poultry production. women generally contribute more labor inputs in areas of feeding and grazing of cows, watering, manage vulnerable animals (calves, small ruminants, and sick, injured and pregnant animals), cleaning of barns, dairy-related activities (milking, butter and cheese making), gathering and making dung cakes, transporting farm manure, egg collection, and sale of egg/poultry, than men and children. However, few recognitions have been given to women's contribution to agricultural production. The study was aimed to assess the level of women participation in poultry production. The study went further to identify access and benefit of women from poultry products. Data was collected using semi- structured interview and analyzed using simple descriptive statistics. The study found that house construction was the only activity in which women participation is less than their men counter parts. Women take part in all activities concerning poultry production. Majority of the respondents 86.7% carried out watering poultry and collecting eggs followed by house cleaning 80% and recording events 80%. Taking products to market, selling products and holding money from poultry product sale are the major activities done by women by 73.3%. Based on results further researches need to be done in order to magnify the contribution of women in agricultural production.*

KEYWORDS: Ethiopia, participation, poultry, women, East Shewa

INTRODUCTION

Women have been making prominent and important contributions to agriculture right from creation and they actually constitute the bulk of the world's food producers [17]. Women play essential roles in agriculture; providing inputs, working in the farm, generating off-farm income and doing the unpaid house chores, but often the gains go to the husband and children [11]. Poultry products in most developing countries, especially in Africa, are still expensive [15]. Ethiopia has about 60%

of the total chicken population of East Africa, which includes local, exotic, and hybrid chicken breeds [21]. Ethiopia is representative of countries where village poultry plays a dominant role in total poultry production [13]. Poultry farming contributes significantly to the welfare of people at household and national level [4].

women generally contribute more labor inputs in areas of feeding and grazing of cows, watering, manage vulnerable animals (calves, small ruminants, and sick, injured and pregnant animals), cleaning of barns, dairy-related activities (milking, butter and cheese making), gathering and making dung cakes, transporting farm manure, egg collection, and sale of egg/poultry, than men and children. However, there are cases where both men and women take part in the harvesting and transportation of feed, chaffing of fodder, feeding of animals, cleaning of sheds and sale of milk, cheese and butter[12]. According to the findings of Oladeji, extension agents are information sources for poultry producers [18]. Women embark on agricultural activities for a variety of reasons. Prominent among such reasons is that of being able to earn financial resources, as well as being a family tradition and personal interest [13].

Study conducted by Gebre et al., on gender differences on productivity found that, male headed households have significantly a higher number of family members to provide labor, larger land size, and better financial access than female headed households[9]. Yadeta & Fojo found that the contributions of wives to decision making on poultry production and household expenditure was principally higher than that of their husbands [23]. The authors revealed that the production and management of poultry (hen) is mostly performed by women as a result of cultural expectation. Farmers fed their chickens using locally available feed resources such as maize, wheat, waste vegetables and some well experienced farmers start to supplement their chickens using animal byproducts such as bone meal by grinding it into small pieces and some calcium sources of feed such as sand and calcium carbonate [20].

Women's access to information—particularly to information provided by extension services—may be subject to both extra- household and intra-household constraints [14]. The aim of extension services is to empower women by increasing their own agricultural knowledge, decision-making autonomy, and adoption of recommended practices to ultimately to boost yields and output, then there is considerable value in providing information directly to women. Describing the significant role of women in household food security, [7] brought forward that Women farmers had been classified to be highly vulnerable due to multiple challenges they faced in the rural setting. The authors stated that the challenges are surmountable if they could access the right types of agricultural information as this will reduce shocks that are inherent in vulnerability context. Participation of smallholder farmers in agricultural research leads to more appropriate technology design and faster adoption by ensuring that research builds on farmers' knowledge of local contextual constraints, their own capabilities and consumer preferences [16]. Girls have more agricultural knowledge than boys because girls are the ones who help parents [8].

The contribution of women in any development endeavors is greatly decisive to bring fast and progressive economic change [6]. According to the research of Tsigab et al., Koekoek chickens are more preferred in their body weight, egg production, egg hatchability, egg marketability, and age at egg laying and slaughtering weight as compared to the local chickens [22]. Some households sharing their home with small livestock like chicken indicated that the main reason for sharing is small number of chicken, lack of awareness, shortage of land and construction materials [5]. Yigzaw & Demeke, recommended that awareness creation and changing the attitudes of pregnant women towards egg consumption should be implemented by local GOs and NGOs [24]. In rural areas of Ethiopia, women play the leading role in agricultural production, livestock rearing and cottage industries and remain busy from dawn to dusk to supply food to men in fields, fetch water, collect fuel wood, and manage livestock [1].

Women involved in many unpaid activities. Despite the fact that women's contribution to household chores and agriculture, limited number of literatures are available on women participation in agricultural production. Despite women's participation in livestock production, women were severely disadvantaged with respect to land ownership, locally adapted breeds that can access and utilize common property resource represented an enormous asset playing a role that cannot be fulfilled by improved breeds. Therefore, the current study was aimed to assess the extent of participation of women and men in the poultry production in these particular areas. The study went further to explore who does what in the course of poultry production.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Description of the Study Areas.

The study was conducted in three selected districts of East Shewa Zone which is one of the Zones of Ethiopian Region of Oromia. East Shewa is located in the middle of Oromia, connecting the western regions to the eastern ones. This zone is bordered on the south by the West Arsi Zone, on the southwest by the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region, on the west by South west Shewa and Oromia Special Zone Surrounding Finfinnee, on the northwest by North Shewa, on the north by the Amhara Region, on the northeast by the Afar Region, and on the southeast by Arsi; its western most reach is defined by the course of the Bilate River. Towns and cities in East Shewa include Bishoftu (Debre Zeit), Metehara, and Ziway. The town of Adama was separated from East Shewa and is a special zone now. Ada'a, Lume and Akaki were selected for the study.

Data Collection and Analysis Method

Primary data were collected from target farmers those who were the target beneficiaries of demonstration koekoek chicken breeds demonstration activities. Each participant was interviewed and response were noted by enumerators. The collected data was analyzed using SPSS version 23.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographic Features of Respondents

Majority of the respondents, 86.7% (26) were married while 13.3% (4) were single. Out of the respondents, 64.3% have primary education where as 35.7% of them have secondary and preparatory level of education. The entire participants have poultry production experiences on local chicken breeds.

Gender Disaggregated Activities in Poultry Production

Respondents were asked to rate activities based on their existing practical experiences in the course of poultry production and the results in table 1 revealed that house construction was the major activity in which women participation is less when compared to their male counterparts. House construction mostly 93.3% done by men followed by feeding poultry and floor litter preparation respectively. Watering poultry (86.7), collecting eggs (86.7), recording events (80%), house cleaning (80%) and feed purchasing (73.3%) were the activities solely done by women. This is in agreement with the findings of Abate Dessie, revealed that the situation of women in general indicates that they carried out the heaviest burden of family life responsibility, which includes feeding, housing, clothing, and breadwinner sharing [1]. Similarly, Gudeta and Hailu, reported that women usually participate in farming activities of wheat production with the exception of chemical application [10]. This implies that the role of women in agricultural production including poultry production is invaluable even though it has not been recognized well.

Table 1. Activities in poultry production

Activities	Participants			
	Men		Women	
	Frequency	Percentages	Frequency	percentages
House construction	28	93.3	2	6.7
House cleaning	6	20	24	80
Floor litter preparation	12	40	18	60
Feed purchase	8	26.7	22	73.3
Feeding poultry	14	46.7	16	53.3
Watering poultry	4	13.3	26	86.7
Recording events	6	20	24	80
Collecting eggs	4	13.3	26	86.7

Source: Survey results ,2021

Poultry Products: Access and Benefit

The respondents were asked to show their insights concerning the access and benefit of poultry production by comparing their participation with their male counter parts. The results in table 2 indicated that women participate more than men in taking products to markets (73.3%), selling

products (73.3%) and holding money from poultry product sales (73.3%) while their role become low in accessing and using the money for expenditure (40%). This results argued with the findings of Yadeta & Fojo, which indicated that the contributions of wives to decision making on poultry production and household expenditure was principally higher than that of their husbands [23]. This leads to the suggestion that women participated in a number of activities in poultry production although their decision-making power is limited. This is in agreement with the findings, (Belay and Oljira, which revealed that Chickens are important sources of food for women post-birth; chickens are also sources of payment being provided to villagers for local health services; chickens are gifts to newly married couples; and strengthen social networks between women [3]. Similarly, Sariyev & Zeller, found that sampled male holders attach greater importance to food and income generation from poultry production than female holders do [19]. Similarly, Alem Tadesse, reported that access to information affects women poultry extension services positively and significantly at one percent probability level [2]. That is women who have access to information on poultry extension services are more beneficiary and participant than less informant women households.

Table 2. Access and Benefit

Indicators	Participants			
	Men		Women	
	Frequency	Percentages	Frequency	Percentages
Taking products to markets	8	26.7	22	73.3
Selling products	8	26.7	22	73.3
Holding money from sale	8	26.7	22	73.3
Expense decision making	18	60	12	40

Source: survey results,2021

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Women play essential roles in agriculture; providing inputs, working in the farm, generating off-farm income and doing the unpaid house chores, but often the gains go to the husband and children. The current study examined the participation of women in poultry production and access and benefit women obtained from poultry products including their decision-making power of on expenses concerning the poultry production. The results showed that women take part in all activities of poultry production. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the contribution of women in all activities should get attention and recognition is needed to be given for rural women for their invaluable contribution in all aspects of household survival.

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