

Research Article

Gender Differences in Possession of Land and Livestock in Rural Sikkim: A Brief Overview

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Abstract—The present study analyses the gender differences in possession of land and livestock in rural Sikkim: a brief overview. A comprehensive survey was undertaken by using multi stage random sampling method to collect data from four different villages in Sikkim viz. Upper Legship village from Rabong block, South district comprising of 46 households; Bop village from Chungthang block, North district containing 25 households; Nazitam village from Martam block, East district constituting of 79 households and Lagay village from Gyalshing block, West district comprising of 62 households. It is found that in the study area, 82 percent of the land is registered in favour of men, 12 percent in favour of women and 6 percent in favour of both (joint registration). Regarding ownership position of the livestock in the study area, it is found that except in case of pig and poultry, the ownership favours the male counterparts which reveal gender differences in possession of land and livestock in rural Sikkim. Hence, it is significant to study “Gender Differences in Possession of Land and Livestock in Rural Sikkim”.

Keywords — Rural Sikkim, Possession of land and livestock, Gender Differences

1. Introduction

About 60 percent of the population directly or indirectly depends on for their livelihood on agriculture and allied activities [1]. About 47 percent of the Sikkim’s women participate in agricultural sector [2,3]. The rural women are the major contributors in agriculture and its allied fields. Women are responsible for 98.6 percent of the fodder collection and, however, they receive no wages [4]. In hilly and mountain region this fact is even more significant. Mountain women work long hours and share agricultural and livestock tasks fairly evenly with men. Women work ranges from crop production like field crops, fruit crop, plantation crop, livestock production, forestry, fishery to cottage industry, from household and family maintenance activities to transporting water, fuel and fodder. Unfortunately the role and dignity of women remain unrecognized. Women’s status is low by all social, economic and political indicators [5]. The present study concentrates on the gender differences in the possession of land and livestock in rural Sikkim.

Section 1 contains the brief introduction of the study. Section 2 contains the related works undertaken by the previous researcher on the study. Section 3 contains the methodology applied to study the given problem. Section 4 contains results and discussions. Section 5 contains conclusion and suggestions.

2. Related Work

Women’s constraints to development are shortage of land and irrigation water, lack of ownership of resources, limited access to credit, lack of control and decision making powers over productive resources, lack of markets and lack of managerial know-how due to lack of education and inadequate extension services [6]. Further, women’s absence of assets contributes to their exclusion from high-growth sectors, escalating persistent inequalities and enhanced vulnerabilities [7].

In all the developing countries of the world, rural women are among the most deprived people. Widespread gender-based discrimination in laws, customs and practices cause severe inequalities in their ability to access and control land and other natural resources, and limit their participation in decision-making in land governance, from the household to local and national institutions [8].

In India, most of the landowning women acquired their land through their marital families, especially as widows, and not through their paternal families, despite being given equal rights with brothers in the father’s separate property under the Hindu Succession Act 1956 and the family’s joint family property under the Hindu Succession Amendment Act 2005. In terms of policy, women’s property position as daughters

clearly needs improving in order for India to move towards gender equality in landownership, as also targeted in SDG 5. This remains a significant challenge in the face of rigid social norms and longstanding practice [9].

A study on the status and role of women in three pastoral societies inhabiting different regions of Himalayas viz., Changpa of Changthang, Ladakh, the Gaddis of Bharmour, Himachal Pradesh and the Bhutias of Lachen and Lachung in Sikkim revealed that all the three groups are patriarchal where decision making regarding mobility, migration, sale of animals and animal products are done by men. Males control the ownership, distribution and tending of land, animals while women look after home, children, dairying and subsistence agriculture [10]. The pastoral women work very hard in some cases even more than the men. Limited right of girl's education, lack of access to control resources and lack of decision-making has led to the miserable condition of the women.

In Sikkim men dominated the ownership of bullock, pig and cow while women own the low-value small animals, such as goats and poultry. Lack of cattle ownership, lack of equal access to land and other productive resources have made women poor and socio-economically insecure [11] which is why the researcher has taken up the present study. Therefore, the main objective of the study is to find out the gender differences in possession of land and livestock in rural Sikkim.

3. Methodology

The study is solely based on primary sources. The primary data and information were collected from the study area comprising of 212 households. A comprehensive survey was undertaken by using multi stage random sampling method to collect data from four different villages in Sikkim. So, for the study, first state of Sikkim was selected and then categorized into four districts viz., - South, North, East and West. Each district was again divided into blocks namely, Rabong, Chungthang, Martam and Gyalsing. Finally, one village from each block was selected to collect data for the study using complete enumeration method. The four sample villages were Upper Legship village from Rabong block comprising of 46 households, Bop village from Chungthang block consisting of 25 households, Nazitam village from Martam block comprising of 79 households and Lagay village from Gyalshing block containing 62 households. The results were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentages, graphical and tabular representation. The statistical software namely Microsoft Excel 2010 had been used for processing, analyzing and finally interpretation of the primary data.

4. Results and Discussion

The table 1 below shows the allocation of land in the study area. The land type in the study area is divided as below:

Area cultivated (field crops):

Area cultivated once

Area cultivated more than once.

Area used for other activities:

Area for plantation crop

Area for horticulture crops

Area for floriculture activities

Permanent pastures and grazing lands

Area not cultivated:

Barren and unculturable waste

Culturable waste

Fallow land

Homestead land.

In Upper Legship village, 14 acres of land is considered as area cultivated once followed by Lagay village and Nazitam village with 12.5 and 3.5 acres of land respectively. In Bop village such type of land is absolutely lacking. The share of area cultivated more than once is inspiring in all the sample villages where Nazitam village supersedes all the other sample villages with 50.5 acres of land followed by Upper Legship, Lagay and Bop village with 36.5, 34.5 and 17 acres of land correspondingly. However, comprehending the area for plantation crop, Lagay village is ahead with 41.5 acres of land averted towards such agricultural activity followed by Upper Legship, Bop and Nazitam village with 28.5, 24.5 and 7 acres of land respectively. Area for horticulture with ample irrigation facility is widespread in all the sample villages where 23.5 acres of land each from Upper legship and Nazitam village, 30 acres of land from Lagay village and 15 acres of land from Bopp village are earmarked for the purpose. Nonetheless, Sikkim outstrip in floriculture business, area for floriculture activity in the sample villages exhibit a distressing scenario with only 0.5 to 1.5 acres of land assigned for such activity. Henceforth, it is extremely necessary to impart awareness in this vocation so that it certainly benefits in enhancing the rural economy of the study area. Permanent pastures and grazing lands are inadequate in the study area ranging from 1.5 to 3 acres of land, which is a reason why people in the study area have reduced their interest in cattle rearing. This will have a negative impact in the rural economy and it is a matter of great concern for the government and the policy makers. A close view of the barren and unculturable waste, culturable waste and fallow land in the study area presents an optimistic insignia since such land is restricted between 0 to 2 acres. This shows that people in the study area are industrious and dedicated where they make use of all the lands available with them for cultivation in the best possible way they can.

Of the total 384.539 acres of land of the study area, 209.5 acres have irrigation facility and 168 acres of land are devoid of it. Irrigation facility if augmented will surely support the agricultural economy of the study area by manifold. It is also worthy to mention here that out of 384.539 acres of land in the study area, 7.039 acres of land have been used for making dwelling (homesteadland).

Table - 1: Household Assets: Area Possession in Acres

Sample Village		Land Type									Total Land	(e)	Grand Total Land
		(a)		(b)			(c)	(d)					
		(a ₁)	(a ₂)	(b ₁)	(b ₂)	(b ₃)	(c)	(d ₁)	(d ₂)	(d ₃)			
Upper Legship	Irrigated	12.5	13	2	23.5	1	0	0	0	0	52	2.679	111.679 acres
	Not Irrigated	1.5	23.5	26.5	0	0	3	0	2.5	0	57		
Bopp	Irrigated	0	6.5	24	15	0	0	0	0	0	45.5	1.05	59.55 acres
	Not Irrigated	0	10.5	0.5	0	0	2	0	0	0	13		
Nazitam	Irrigated	3.5	15.5	2	23.5	0	0	0	0	0	44.5	1.72	89.22 acres
	Not Irrigated	0	35	5	0	0.5	1.5	1	0	0	43		
Lagay	Irrigated	10.5	8	18.5	30	0.5	0	0	0	0	67.5	1.59	124.09 acres
	Not Irrigated	2	26.5	23	0	1	1.5	1	0	0	55		
All	Irrigated	26.5	43	46.5	92	1.5	0	0	0	0	209.5	7.039	384.539 acres
	Not Irrigated	3.5	95.5	55	0	1.5	8	2	2.5	0	168		

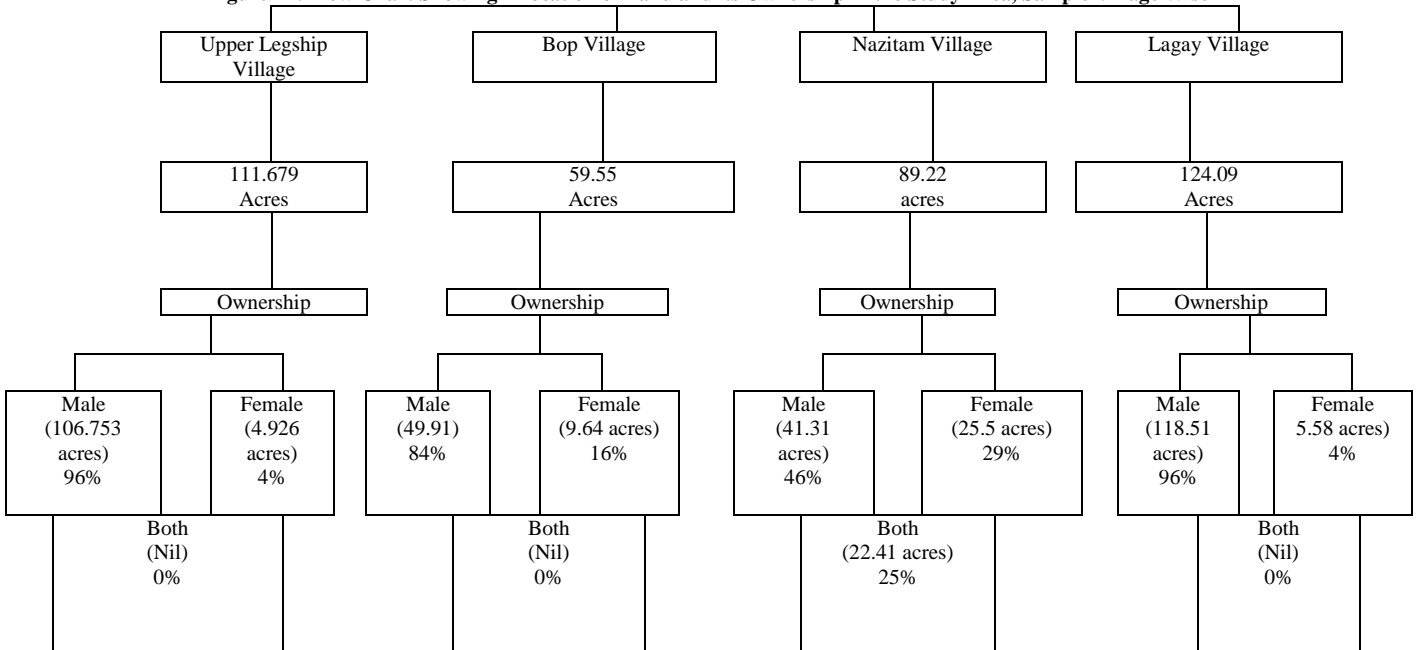
Source: Field Survey and Interview, January-March, 2019.

Note: (a): Area cultivated (field crops); (a₁): Area cultivated once; (a₂): Area cultivated more than once; (b): Area used for other activities; (b₁): Area for plantation crops; (b₂): Area for horticulture activities; (b₃): Area for floriculture activities; (c): Permanent pastures and grazing lands; (d): Area not cultivated; (d₁): Barren and unculturable waste; (d₂): Culturable waste; (d₃): Fallow land and (e): Homestead land.

Figure – 1 below shows the ownership of land among the males and the females in the four sample villages and it is noticed that the paradigm is identical in Upper Legship village and Lagay village where 96 percent of the land is in the name of the male counterparts and 4 percent in the name of the females, the actualities which is very deleterious. On the hand, in Bop village 84 percent of its land is in the name of the males and 16 percent in the name of the females, the figure that is again extremely dismal. While comparing the four villages, Nazitam village is better off with 46 percent of its land in the name of the males, 29 percent is in the name of the females and 25 percent in joint appellation. The reason could be better educational system and healthier exposure that has helped in breaking the stereotyped attitude of the location on gender due to its proximity to Gangtok, the state’s capital. Such optimistic evidences offer hope and the situation will definitely recuperate in other sample villages also in due course of time.

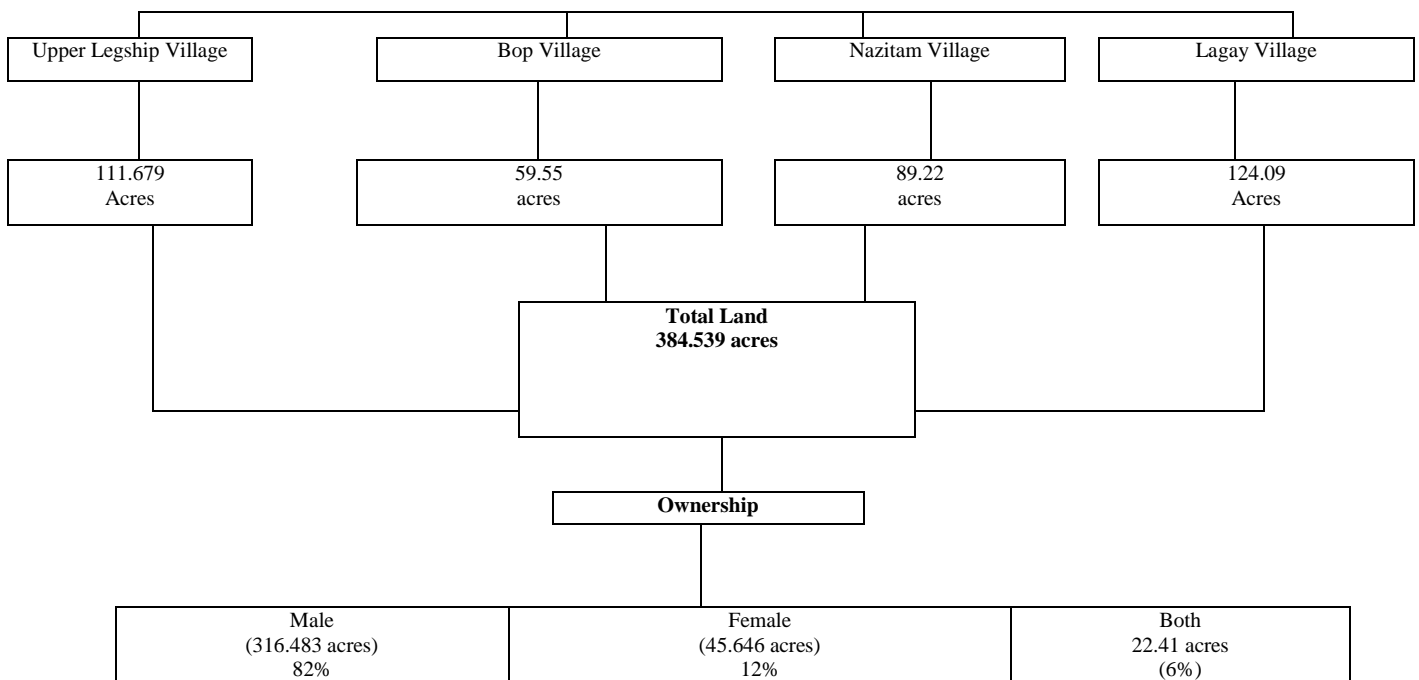
A comprehensive data of the study area given in figure 2 below, specify that 82 percent of its land are in the name of the males though 12 percent of the land is owned by the females and 6 percent land are in joint names. Thus, in aggregate, it is premeditated that men dominate the proprietorship in land and therefore, it is concluded that patriarchy endures in the study area. This is one of the major societal concerns that must to be confronted by the government, NGO’s and the policy makers if economic progress is to be augmented in the study area. Prevalence of gender equality will absolutely motivate the womenfolk to enhance their productivity level, which will benefit the family in particular and the community at large.

Figure - 1: Flow Chart Showing Allocation of Land and its Ownership in the Study Area, Sample Village Wise



Source: Field Survey and Interview, January - March 2019.

Figure - 2: Flow Chart Showing Allocation of Land and its Ownership in the Study Area in Aggregate:



Source: Field Survey and Interview, January - March 2019.

Table – 2 (a) and 2 (b) below, demonstrates the household assets i.e., possession of livestock/animal husbandry and the number used for commercial purposes in the sample villages respectively. It is learnt that in Upper Legship village the most common animal nurtured is the cow/buffalo followed by goat/sheep, pig, chicken/duck and rabbit whereas in Bopp and Nazitam villages, they rear more chicken/duck. In Lagay village too, it is noticed that poultry farming is dominant followed by cow/buffalo, goat/sheep, yak/dzo and pig. Examining the livestock farming of the study area in aggregate, it is found that Nazitam village supersedes all the other three sample villages. While observing the number of animals used for commercial purposes in the study area, it is found that Upper Legship is performing better than the other sample villages with 85 percent followed by Nazitam, Bop and Lagay village with 84 percent, 76 percent and 67 percent respectively.

Table - 2 (a): Household Assets: Possession of Livestock/Animal Husbandry & Number used for Commercial Purpose; Sample Village Wise (Upper Legship Village & Bop Village)

Livestock	Sample Village							
	Upper Legship				Bop			
	M	F	T	NCP	M	F	T	NCP
Cow/Buffalo	44 (43%)	59 (57%)	103	70 (68%)	03 (8%)	33 (92%)	36	15 (42%)
Yak/Dzo	00	00	00	00	05 (50%)	05 (50%)	10	10 (100%)
Goat/Sheep	65 (67%)	32 (33%)	97	97 (100%)	26 (57%)	20 (43%)	46	46 (100%)
Pig	30 (77%)	09 (23%)	39	39 (100%)	20 (95%)	01 (5%)	21	21 (100%)
Chicken/Duck	01 (11%)	08 (89%)	09	05 (56%)	178 (51%)	172 (49%)	350	259 (74%)
Other (Specify)	Rabbit				NA			
	02 (40%)	03 (60%)	05	04 (80%)	00	00	00	00
Total	142 (56%)	111 (44%)	253	215 (85%)	232 (50%)	231 (50%)	463	351 (76%)

Note: M=Male; F= Female; T= Total; NCP: Number used for Commercial Purpose.

Source: Field Survey and Interview, January - March 2019.

Table - 2 (b): Household assets: Possession of Livestock/Animal Husbandry & Number used for Commercial Purpose; sample village wise (Nazitam Village & Lagay Village)

Livestock	Sample Village							
	Nazitam				Lagay			
	M	F	T	NCP	M	F	T	NCP
Cow/Buffalo	70 (40%)	104 (60%)	174	48 (28%)	23 (25%)	68 (75%)	91	48 (53%)
Yak/Dzo	00	00	00	00	08 (44%)	10 (56%)	18	18 (100%)
Goat/Sheep	56 (41%)	82 (59%)	138	134 (97%)	15 (39%)	23 (61%)	38	38 (100%)
Pig	19 (73%)	07 (27%)	26	24 (92%)	14 (82%)	03 (18%)	17	17 (100%)
Chicken/Duck	157 (48%)	167 (52%)	324	288 (89%)	73 (40%)	111 (60%)	184	113 (61%)
Other (Specify)	Fish							
	300 (43%)	400 (57%)	700	650 (93%)	00	00	00	00
Total	602 (44%)	760 (56%)	1362	1144 (84%)	133 (38%)	215 (62%)	348	234 (67%)

Note: M=Male; F= Female; T= Total; NCP: Number used for Commercial Purpose.

Source: Field Survey and Interview, January - March 2019.

Table - 3 (a) below display the ownership of livestock/animal husbandry in all the sample villages. It is noticed that in case of pig and poultry, the ownership supports the female counterparts in all the three sample villages except in Nazitam where the ownership is in favour of male with 42 percent (male), 32 percent (female), 26 percent (both/jointly) in case of pig and 60 percent (male) and 40 percent (female) in case of poultry. On the contrary, in all the other cases the ownership favours the male counterpart, which replicates a great sense of inequality in the society where men hold the majority of the livestock assets.

Table - 3 (b) below furnishes the data of the livestock/animal husbandry in the study area in aggregate where it portrays that the study area is dominated by poultry farming followed by cattle rearing, goatery, piggery and rearing of yak/dzo There is a prodigious disparity in the sex ratio in animal population in the study area especially in pig paradigm. This can be one reason why animal husbandry sector could not flourish in the study area. Therefore, this could be an area of study for further research by a theriogenologist

Furthermore, the number of animals accessible in the study area used for commercial purpose is highly varying from 45 percent to 100 percent. Initiative has to be taken up by the government, bureaucrat, NGO's and the policy makers to enlighten the villagers in this area through their various awareness programmes and policies, provide rigorous training, provide credit facility at subsidized rate of interest and create market facilities to motivate the villagers to take up animal husbandry as a vocation which will definitely enhance their income. The policies and the programmes adopted by the government should be women friendly so that more and more women become an owner of the livestock assets and get into this vocation. The truth is that an economically sound mother can give a better education and health facility for her child. Today's children are tomorrow's assets (human resource). A healthy and an educated person can contribute more to the society which will certainly add to the economic and social development of the society.

Regarding the responsibility of taking care of the different livestock/animal husbandry in the study area, it is found that such obligation is mainly showered on the womenfolk though they do not own it. Nevertheless, the practice of joint responsibility of caring the animals is also quite high in the study area that anticipates a better society in the days to come.

Table - 3 (a): Household Assets: Possession of Livestock (Ownership)

L	Sample Village											
	Upper Legship			Bop			Nazitam			Lagay		
	M	F	B	M	F	B	M	F	B	M	F	B
A	30 (73%)	07 (17%)	4 (10%)	13 (81%)	03 (19%)	00	34 (48%)	15 (21%)	22 (31%)	35 (87.5%)	05 (12.5%)	00
B	00	00	00	02 (100%)	00	00	00	00	00	01 (100%)	00	00
C	25 (69.5%)	07 (19.5%)	04 (11%)	13 (93%)	01 (7%)	00	25 (62.5%)	03 (7.5%)	12 (30%)	13 (87%)	02 (13%)	00
D	07 (20.5%)	24 (70.5%)	03 (9%)	07 (35%)	13 (65%)	00	8 (42%)	6 (32%)	5 (26%)	05 (33%)	10 (67%)	00
E	00	01 (100%)	00	05 (22%)	18 (78%)	00	3 (60%)	2 (40%)	00	05 (17%)	24 (83%)	00
F	01 (100%)	00	00	00	00	00	1 (100%)	00	00	00	00	00

Note: M=Male; F= Female; B= Both (1= Male, 2= Female, 3= Both); L:Livestock; A: Cow/Buffalo; B: Yak/Dzo;

C: Goat/Sheep; D:Pig; E: Chicken/Duck; F: Other (Specify); T: Total

Source: Field Survey and Interview, January - March 2019.

Table - 3 (b): Household Assets: Possession of Livestock/Animal Husbandry & Number used for Commercial Purpose in the study area in aggregate

L	M	F	T	NCP	Ownership			Caring		
					M	F	B	M	F	B
A	140 (35%)	264 (65%)	404	181 (45%)	112 (75%)	30 (20%)	08 (5%)	19 (11%)	21 (13%)	128 (76%)
B	13 (46%)	15 (54%)	28	28 (100%)	03 (100%)	00	00	00	01 (33%)	02 (67%)
C	162 (51%)	157 (49%)	319	315 (99%)	76 (72.4%)	13 (12.4%)	16 (15.2%)	14 (13.3%)	11 (10.5%)	80 (76.2%)
D	83 (81%)	20 (19%)	103	101 (98%)	27 (31%)	53 (60%)	08 (9%)	08 (9%)	18 (20.5%)	62 (70.5%)
E	409 (47%)	458 (53%)	867	665 (77%)	13 (22%)	45 (78%)	00	09 (15%)	19 (33%)	30 (52%)
F	302 (43%)	403 (57%)	705	654 (93%)	02 (100%)	00	00	01 (50%)	00	01 (50%)

Note: M=Male; F= Female; B= Both (1= Male, 2= Female, 3= Both); L: Livestock; A: Cow/Buffalo; B: Yak/Dzo; C: Goat/Sheep; D: Pig; E: Chicken/Duck; F: Other (Specify): Here it is rabbit and fish (refer table 5.15 (a) & 5.15 (b)); T: Total

Source: Field Survey and Interview, January - March 2019.

5. Conclusion and suggestions

A comprehensive survey is undertaken by using multi stage random sampling method to collect data from four different villages in Sikkim viz. Upper Legship village, Bop village, Nazitam village and Lagay village to study the “Gender Differences in Possession of Land and Livestock in Rural Sikkim”. It is found that in the study area, 82 percent of the land is registered in favour of men, 12 percent in favour of women and 6 percent in favour of both (joint registration). Thus, in aggregate, it is observed that men dominate the proprietorship in land. This is one of the major societal concerns that must be confronted by the government, NGO’s and the policy makers. The Hindu Succession Act 1956 and the Hindu Succession Amendment Act 2005 of Government of India should be implemented sincerely and successfully which will reinforce gender equality motivating the womenfolk to enhance their productivity level, that will definitely benefit the family in particular and the community at large.

Considering the ownership regarding livestock/animal husbandry in the study area, it is found that in case of pig and poultry, the ownership is in favour of female counterparts while, in case of other livestock’s, the ownership is in favour of the male counterparts, which replicates a great sense of inequality in the society where men hold the majority of the livestock assets. The government, bureaucrat, NGO’s and the policy makers have to come up with better policies and programmes which is women friendly so that more and more women become an owner of the livestock assets and get into this vocation of animal husbandry sector. The truth is that an economically sound mother can give a better education and health facility for her child. Today’s children are tomorrow’s assets (human resource). A healthy and an educated person can contribute more to the society which will certainly add to the economic and social development of the society.

Regarding the responsibility of taking care of the different livestock/animal husbandry in the study area, it is found that such obligation is mainly showered on the womenfolk though they do not own it. Nevertheless, the practice of joint responsibility of caring the animals is also quite high in the study area that anticipates a better society in the days to come.

Data Availability

The data used are available in the manuscript and with the author.

Conflict of Interest

There is no Conflict of Interest

Funding Source

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Authors’ Contributions

The author has visited the study area personally and interacted with the respondent’s minutely and without any predisposition. It is her sole contribution.

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