

Roles Of Women In Livestock Raising In Lao Pdr

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Abstract: In a typical Lao family, women contribute essentially to its livestock and crop production. However, there is much variety in women's roles and over-generalization undermines policy relevance, ethnic groups, and planning. In Lao PDR, women are involved in the workforce more than men, and in both crop and livestock production, women also play more roles than men. Women in the rural areas of Lao PDR still have a harder time than men because of ethnic/traditional practices. Although the law is equal for both men and women, customary practices principally through inheritance always override official laws. The application of the customary laws is predominantly determined by the matrilineal and patrilineal practices of the different ethnic groups. Many activities in livestock raising were strictly separated by gender as men dominate activities such as management of ruminant animals and building houses for them, while women attend to all livestock but they focus on pig, goat, and poultry production. Women in livestock raising in Lao PDR need to be recognized. This paper aims to determine the women's role in livestock production in Lao PDR and analyze the gender-related tasks in livestock raising in Xiengkhor district Houaphanh province, Lao PDR. The respondents comprising of 180 households from selected villages in Xiengkhor District, namely, Natong village and Phouk village, participated in the study

Keywords: Livestock, gender, production, labor-use, decision-making

1. Introduction

Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) is a landlocked country with an area of about 236,800 km². Its current population is 7,195,427 (50.2% male and 49.8% female) and 64.9% of the total population live in rural areas [1]

Livestock raising is important socio-economically and culturally. This is because it is a source of livelihood and it provides food, and additional income. In 2017, there were approximately 1,135,003 buffalos; 1,871,163 cattle; 3,049,122 pigs; 507,862 goats; and 32,535,575 poultry in Laos [5].

The laws of Lao PDR provide equality to both men and women to access agriculture and forest land, but customary practices principally through inheritance always over-ride official laws. These customary practices are predominantly determined by the matrilineal and patrilineal practices of the different ethnic groups. Currently, women still work harder time than men because in rural areas gender issues become even starker [2]. With regard to gender-based responsibilities in Lao PDR, generally women's tasks are lighter than those of the men. Women work in their home and the main responsibilities are taking care of children, cooking, and cleaning the house including feeding small livestock, weeding and watering the gardens. Men carry out responsibilities that are heavier than women especially

repairing houses when damaged, cutting wood and plowing the fields including raising larger animals and operating machines [3].

Customary behaviors, particularly those passed down via inheritance, always take precedence over formal rules in the area of gender equality. Present some of the researchers studied gender in Agriculture, particularly those that concern their routine work tasks, participation of gender, and equality of gender are not balanced. There is no research yet that focuses only on gender-related tasks in livestock production. This paper aims to determine the women's role and responsibilities in livestock production, including the socio-cultural factors that contribute to women's development in the communities.

2. Methodology

The study was conducted in Lao PDR, particularly in the villages of Natong and Phouk in Xiengkhor district, Houaphan province. These two villages were chosen as study sites for the following reasons: 1) Those village has many different ethnic groups, 2) two villages is a priority to develop in Xiengkhor district, and 3) there is the highest number of animals raised. The group used Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools in order to arrive at a daily activity of community development. According to [4], PRA is a growing combination of approaches and methods that enable rural people to share, enhance, and analyze their

knowledge of life and conditions, plan and act, and monitor and evaluate. The role of the outsider is that of a catalyst, a facilitator of processes within a community that is prepared to alter their situation.

A total of 80 respondents (36 men and 44 women) participated in the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The two villages selected in the study consisted of 8 groups FGDs, four groups of a village, and each group consisted of 10 respondents. FGDs and daily activity of respondents has done in this research. To analyze the daily activities of households in terms of gender. The researchers sent a letter to the headmen of the two villages to gather the household heads at the office of the village headmen. Data were gathered during the research periods using FGDs in face-to-face interviews with questionnaires built around a mix of open-ended and closed-ended questions.

The Microsoft Excel Program 2018 (Microsoft Corp., USA) was used for data analysis and generating tables and descriptive statistics.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Access too Work and Decision-Making

Table 1 shows the different household activities in terms of gender. In Natong, the men and women have equal access to production and income building activities and community activities; but decision-making activities were male-dominated. On the other hand, access to routine work and decision-making were female dominated. In Phouk, the men and women also have equal access to production and income building activities; but community activities and decision-making activities were male-dominated. On the other hand, access to routine work and decision-making were female-dominated. In contrast, in terms of political activities in both of villages, the men over-ride the women in terms of access to activities and decision-making.

The result of the two villages showed that the man had higher than women in production and income building, community activities, and political activities, except for routine work. It is because in most male-headed households hence the men have access to activities and decision-making the women. The majority of tasks of women are working around their house especially cooking, feeding an animal in the backyard, and weaving and they believed and followed men's decisions. It is connected to the study of Theonakhet [6] that in rural areas of Lao PDR, the role of community leaders is mostly reserved for men because they believe that women must be stifled, voices kept silent, and capacities reduced. There are many ethnic groups that believed that men should head the households because men can lead their families toward a comfortable and rich life in the future. In 2018, [7] ADB did a survey in the central and southern regions of Laos and found that 10% of the households were female-headed households (FHHs) which were poorer than the male-headed households (MHHs). In the Southern province of Attapeu, only 8% of the households were female-headed but all of them were considered poor. In Sekong and Savannakhet, about 80% of FHHs were among poor households.

Table 1. Access to work and decision-making of male and female participants in Natong and Phouk villages, Xiengkhor district Houaphanh province, Lao PDR.

Type of Work	Access to Activities				Decision-making			
	Natong n= 43		Phouk n= 37		Natong n= 43		Phouk n= 37	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Production and income building	•••	•••	•••	•••	•••	••	•••	••
Routine work	••	•••	••	•••	••	•••	••	•••
Community activities	•••	•••	•••	••	•••	••	•••	••
Political activities	•••	•	•••	•	•••	•	•••	•

3.2. Routine Activities of Men and Women

Traditionally, labor is divided between the genders. In crop production, women are involved in planting, weeding and harvesting crops; in livestock production, the women are predominantly involved in raising of pigs, poultry, goats and primary household water management. On the other hand, the men tend the larger livestock like cattle and buffaloes, and men are also responsible for activities such as plowing, constructing bunds, and preparing seedbeds. In some areas were irrigation and other water resources are used especially in lowland or upland areas, men are responsible for decision-making.

In the two villages, women are engaged only in routine activities. They wake up one hour earlier than the men every morning, which means that women take over the roles of men during daily activities especially cooking. However, men cook food when guests visit their house, and sometimes they have raw meat (Tables 2 and 3). Men dominate activities such as the management of ruminant animals and building houses for their animals, while women attend to all livestock and but they focus on pig, goat, and poultry production. In general, women and children were found to be responsible for pig production in the family. The households reported that collection of feed, cooking feed, and feeding the pigs were mainly done by women and children more than the men. Collecting feed took 1.5 to 3 hours/day and another 1.5 hours to cook and feed pigs [8]

Table 2. Routine activities done by men and women in Natong village, Xiengkhor district, Houaphan province, LAO PDR.

Daily Activities of Women		Daily Activities of Men	
Time	Activities	Time	Activities
5:00-8:00	Cooking (rice and food), feeding (pig, poultry), house cleaning and breakfast	6:00-8:00	Feeding of ruminant animals, inspection and repair of housing, prepare materials for activities and breakfast
8:01-12:00	Processing activities (rice field, corn farm, garden)	08:01-12:00	Processing activities (rice field, corn farm, garden, livestock raising)
12:01-14:00	Lunch, relax and then finding food for dinner	12:01-14:00	Lunch and relax
14:01-17:00	Continue activities	14:01-17:00	Continue activities
17:01-18:00	Back to home and find feed stuff for pigs and take a bath	17:01-18:00	Back to home and find feed stuff for ruminants and take a bath
18:01-20:00	Cooking, feeding (pig, poultry), house cleaning and cooking dinner	18:01-20:00	Feeding of ruminants and take care of animals and dinner
20:01-23:00	Cooking feed for pigs, weaving, watching TV	20:01-23:00	Watching TV, visit relatives or neighbor's house
23:01-5:00	Sleeping	23:01-06:00	Sleeping
Free-day	Find food and feed for animals, weaving, etc.	Free day	Find food, handicraft, raising of ruminants

Table 3. Routine activities of men and women in Phouk village, Xiengkhor district, Houaphan province, LAO PDR.

Daily Activities of Women		Daily Activities of Men	
Time	Activities	Time	Activities
4:30-7:00	Cook and feed animals, take breakfast	5:30-7:00	Prepare materials for farm activities, bring ruminant animals to grazing area, and take breakfast
7:01-12:00	Activities in the rice field	07:01-12:00	Activities in the rice field
12:01-14:00	Take lunch and relax	12:01-14:00	Lunch and relax
14:01-16:00	Continue activities	14:01-17:00	Continue activities
16:01-17:00	Find food for dinner and feed stuff for pigs	17:01-18:00	Back to home and find feed stuff for ruminants and take a bath
18:01-20:00	Take a bath and cook, feed animals (pig, poultry, goat) and take dinner	18:01-20:00	Bring ruminants back to home and also find grazes, take a bath and dinner
20:01-22:00	Cook feed for pigs, and watch TV	20:01-22:30	Watch TV, sometimes go out and talk with relatives/friends
22:01-4:30	Sleep	22:31-5:30	Sleep
Free day	Find food and firewood, weaving, etc.	Free day	Handicraft making, raising ruminants and visit relatives/friends

3.3. Responsibilities of Men and Women in Animal Raising

Table 4 provides information in Natong village for breed selection, finding feed stuff, feeding, management and building pen for cattle and buffaloes were done by men; in goat these were done by both men and women, except building pen which was done by the men; in pig production these were done by men and women, but breed selection breed and building pen and finding feed stuff, feeding, management were done by the women. However, in poultry production, breed selection, finding feed stuff, feeding, and management were done by the women, only building pen was done by the men. Women and men enjoy equal access to agricultural and forest land under the law, customary practices tend to over-ride this.

Table 4. Responsibilities of men and women in animal raising in Natong village, Xiengkhor district, Houaphan province, LAO PDR.

Responsibility	Livestock			
	Cattle and Buffaloes	Goat	Pig	Poultry
Breed selection	Male	Both	Both	Female
Finding feed stuff	Male	Both	Female	Female
Feeding	Male	Both	Female	Female
Management	Male	Both	Female	Female
Building pens	Male	Male	Both	Both

Table 5 shows gender-related tasks in livestock raising in Phouk village. Breed selection, finding feed stuff, feeding, management and building pen for cattle and buffaloes were done by the men. For goat, breed selection and finding feed stuff are done by the men while feeding, management, and building pen were done by both men and women. In pig and poultry production, finding feed stuff and feeding were done by the women while breed selection, management, and building pen were done by both men and women.

Table 5. Responsibilities of men and women in animal raising in Phouk village, Xiengkhor district, Houaphan province, LAO PDR.

Responsibility	Animals			
	Cattle and Buffaloes	Goat	Pig	Poultry
Breed selection	Male	Male	Both	Both
Finding feed stuff	Male	Male	Female	Female
Feeding	Male	Both	Female	Female
Management	Male	Both	Both	Both
Building pens	Male	Both	Both	Both

The Department of Planning, Investment and Finance (2013) conducted a survey through FGD with both men and women on the gender-related activities. The PRA survey led to dialogue and explanation of the division of labor between men and women as shown in Table 6. Men and women have roughly equal access to natural and productive resources, however, men tend to control the land's motorized power and women are primarily responsible for tending animals. Men have a disproportionate amount of authority over resources like land, irrigation, motorized power, and labor force management. On the other hand, raising, feeding, and caring for the animals are the responsibility of women.

Table 6. Access to and control of natural productive resources

Resources	Access to		Control of	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Land (Tenure)	∕∕	∕	∕∕	∕
Irrigation	∕	∕	∕∕	∕
Production fields	∕	∕	∕	∕
Livestock and motive power	∕∕	∕	∕∕	∕
Livestock for raising purposes	∕	∕∕	∕	∕∕
Fodder, grazing land	∕	∕	∕	∕∕
Seeds	∕	∕	∕	∕
Supplies (fertilizers, pesticides)	∕	∕	∕	∕
Production Tools	∕	∕	∕	∕
Labor force	∕	∕	∕∕	∕
Decision on management practices	∕∕	∕	∕∕	∕

Source: PRA survey of Department of Planning, Investment and Finance, 2013

4. Conclusion

In Lao PDR, women are involved in the workforce more than men, and in both crop and livestock production, women also play more roles than the men. Women in rural areas of Lao PDR still have harder time than men because of ethnic/traditional practices. Although the law is equal for both men and women, customary practices principally through inheritance always over-ride official laws. Application of the customary laws is predominantly determined by the matrilineal and patrilineal practices of the different ethnic groups. Many activities in livestock raising were strictly separated by gender as men dominate activities such as management of ruminant animals and building houses for them, while women attend to all livestock but they focus on pig, goat and poultry production. Women in livestock raising in Lao PDR need to be recognized.

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are forwarded enhance the appreciation of the gender roles in small-scale livestock production in Lao PDR.

1. Dissemination of the national law in rural areas and make the local people understand and appreciate the workload and work duties of men and women.
2. Identify needs of men and women farmers according to their location, whether rural or urban, and according to their ethnicity.
3. Mainstream gender concerns in livestock management through gender-focused agricultural extension services to widen the opportunity and access of women farmers to agricultural services which will eventually lead toward poverty reduction.
4. Address gender disparity between men and women headed-headed households by giving women access to community, political, and administrative activities.

6. Acknowledgement

I am thankful to the following people, institutions and agencies for making this undertaking possible:

The corresponding author is deeply thankful to the District Agriculture and Forestry Office for the allowed to conduct data gathering and to Dr. Josefina T. Dizon, for the advice, insights, suggestions and edited during the paper writing.

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