

## Gender Based Disparity in Poultry Production in Ethiopia

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**ABSTRACT:** *A review was carried out with the aim of providing the comprehensive and organized information on Gender based disparity in Poultry production day to day activities. Poultry production has an important economic, social and cultural role in rural areas of developing Countries like Ethiopia where women's involvement and contribution has not been much recognized even though they contribute a lot for agricultural sector. According to this review results, Village chicken production has a fundamental role in capital build up, poverty minimization, malnutrition and hunger reduction among the resource poor households in developing countries of the world because of their short generation intervals, low input requirements for production, good scavengers and adaptation to harsh production environments. This review results also indicated that women are generally less able than men to participate in economic opportunities because they face a work burden that men do not. In most societies, women are responsible for most of the household and child-rearing activities as well rearing of small livestock, although norms differ by culture and over time. The review went further to address and compile available findings concerning the challenges poultry farmers face and showed that the most serious constraints hindering poultry production was predator followed by flock mortality and prevalence of diseases, and low production.*

**KEYWORDS:** disparity, gender, poultry production, Ethiopia

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### INTRODUCTION

The extent of agricultural productivity differences between male and female farmers varies across and within countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Empirical evidence shows that the gender differences in agricultural productivity across sub-Saharan African countries are generally around 20 to 30%, with an average of 25% (FAO 2011b; Aguilar *et al.* 2014; Kilic *et al.* 2015; Mukasa and Salami 2015). The productivity difference between male headed households (MHHs) and female headed households (FHHs) from Northern to Southern Ethiopia ranges from 30 to 65%, respectively (Tiruneh *et al.* 2001; Aguilar *et al.* 2014; Challa and Mahendran 2015). One of the key reasons' women farmers have lower productivity is the difference in the use of inputs such as improved seed, fertilizer, and labor, and access to other resources influencing productivity such as education, extension, and credit.

Poultry production has an important economic, social and cultural benefit and plays a significant role in family nutrition in the developing countries. In many cases gender roles are biased and favor certain social constituencies at the expense of others. Rural women, for instance, face serious obstacles more regularly than men, since traditional structures and perceptions tend to prevent them from obtaining the necessary tools to reach their full potential in the agricultural sector. In fact, despite their major involvement in and contribution to livestock management, women tend to have limited access to resources, extension services and less participation in decision making compared to their male counterparts (FAO, 2011). Recognizing the different roles that women and men play in the agriculture sector is key to identifying the diverse challenges they face and tailoring projects and programs on their specific needs. The gender division of labor varies from one society and culture to another, and within each culture external circumstances influence the level of activity (Farnworth, R.C. 2011). However, except in few most developed countries, women's efforts are not yet realized by society. They are involved in over half of the farm activities in many developing countries, bear most of responsibilities for household food security and contribute to household wellbeing through their income generating activities (Coles, C., Mitchell, J. 2011). Women are the backbone of the rural economy, especially in the developing country like Ethiopia. Apart from their primary obligation of taking care of children at home, women are actively involved in enormous agricultural production activities and manage family poultry.

Family poultry helped for improvement of livelihood pattern by maintaining balance nutrition among their children (Kattel,2016). The tasks involved in poultry rearing include acquiring the poultry, keeping them safe, providing clean and healthy food and water supplies, obtaining veterinary care (i.e., vaccinations and getting treatment in case of illness), cleaning the coop and troughs, and selling the poultry. Across the village sites, everyone in the household, men, women, boys, and girls – typically participates in most of these poultry activities, regardless of ownership. Women are responsible for sweeping and maintaining the hygiene of the compound, which includes keeping it clean of poultry feces and any poultry-related residue (IFPRI,2020).

### **Men and women role in poultry farming system**

The gender division of labour between women and men varies according to the enterprise, the farming system, the technology used, and the wealth status of the household (Aregu *et al.* 2010), culture, religion, stage of economic development, species of predominant animals, and population pressure influenced by sociocultural and socio-economic factors (Mulema *et al.* 2017). Aspects of animal husbandry such as care of the young, pregnant and sick animals, processing of milk, sale of dairy products and milk in pastoral systems are mainly undertaken by women. Similarly, in mixed crop livestock systems, livestock management practices were mainly carried out by women including feeding, cleaning, watering and milking (Ali and Neka 2012) done in conjunction with other activities whereas men concentrate on a few roles (Kinati and Mulema 2016) and generally involved in herd management, sale of animals, purchase of feed and sale of milk in intensified systems.

### **Opportunities men and women have in poultry production**

The contribution of the sector to rural households depends upon reasons of rearing that can be demographical, socio-economic and cultural. In Ethiopia, marketing of chicken and egg is one of the functions of keeping free-range chicken by smallholder farmers. Village chicken and eggs are sold in local and urban markets to traders or directly to consumers depending on the location of the farm. According to (Alemu and Tadelle,1997), smallholder village chicken owners found in different parts of the country sell chicken and eggs to purchase food items, cover school fee, get cash for grain milling services, purchase improved seeds and to adjust flock size. It was also reported (Gondwe,2004) that few farmers in central highlands of Ethiopia exchanged their free-range chicken for food and household items. The impact of village chicken in the national economy and its role in improving the nutritional status, income, food security and livelihood of many smallholders is significant owing to its low cost of production (Sonaiya,2000). Village chickens are rarely the sole means of livelihood for the family, but it is one of the numbers of integrated farming activities contributing to the overall well -being of the households.

According to Abubakar *et al.* (2007), the impact of the Ethiopian village chicken in the national economy and its role in improving the nutritional status, family income, food security and livelihood of many smallholders is significant owing to its low cost of production. The diverse agro-ecology and agronomic practice prevailing in the country together with the huge population of livestock in general and poultry in particular, could be a promising attribute to boost up the sector and increase its contribution to the total agricultural output as well as to improve the living standards of the poor livestock keepers (Hunduma *et al.*, 2010; Aleme and Mitiku, 2015). Village chicken production has a fundamental role in capital build up, poverty minimization, malnutrition and hunger reduction among the resource poor households in developing countries of the world because of their short generation intervals, low input requirements for production, good scavengers and adaptation to harsh production environments (Besbes, 2009). The indigenous chickens are known to possess desirable characters such as thermo-tolerance, resistance to some diseases, good egg and meat flavor, hard egg shell, high fertility and hatchability as well as high dressing percentage (Abdelqader *et al.*, 2007). Women are generally less able than men to participate in economic opportunities because they face a work burden that men do not. In most societies, women are responsible for most of the household and child-rearing activities as well rearing of small livestock, although norms differ by culture and over time. Furthermore, the nature of tasks, such as caring for children and elderly household members, requires women to stay near the home, thus limiting options to work for a wage. Village poultry production also avail ample opportunities compared to other alternative investments in rural areas, particularly it requires less labour, less capital management in which rural communities have comparative advantage and technical skills (Gueye,2002). Appreciating the opportunities of poultry production, (Feleke *etal*,2015) brought forward that market access, credit service, feed access and extension services were the major opportunities.

### **Challenges Faced in Poultry Production**

Poultry production sector is characterized by low input-output levels and is attributed to a range of factors such as suboptimal management, lack of supplementary feed, poor marketing

performance, low genetic potential and high mortality rate. According to Feleke *etal*, (2015), the most serious constraints hindering poultry production was predator followed by flock mortality and prevalence of diseases, and low production respectively. Similarly, Melkamu (2013) stated that predator, feed shortage, flock mortality and low production as first, second, third and fourth constraints, respectively. Regarding challenges faced in poultry production, Matilal, (2019) indicated the challenges faced by dividing them as economic problems such as lack of capital, high price feed, price fluctuation of birds, lack of credit institutions , social and natural problems such as problem of theft, outbreak of disease, environmental pollution and predatory animals , marketing problems such as lack of competitive market, lower price, lack of proper, lack of insurance agent for loss/theft and technical problems such as housing, lack of training facilities, lower quality of chicks and inadequate vaccine/ medicine. According to Nagalla and pongur (2016) women are generally less able than men to participate in economic opportunities because they face a work burden that men do not. In most societies, women are responsible for most of the household and child-rearing activities as well rearing of small livestock, although norms differ by culture and over time.

## CONCLUSION

Poultry production can create a great opportunity for the rural women and youth in income generation. Socio economic development can be achieved with the help of family poultry farming. There is a wide scope for development of family poultry farming in the country because rural poor women have enough time for rearing family poultry. It would be helpful for income generation, women empowerment, and nutritional improvement for the farm family. Extensive poultry production system especially free range and backyard system, the most practiced husbandry system represent sustainable, profitable and well adapted poultry farming could be progressively developed. It is very helpful for income generation, nutritional improvement, and food security and poverty alleviation.

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