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ABSTRACT

This study assessed women's participation and empowerment in the Livestock Vaccine distribution, delivery, and use (Livestock Vaccine Value Chain - LVVC) in Sembabule District. The objectives of the study were to: 1) examine the status of women smallholder farmers' participation in the Livestock Vaccine Value Chain (LVVC) before the interventions; 2) assess the nature of women smallholder farmers' participation in the Livestock Vaccine Value Chain under interventions; and 3) analyze the effect of the interventions on women smallholder farmers' empowerment in LVVC. A total of 100 participants were involved in qualitative methods, including 70 females and 30 males. Ten focus group discussions were conducted, and 31 Key Informant Interviews were carried out. Additionally, 300 participants took part in the survey questionnaire, comprising 233 females and 77 males. The focus was specifically on the Pest des petits ruminants (PPR) vaccine for goats and the Newcastle disease (ND) vaccine for chickens. The study encompassed various methods including focus group discussions, key informant interviews, stakeholders engagements, photovoice and a survey questionnaire. The research employed mixed methods during data collection in order to gain a more nuanced understanding of the research topic.

Qualitative data was mainly collected using audio recorders and transcribed verbatim to ensure the utmost accuracy of the comprehensive qualitative dataset. The raw data was then coded and categorized into themes, which were thematically analyzed in alignment with the study objectives. Quantitative data was cleaned and organized in Excel, after which it underwent descriptive statistical analysis, resulting into the development of various visual representations, including charts, graphs, and tables. Triangulation was achieved by integrating multiple data sources, employing different research techniques to tackle the same questions, and applying multiple theoretical frameworks for data interpretation. The credibility of the findings was reinforced through the use of standardized instruments that captured all relevant aspects of the study's concept, thereby ensuring result accuracy.

The results revealed that before SHEVAX+ interventions, women's involvement in the livestock vaccine distribution, delivery, and use was impeded by restricted access to resources, insufficient knowledge regarding the livestock vaccine value chain, and prevailing gender stereotypes. The SHEVAX+ interventions significantly enhanced women's participation by providing training in animal health management which in turn improved their opportunities for livestock ownership, decision-making capabilities, and relative agency and empowerment. The study suggests gender inclusive programs for extension training to farmers, make vaccines accessible to farmers for increased productivity and women's empowerment.

Key Words: Participation, Empowerment, LVVC, Women Farmers, SHEVAX+