

**Socioeconomic Empowerment of Women through Entrepreneurship – A Study on
Women Cooperative Dairies in Telangana State**

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Abstract

Women play an important role in an agriculture sector in India. Their contribution is more significant and essential. Dairying is also the part of agriculture. This research looks at the potential of dairy cooperatives for women's entrepreneurship in rural areas. Dairy production has great importance for rural economy in India and women contribute significantly to this activity. This study analyses the managerial abilities and assess the socio-economic impact on the members by women co-operative dairies.

Key words: Small enterprises, women entrepreneurship, social and economic empowerment.

1. Introduction

Women development has been considered the core for overall sustainable development of the nation. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru rightly said that to build a strong nation woman should play a vital role in educational, technical and financial infrastructures. Further, the necessity of development of women has been understood that women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society are fundamental for achievement of equity, development and peace. Empowerment of women is the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such ability (Kabeer 1999). Empowerment means increase in the authority and power of an individual. It can be looked at in a behavioural sense as the ability to take effective action (Rowland 1997 & Mayoux 2000). It is well understood that when a woman moves forward, the family moves and the village moves and the nation moves. The women folk can be considered as back bone of any nation and better half of the men in almost all spheres of community development, of which India is not an exception. The rural woman, who constitutes about 50% of total rural population, plays an active role in all spheres of economic life and contributes richly towards national income (World Bank 2018).

In India agricultural is the main economic activity majority of population live in villages. Besides crop farming, the domestication of animals has been integral part of the farming system from time immemorial. It is centuries old tradition for millions of Indian rural households (Khan et al., 2011). The important role played by dairy farming in the sustenance of landless and poor people in the village economy is quite evident (Pandey and Pathak, 1997). Lack of infrastructural facilities along with low, scattered and seasonal milk

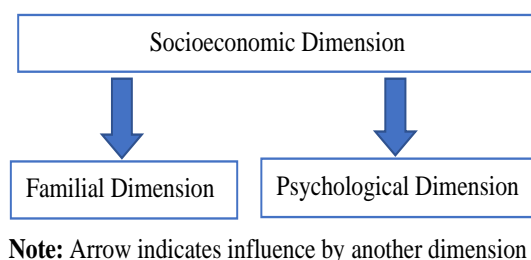
production poses a serious problem of marketing that compels dairy farmers either to sell milk to the middlemen or to convert it into remunerative milk products. Under the situation, the organization of Dairy Cooperative Societies (DCS) seems to be only viable alternative for rural milk marketing under organized system.

India is the largest milk producing country in the world with highest cattle and buffalo population; it has increased its milk production from 17 million tons in the 1960s to 176.27 million tons in 2017(FAOSTAT 2019). India's milk production accounts for 21% of the global output and per capita availability of milk is 276 gm/day (WHO 2019). Livestock keeping has a significant role on the lives of almost all people of the country either directly or indirectly. It may be as a main source of income and also an additional source of income, in particular rearing cows is seen as a traditional or auspicious activity. As per 2012 livestock census in Telangana State there are 5.03 million Cattle (13th rank in India), 4.19 million Buffaloes (13th rank in India), Total 27.04 million livestock (10th rank in India). Livestock contributes about 4.86% to state GDP (AHDDFD 2019). Consumption of milk and milk-based products is very common as part of daily diet in one or other form by almost all people in India. 40-42% of households are lacto-vegetarians in India; milk products constitute their only source of animal protein, therefore creating an important demand for dairy products inside the country (Times of India 2019). Thus, the dairy sector is touching all sections of the people of the country daily.

To encourage saving habit and establish Dairy Cooperative Societies at rural villages Cooperative Development Foundation began helping rural people to form Thrift Cooperatives for men and women at village levels in Warangal and Karimnagar districts of Telangana from the year 1990. A Thrift Cooperative is a voluntary association of individuals who come together to meet their saving, credit and insurance needs and they formed an Association for Thrift Cooperatives with several TCs together. After 7 years of saving, the resulting huge amount of savings from women TCs was disproportionate compared with very little demand for credit; this led ATC to think about investing further their idle capital into a new venture benefiting a majority of its members. Thus, they arrived to an idea of establishing a dairy processing plant to make use of these funds. Indeed, dairy has comparative advantages over all other ventures for the members of women cooperatives; there was also great demand for quality milk in Warangal, the nearby city. CDF and National Dairy Development Board had done a milk market survey and measured the possible interest from the dairy farmers. Subsequently, ATC approached Mulkanoor Cooperative Rural Bank and Marketing Society for the required support to establish the dairy plant. The Mulkanoor Women's Cooperative Dairy started its procurement operation on 17 August 2002 from 67 Women Dairy Cooperative societies. Now the number has reached 110 WDCs situated within a radius of 25 km from MWCD (CDF, Sahavikasa 2020). Mulkanoor Women Cooperative Dairy and Vardannapet Women Cooperative Dairy are being run successfully in Telangana State. Hence, these both women cooperative dairies were identified for the study.

2. Conceptual Framework

For knowing the association of dairy-coop on women's empowerment, this study has divided women's empowerment into three dimensions: socio-economic, familial, and physiological, as (Malhotra, 2002) did in his conceptual framework. Women's empowerment is a process of moving from marginalization to the mainstream within the household and the community as well. These dimensions are dynamic, interlinked and mutually reinforcing at the household level and recognize the fact that the level of gender equality and development are directly proportional. These dimensions are as follows:



3. Review of literature

There are plenty of research works done on the dairy farming and socioeconomic empowerment of women. But there are few studies existed regarding it. Some of the literature reviews regarding this is given below.

Pitchai C (2002) in his article titled, “parading of women empowerment and cooperative in India”, states the need for women participation in cooperatives and also concludes that the real empowerment of women will come only when women really solve their problems.

Sudha (2008), in her book titled on “Women's Empowerment in South Asia”, explained that, women's empowerment as the ability of women to transform economic and social development when empowered to fully participate in the decisions that affect their lives through leadership training, coaching, consulting and the provision of enabling tools for women to lead within their communities, regions and countries.

Subrahmanyeswari.B, K.Veeraraghava Reddy and B.Sudhar Rao (2010), in their article have commented that majority of the dairy women farmers possessed medium entrepreneurial behavior and variation among the small, medium and large rural women farmers in dairying was found to be significant ($P < 0.01$). 55.

Shruti Singh (2013) in her article titled on “Women Empowerment in Modern India” mentioned that, women empowerment is the ability of women to exercise full control over

their actions. This means control over material assets, intellectual resources and even over their ideologies. It involves, at the psychological level, women's ability to assert them which has, so far, been constricted by the 'gender roles' assigned to them especially in a culture like India which resists changes. This essay throws light upon the different challenges that are faced by Indian Women and why there is still need for their empowerment. It will also focus on the efforts made by Government for empowerment of women.

Ravinder.D, Pratap.S (2016) in their article titled, "Dairy Cooperatives and Women Entrepreneurship - A study of Mulkanoor Women's Cooperative Dairy", states dairy cooperatives improve entrepreneurship and empower women decision making the need for women participation in cooperatives and also concludes that the real empowerment of women will come only when women really solve their problems.

Ramesh. Nukala et al (2018) in their article titled, "Women Entrepreneurship: A Successful Case Study of Mulkanoor Women's Cooperative Dairy (Swakrushi Dairy)", states this dairy is not just producing yet another litter of milk, a vibrant dairy industry ensure an alternate source of income to the farmers and it leads to an all-round self-sustaining socioeconomic development at the village level.

4. Objectives

The main objective of this study is to know the role of women dairy cooperatives in socioeconomic empowerment of women. These objectives are

1. To study the role of women cooperative unions in establishment of women cooperative dairy and organizing and Managerial system of WCD enterprises.
2. to know the impact of women cooperative dairy on socioeconomic empowerment of women
3. To find out problems faced by women dairy farmers and suggest appropriate measures.

4. Hypothesis

The study endeavours to test the following hypothesis evolved in the light of the said objectives

H0: there is no impact of women cooperative dairy on socioeconomic empowerment of women.

5. Methodology

The present study is based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected through personal interview using a well-structured interview schedule from sample women members of select co-operative societies. The secondary data was collected from

Annual Reports, Books, journals, Magazines and from related Web sites. Total members of Mulkanoor women co-operative Dairy and Vardannapet women co-operative Dairy are 10,040. Simple random sampling method was adopted to collect data from 100 dairy farmers, 50 respondents from MWCD and 50 respondents are from VWCD.

6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected is tabulated in Table-1 on demographic characteristics of the respondents

Table-1 Demographic Variables		
	No. of Respondents	%
Name of the Dairy enterprise		
MWCD	50	50.00
VWCD	50	50.00
Age		
18 to 25 years	18	18.00
26-40 years	42	42.00
41-55 years	31	31.00
Above 55 years	09	09.00
Education		
Illiterates	41	41.00
Up to 7 th class	08	08.00
SSC level	29	29.00
Inter and above	22	22.00
Type of Family		
Nuclear	49	49.00
Joint	51	51.00
Caste/Social Group		
SC	17	17.00
OBC	68	68.00
General	15	15.00
Marital Status		
Married	100	100.00
Unmarried	00	00.00
Economic Status		
BPL	94	94.00
APL	06	06.00
Occupation		
Agriculture Wage	29	29.00
Non-Agriculture Wage	03	03.00
Dairy	66	66.00
House Wife Services	02	02.00

Source: Primary Data

Above table-1 describes that 42 percentage of the women's age in 26 years to 40 years, 41 percentage of dairy farmers are illiterates, most of the members (51 %) belong to joint family and (49 %) belongs to nuclear family. It has been found that the among the women who joined the WDCs, 68 % belong to OBC, 17 % belong to SC and only 15 % belong to general category. All women are married & are involved in dairy farming to enhance their family income.94 % of women belong to BPL families where as 04 % belong to APL families. Maximum number of the women members of the WDCs is agricultural wage earners.

6.1 Socioeconomic Empowerment of members of Dairy Enterprise (Change in Monthly Average Income from Dairy Across Socioeconomic Status)

Table-2

Particulars	Before joining in Dairy Enterprise (Mean Value in Rs)	After joining Dairy Enterprise (Mean Value in Rs)	Change in Income (Rs) and Percentage
Social			
SC	1182.60	2345.23	1162.63 (98%)
OBC	2136.50	3278.91	1142.41(53%)
General	1297.64	2478.38	1180.74 (91%)
Economic			
BPL	2021.31	2581.73	560.42 (28%)
APL	1384.29	2176.81	792.52 (57%)

Source: Primary Data

* Expected to Earn (It's not guaranty to earn that shown amount in the table income depends on many factors.)

Above table-2 shows that 98 percentage of Schedule Caste, 53 percentage of OBC and 91 percentage of general women of dairy cooperative member's social status have been increased after joining in WCD. 28 percentage of below poverty line and 57 percentage of above poverty line women dairy cooperative members have been increased in economic status.

6.2 Test of Hypothesis

H0: There is no impact of economic and social status of the members after establishment of dairy enterprise.

Crosstab Table-3						
Count						
		Income After Joining in WCD				Total
		Below 1500	1500-2500	2500-3500	3500-4500	
Economic	BPL	6	30	39	19	94

Status	APL	0	0	0	6	6
Total		6	30	39	25	100

Source: Primary Data

In order to find out impact of the dairy enterprise on economic and social status of dairy farmers, a chi-square test was used and result of the test is shown in the following table-3a.

Chi-Square Tests Table-3a				
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Remark
Pearson Chi-Square	19.149	3	.000	Highly Significant
Likelihood Ratio	17.840	3	.000	
Linear-by-Linear Association	11.366	1	.001	
N of Valid Cases	100			

It is noted from the above table-3a that the 'p' value is less than 0.05 and hence the result is highly significant. Hence the hypothesis 'There is no impact on economic and social status of the members after establishment of dairy enterprise' does not hold well. From the analysis it is concluded that there is highly significant impact of dairy enterprise on economic and social status of dairy farmers.

7. Findings

The major findings of this study are on demographic, economic and social factors. These factors are maximum 56 per cent of the women dairy farmers have agricultural land between below 2 hectors so the land, green feeder and rainfall are also major factor to maintain cows/buffaloes. Proper education and digital literacy are essential to fallow current changes in dairy management.

8. Conclusion

Dairy enterprises are playing major role to strengthening the lives of rural women economically and socially. It is creating employment opportunity not only for women also for men. This is a sure march towards economic empowerment of women. Dairy cooperatives have greater potential and can play a bigger role in empowering rural women provided the challenges posed by society on women are effectively addressed. Conclusion is to enhance active participation and economic empowerment of women in dairy sector requires economical & educational support, Training & Development (Managerial & Technical) from the state and central government then only women can able to take appropriate decisions towards effective functioning of dairy form and family too.

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