

Empowerment Of Women Through Dairy Co-Operatives – A Study in Telangana State

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ABSTRACT

The present study has conducted an analysis on the socio-economic advancement of women through their involvement in dairy enterprises. The research was carried out in the Hanumakonda District of Telangana State, where data was collected from 100 members of women's dairy cooperative societies. The findings of the study indicate that farm women have significantly contributed to the social and economic progress of countries. However, they frequently encounter unequal chances as a result of deeply ingrained gender disparities. Although women make a substantial contribution to dairy production in Telangana, their involvement in dairy farming is regarded as a crucial means of reducing poverty and improving the quality of life within rural communities.

Keywords: Social- Economic Empowerment, Dairy enterprises.

1. Introduction

The majority of the people in India resides in rural areas, specifically villages, where agriculture serves as the primary economic pursuit. In addition to crop cultivation, the domestication of animals has long been an essential component of agricultural practices throughout history. The practice of millions of Indian rural households has been observed for millennia (Khan et al., 2011). The emergence of the Green Revolution, the mechanization of farming, and the use of other contemporary agricultural techniques have diminished the significance of livestock within the agricultural sector. Nevertheless, livestock continues to play a crucial role in both the agricultural production system and social fabric of India. The significance of dairy farming in supporting the livelihoods of landless and impoverished individuals within the rural economy is clearly demonstrated (Pandey and Pathak, 1997).

The significance of the livestock sector, particularly in relation to dairying, is undeniably crucial in a country such as India. The primary and well recognized contribution of the livestock sector lies in its role in the production of milk and milk products. The absence of adequate infrastructure amenities, coupled with limited, dispersed, and seasonal milk production, presents a significant challenge in the marketing sector. This predicament drives dairy producers to either sell their milk to intermediaries or process it into profitable milk-based products. In the given circumstances, the establishment and management of Dairy Cooperative Societies (DCS) seems to be only viable alternative for rural milk marketing under organized system.

The dairy cooperatives in India are structured into three tiers, namely state level federations, district milk unions, and dairy cooperative societies at the village level. Dairy cooperative organisations have been established as a means to offer fair pricing to farmers, fulfil local milk demand, and eliminate prevailing malpractices in milk marketing.

Telangana is considered a prominent state in the realm of agricultural production, with dairy farming making a substantial contribution to the overall agricultural gross domestic product (GDP).

Dairy farming is a prevalent agricultural activity among small and marginal farmers because to their limited land resources, which necessitate the domestication of animals to meet their demands (Bhaskaran, 1996). While dairy farming may not be considered a specialised commercial endeavor, it does offer a consistent source of income for farmers year-round and plays a noteworthy role in creating economic opportunities for women (Manish S. and Tanaka H., 2007).

Animal husbandry and dairy production play a significant part in the socioeconomic development of rural areas in Telangana, serving as a crucial source of income and employment for millions of landless individuals. The involvement of women in dairy production is of significant importance. The

establishment of numerous women-led dairy cooperatives has been instrumental in enhancing women's engagement in both the production and marketing aspects of the dairy industry. However, there is a limited body of research available in the public domain that has investigated the impact of these societies on the socioeconomic condition of women specifically within the context of dairy cooperatives. Therefore, the current study was conducted at the village level in order to comprehend the impact of dairy cooperatives on the socio-economic advancement of female dairy farmers.

2. Materials and Methods

The Mulukanoor Women Cooperative Dairy (MWCD) came into existence on August 17, 2002. It is registered under the Andhra Pradesh Mutually Aided Cooperative Societies Act., (AP Macs Act.,) of 1995. This is an ISO 22000-2018 certified Dairy. This is a Cooperative Dairy Union under which there are 192 primary Women Cooperative Dairies (WDCs) spread in Karimnagar, Warangal, Siddipet and Janagoan districts within a radius of 30 kilometres from Mulukanoor Village. Mulukanoor women started exploring ways of investment which would benefit a large section of poor rural women. After a lot of brain-storming, they realized that many women had milch cattle and were already selling milk. Thus, emerged the idea of promoting Dairy on Cooperative basis.

The study employed a linear regression model to examine the impact of independent variables on the dependent variable of socio-economic upliftment. The variables being examined in this study include age, education level, family type, housing type, caste, occupation, and income derived from both dairy and other sources. This approach was implemented independently to assess the effects of women's dairy cooperatives on the social and economic empowerment of women through their participation in such cooperatives. The linear regression model and analytical form are mentioned as under

$$Y = a + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + b_3x_3 + \dots + b_9x_9 + b_nx_n + e$$

Where, y = Social upliftment index

a = Constant

x₁ = Age (in years)

x₂ = Education (in years attended school/ colleges) x₃ = Type of family (Nuclear-1, otherwise-0)

x₄ = Type of house (Pucca-1, otherwise-0)

x₅ = Caste (SC-1, otherwise-0)

x₆ = Occupation (Agriculture-1, otherwise-0)

x₇ = Income from other sources (Below Rs 25000-1, otherwise-0)

x₈ = Income from dairy (in Rs.)

x₉ = Farmers' category (Marginal-1, otherwise-0). B₁ b_n = partial regression co-efficient

e = error term.

The aforementioned approach was also employed to assess the economic empowerment of women in order to discover significant elements contributing to their economic upliftment. The independent variables in the current model were identical to those used in the prior model. The model utilized economic indices as dependent variables, which were generated and incorporated into the analysis.

3. Results and Discussion

The advancement of women has emerged as a significant factor in fostering comprehensive and sustainable national development. It is well acknowledged that the progress of a woman has a ripple effect, impacting not just her immediate family but also the broader community and even the nation as a whole. The advancement of women is a crucial component of human growth. Women residing in rural areas actively participate in a significant range of agricultural and related occupations. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that dairy-related activities tend to be more favored and engaged in by female farmers in comparison to activities related to crop farming. The development of dairy production has made a good contribution towards enhancing the economic and nutritional conditions in rural regions. According to Bowonder et al. (1987), individuals belonging to lower income categories, specifically the landless class and marginal farmers residing in rural areas, saw favorable outcomes in terms of both food consumption and income as a result of dairy development. These benefits were shown even during periods of reduced agricultural productivity. Dairy farming has been demonstrated to be an effective tool for promoting economic advancement and societal transformation, particularly among rural women.

An endeavor was undertaken to ascertain the primary factors influencing societal advancement. Social upliftment indicators were calculated for each household of the respondents, and these indices were then analysed in relation to their respective socio-economic characteristics. In order to conduct a comprehensive analysis, the researchers employed a linear regression model. The results are displayed in Table 1.

The dependent variable in this study was the social upliftment index, whereas the independent factors included age, education, type of family, type of dwelling, caste, occupation, income, and farmers' category. The results indicate that the coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.4321, suggesting that 45% of the changes in the socio-economic status of WDCS members can be explained by the variables included in the model. The coefficient of age is statistically significant at the 1% level, with a negative value of -0.0039. Therefore, it may be argued that younger individuals within the WDCS exhibit a greater degree of social hierarchy compared to their older counterparts. The coefficients for income level (0.2322) and income from dairy (0.0491) exhibit a positive and statistically significant relationship at a 1% level of significance. This suggests that these two variables have a considerable impact on the social upliftment of members of WDCS. Therefore, it can be inferred that an increase in both income level and income derived from dairy farming is expected to have a positive impact on the social standing of women who are members of the Women's Dairy Cooperative Society (WDCS). During the process of constructing the model, a value of 1 was provided to the variable representing the higher caste (S C), while a value of 0 was allocated to the other variables. The coefficient of caste was determined to be negative (-0.0591), and it was found to be statistically significant at a 5% level of significance. This suggests that individuals belonging to higher castes in the social hierarchy tend to have a higher social standing within the members of WDCS. The coefficient of occupation is found to be positive (0.0519) and statistically significant at a 10% level of significance.

This suggests that women who have agriculture as their main occupation tend to have a higher social standing compared to those who have occupations such as labour or artisan. The occupation of women members of the WDCS also played a crucial role in determining their social position. The variables, including education level, type of housing, farmers' category, and type of family, did not demonstrate any statistically significant impact on the social standing of women members of WDCS. However, several elements that contribute to societal advancement were excluded from the model due to their inability to be quantified or measured.

Based on the aforementioned discourse, it is apparent that the flow of revenue significantly influences the social position of women. The economic status of female members of the Women's dairy Development Society (WDCS) experienced improvement as a result of an increase in several factors that directly impact their economic standing. However, it is possible that some socio-economic factors pertaining to women members may have had a substantial impact on improving their economic standing. In order to determine the key economic variables that contribute to the improvement of the economic status of women members, a linear regression model was utilized. The dependent variable in this study was the economic index, whereas the independent factors included age, education, type of family, type of dwelling, caste, occupation, income level, and farmers' category. The outcome of the analysis is displayed in Table 2.

Table.1 Regression co-efficient and respective Standard error of variables of social upliftment

Dependent variable = Social Empowerment index			
Explanatory variables	Coefficient	Standard error	T value
Age	-0.0039***	0.0007	-3.21
Education	-0.0029	0.0029	-0.83
Type of family	0.0054	0.0261	0.19
Type of house	-0.0131	0.0272	-0.44
Caste	-0.0604**	0.0273	-2.07
Occupation	0.0519*	0.0307	1.65
Income	0.2322***	0.0265	8.54
Income from dairy	0.0513***	0.0164	2.76
Farmers' category	0.0096	0.0294	0.33
Constant	1.5830***	0.0751	20.65
No. of observation	100		
R-squared	0.4489		
Adj R-squared	0.4241		

***, ** and * indicate 1, 5 and 10 % level of significance, respectively.

Table.2 Regression co-efficient and respective standard error of independent variables responsible for economic upliftment of WDCS members.

Dependent variable = Economic Empowerment index			
Explanatory variables	Coefficient	Standard error	T value
Age	-0.0029***	0.0011	-3.18
Education	-0.0027	0.0031	-0.83
Type of family	0.0061	0.0265	0.19
Type of house	-0.0124	0.0271	-0.43
Caste	-0.0610	0.0281	-2.07
Occupation	0.0507	0.0308	1.63
Income	0.2236***	0.0289	8.69
Income from dairy	0.0507***	0.0169	2.71
Farmers' category	0.0100	0.0300	0.30
Constant	1.5827***	0.0754	20.69
No. of observation	100		
R-squared	0.4472		
Adj R-squared	0.4239		

***, ** and * indicate 1, 5 and 10 % level of significance, respectively.

The table reveals that the coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.4355, suggesting that 45% of the variability in income can be accounted for by the variables examined in the study. The expectation arises due to the fact that in the case of a qualitative variable, the R^2 value does not exceed 0.50. This suggests that the model is well-suited to the data at hand. The coefficient of age has a negative value (-0.0029) and is statistically significant at the 1% level of significance. This finding strongly suggests that there is an inverse relationship between the income level of women and their age. Younger women were more likely to possess a higher socioeconomic position compared to older women. The coefficients of income level and income from dairy were shown to be positively and significantly associated at a 1% level of significance. This suggests that women who make higher incomes, notably through dairy farming, tend to have a higher economic standing. The statistical analysis did not find any significant relationship between the coefficient of educational level, type of family, type of dwelling, caste, occupation, and the economic status of women members of WDCS in the villages under study. Therefore, it can be stated that these variables do not have any influence on the economic status of women in this context. Based on the aforementioned discussions, it can be inferred that the Women's dairy cooperative Society (WDCS) has had a beneficial influence on the improvement of the socio-economic standing of its female members. In the social hierarchy, younger women belonging to higher castes and possessing higher levels of income tend to enjoy elevated social standing. Therefore, it may be deduced that the caste hierarchy continues to influence social standing in rural Telangana.

However, the caste system does not have a substantial impact on the economic standing of women within its ranks. In rural areas, it is seen that younger women possess a greater degree of social and economic influence.

4. Conclusion

The occupation of agriculture is not commonly favored in rural areas; nonetheless, women who engage in agriculture as their primary occupation tend to possess a higher social and economic standing in rural Telangana. In the context of rural Telangana, it is said that qualitative characteristics such as education, family background, and housing style do not significantly contribute to attaining a higher social and economic standing. Hence, it is imperative to undertake collaborative endeavors aimed at addressing gender-related concerns by offering assistance for the technological and economic empowerment of women, thereby enhancing their socio-economic standing.

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