

WOMEN IN DAIRYING: EMPOWERMENT THROUGH DAIRY CO-OPERATIVES

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Abstract: People of rural India are mostly engaged in agriculture, animal husbandry and other allied activities. Income from agricultural activity has been as erratic as the monsoon. Hence, rural people are forced to think of generating additional revenues. A majority of them choose rearing of milch cattle and selling the milk as a source of secondary income. Cattle rearing is a diversification from existing agricultural activity. Largely, rural women are engaged in this activity. These rural women, besides doing hard household chores, also undertake the taxing job of cattle rearing. They supply the milk to the well-established district cooperative dairies working successfully on the Anand model. Operation Flood encouraged a process of change in other activities of the milk-producing households and contributed to the overall socio-economic development of rural women.

Keywords: *Dairy Co-operative, Economic Empowerment, Gender role, Social Empowerment.*

Introduction: There are 1347.47 million cattle, 180.73 million buffaloes, 1078.17 million sheep, 861.90 million goats, 941.28 million pigs and 18398.43 million chickens in the world contributing 693.71 million MTs of milk production, 279.95 million MTs of meat and 65.59 million MTs of egg production respectively. India possesses 18 percent of the world's bovine population with 174.51 million cattle, 98.59 million buffaloes holding No.1 position in the world, 64.98 million sheep possessing 6 percent of world's population ranking as No. 3 position, 125.73 million goat possessing 15 percent of the world's population ranking No 2 position, 621.80 million poultry ranking 5th position, and 14.0 million pigs contributing 109.0 million MTs of milk production, 6.79 million MTs of meat and 2.74 million MTs of egg production (FAOSTAT, 2010). In India livestock farming is a major source of supplementary income for 73% of rural households. Livestock sector has also been a great source of employment as it engages 8% of the total labor force in the country. This is a rural self-employment sector with a steady increase of 4.5% per annum. The important advantage is almost 90% of rural women are engaged in livestock rearing.

India has been called 'a country of villages'. The primary occupation in the villages is agriculture supplemented with cattle rearing. India being a rural and agro-based economy, 54% of its workforce is engaged in agriculture, of which 37% are women [4]. Rural women form the most important productive work force in the economy of majority of the developing nations including India. Agriculture, the single largest production endeavor in India, contributing 25 per cent of GDP, is increasingly becoming a female activity. Agriculture sector employs 4/5th of all economically active women in the country. Forty eight per cent of India's self-employed farmers are women. There are 75 million women engaged in dairying as against 15 million men and 20 million in animal husbandry as compared to 1.5 million men. The contribution of livestock sector to agricultural GDP has been steadily growing. It was about 22.51 per cent in 1999-2000 and has increased to 31.70 per cent in 2006-07. The dairy sub-sector occupies an important position

in the agricultural economy. Milk and milk products play a vital role in the country's agricultural economy. It provides sustenance to millions of farmers, particularly the rural poor. Dairy development fits most appropriate in the country's programmes of increasing rural employment and equitable distribution of income with justice. Strong networks of milk co-operatives have been instrumental in this phenomenal performance of dairy sector in the country. In small farm situation also, milk and milk products directly help in increasing crop production through making fluid cash available to the farmers for the purchase of essential inputs. India ranks first in the world in milk production, which was around 100 mt in 2006-07. Milk production accounts for 5.86 per cent of the GDP [3].

Gender role in livestock production system: Study on participation of farm women in agricultural and animal Husbandry activities reported that cent per cent of farm women had participated in animal husbandry activities like, grazing of animals, care of animal at the time of delivery, feeding colostrums to calves, taking out the animal and offering water to animals; followed by 50.00 per cent of the farm women had participated in colostrums management, cleaning of cattle shed, boiling of milk, churning milk, cleaning of utensils used for milking and preparation of feed, cleaning of cattle shed, collection and disposal of dung; least per cent of farm women participated in the preparation of feed at home, taking animal for artificial insemination, preparation of special feed at home and preparation of special feed for the sick animals [1].

Study on role of rural women in animal husbandry in Dharwad district of Karnataka and revealed that high participation was seen in regular activities in all the three enterprises, viz., dairy (88.70%), poultry (100%) and goat rearing (83.60%) [5].

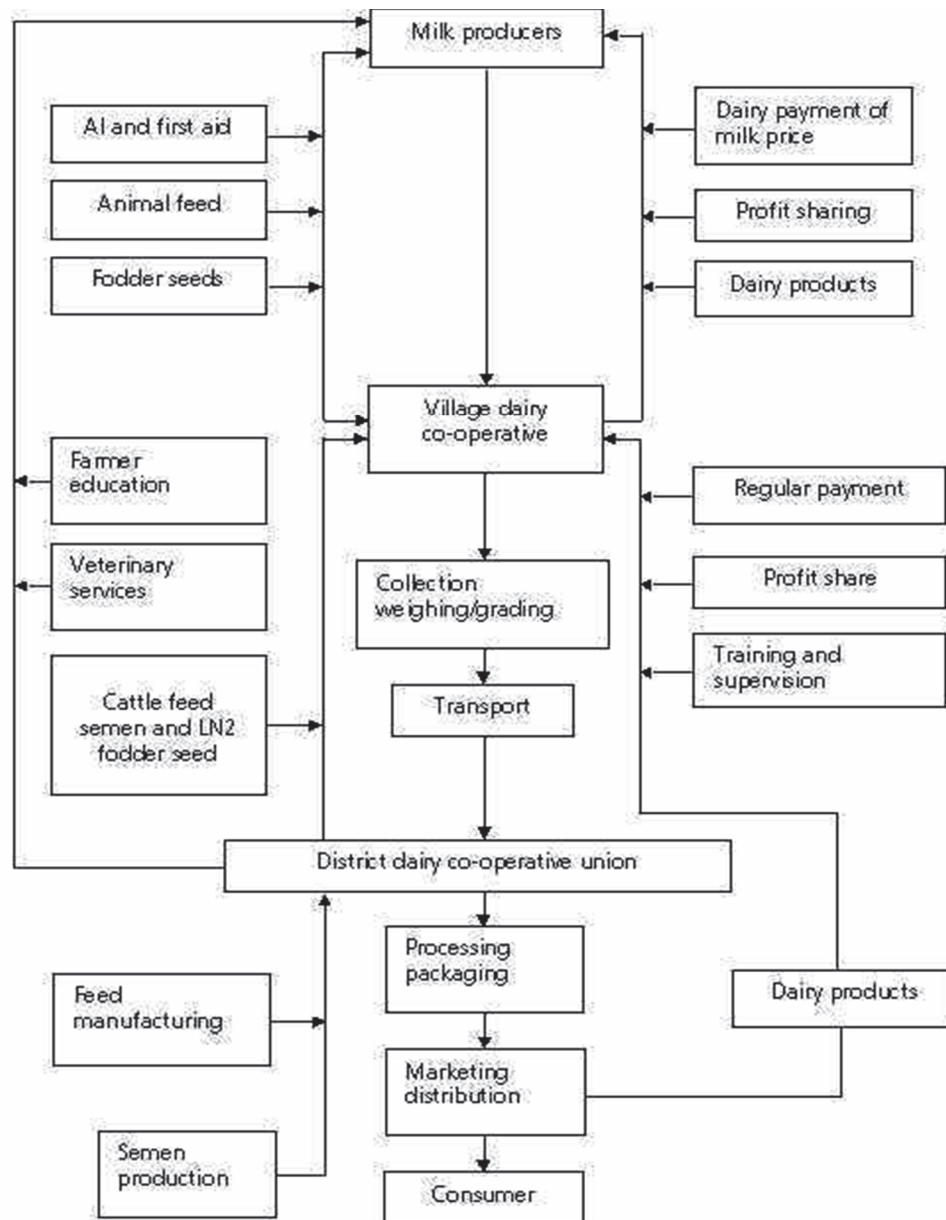
Study on perception of rural women on buffalo husbandry: a perusal in district Jind of Haryana and reported that about 80.00 per cent of female performed operations like milking, watering and feeding of animals, while 66.40 per cent of the women were involved in activities of fodder harvesting, heat

detection, health management and cent per cent of the women involved in cleaning shed, dung disposal and animal care at calving [6].

Study on role of women in the economically vulnerable households with special reference to dairying in Biejapuri block of Agra district Uttar Pradesh and reported that women's participation was 100 per cent in milk processing, making cow dung cakes and feeding

young calves and cleaning sheds, 70.00 per cent in milking of buffaloes/cow and in soaking and boiling concentrates, 50.00 per cent in cleaning and bathing the buffaloes, offering the concentrate mixture and harvesting and bringing of fodder from fields, 40.00 per cent in feeding fodder and 20.00 per cent in sale of milk and grazing of buffaloes/cows[2].

Anand Pattern of Dairy Co-operative:



Role of Dairy Co-operatives in Women Empowerment: Empowerment has been defined as a change in the content of a women's life that enables her capacity for leading a fulfilling human life. It gets reflected in external qualities such as health, mobility, education and awareness status in the family participation in decision making and also at the level of material security. It also includes internal qualities such

as self awareness and self confidence.

Social Empowerment:

Renowned Sociologist BS Baviskar explains that Operation Flood was considered a means of overcoming the barriers of caste, class, and power, something earlier rural development programs had been unable to do. In the women dairy cooperative societies (WDCs) women find themselves empowered, as they are authorised to

make their own decisions in meetings held outside the home. Income from WDCs enables the women to make most household expenditures without being dependent on their husbands. Operation Flood has also played an important role in generating employment for women. With 3.5 million milk suppliers, "it is reasonable to assume that 5 percent represented women who were able to stay at home rather than go out for work. This withdrawal of women from the labour force will have created an additional 175,000 labouring jobs, predominantly for the very poor," reveals the assessment report of the World Bank in 1998. The women members of dairy cooperatives visit dairy cooperative unions and are shown the mysteries of artificial insemination under a microscope. The knowledge of conception in animals helps them to better understand their own lives and to begin to control what was simply assumed as a matter of fate. They see that with feed and care better milk is produced and as their animals improve their income from milk increases and they become hopeful of better housing and future.

Economic Empowerment: Operation Flood accorded the highest priority to ensuring a year-round and dependable market at remunerative prices for rurally produced milk. Indeed, OF was originally conceived as a marketing project. The producer price of milk in most OF areas is determined by the state government concerned and is set at a level that is considered remunerative to the milk producers. The Anand Pattern

emphasized keeping cattle in the hinterland and transporting milk to cities by farmer cooperatives, rather than transporting cattle as well as fodder to cities. Thus the system had strong comparative advantage. As a result, the early dairy unions in Gujarat—such as Kaira, Mehsana, Sabarkantha, Banaskantha, and others—rapidly emerged as large and successful farmer organizations, with hundreds of thousands of members dominating the economies of their domains. It is notable that the increased income from milk under OF encouraged a process of change in other activities of the milk-producing households and contributed to their overall socio-economic development.

Conclusion: In India women play major role in feeding and milking the cows and buffaloes. Raising their participation is essential to the long-term strength of the dairy cooperative movement. It is evident that in pursuance of value of cooperation, empowered women mass in rural India, in turn these small woman cooperators, in aggregate created cooperatives with spirit of cooperation. The empowered women in cooperatives have strengthened social, economical & political conditions in rural mass of India. Emerging strong and robust economy of the country is obliged to this undercurrent movement at grass root. Government has to intervene and create funds (may be called Dairy Development Fund) for such programmes to be implemented on mission mode integrating various schemes for women empowerment.

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