

Women's empowerment through dairy farming in Kerala: a study on some selected areas of Wayanad district

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Abstract - The present study was conducted to identify the women's empowerment through small-scale dairy farming in Wayanad District of Kerala. Small-scale dairy farm women owners with 2 to 5 cattle constituted the population of the present study. Among the population, the households who were actively engaged in dairy farming activities more than two years in the selected area of Wayanad district were considered as the sample unit. For data collection, 35 households from the sample unit were randomly selected. Simple percentages were used to show the frequency distribution at different categories of variables. Small-scale dairy farming helps rural women to increase their confidence and decision-making power with regard to their family matters, use of nutritious food and experienced increased self-esteem, expansion of their social circles, and ultimately attained empowerment through the breakdown of traditional socio-cultural barriers. Thus, the expansion of small-scale dairy farming in other rural areas of Kerala is likely to contribute to the empowerment of more rural women.

Keywords: dairying; small-scale dairy farming; women's empowerment

I. INTRODUCTION

Women's empowerment plays an important role in socio-economic development in any country that involves improving decision-making, control over family income, increased participation in family affairs, awareness about human rights and freedom to do anything that they wish to do, increasing in the family and in general creating confidence of rural women in their capabilities. In developing countries women are always underrated in all matters. So, they get unequal wages for equal work and they see as less valuable than men. Keller and Mbwewe (1991) describe the Empowerment as a process whereby women become able to organize themselves to increase their own self-reliance, to assert their independent right to make choices and to control resources which will assist in challenging and eliminating their own subordination. Siddique (1998) stated that women receive less household resources for their food, education, health and clothing than men. Batliwala (1994) suggests that the process of challenging existing power relation, and of greater control over the source of power may be termed as empowerment. Kabeer (1999) writes that the capacity of those who have a stake in challenging the status quo to deal with resistance cannot be taken for granted; it has to be built up through process of empowerment. Farming has enabled them to increase family income as well as fulfill household food needs (Batool et al., 2014). Women empowerment is when have the freedom and choice to make their own decisions (Shivani J, 2020). Through their increasing participation in income generating activities like dairy farming, rural women are able to overcome the socio-economic barriers and have the potential to raise sound against domestic violence. Dairy

farms run by rural women are growing in India due to the agricultural crisis faced during the last two decades. Now dairying become a female dominated activity. Income from dairying and increased participation in cooperative societies are likely to contribute to the empowerment of more rural women in Wayanad.

Increased participation of rural women was able to increase their confidence level through improvement in educational, nutritional food and human right awareness and health consciousness and decision-making power with regard to their family, increased self-esteem and self-respect, reduction of dependency on others, expansion of their social circles, and ultimately enhanced empowerment through the breakdown of socio-economic and cultural barriers.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Research design

The study was descriptive in nature.

2.2. Types and sources of data

Primary and secondary data were used to carry out the study. The primary data were collected from rural women who possessed the small-scale dairy farm in selected area. The secondary data were collected from different journals, books, magazines, newspapers, annual reports, website, research reports, and other publications related to the present study.

2.3. Population of the study

Dairy farm owners in Wayanad district of Kerala were constituted the population of the study.

2.4. Sampling unit of the study

From the population, the households who were actively engaged in dairy farming activities more than two years in the selected area of Wayand district were considered as the sample unit of the study.

2.5. Sampling technique

Random Sampling Method (RSM) was applied to carry out the study.

2.6. Sample size

The women in the study area who are engaged in dairy farming activities, 35 households were interviewed in total from the sampling unit.

2.7. Data collection procedure

Questionnaire method were used to collect primary data from the selected rural women. With the help of interview schedule face to face interview with the selected woman was conducted to collect data.

2.8. Data processing and analysis

The data processing consisted of editing, coding, classification, and tabulation of collected data so that they were amenable to analysis. Simple percentages were calculated to show the frequency distribution at different categories of variables.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, several empowerment dimensions such as social, economic, and psychological with their indicators have been used to identify the level of empowerment among small scale dairy farm women owners in some selected areas of Wayanad district in Kerala. Considering the different empowerment indicators, the percentage distributions of all women’s responses are shown in Table 1.

Table. No.1 Distribution of indicators of women dairy farmers empowerment before and during study.

Dimensions of women empowerment	Indicators	Category	Before study		After study	
			Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Social empowerment	Courage to assume leadership	Poor	20	57	8	23
		Moderate	10	29	5	14
		Good	5	14	22	63
	Desire for education to children	Poor	16	46	28	80
		Moderate	8	23	1	3

		Good	11	31	6	17
	Participation in decision making	Poor	29	83	4	11
		Moderate	2	6	8	23
		Good	4	11	23	66
Economic empowerment	Income earning potential	Poor	27	77	3	9
		Moderate	3	9	2	5
		Good	5	14	30	86
	Autonomy in financial decision	Poor	31	89	7	20
		Moderate	0	0	2	6
		Good	4	11	26	74
	Independence in spending money	Poor	30	86	1	17
		Moderate	3	9	4	11
		Good	2	6	25	71
Psychological empowerment	Self-confidence	Poor	32	91	8	23
		Moderate	1	3	2	25
		Good	2	6	25	71
	Self-respect	Poor	27	77	5	14
		Moderate	4	11	2	6
		Good	4	11	28	80

Source: Primary data

IV. FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

Social empowerment is the process of developing a sense of autonomy and self-confidence. Poor rural women are socially empowered through courage to assume leadership, desire for education to children and participation in decision making and this process served to remove social barriers which is prevalent in our society. As can be seen in Table 1, social empowerment was higher in during study period.

Economic empowerment is another significant dimension of women’s empowerment and can be achieved through by ensuring their active participation in economic activities. Their ability to earn income through economic activities enhance their empowerment than who are not engaged in any economic activity. During the study, women earned much more money from dairy farming than before inclusion of small-scale dairy farming activities. During the study period, the selected rural women reported that they had poor (9%), Moderate (5%) and good (82%) income earning potential by

improving farm productivity but before the study they had poor (77%), Moderate (9%) and good (14%) income earning potential respectively (Table 1). Economic empowerment leads to social empowerment encompasses inclusion of nutritious food, education to children, health care access, and other different social opportunities. Only 11 percent women had autonomy in financial decisions before study. Whereas, 74 percent women had autonomy in financial decisions during the study. They realized their strength and power as a woman. (Table 1).

Psychological empowerment includes autonomy, decision making capacity and positive self-evolution as well as having capacity to regulate her own life as a person and not as a constructed feminine identity of subservient. Only 6 percent women had self-confidence before study. Whereas, 71 percent had self-confidence during the study. Only 11 percent women had self-respect before study. Whereas, it increased to 71 percent during the study.

V. CONCLUSION

The study is mainly aimed to know the impact of small-scale dairy farming in the development and empowerment in rural women. In rural area of Kerala, the traditional role of women is to stay at home and is expected to obey her husband and his parents and look after children and house work. The women in some selected areas of Wayanad district in Kerala were empowered through the dairy farming by increasing their socio-economic status and awareness about educational, health, nutritional, financial, independent decision-making, increased involvement in family affairs, and also increasing their confidence level and self-respect to enhance their dairy farming by increasing the number and quality of cattle and which will lead to poverty eradication. The women's increased confidence level and participation in decision making increased their efficiency and productivity which helps to achieve high living standards.

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