

Socio-Economic Profile and the Attitude of Dairy Farmers in Kerala Towards the Assistance and Incentives from Various Institutional Sources

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ABSTRACT

Dairying helps to improve the status of rural masses especially weaker sections, consisting of small and marginal farmers and landless labourers and women of low income families. In India, a large majority of milk producers have one or two milch animals and account for about 70 per cent of milk production. The Institutional agencies such as MILMA, Animal husbandry Department and Dairy Development Department are providing various assistance and incentives for the sustainability of dairying and dairy farmers. In this study, the socio economic profile of these dairy farmers in the study area together with their attitude towards the assistance and incentives from the above mentioned institutional agencies have been studied.

Keywords: Dairy farmer, Dairy Co-operative Society, Member, Non Member.

INTRODUCTION:

Milk production in India is dominated by small and marginal landholding farmers and by landless laborers who, in aggregate, own about 70 percent of the national milch animal herd. Dairying, as a subsidiary source of income, is a real relief to most of weaker groups in society. Often one or two milch animals enable farmers to generate sufficient additional income to break the vicious subsistence agricultural-debt situation. A study on the socio-economic profile of the respondent dairy farmers enables to understand these farmers in terms of their age, education, gender, years of farming experience, type of family, occupation etc. Because of the inherent risks involved in this activity, the farmers who undertake this profession should be supported through proper interventions which ensure them feasibility and viability for their venture. There are various agencies that are involved in assisting the dairy farmers such as Kerala Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation, popularly known as Milma, Animal Husbandry Department and Dairy Development Department. These agencies provide various assistance and Incentives for the sustainability of Dairy farmers in Kerala. Dairy farmers, being the beneficiaries of these assistance and incentives, It is pertinent to study the attitude of these dairy farmers towards the support extended by these Institutional sources.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Review of literature is an integral part of all scientific investigations which would enable the researcher to understand the research gap and justify the study. Here the research begins with an enquiry into the studies already conducted in the field of dairying and it would throw light on the various aspects of dairying that has been studied from different angles by expert researchers and authors.

Francis and Sibanda (2001) conducted a study titled "Case study of the viability of small holder dairy farming

in Nharira- Lancashire, Zimbabwe”. The objective was to assess the viability (based on gross margin: GM analysis) of dairy farming in Nharira communal area and Lancashire small scale commercial area. This paper is based on data obtained through participatory monitoring of 13 small holder dairy farms. From the study, it could be noted that, though substantial inter-farm differences were observed, small holder dairy farming in Nharira-Lancashire was found to be viable. It was also observed that feed costs, number of cows and sizes of land holdings were the main factors determining viability of small holder dairy farming. And they pointed to the fact that the development of low cost feeding strategies based on farm produced feeds would improve the profitability of the small holder dairy farms.

Vinod et al. (2004) conducted a study with reference to 120 respondents scattered in six villages of two blocks in Rewari district of Hariyana to analyze the nature of markets and role of cooperatives in marketing of milk. It was observed that on medium and large category of farms the milk sold through cooperative society was found to be higher than the disposal through milk vendors and directly to the consumers mainly due to more marketable surplus. While on small farms the disposal was found to be almost equal, i.e., 35 percent through milk vendors and directly to the consumers, and the disposal of milk through cooperative society was less due to lower marketable surplus owing to smaller herd size.

Shinde (2011) carried out a study titled “Socio - economic profile of dairy farmers in Solapur district of Maharashtra state”. The objectives of the study were to provide a general review of dairy units in the Solapur district and to study the growth and performance of selected dairy units in study area. The present study was taken up in a drought prone district leading in milk production namely Solapur district of Maharashtra State. The criterion for the selection of the District was its progress in dairy performance. The entire Taluks of the district has divided into two regions namely irrigated Taluks and non-irrigated Taluks. The primary data were collected through the structured questionnaire (Appendices I) which was developed and administered for this purpose. From each region 130 respondents were selected by using stratified random sampling, purposive random sampling method the total sample size was 260. It has been found that there is a striking difference in primary sources of occupation across the different categories. A large proportion of small farmers (42 per cent) in the irrigated Taluks were wage earners, while in the non-irrigated Taluks about 44 per cent of smallholders had dairying as their primary occupation. The constraints perceived by farmers were found to be technological, marketing, disease, feed and fodder and Environment etc.

Nishi et al. (2011) in her study titled “Dairy farmer’s satisfaction with dairy societies: a case study” assessed the level of Farmer’s satisfaction with Dairy Co-operative Societies and influence of the characteristics of the farmers on their satisfaction with DCSs. The study was conducted in purposively selected organization i.e., PCDF, Uttarpradesh. Out of 31 milk unions under PCDF, 4 milk unions were selected under stratified proportionate random sampling procedure. The survey revealed that more the farmers are motivated towards economic accomplishment, they utilizes the services of the societies to a great extent for their economic benefit. It could also be found that about one –third of the respondents were happy with the functioning of the societies. Organization participation, market potential and economic motivation were found to have strong influence on the satisfaction level of farmers. However the prevailing constraints like impediments for member farmers in getting accrued benefits of several provisions within the co-operatives and the hostile or non co-operative attitude towards societies have negatively contributed towards farmer’s satisfaction with the functioning of DCSs.

From the above studies, it could be observed that there are dairy farmers who undertake this profession as their primary occupation and hence it should be supported with proper interventions. The studies related to the dairy farmers’ satisfaction level with these institutional sources indicates that they utilize the services of the dairy co-operative societies to a great extent for their economic benefit. However, the hostile or non co-operative attitude of these farmers towards the services extended by these Institutional sources has negatively contributed towards the farmer’s satisfaction.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the Socio-economic profile of the dairy farmers in Kerala
2. To examine the attitude of dairy farmers in Kerala towards the assistance and Incentives from various Institutional sources

Sources of data:

Both the primary and secondary data have been used for conducting the study. Secondary data regarding the various assistance and incentives received by the farmers have been collected from Dairy Development Department, Animal Husbandry Department and Kerala Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation (Thrissur

Dairy). Primary data comprised of the socio-economic profile of the dairy farmers and their attitude towards the assistance and Incentives have been collected through the sample survey. Pre-tested structured interview schedule have been used for collecting data from the respondents.

Selection of the sample:

For the selection of 133 sample dairy farmers from Thrissur district of Kerala, Multi-stage random sampling method was used. Multi-stage sampling refers to sampling plans where the sampling is carried out in stages using smaller and smaller sampling units at each stage. In the first stage, from each Taluk, two Anand Pattern Co-operative Societies (APCOS) have been selected for which the societies in the Taluks have been ranked based on the quantity of milk supplied to MILMA during the last three years. From the rank list prepared, societies which ranked first and last have been selected. Thus the sample size of APCOS is ten, i.e., two societies each from five Taluks. In the second stage, from each of the societies, 10 farmers who are pouring members for the last three years have been selected randomly. As a control group for comparison, three farmers who are not the members of the society, but residing within the area of operation of the society have been selected. Thus the sample size is 130 dairy farmers, consisting of 100 member farmers of APCOS and 30 non member farmers. In addition to this, three commercial dairy units from the study area having a minimum cattle holding of 20, have also been included for the study.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

Dairying seems to be a viable option for villagers who don't otherwise have access to other lucrative and alternative employment opportunities. The villagers who are less educated and those who cannot aspire for a regular income white collar job can depend upon these cattle for meeting their day to day expenses and also a meagre share for saving. Hence the dairying as a profession has its own significance in providing a considerable source of Income particularly for rural community.

Based on the objectives of the study and the results of data analysis, the discussions are presented in two parts in the present study.

- Socio-economic profile of the dairy farmers in Kerala
- Attitude of dairy farmers in Kerala towards the assistance and Incentives from various Institutional sources

Socio-economic profile of the respondents

Socio-economic status is a combined total measure of the economic and sociological factors of an individual. It indicates an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others based on income, education and occupation. For analysing the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, the indicators such as age, education, gender, years of farming experience, type of family, occupation, Income from primary occupation and total family income of the respondents are considered which are depicted in Table 1.1

Table 1.1: Socio-economic Profile of the respondents

Sl.No.	Characteristics	Unit	Members	Non Members	Total
1	Sex	Number			
1.1	Male		65	13	78(59)
1.2	Female		38	17	55(41)
2	Age level	Years			
2.1	25-35		9	3	12(9)
2.2	36-45		27	3	30(23)
2.3	46-55		20	9	29(21)
2.4	56-65		34	10	44(33)
2.5	Above 65		13	5	18(14)
3	Education Level	Number			
3.1	Below SSLC		42	16	58(44)
3.2	SSLC Pass		44	10	54(41)
3.3	Pre Degree/Plus Two		7	1	8(6)
3.4	Diploma		4	2	6(4)
3.5	Degree or above		6	1	7(5)

Sl.No.	Characteristics	Unit	Members	Non Members	Total
4	Type of Family	Type			
4.1	Nuclear		78	15	93(70)
4.2	Joint		31	9	40(30)
5	Years of farming experience	Years			
5.1	Less than 5		10	4	14(11)
5.2	6 – 15		29	9	38(29)
5.3	16 – 25		33	13	46(35)
5.4	Above 25		31	4	35(26)
6	Landholding	In Cents			
6.1	Less than 100		77	15	92(69)
6.2	100 – 200		15	11	26(20)
6.3	200 – 300		5	2	7(5)
6.4	300 – 400		4	1	5(4)
6.5	400 – 500		2	1	3(2)
7	Occupation				
7.1	Agriculture		45	11	56(42)
7.2	Government sector		6	3	9(7)
7.3	Business		15	3	18(13)
7.4	Others		37	13	50(38)
8	Income from primary occupation	In Rs.			
8.1	Less than 1 Lakh		12	2	14(10)
8.2	1 Lakh - 2 Lakhs		65	23	88(66)
8.3	2 Lakhs - 3 Lakhs		16	2	18(14)
8.4	3 Lakhs - 4 Lakhs		6	3	9(7)
8.5	4 Lakhs - 5 Lakhs		4	0	4(3)
9	Income from dairying	In Rs.			
9.1	Less than 2 Lakhs		98	30	128(96)
9.2	2 Lakhs - 3 Lakhs		3	0	3(2)
9.3	3 Lakhs – 4 Lakhs		1	0	1(1)
9.5	5 Lakhs – 6 Lakhs		1	0	1(1)
10	Annual family income	In Rs.			
10.1	Less than 5 Lakhs		84	28	112(84)
10.2	5 Lakhs - 10 Lakhs		16	2	18(13)
10.3	10 Lakhs - 15 Lakhs		1	0	1(1)
10.4	15 Lakhs - 20 Lakhs		2	0	2(2)
11	% of Income from dairying to total Income	In %			
11.1	Below 15		68	21	89(67)
11.2	15 – 30		29	7	36(27)
11.3	30 – 45		4	2	6(4)
11.4	45 – 60		2	0	2(2)
12	Categories				
12.1	Category 1		45	12	57(43)
12.2	Category 2		30	15	45(34)
12.3	Category 3		25	3	28(21)
12.4	Category 4		3	0	3(2)

Source: Compiled from primary survey

Note: Figures in parenthesis represent percentage share to total

Table 1.1 reveals that both male and female respondents are engaged in dairying and majority (59 per cent) are male. In both the member and non-member category, male respondents are more when compared to the female respondents. Thirty three per cent of the dairy farmers fall under the age category ranging from 56 to 65. Only nine per cent fall in the category of 25 to 35 years of age. The participation of youth seems to be less and this tilts to the fact

that the present generation is not interested to undertake this profession.

It could be observed that majority of the dairy farmers (44 per cent) have education level below SSLC. But none of them found to be illiterate. The dairy farmers who qualified SSLC constitute 41 per cent of the total respondents. Education level holds less significance as far as a dairy farmer is concerned. An educational qualification up to fifth standard is more than enough for a dairy farmer. And this is a sector where people of less education, who cannot aspire for regular income jobs, can depend upon for meeting their livelihood expenses. It is because of this reason that this sector is being dominated by people of less education. This also reveals that educated group is not actively taking part in this profession. Higher the education level, higher is their preference for other employment opportunities.

As seen in the present era, majority of the respondents (70 per cent) belong to nuclear family and only 30 per cent of the respondents are having joint family.

Thirty five per cent of the dairy farmers (35 per cent) are those who have dairying experience ranging from 16 to 25 years followed by those with 6 to 15 years. From this, it could be implied that the farmers have taken up this profession traditionally and they are well versed with managing the dairying activities with this strong base of experience.

It could be observed from the survey that majority of the respondents (69 per cent) have less than 100 cents of land. Only two per cent of the respondents have more than four acres of land.

With regard to the occupation of the sample respondents, the main occupation of 42 per cent of the respondents is agriculture. Only seven per cent of the total respondents are employed in government sector. These respondents are undertaking dairying as their subsidiary occupation.

Majority of the respondents (66 per cent) have income from primary occupation ranging from one lakh to two lakhs and only three per cent of the respondents have Primary income ranging from four lakhs to five lakhs per year.

Income from dairying is obtained by deducting all expenses incurred under dairying from the income earned out of dairying. And the survey revealed that majority of the respondents both in the member and non- member group earn net income less than two lakhs Rupees per year.

As regard to their total family income, majority of the respondents (84 per cent) have less than five lakhs per year and only three percent of the respondents have their annual income more than ten lakhs. Total family income constitutes both their income from primary occupation together with the income from dairying.

Since dairying is a subsidiary occupation, the contribution of income from dairying to total family income is analysed and it could be observed that majority of the respondents (67 per cent) irrespective of the member and non- member group contribute to less than 15 per cent of their total family income from dairying. Only two per cent of the respondents contribute more than 45 per cent of their family income from dairying.

The respondents are classified based on their cattle population. Category one belongs to the respondents who have one to two cattle. Category two consists of respondents who have cattle population ranging from three to five. Category three includes dairy farmers who have six to ten cattle and category four denotes the farm units who have more than ten numbers of cattle. Majority of the dairy farmers are those who have one to two cattle.

Attitude of farmers towards assistance and incentives from various Institutional sources:

One of the factors that influence the attitude of farmers towards assistance and incentives is its extent of amount availed by them. After analysing the extent, it was found that the assistance amount constitutes a meagre per cent. There is a critical role for the institutional agencies in ensuring all sorts of assistance for the sustainability of dairy farmers. Dairying, because of its inherent risk nature needs proper intervention by way of assistance and incentives. There are various assistance and incentives that are existing for supporting the dairy farmers. But the introduction of these schemes would be successful only if there is a positive orientation in the part of dairy farmers towards these support schemes. The assistance and incentives provided by the institutional agencies would not reach to its desired objectives unless and until the farmers co-operate with them. So it is pertinent to study the attitude of farmers towards the assistance and incentives provided to them.

Table 1.2 reflects the attitude of dairy farmers towards the assistance and incentives. Based on the knowledge, experience and approach towards the assistance and incentives, the dairy farmers were asked to express their attitude out of the five options provided such as “very good”, “good”, “no opinion”, “bad” and “very bad”.

Table 1.2: Attitude of dairy farmers towards assistance and incentives

Sl.No	Attitude	No of Respondents	Per cent
1	Very good	5	4
2	Good	19	14

3	No opinion	53	40
4	Bad	31	23
5	Very Bad	25	19
6	Total	133	100

Source: Compiled from primary survey

From the Table, it could be observed that majority of the respondents have no opinion whereas only 18 per cent of the respondents have a good opinion about the assistance and incentives. The major problem of 40 per cent of the respondents who have reportedly said “no opinion” is their lack of awareness about the assistance and incentives or their hesitant attitude towards the institutional agencies. The member respondents under survey utilize the facility of the society only as a marketing avenue for their produce. Among the respondents who are aware of the assistance and incentives, the respondents who have availed found to be less. And this is because of the long procedural time consuming process that makes the farmers reluctant to proceed with.

Since dairying is a round the clock job, starting from morning to evening, it is difficult for the farmers to leave the cattle and go before the procedural formalities which may consume more time and adversely affect their day to day livelihood income. Another reason for the negative approach towards the assistance and incentives is their financial illiteracy. It is evident from the increased number of persons who have availed the summer incentive and comparatively less number of persons who have availed cattle feed subsidy. Since summer incentive amount is being provided by MILMA along with the milk price from society directly to the dairy farmer, without any procedural formalities, it has more number of beneficiaries whereas the cattle feed subsidy which is being credited to the farmer’s bank account has less number of beneficiaries.

CONCLUSION:

From the above study, it could be observed that there are some critical factors that cause for their hesitant attitude towards the assistance and Incentives extended to them. One of the major reasons that has been found is, the farmers fear of institutional set up’s to deal with. This situation calls for the implementation of financial literacy programmes for the dairy farmers which gives them knowledge about the use of bank account, how it can be operated and how it would be beneficial for them in getting the assistance and incentives. By providing financial literacy to the dairy farmers, the agencies can introduce one time settlement or similar programmes for the farmers to obtain the subsidy amount in lump sum at one time in a year. One time settlement enables the dairy farmers to get the eligible assistance and incentives amount that will be credited to their bank account. Thus it avoids the farmer’s inconvenience of going before each subsidy scheme which takes out their time. And the society should take part an active role as a link between bank and the farmers in determining the amount that should be credited to the bank account of each farmer and in ensuring that the farmers have received the amount or making sure that their bank accounts are getting credited with the assistance and incentive amount. Dairying being a subsidiary occupation should not get marginalised. It should get the consideration it deserves for its efficient functioning and thereby the sustainability of dairy farmers could be attained.

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