

## A Study on Women Empowerment through Dairy Co-operatives in Telangana State

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### Abstract

Women have a significant position in the agricultural industry in India. Their participation is more substantial and vital. Dairying is a component of agriculture. This study examines the possibilities of dairy cooperatives for women's entrepreneurship in rural regions. Dairy farming has substantial significance for the rural economy in India, with women playing a crucial role in this sector. This research examines the management competencies and evaluates the socio-economic effects on members of women's cooperative dairies.

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

### Introduction

The advancement of women is seen as fundamental to the comprehensive sustainable development of the country. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru aptly said that women must play a crucial part in the educational, technological, and financial infrastructures to build a robust country. Moreover, the need for women's development has been recognized, since their empowerment and full involvement on the basis of equality in all societal domains are essential for attaining equity, progress, and peace. The empowerment of women is the process by which individuals who have been deprived of the capacity to make strategic life choices gain that capacity [1] Empowerment refers to the augmentation of an individual's authority and power. It may be seen behaviourally as the capacity to execute successful actions [2][3]. It is well recognized that when a woman advances, the family progresses, the community evolves, and the country develops. Women may be regarded as the backbone of every country and the better half of males in almost all aspects of community development, with India being no exception. The rural woman, comprising around 50% of the entire rural population, actively participates in all aspects of economic life and significantly contributes to national revenue [4].

In India, the majority of the population lives in rural areas engaged in agriculture. In addition to crop cultivation, the domestication of animals has been an essential component of agricultural systems throughout history. It is a centuries-old practice for millions of rural Indian families [5]. The significant contribution of dairy farming to the livelihood of landless and impoverished individuals in the rural economy is clearly obvious [6]. The deficiency of infrastructural facilities, along with low, dispersed, and seasonal milk production, presents a significant marketing challenge that forces dairy producers to either sell milk to intermediaries or transform it into profitable dairy products. In this context, the establishment of Dairy Cooperative Societies (DCS) seems to be the only feasible option for structured rural milk marketing.

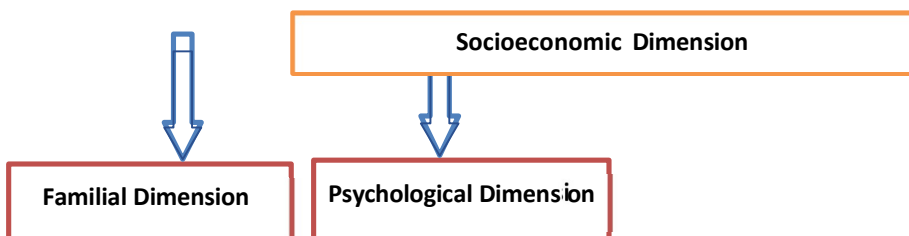
India is the foremost milk-producing nation globally, with the biggest population of cow and buffalo. Its milk output grew from 17 million tons in the 1960s to 176.27 million tons in 2017 [7]. India's milk production constitutes 21% of world output, with a per capita availability of 276 grams per day [8]. Livestock husbandry plays a crucial part in the lives of almost all individuals in the nation, either directly or indirectly. Cattle ranching may serve as both a primary and supplementary source of income, particularly seen as a traditional or auspicious endeavour. According to the 2012 livestock census in Telangana State, there are 5.03 million cattle (13th rank in India), 4.19 million buffaloes (13th rank in

India), and a total of 27.04 million livestock (10th rank in India). Livestock accounts for about 4.86% of the state GDP [9]. The use of milk and dairy products is prevalent in the daily diet of almost all individuals in India. In India, 40-42% of families are lacto-vegetarians, relying only on milk products for animal protein, hence generating significant demand for dairy goods domestically [10]. Consequently, the dairy business impacts all demographics of the population on a daily basis.

In 1990, the Cooperative Development Foundation initiated support for rural populations in Warangal and Karimnagar districts of Telangana to foster saving habits and develop Dairy Cooperative Societies by facilitating the formation of Thrift Cooperatives for men and women at the village level. A Thrift Cooperative is a voluntary assembly of persons united to address their savings, credit, and insurance requirements, and they established an Association for Thrift Cooperatives including many TCs. Following seven years of savings, the substantial accumulation of funds from women TCs was incongruous with the little demand for loans; this prompted ATC to consider putting their idle wealth into a new enterprise that would benefit the majority of its members. Consequently, they had the concept of creating a dairy processing facility to use these monies. Dairy has distinct benefits over other enterprises for members of women's cooperatives, and there exists significant demand for excellent milk in the adjacent city of Warangal. The CDF and National Dairy Development Board conducted a milk market study to assess the potential interest among dairy producers. Thereafter, ATC contacted Mulkanoor Cooperative Rural Bank and Marketing Society for the necessary assistance to develop the dairy facility. The Mulkanoor Women's Cooperative Dairy commenced its procurement operations on 17 August 2002, with 67 Women Dairy Cooperative groups. The total has now reached 110 WDCs located within a 25 km radius of MWCD [11]. The Mulkanoor Women Cooperative Dairy and Vardannapet Women Cooperative Dairy are operating well in the state of Telangana. Consequently, these two women's cooperative dairies were selected for the research.

### 1. Conceptual Framework

This research examines the relationship between dairy cooperatives and women's empowerment by categorizing empowerment into three dimensions: socio-economic, family, and physiological, as outlined [12] in his conceptual framework. Women's empowerment entails transitioning from marginalization to inclusion within both the family and the community. These dimensions are dynamic, interconnected, and mutually reinforcing at the family level, acknowledging that the degree of gender equality and development is directly proportionate. The dimensions are as follows:



**Note:** Arrow indicates influence by another dimension

### 2. Literature Review

A substantial body of research has been conducted on dairy farming and the socioeconomic empowerment of women. However, little research exists about this matter. Below is a compilation of relevant literature reviews on this topic.

The need of women's involvement in cooperatives and concludes that genuine empowerment would occur only when women actively address their own issues [13]. women's empowerment entails the capacity of women to effectuate economic and social development when granted the opportunity to engage fully in decision-making processes that influence their lives, facilitated by leadership training, coaching, consulting, and the provision of resources that enable women to assume leadership roles within their communities, regions, and nations [14]. Most dairy women farmers exhibited moderate entrepreneurial activity, with substantial heterogeneity across small, medium, and big rural women farmers in dairying [15]. Women empowerment is the capacity of women to exert complete control over their activities.

This signifies dominion over tangible things, intellectual resources, and their corresponding philosophies. It pertains to the psychological capacity of women to express themselves, which has been limited by the gender norms imposed upon them, particularly in a society like India that opposes change. This article elucidates the many problems encountered by Indian women and underscores the continued need for their empowerment. It will also emphasize the initiatives undertaken by the Government for the empowerment of women [16]. Dairy cooperatives enhance entrepreneurship and empower women's decision-making, emphasizing the necessity for women's participation in cooperatives. The author concludes that genuine empowerment of women will occur only when they actively address their own challenges [17]. Dairy not only produces milk but also provides an alternative income source for farmers, contributing to comprehensive self-sustaining socioeconomic development at the village level [18].

### 3. Objectives

The primary aim of this research is to examine the role of women's dairy cooperatives in the socioeconomic empowerment of women. The goals are:

1. To examine the function of women's cooperative unions in the formation of women cooperative dairies and the organization and management systems of WCD companies.
2. To ascertain the influence of women's cooperative dairy initiatives on the socioeconomic empowerment of women.
3. To identify the challenges encountered by women dairy producers and provide suitable solutions.

### 4. Hypothesis.

The research aims to examine the hypothesis developed in accordance with the stated goals.

H0: There is no effect of women's cooperative dairy on the socioeconomic empowerment of women.

### 5. Methodology

This research utilizes both primary and secondary data. Primary data was gathered via personal interviews using a meticulously organized interview schedule from a sample of female members of designated cooperative organizations. Secondary data was obtained from annual reports, books, journals, magazines, and relevant websites. The total membership of the Mulkanoor Women's Co-operative Dairy and the Vardannapet Women's Co-operative Dairy is 10,040. The simple random sample approach was used to gather data from 100 dairy producers, including 50 respondents from MWCD and 50 respondents 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	%
<b>Name of the Dairy enterprise</b>		
MWCD	60	60.00
VWCD	40	40.00
<b>Age</b>		
18 to 25 years	17	17.00
26-40 years	44	44.00
41-55 years	30	30.00
Above 55 years	09	09.00
<b>Education</b>		
Illiterates	36	36.00
Up to 7 <sup>th</sup> class	13	13.00
SSC level	30	30.00
Inter and above	21	21.00
<b>Type of Family</b>		

Nuclear	62	62.00
Joint	38	38.00
<b>Caste/Social Group</b>		
SC	18	18.00
OBC	70	70.00
General	12	12.00
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	100	100.00
Unmarried	00	00.00
<b>Economic Status</b>		
BPL	94	94.00
APL	06	06.00
<b>Occupation</b>		
Agriculture Wage	29	29.00
Non-Agriculture Wage	03	03.00
Dairy	66	66.00
House Wife Services	02	02.00

Source: Primary Data

The aforementioned Table 1 indicates that 44% of women are aged between 26 and 40 years, 36 % of dairy farmers are illiterate, and the majority of members (38 %) belong to joint families, while 62% belong to nuclear families. Among the women who participated in the WDCs, 70% are from the OBC group, 18% from the SC category, and just 12 % from the general category. All women are married and engaged in dairy farming to augment their family income. 94% of women belong to Below Poverty Line (BPL) households, whereas 4% belong to Above Poverty Line (APL) families. The majority of women members of the WDCs are agricultural wage workers.

#### 7.1 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
<b>Social</b>			
SC	1182.60	2345.23	1162.63 (98%)
OBC	2136.50	3278.91	1142.41 (53%)
General	1297.64	2478.38	1180.74 (91%)
<b>Economic</b>			
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.)

The aforementioned Table 2 indicates that the social position of 98% of Scheduled Caste women, 53% of OBC women, and 91% of general women members of dairy cooperatives has improved after their participation in WCD. 28 percent of

women dairy cooperative members below the poverty level and 57 percent of those above the poverty line have seen an improvement in their economic condition.

## 6.2 Test of Hypothesis

H0: There is no effect of women's cooperative dairy on the socioeconomic empowerment of women.

<b>Crosstab Table-3</b>						
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
<b>Total</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

**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.

<b>Chi-Square Tests Table-3a</b>				
	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			

The aforementioned Table 3a indicates that the p-value is below 0.05, hence rendering the result highly significant. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that the founding of a dairy firm has no effect on the economic and social standing of its members is invalid. The investigation concludes that dairy enterprises significantly affect the economic and social standing of dairy farmers.

## 7. Results

The principal conclusions of this research are to demographic, economic, and social issues. A maximum of 56 percent of women dairy producers own agricultural land of less than 2 hectares; so, land, green fodder, and rainfall are significant elements in sustaining cows and buffaloes. Appropriate education and digital literacy are crucial to keep pace with contemporary developments in dairy management.

## 8. Conclusion

Dairy operations significantly enhance the economic and social status of rural women. It is generating job opportunities for both women and men. This is a definitive progression towards the economic empowerment of women. Dairy cooperatives provide significant potential and may enhance the empowerment of rural women, contingent upon the successful resolution of societal difficulties faced by women. Enhancing active participation and economic empowerment of women in the dairy sector necessitates financial and educational support, as well as managerial and technical training and development from both state and central governments; only then can women make informed decisions for the effective operation of dairy farms and their families.

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