



A STUDY OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF FARM WOMEN ASSOCIATED WITH DAIRY OCCUPATION

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ABSTRACT

Women play a vital role in sustaining rural households by contributing significantly to agricultural and dairy activities while simultaneously managing household responsibilities. Their day typically begins early with tasks such as fetching water, collecting fodder and fuel, preparing food, caring for livestock, and looking after children. Studies have reported that farm women spend approximately 15.64 to 16.58 hours per day on productive work; however, their contribution remains largely unrecognized due to the lack of monetary valuation. Considering that the socio-economic characteristics, knowledge, and capabilities of farm women directly influence the efficiency of dairy enterprises and family income, the present study, entitled “A Study of the Socio-Economic Profile of Farm Women Associated with Dairy Occupation,” was undertaken. The findings revealed that the majority of farm women belonged to the middle-age group, were educated up to the primary level, had a medium level of dairy farming experience, lived in medium-sized families, held membership in one organization, belonged to the marginal farmer category, maintained small herd sizes, possessed a medium level of access to information sources, had a medium level of knowledge regarding dairy practices, maintained kutcha byres with mud flooring, and achieved a medium level of daily milk yield, respectively.

KEYWORDS: Farm women, Dairy Occupation, Milk etc.

I. INTRODUCTION

Agriculture and its allied sectors are the backbone of the Indian economy and an important occupation for most of the Indian families. In the livestock sector, India is the world's single largest milk-producing country, with 187.96 million tonnes against the world milk production of 843.04 million tonnes, with a share of about 22.29 per cent (Source: FAOSTAT, 6th November, 2020). Also, India, the current leader in the dairy world, ranks 1st in milk production, with a contribution of livestock to agricultural GDP of 28.63 per cent (Anonymous^b, 2020-21). In the dairy development sector of India, Gujarat occupies a place of pride. This is mainly due to the impressive progress made by organising a chain of co-operative dairies in many parts of the state. As per the 20th livestock census, 2019, conducted by the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, GOG reported that the total livestock population in the Banaskantha district was 3,398,084 against the total livestock population of 26,831,894 in Gujarat, contributing 12.66 per cent. Banaskantha's contribution to Gujarat's cattle was 4.98 per cent with a rank of 11th against India's, and Gujarat's contribution to buffalo was 9.60 per cent with a rank of 3rd

against India's total livestock population (<https://doah.gujarat.gov.in/livestock-census.html>). A woman is the nucleus of a family, particularly in rural India. For the rural women, the day starts early in the morning with the responsibilities of fetching water, fodder and fuel, cooking food and looking after the livestock and children. Promila *et al.* (2003) revealed that farm women spent 15.64 hrs/day and 16.58 hrs/day for productive work during the slack and peak periods, respectively. Considering that the socio-economic characteristics, knowledge, and capabilities of farm women directly influence the efficiency of dairy enterprises and family income, the present study, entitled "A Study of the Socio-Economic Profile of Farm Women Associated with Dairy Occupations", was undertaken.

II. OBJECTIVE

To study the personal, socio-economic, communicational, psychological and situational characteristics of farm women

III. METHODOLOGY

The present study was confined to "Ex-post facto" research design as the independent variables have already operated in the study area. Kerlinger (1976) defined ex-post-facto design as any systematic empirical enquiry in which the independent variables have not been directly manipulated because they have already occurred or because they are inherently not manipulated. For the present investigation, a simple random sampling technique was employed to select 150 farm women engaged in dairy occupation. The talukas of Palanpur, Deesa, Dantiwada, and Amirgadh were selected purposively, as these talukas had a comparatively higher number of farm women members associated with dairy cooperatives. For the selection of villages, a list of villages from each selected taluka was obtained from the respective taluka maps. Subsequently, four villages were selected randomly from Palanpur taluka, four villages from Deesa taluka, three villages from Dantiwada taluka, and four villages from Amirgadh taluka, respectively.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter is deals with the critical assessment of the results. The information related to this study was collected from farm women by means of well-structured, pre-tested, Gujarati version interview schedule.

A) Age

Age denotes the chronologically completed calendar years by farm women. Therefore, age of farm women was considered as essential aspect in this investigation. Data with respect to age are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 : Distribution of farm women according to their age group

Sr. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Young age group (Up to 35 years)	41	27.33
2	Middle age group (36 to 50 years)	92	61.34
3	Old age group (Above 50 years)	17	11.33
Total		150	100.00

The findings depicted in Table 1 indicate that majority (61.34%) of farm women belonged to middle age group followed by 27.33 per cent with young age and 11.33 per cent were from old age group. The finding have been reported by Potdar *et al.* (2019) and Prajapati *et al.* (2019).

B) Education

Education is a process of production of desired changes in knowledge, skill and attitude behaviour of farm women. The data with respect to education are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 : Distribution of farm women according to their level of education

Sr. No.	Level of education	Frequency	Percentage
1	Illiterate (Do not read and write)	54	36.00
2	Primary (Up to VIII standard)	69	46.00
3	Secondary (IX to X standard)	19	12.67
4	Higher secondary (XI to XII standard)	08	05.33
5	College and above	00	00.00
Total		150	100.00

The data depicted in Table 2 indicate that 46.00 per cent of farm women were educated up to primary level followed by 36.00 per cent illiterate, 12.67 per cent of them were secondary educated and 5.33 per cent of them had completed their higher secondary. There were no graduate farm women. This may be due to the availability of primary school at village level and secondary school at nearby villages. Similar findings have been reported by Joshi *et al.* (2018), Mthi *et al.* (2018).

C) Experience in dairy occupation:

Knowledge, participation and decision making of farm women might be influenced by the experience of farm women in dairy occupation. The data regarding the experience of farm women in dairy occupation were collected and are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 : Distribution of farm women according to their experience

Sr. No.	Experience in dairy occupation	Frequency	Percentage
1	Less experience (Up to 10 years)	30	20.00
2	Medium experience (Between 11 to 20 years)	105	70.00
3	High experience (Above 20 years)	15	10.00
Total		150	100.00

$$\bar{X} = 15.61$$

$$S.D. = 05.29$$

It can be observed from the data presented in Table 3 that 70.00 per cent of farm women were found with medium (between 11 to 20 years) followed by 20.00 (up to 10 years) per cent with less and 10.00 per cent of them had high (above 20 years) level of experience in dairy occupation. This finding have been supported by the findings Saba *et al.* (2020).

D) Size of family:

The size of family refers the total number of individuals living together under common roof, having blood ties with each other and directly dependent on the head of the family. Data in this regard are given in the Table 4.

Table 4 : Distribution of farm women according to their size of family

Sr. No.	Size of family	Frequency	Percentage
1	Small family (Up to 4 members)	66	44.00
2	Medium family (5 to 8 members)	79	52.67
3	Large family (Above 8 members)	05	03.33
Total		150	100.00

$$\bar{X} = 05.00$$

$$S.D. = 01.27$$

The data from Table 4 indicated that majority (52.67%) of farm women belonged to the medium sized (5 to 8 members) families. While 44.00 per cent of them belonged to small sized families (up to 4 members) and only 03.33 per cent of farm women belong to large sized (above 8 members) families. This may be due to unawareness about family planning programme in rural areas. This finding have been supported by findings of Khare and Singh (2019).

E) Social participation:

Participation in different social activities definitely influences one's way of thinking, acting and behaving. Keeping this in view, social participation of farm women was studied and data in this regard are presented in Table 5.

Table 5 : Distribution of farm women according to their social participation

Sr. No.	Social participation	Frequency	Percentage
1	No membership	5	03.33
2	Membership in one organization	131	87.34
3	Membership in more than one organization	14	09.33
4	Holding position in organization	00	00.00
Total		150	100.00

The data observed in Table 5 that 87.34 per cent of farm women had membership in one organization followed by 9.33 per cent had membership in more than one organization and 3.33 per cent had no membership in any organization. Farm woman holding position in organization was found none. It is cleared from the data that overwhelming majority (87.34%) of farm women had membership in at least one organization. These finding have been in line with Patel (2020).

F) Size of land holding:

It refers to the number of hectares of land owned and cultivated by farm woman. In the present study, the data regarding the land owned by the families of farm women were collected and are presented in Table 6.

Table 6 : Distribution of farm women according to their size of land holding

Sr. No.	Size of land holding	Frequency	Percentage
1	Landless (No land)	03	02.00
2	Marginal farmer (Up to 1.0 ha)	57	38.00
3	Small farmer (Between 1.01 to 2.0 ha)	48	32.00
4	Medium farmer (Between 2.01 to 4.0 ha)	32	21.33
5	Big farmer (Above 4.0 ha)	10	06.67
Total		150	100.00

It is evident from the data in Table 6 that 38.00 per cent of farm women were marginal farmer (up to 1.0 ha) followed by 32.00 per cent small farmer (between 1.01 to 2.0 ha) and 21.33 per cent medium farmer (between 2.01 to 4.0 ha). Only 06.67 per cent farm women were big farmer and 02.00 per cent had no any land *i.e.* landless. This finding have been supported by Potdar *et al.* (2019).

G) Herd size:

It refers to the number of domesticated milch animals possessed by farm women. The interest and participation of an individual increases with increase in number of animal holdings. The data regarding this are presented in Table 7.

Table 7 : Distribution of farm women according to their herd size

Sr. No.	Herd size	Frequency	Percentage
1	Small (Up to 5 animals)	94	62.67
2	Medium (6 to 10 animals)	40	26.67
3	Large (11 to 15 animals)	11	07.33
4	Very large (More than 15 animals)	05	03.33
Total		150	100.00

A look into Table 7 showed that more than three fifth (62.67%) of farm women had small (up to 5 animals) herd size followed by 26.67 per cent had medium (6 to 10 animals) herd size. About 07.33 per cent farm women had large (11 to 15 animals) herd size. A small proportion (3.33%) of them had very large (more than 15 animals) herd size. These finding have been reported by Rajadurai *et al.* (2018) and Kaur *et al.* (2019).

H) Sources of information

Sources of information refer to the various information channels used by farm woman for getting information about dairy occupation. The data in this respect are presented in Table 8.

Table 8 : Distribution of farm women according to sources of information utilized

Sr. No.	Sources of information utilized	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low level of source of information	38	25.33
2	Medium level of source of information	83	55.34
3	High level of source of information	29	19.33
Total		150	100.00

$$\bar{X} = 24.86$$

$$S.D. = 08.84$$

It is evident from Table 8 that majority (55.34%) of farm women used medium sources of information for obtaining information about dairy occupation, whereas 25.33 and 19.33 per cent of them used less and more sources of information, respectively. The finding have been reported by Kumari *et al.* (2015) and Vekariya *et al.* (2016).

I) Level of knowledge

It can be defined as body of understood information possessed by an individual or by a culture. Knowledge regarding recommended animal husbandry practices was measured with the help of teacher made knowledge test based on the scale developed by Jha and Singh (1970) and was administrated with slight modifications to suit the present study. The data regarding the knowledge possessed by farm women about dairy occupation is given in the Table 9.

Table 9 : Distribution of farm women according to their knowledge level

Sr. No.	Level of knowledge	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low level of knowledge	20	13.33
2	Medium level of knowledge	97	64.67
3	High level of knowledge	33	22.00
Total		150	100.00

$$\bar{X} = 46.99$$

$$S.D. = 08.68$$

The data presented in Table 9 portrays that (64.67%) of farm women were found with medium level of knowledge in dairy occupation, whereas 22.00 and 13.33 per cent farm women were having with high and low level of knowledge in dairy occupation, respectively. This finding have been supported by Bhumra *et al.* (2018), Patel *et al.* (2018) and Sharma *et al.* (2018).

J) Cattle shed (Type of byre):

An efficient management of cattle will be incomplete without a well planned and adequate housing of cattle. Keeping in view this point, the data regarding the animal house kept by farm women is given in the Table 10.

Table 10 : Distribution of farm women according to their type of byre

Sr. No.	Type of byre	Frequency	Percentage
1	Kutchha	88	58.67
2	Pukka	62	41.33
Total		150	100.00

Sr. No.	Flooring of byre	Frequency	Percentage
1	Concrete	62	41.33
2	Mud	88	58.67
Total		150	100.00

Sr. No.	Roofing of byre	Frequency	Percentage
1	Cement concrete	89	59.33
2	Galvanized/Asbestos sheets	01	00.67
3	Plastic sheets	00	00.00
4	Fodder waste	60	40.00
Total		150	100.00

The data presented in Table 10 portrays that 58.67 per cent of farm women had kutcha byre with concrete floor followed by pukka byre with mud flooring (41.33%). It is also found that 59.33 per cent of farm women possess cement concrete type of roofing followed by fodder waste type of roofing (40.00%). Only 00.67 per cent farm women possesses galvanized/asbestos type of roofing. This finding have been reported by Kavitha and Rajkumar (2016) and Kotresh *et al.* (2017).

K) Milk yield:

It refers to the quantity of milk produced by milch animal. The simple method calculated rough daily milk production by summing up the yield per day. Keeping in view this point, the data regarding the milk yield of animal was calculated and data are presented in the Table 11.

Table 11 : Distribution of farm women according to milk yield of their milch animal

Sr. No.	Milk yield	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low level of milk yield	19	12.67
2	Medium level of milk yield	111	74.00
3	High level of milk yield	20	13.33
Total		150	100.00

$$\bar{X} = 44.45$$

$$S.D. = 30.39$$

The data presented in Table 11 portrays that 74.00 per cent of farm women were producing medium level of milk yield per day followed by 13.33 and 12.67 per cent of farm women were producing high and low level of milk yield per day from their milch animals, respectively. This finding have been reported by Patel *et al.* (2018), Kaur *et al.* (2019) and Prajapati *et al.* (2019).

V. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE SCOPE

A woman is the nucleus of a family, particularly in rural India. Rural women begin their day early, undertaking multiple responsibilities such as fetching water, fodder, and fuel, preparing food, and caring for livestock and children. The findings from this research revealed that the majority of farm women were middle-aged, educated up to the primary level, had medium farming experience, and belonged to medium-sized families. Most were members of one organization, owned marginal landholdings with small herd sizes, and had a medium level of access to information and knowledge related to dairy farming. They predominantly maintained cattle in kutcha byres with mud flooring and recorded a medium level of daily milk yield.

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