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A study to find out the determinants influencing women's participation in dairy farming

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Abstract

The present study was carried out in Gobichettipalayam, Sathyamangalam, Bhavanisagar and Thokkanaicken Palayam (T.N. PALAYAM) blocks of Erode district of Tamil Nadu. A simple random sampling procedure was followed in order to obtain a sample of 40 rural women from each block, thus the total sample size was 160. The dependent variable was participation of rural women in dairying. The independent attributes were socio-personal, socio-economic, communicational and psychological traits of rural women such as age, community, level of education, marital status, farming experience, annual income, primary occupation, economic status, land holding, extension contact, source of information, mass media exposure, level of aspiration, scientific orientation, attitude towards dairying and knowledge about dairy farming. The data were collected by personal interview technique with the help of structured interview schedule. The data were analyzed using statistical methods such as correlation and regression analysis. The attributes like age, level of education, farming experience, economic status, extension contact source of information, mass media exposure, level of aspiration, scientific orientation, attitude towards dairying and knowledge about dairy farming had positive and strong correlation with level of participation. About 64.32 per cent variation in the extent of participation of rural women in dairying was explained by all the 15 attributes into consideration. Age, Level of education, farming experience, economic status, source of information, mass media exposure, level of aspiration, scientific orientation, attitude towards dairying and knowledge about dairy farming significantly influenced the extent of participation of rural women in agricultural activities.

Keywords: Farm women, participation, dairying

Introduction

The contemporary context underscores the profound significance of women's contributions to national development. Women assume a pivotal role in both agriculture and rural development, forming an undeniable reality in the progress of the nation. However, the degree of their involvement fluctuates over time and across regions. Recognizing that women constitute nearly half of the population, their status and development significantly influence the growth of the remaining half. Empirical evidence establishes that women in rural areas are disproportionately affected by poverty compared to men. Despite their indispensable role in farming and elevating the quality of life in rural areas, societal barriers and gender bias often obscure the recognition of women's contributions. The essential role of women in agriculture, allied occupations, and household activities tends to be underestimated and undervalued. In the domain of agricultural development and related fields like dairy farming and vermicompost production, women play a significant and crucial role. Rural women in India bear substantial responsibilities, engaging in diverse duties related to family and farming activities, alongside their exclusive involvement in domestic chores. Consequently, they are widely regarded as the backbone of the Indian economy. Their contributions extend to tasks such as cleaning cattle sheds, feeding and grazing animals, and participating in milking and marketing to some extent. Remarkably, women undertake 80 to 90 percent of total dairying operations (Satyanarayana, 2010) ^[2], collaborating with male counterparts and actively participating in various farming activities, thus contributing numerous hours of productive manual labor daily. Keeping these facts, the present study was formulated with the objectives; (i) To explore the relationship between extent of participation of rural women in dairying and their selected traits, and (ii) To find out the factors determining the participation of rural women in dairying

Methodology

The current research was conducted in a purposive selected Gobichettipalayam,

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Sathyamangalam, Bhavanisagar, and Thokkanaicken Palayam (T.N. PALAYAM) blocks within the Erode district of Tamil Nadu during the period 2022-23. A systematic approach was employed, utilizing a simple random sampling procedure to secure a sample of 40 rural women from each block, resulting in a total sample size of 160. The focal point of investigation was the participation of rural women in dairying. Various independent attributes encompassing socio-personal, socio-economic, communicational, and psychological traits of rural women were considered. These attributes included age, community, level of education, marital status, farming experience, annual income, primary occupation, economic

status, land holding, extension contact, source of information, mass media exposure, level of aspiration, scientific orientation, attitude towards dairying, and knowledge about dairy farming. Data acquisition was accomplished through personal interviews utilizing a structured interview schedule. The subsequent data were subjected to analysis utilizing statistical methods, specifically correlation and regression analysis, to derive meaningful insights from the gathered information

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Correlation coefficient ('r' value) of extent of participation of rural women in dairying with their selected traits

S. No.	Socio-personal, socio-economic, communicational, and psychological traits	'r' value
1.	Community	0.098
2.	Level of education	0.349**
3.	Marital status	-0.080
4.	Farming experience	0.636**
5.	Annual Income	0.075
6.	Occupation	0.178*
7.	Economic status	0.438**
8.	Land holding	0.069
9.	Extension contact	0.301**
10.	Source of information	0.390**
11.	Mass media exposure	0.336**
12.	Level of aspiration	0.359**
13.	Scientific orientation	0.484**
14.	Attitude towards dairying	0.220**
15.	Knowledge about dairy farming	0.404**

* - Significant at $p=0.05$, ** - Significant at $p=0.01$

Data in Table 1 reveals the nature of relationship between socio-personal, socio-economic, communicational and psychological traits of rural women with their participation in agricultural activities. Based on the correlation analysis it was found that ten traits such as age, level of education, farming experience, economic status, extension contact, source of information, mass media exposure, level of aspiration, scientific orientation, attitude towards dairying and knowledge about dairy farming exhibited positive and significant relationship with participation at 1% level of significance but, primary occupation shows positive and significant relation at 5% level of significance with participation. The association of level of participation of rural women in dairying with their community, annual income,

land holding was found positive but not significant, while its relationship with marital status was although negative but not high enough to be statistically significant. In correlation analysis, level of education, farming experience and scientific orientation were found to be significantly and positively correlation with the level of participation in dairying. Education is certainly a mean to increase livelihood and also equally breeds on high expectations and ambitions. The positive correlation implies that for participation in dairying, education and scientific orientation were might be a precondition. Higher the education along with scientific orientation, the higher would have been the expectations. In such a situation with an increase in educational level the degree of participation in dairying had gone up.

Table 2: Partial regression coefficient ('b' value) of extent of participation of rural women in agricultural activities on their selected traits

Socio-personal, socio-economic, communicational, and psychological traits	'b' value	S.E. (b)	't' value
Community	0.013	0.063	0.210
Level of education	0.171	0.075	2.281*
Marital status	-0.066	0.054	-1.228
Farming experience	0.566	0.162	3.495**
Annual Income	0.074	0.062	1.198
Occupation	0.033	0.019	1.745
Economic status	0.342	0.072	4.752**
Land holding	-0.115	0.103	-1.120
Extension contact	0.016	0.011	1.447
Source of information	0.187	0.063	2.968**
Mass media exposure	0.184	0.089	2.071*
Level of aspiration	0.271	0.112	2.415*
Scientific orientation	0.320	0.097	3.294**
Attitude towards dairying	0.278	0.073	3.815**
Knowledge about dairy farming	0.171	0.043	3.978**

* - Significant at $p=0.05$, ** - Significant at $p=0.01$

The positive correlation observed between farming experience, occupation, economic status, extension participation, source of information, mass media exposure, level of aspiration, scientific orientation, attitude towards dairying, and knowledge about dairy farming suggests a decisive and favorable impact on the level of participation in dairying. Mahadi *et al.* (2014) [1] similarly found a positive and significant association with education. Recognizing that a simple correlation coefficient may not adequately gauge the strength of relationships between variables, studies employing partial regression coefficients prove instrumental in precisely delineating such associations.

In this study, regression analysis concerning the level of participation of rural women in dairying, considering socio-personal, socio-economic, communicational, and psychological traits (Table 2), elucidated that 64.32 percent of the variation in the level of participation could be explained by all sixteen traits under examination. The multiple R^2 value of 0.6432 was highly significant, emphasizing the relevance of the regression equation in predicting the extent of participation of rural women in agricultural activities. Notably, out of the fifteen traits, ten—namely, level of education, farming experience, economic status, source of information, mass media exposure, level of aspiration, scientific orientation, attitude towards dairying, and knowledge about dairy farming activities—demonstrated conspicuously effective impacts on the level of participation among rural youth in agricultural activities. Importantly, all these factors exhibited a positive and significant relationship with the extent of participation of rural women in agricultural activities

Conclusion

The study's findings underscore the importance of targeting highly educated and experienced rural women with additional income sources, favorable attitudes, and extensive knowledge about dairying to enhance their participation in dairy farming activities. The results derived from multiple regression analysis propose that certain traits - specifically, education, farming experience, economic status, extension participation, source of information, level of aspiration, scientific orientation, attitude towards dairying, and knowledge about dairying activities - should be accorded greater significance in the formulation of a selection index aimed at determining the level of participation.

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