



Growth of Women Dairy cooperatives- way to enrich lives of Rural Women

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Abstract

Women Dairy Cooperatives are such a vital instrument in enhancing opportunities for women to get education and finance. Women cooperatives are exclusive women organisations to ran economic activities. These organisations provide platform for women to participate without any fear and inferior mentality and learn things and skill, exhibit their talent and earn financial support. Women Dairy Cooperatives are such vehicle and proved their strength in empowering women. In this article tried to give glance of growth of Women Dairy Cooperatives in India and Karnataka and their role in enriching lives of rural women. Secondary data was used. Explanation method was adopted.

Introduction

Women empowerment, especially in rural areas is a Hercules job. Dairy Cooperatives, exclusively Women Dairy Co-Operatives are proved to be one of the main instruments to achieve women empowerment in developing countries like India where agriculture and allied activities predominant the economy. Traditionally, women spend significance time and labour in animal care, maintenance and dairy activities in India. But in return they had hardly get benefit in terms of income and any role in management of governing bodies. Consequently, their share of economic and social status derived from dairying was disproportionately smaller than their contribution to it. Women Dairy Co Operatives which are established under part of STEP (Support to Training and Employment Programme) programme give women folk opportunity to participate in economic activities, earn their livelihood and participate in management. With Women Dairy Co-Operatives, women are gaining economic autonomy and significant role in family and societal decision making. Dairy industry is growing with spectacular prospects in India. Expansion of dairy industry itself gives immense opportunity to Women Dairy Co-Operatives to work and upgrade women dairy farmers' life. Now need to strength Women Dairy Cooperatives and accomplish more women empowerment in India specially in rural area.

Women Empowerment

Women Empowerment refers to increasing economic, social, political and spiritual strength of women. It often involves developing confidence in their own capabilities. Empowerment can enable women to participate, as equal citizens, in the economic, political and social sustainable development of the communities. It can be said that men and women should enjoy desirable welfare conditions and equality in accessing the sources and facilities, decision making process in affairs of family and at society and control over resources. In spite of government's continuance efforts to empower women, still now it is daunting task. Further women should realize that their problem is not due to their inefficiencies and shortage but it has emerged due to social system (Fatemi Iman et. al, 2011). Social barriers and attitudes are the main constrains in the path of women empowerment. Considerable economic empowerment (employment, income) may help to break social stigma about women. Dedicated and honest nature of women gets opportunities to work and prosper in every sector.

Present Dairy industry in India

Dairy industry is the major prominent growing sector with lot of backward and forward link aging activities. India is the highest milk producer and ranks first position in the world contributing 24% of global milk production in year 2021-22. The milk production of India has increased 51% during the last eight years i.e. During the year 2014-15 and 2021-22. And increased to 221.06 mn tonnes in the year 2021-22. The top 5 milk producing states are Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Andra Pradesh. They together contribute 53.11% of total milk production in the country. Export of dairy products recorded a growth of 19.45% as its export rose to 4714 mn US \$.

Dairy Cooperatives in India

Co-operative is the voluntary movement of people. But in India this cooperative movement is supported by government in terms of policies and financial support. Cooperative organisations are ray of hope for socially and economically weaker section. In this organisation people organise themselves democratically and pool their resources and efforts to achieve common goals. Cooperative organisations help people achieve things which cannot get done individually. These organisation values virtues such as self-help, mutual help, self-reliance and general goods of all. The Co-operative form of organization is the ideal organization form to uplift weaker sections of the society. The idea of dairy cooperative originated first in Switzerland in the village of Kiesen in 1815. Later on, it spread over Denmark, Europe, and the USA. In India the seed of Cooperation was sown in 1904 with the passage of first Cooperative Act. The Revolution of Agro- Industries as well as white Revolution (cotton and milk) is the symbol of the development through the cooperative movement in India. The Dairy cooperative movement has not only improved the lives of rural people but also generate employment opportunities for millions of farm families and made significant contribution to the economy of the nation as well. It strengthens the infrastructure for milk collection, transportation, processing, and packaging, pricing, and marketing of dairy products also help in reducing unwanted exploitation of producers. Dairy co-operatives have played a major role in the uplift of milk producers leading to growth of dairy industry in India. The history of Dairy development movement in India is date backs to 1970s. During the pre-independence period this movement was limited to a few compartments of Calcutta, Madras, Bangalore and

Gujarat. The most outstanding of this endeavour was Anand Co-operative Milk Producers Union Limited (AMUL) of Kaira District, Gujarat. After the initial periods of India's independence, the successive governments took outstanding steps to setting up new dairy cooperative in all regions of the county. The National Dairy Development Board was initiated in the year 1965 to make the most result-oriented project a success. In India, in 2021-22 Dairy Co-operatives 2,28, 374, Producer member 18, 058, Milk procurement 58,725

Women Dairy Co-operative Societies in India

Women Dairy Co-Operatives are government intervention in the process of rural development and women empowerment. The Women Dairy Co Operatives are formed exclusively for women member. These societies are organised, run and managed by women. Institutions like this create working environment where women participator work and express themselves without hesitation and can extend opportunities exclusively to women who are all coming from low social profile background. Women are largely participating in agriculture and dairy activities. Formation of Women Dairy cooperatives gives women folk concentrated opportunity to uplift their socio-economic status. In spite of considerable progress made by dairy cooperatives, women could not become members of the village level dairy cooperative societies till 1973 even in Gujarat. This is because of the fact that a majority of the households in rural areas were headed by men and it was stipulated that only one person from each household, obviously the head, could become member of the dairy cooperative. The first major effort to support women's participation was funded and supported by the Ford Foundation in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Bihar. It sought to create dairy cooperative societies for women led by women and managed by women. In effect however women have found it difficult, if not impossible to assume a meaningful role in elected leadership or in the management of the Co-operatives. Therefore, to support the development of all women's cooperatives cadre of women extension workers are recruited and trained. From the late 1980s the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) placed a major emphasis on women's education as part of our co-operative development programme, an activity designed to strengthen the role of women members in the control and governance of the dairy cooperatives. Men were educated about the role of women in dairying while women were motivated to join dairy cooperatives and to assert their rights as member. They were encouraged to attend meeting with extension workers and when the payments for milk were made to collect the money that was paid by the society. Women were also encouraged to stand for membership of managing committees and in some states co-operatives and unions began to reserve seats on their boards for women. Because of their direct involvement in animal husbandry, women also know much more about the care and feeding of dairy animals. Women's dairy cooperatives will perform better than men's because women are less political, more loyal to the cooperative concept, more inclined to co-operate with each other and to place their common interests and concerns above the superficial differences of religion, caste and political affiliation.

Women Dairy Co-operative Societies in Karnataka

Women dairy cooperatives are organised under the scheme of STEP. The Vocational Training and Employment Support Scheme (STEP) for Women was launched in 1986 by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India. The main objective of the project will be to develop women in the unorganized sector socially and economically. It also aims to engage more women in jobs by creating trainings to develop professional skills in women and jobs that bring constant income. STEP project organizes women into self-help groups to develop their vocational skills and arrange productive assets, create backward and forward linkages, improve/arrange support services, provide credit for asset creation, gender equality, health and nutrition and legal literacy. The program aims to create awareness and make a significant impact by providing sustainable income generating employment to women. Thus, the STEP program offers a package aimed at holistic development of poor women in traditional sectors. The main objective of the scheme is to develop groups on self-sustaining basis in the market area with minimal government assistance and guidance even after the completion of the project period. The Karnataka Milk Mahamandal (KAHAMA) has been implementing the Women's Vocational Training and Employment Support (STEP) Scheme awarded by the Ministry of Women and Child Development of the Union Government since October 1997 in Karnataka. 800 Women Cooperative Milk Producers' Unions have been formed in three phases and 250 women's unions formed earlier have been converted into Step Sanghs in the fourth phase. Along with this, in 2007, the Government of India again agreed to two phases, in the 5th phase 200 new milk producers' women's associations and in the 6th phase 200 existing women's associations were brought under the STEP scheme. Along with this, the Government of India again agreed to two phases in August 2010, in which 200 women's associations were implemented in the 7th phase and 250 women's associations in the 8th phase. So far 3,949 women milk producers' associations have been formed in Kahama and 1924 women cooperative milk producers' associations have been incorporated in the STEP scheme. Along with this, 24 Women Co-operative Milk Producers Associations have been formed under the STEP Yojana started in collaboration with Balki, Nittoor Educational Institution of Bidar District in relation to Gulbarga Milk Union. The Government of India has sanctioned a total grant of Rs.56.48 crore and has released Rs.45.36 crore so far. 2.50 lakhs to 3.00 lakhs is provided to each women's association, which is allowed to be utilized in the form of interest-free loan for formation of associations, maintenance, training programs, awareness programs and margin amount (round fund) for purchase of dairy. In this, the Government of India has given 11 12 90% of the grant and the implementing organization Kahama/ Unions will bear 10% of the expenses. The following table a brief of women dairy cooperatives in Karnataka.

Key items	1976	2019-20	2021-22	2022-23(Feb)
Dairy Co-operatives registered	416	16071	17014	17550
DCS functioning	-	14493	15005	15453
Women DCS registered	-	4239	4547	4703
Women DCS functioning	-	3868	4143	4286
STEP registered	-	2474	2855	2855
STEP functioning	-	2299	2880	2880
Membership	-	24.75 lakhs	25.90 lakhs	26.44 lakhs
Turnover (in cores)	8.82	16150	19784	13298

Source: [http:// www.kmf.coop](http://www.kmf.coop)

Conclusion

Women Empowerment is a crucial issue in socio-economic development of the country like India where social stigmas about women barring them from entering into prosperous world. There need to break these social stigmas and allow women grow socially and economically. Only education and opportunities of financial autonomy can equip women to do so. Government of India and states have taken concrete steps to equip them. Women Cooperatives such a vital instrument in enhancing opportunities for women of education and finance. Women cooperatives are exclusive women organisations to ran economic activities. These organisations provide platform for women to participate without any fear and inferior mentality and learn things and skill, exhibit their talent and earn financial support. Women Dairy Cooperatives are such vehicle and proved their strength in empowering women. In this context Women Dairy Cooperatives are promoted with programme called STEP. We need to analyse Women Dairy Cooperatives performance and identify areas where it needs more focus and formulate policies to strength them more and achieve more women empowerment.

In Karnataka Women Dairy cooperatives were established in 1997. Women Dairy cooperatives are completing 25 years. Now assessing these Women Dairy Cooperatives may provide vital information regarding enforcing women empowerment programmes and policies.

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