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## Analysis of socio economic profile of dairy farmers in the north eastern zone of Tamil Nadu

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#### Abstract

The study was conducted in the North Eastern zone of the state of Tamil Nadu out of which three districts i.e., Tiruvallur, Kancheepuram and Viluppuram districts were selected randomly. The data was collected from 40 dairy farmers with the help of a well- structured pre-tested interview schedule and was analysed by using appropriate statistical tools. It was found that 37.50 per cent of the respondents belonged to middle age and 35.00 per cent had no formal education. Thirty seven per cent of dairy farmers had 2.5 to 5 acres of land and belonged to small farmers category, 42.50 per cent possessed low level (2.00 to 4.24 cattle units) of livestock possession and two fifth (40 per cent) of the respondents had a medium level of annual income. One half (50.00 per cent) of the dairy farmers had high level (above 20 years) of experience in dairy farming while same proportion of them had medium level of knowledge about improved dairy husbandry practices. Majority (65.00 per cent) of the respondents did not attend any training on dairy farming practices, nearly half (47.50 per cent) had high level of mass media exposure and a good number (47.50 per cent) belonged to medium level of extension agency contact. Two- fifths of the dairy farmers (40.00 per cent) belonged to medium level of risk orientation, maximum number (42.50 per cent) had medium level of economic motivation and 45.00 per cent had medium level of scientific orientation. Fifty per cent of the respondents marketed milk through cooperatives and more than one third (37.50 per cent) of the respondents belonged to late majority adopter category with respect to Innovativeness.

**Keywords:** dairy farmers, socio-economic profile, Tamil Nadu

#### Introduction

Dairy is a particularly important source of income for Indian farmers with little access to land. Nearly one-quarter of Indian agricultural households with very small landholdings (less than 0.01 hectare) report livestock as their principal source of income (DAHD, 2020) [2]. India stands second in cattle population of the world. Cattle account for 36.04 percent of total livestock as per 20<sup>th</sup> livestock census and contributes to 48 percent of milk production in India. The total number of cattle in the country in 2019 is 192.49 million showing an increase of 0.8 per cent over previous Census.

India has emerged as the largest producer of milk with 20.17 per cent share in total milk production in the world. Milk production during 2018-19 and 2019-20 is 187.75 million tonnes and 198.40 million tonnes respectively showing an annual growth of 5.68 per cent. (Annual report, 2020-21) [3]. Among the livestock products, milk consists of the highest share, and it accounted for 67.20 per cent of the livestock sector in 2017. Moreover, milk and milk products contributed more than 20.60 per cent of the combined output of paddy, wheat and pulses in 2017. Annually, 8.4 million farmers depend on the dairy sector for their livelihoods, out of which 71 per cent are women (Agriculture Skill Council of India). Today, around 17 million farmers belong to 1, 86,000 village level cooperatives in India, and more than 32,000 of these cooperatives are led by women. Furthermore, in a year, crop production employs the rural workforce for 90 to 120 days, but dairy provides alternative employment opportunities throughout the year. Milk production in India is predominantly the domain of small holders in mixed farming system. In this regard, studying the socio-economic profile of dairy farmers would provide insights on devising dairy development strategies to improve their livelihood.

#### Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in the North Eastern zone of the state of Tamil Nadu. North Eastern zone consist of six districts out of which three districts i.e., Tiruvallur, Kancheepuram and

Viluppuram districts were selected randomly. The number of dairy farmers selected in each district was based on the cattle population of the selected district. Hence 7 dairy farmers from Tiruvallur district, 11 from Kancheepuram district and 22 from Viluppuram district were selected for the study. Thus data was collected from 40 dairy farmers with the help of a well- structured pre-tested interview schedule and the data

was analysed by using cumulative square root frequency method wherever applicable.

## Results and Discussion

### Socio- Personal Profile of the dairy farmers

The socio personal details of the farmers were collected and presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Socio personal profile of dairy farmers n=40

S. No.	Profile Characteristics	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Age	Young	11	27.50
		Middle	15	37.50
		Old	14	35.00
2.	Caste	Other Caste (OC)	01	2.50
		Backward Caste (BC)	12	30.00
		Most Backward Caste (MBC)	22	55.00
		Schedule Caste (SC)	05	12.50
3.	Education	No formal education	14	35.00
		Primary	03	7.50
		Middle	07	17.50
		Secondary	10	25.00
		Higher secondary	05	12.50
		Graduate	01	2.50
4.	Land holding	Landless	14	35.00
		Marginal farmers	11	27.50
		Small farmers	15	37.50
5.	Livestock possession	Low	17	42.50
		Medium	13	32.50
		High	10	25.00
6.	Annual income (rounded to nearest 1000)	Low	14	35.00
		Medium	16	40.00
		High	10	25.00
7.	Experience in dairy farming	Low	12	30.00
		Medium	08	20.00
		High	20	50.00
8.	Level of knowledge about improved dairy husbandry practices	Low	07	17.50
		Medium	20	50.00
		High	13	32.50
9.	Extent of participation in training programmes	No training	26	65.00
		One training	11	27.50
		Two trainings	03	7.50
10.	Extension agency contact	Low	10	25.00
		Medium	19	47.50
		High	11	27.50
11.	Mass media exposure	Low	03	7.50
		Medium	18	45.00
		High	19	47.50
12.	Risk orientation	Low	10	25.00
		Medium	16	40.00
		High	14	35.00
13.	Economic motivation	Low	10	25.00
		Medium	17	42.50
		High	13	32.50
14.	Scientific orientation	Low	10	25.00
		Medium	18	45.00
		High	12	30.00
15.	Innovativeness	Innovators	02	5.00
		Early adopters	03	7.50
		Early majority	10	25.00
		Late majority	15	37.50
		Laggards	10	25.00
16.	Marketing behaviour	Middle men	12	30.00
		Co-operatives	20	50.00
		Direct	08	20.00

It could be observed from Table 1 that 37.50 per cent of the respondents belonged to middle age followed by old age

(35.00 per cent) and young age (27.50 per cent). More than half of the respondents (55.00 per cent) belonged to Most

Backward Caste category followed by Backward Caste (30.00 per cent), Scheduled Caste (12.50 per cent) and Other Caste (2.50 per cent). Educational qualification revealed that 35.00, 25.00 and 17.50 per cent of dairy farmers had no formal education followed by higher secondary and middle school level of education respectively. Further, it could be observed that about majority (60.00 per cent) of the respondents in total were of below secondary school level of education and only 15.00 per cent of them had more than secondary school level like higher secondary and graduate etc.

Further it was found that 37.50 per cent were small farmers with 2.5 to 5 acres of land followed by landless (35.00 per cent) and more than one – fourth (27.50 per cent) of the respondents were marginal farmers with land holding of less than 2.5 acres of land. It could be inferred that 42.50 per cent of the respondents possessed low level (2.00 to 4.24 cattle units) of livestock possession followed by medium (4.25 to 9.84 cattle units) by 32.5 percent and high (9.85 to 30 cattle units) possessed by 25.00 per cent of the respondents. Annual income revealed that 40 per cent of the respondents had a medium level of annual income i.e., 192 to 438 thousands followed by low category (35.00 per cent) with an annual income of 67 to 191 thousands and 25.00 per cent of the respondents had high level of income ranging from 439 to 840 thousands.

Data in table 1 revealed that one half (50.00 per cent) of the respondents had high level (above 20 years) of experience in dairy farming whereas 30.00 per cent of the respondents had low (up to 10 years) and 20.00 per cent of them had medium (11-20 years) level of dairy farming experiences respectively. This is in accordance with the finding of Gopi *et al.*, (2017)<sup>[4]</sup>. Exactly half (50.00 per cent) of the respondents had medium level of knowledge about improved dairy husbandry practices while 32.50 per cent had high level of knowledge and 17.50 per cent had low level of knowledge about improved dairy husbandry practices.

Majority (65.00 per cent) of respondents did not attend any training on dairy farming practices, while 27.50 and 7.50 per cent attended one training and two trainings respectively. The results are in consonance with Gupta (2011)<sup>[5]</sup> who reported that majority (80.00 per cent) of smallholder dairy farmers had not undergone any training in dairying while 16.65 per cent of respondents received one training and rest of them had two trainings. Nearly half (47.50 per cent) of the respondents had high level of mass media exposure followed by medium (45.00 per cent) and low (7.50 per cent) levels of mass media exposure. A good number (47.50 per cent) of the respondents belonged to medium level of extension agency contact followed by more than one-fourth (27.50 per cent) of them belonged to high category whereas 25.00 per cent belonged to low level of extension agency contact. Medium to high level of extension agency contact might be due to their regular contact with the local veterinarians, milk co-operative officials and progressive farmers regarding information on dairy farming. This finding is in line with Mahesh *et al.*, (2020)<sup>[6]</sup>.

Two- fifths of the respondents (40.00 per cent) belonged to medium level of risk orientation followed by high level of risk orientation (35.00 per cent) and one- fourth (25.00 per cent) belonged to low level of risk orientation which indicates they are hesitant to take risk like trying new technologies in farming. This was in agreement with the findings of Chandrasekar *et al.*, (2017)<sup>[1]</sup>. Nearly half (42.50 per cent) of the respondents had medium level of economic motivation followed by high level (32.50 per cent) and the rest 25.00 per cent of the respondents had low level of economic motivation.

The medium to high level of economic motivation indicates that the respondents might be aiming to improve their financial situation for achieving a better status. This is in line with the findings of Reshma *et al.*, (2014)<sup>[7]</sup>. Forty five percent of the respondents had medium scientific orientation while 35.00 percent had high level and 20.00 percent had low level of scientific orientation.

It was found that one half (50.00 per cent) of the respondents marketed milk through cooperatives whereas 30.00 per cent of them through middlemen whereas 20.00 per cent marketed milk directly. The reason might be that farmers nearer to urban areas could realise better price for their produce by selling directly to hotels/ restaurants, etc.

With respect to innovativeness of dairy farmers more than one third (37.50 per cent) belonged to late majority adopter category whereas an equal percentage (25.00 per cent) belonged to both early majority and Laggards category. Only a meagre 7.50 per cent and 5.00 per cent of the respondents belonged to early adopters and Innovators categories respectively. Most of the dairy farmers preferred to adopt innovations after seeing the benefits of adoption of other farmers.

### Conclusion

A good understanding of the socio-economic characteristics of dairy farmers is critical in formulating need-based training programmes and farmer-centered extension programmes to improve their knowledge and ability. Hence, efforts should be taken up by the Veterinary Universities, Animal Husbandry Department and other extension agencies to focus on equipping farmers with scientific dairy management practices to improve the socio- economic status of dairy farmers.

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