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Virendra Singh

Teaching Associate, Department of Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Extension Education, Pashu Vigyan Kendra, Dungarpur, Rajasthan, India

Sanjay Kumar Rewani

Assistant Professor, Department of Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Extension Education, Post Graduate Institute of Veterinary Education and Research, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

Social empowerment of women through dairy cooperatives in Jaipur Rajasthan

Virendra Singh and Sanjay Kumar Rewani

Abstract

A study was carried out on 120 randomly selected women dairy cooperative society (WDCS) members in Jaipur district of Rajasthan to assess the social empowerment of women through dairy cooperatives. The data were collected by using structured interview schedule. Majority of the respondents were belonged middle age group (63.33%), illiterate (79.17%) and small size of families (44.17%). Most of the respondents (40.83%) were small land holding farmers and 70.84 per cent were having agriculture as occupation. Majority of the respondents had medium level of annual gross income (77.50%), experience in dairy farming (65.83%), extension contact (66.67%), mass media exposure (65.00%) and economic motivation (57.50%) and low level of social participation (40.83%). The study also revealed a leap of change in the social empowerment of the members after WDCS membership. There was significant change in economic independency, self-confidence level, control over income, freedom of mobility and social liberty. On the other hand there was non-significant change in decision making within family, group or community and personal security of the members after WDCS membership.

Keywords: Empowerment, decision making, freedom, self-confidence

Introduction

Women in India are major producers of food in terms of value, volume and number of hours worked (Dommati and Chittedi 2011) [3]. Despite their dominance of the labour force, women in India still face extreme disadvantage as to pay, land rights, control over income and representation in politics. They are mired in poverty and its consequent multiple disadvantages as regards lack of health, sanitation, education and impairing their work productivity (Ahluwalia 1990) [1]. Women are restricted in their access to and control over financial resources and are less involved in financial transactions and decision-making (Kishore and Gupta 2009) [7]. Women play a crucial and significant role in livestock rearing, but their contribution in livestock rearing has not been given the due place they deserve. Women empowerment is necessary for accelerating the pace of the development of a nation and reducing poverty. Bringing women into the mainstream is one of the major challenges for every government. The Government of India has initiated plethora of women empowerment programmes with the objective of ensuring empowerment of women from all angles, such as political empowerment, social empowerment, economic empowerment and legal empowerment. (Shivashankar and Waghmare 2014) [10].

In this context, the cooperatives being the embodiment of values and the principles are the appropriate instrument for espousing the cause of women empowerment. The cooperatives have been the channels of mobilization of women for collective enterprises concerning production, marketing, banking, services and other entrepreneurial activities. They have provided the women workers the economic forum for their income generation and livelihood activities along with the social safety nets and also addressed the issues related to the poverty, vulnerability and the social exclusion which the women face reflecting on their physical mobility, political participation and gender equality (Jabvala 2013) [6].

Dairy cooperatives provide sustainable livelihood to millions of household in rural India. Women dairy cooperative societies are heralded as pioneers of a silent rural change in India (Sudha 2015) [13]. The scenario is fast changing with the increasing recognition of the dynamic role played by women and the inherent advantages of women empowerment for smart economics and superior society (Bala and Chugh 2015) [2]. Women empowerment is one of the challenging tasks in the present scenario (Sreenivasaiah 2015) [12].

Corresponding Author

Virendra Singh

Teaching Associate, Department of Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Extension Education, Pashu Vigyan Kendra, Dungarpur, Rajasthan, India

Methodology

The present study was conducted in purposively selected Jaipur district of Rajasthan owing to prospective rate of dairying, good cooperative network, livestock wealth status and large numbers of dairy cooperatives. Four tehsils *viz.* Amber, Chaksu, Chomu and Phagi were selected randomly from Jaipur district and two villages were selected randomly from each tehsils. From each village, 15 women who were active members of WDCS for at least three years were selected randomly. Thus, total 120 respondents were selected for the study. The data was collected by using a structured interview schedule. The change in the social empowerment status of the respondents was assessed by studying the variables such as economic independency, control over income, self-confidence, decision making within family and group or community, freedom of mobility, personal security and Social liberty by members before and after WDCS membership. Statistical tools like frequency, percentage and paired t-test (Snedecor and Cochran, 1994) ^[11] were used to draw the inferences.

Results and Discussion

Socio-economic characteristics of WDCS members All of the 120 respondents were women farmer in which majority of the respondents (63.33%) belonged to middle age group followed by old (24.17%) and young (12.50%) age group. The education level of respondents was generally illiterate as 10.00% of respondents had only attended primary education while 5.83% had attended middle education. This finding is in corroboration with that of Hagone and Basunathe (2015) ^[5]. Respondents were having predominantly agriculture as occupation (70.84%) while another 16.67% were having dairy farming.

The most of the respondents have the family size of 6-9 members It constitutes 40.83 per cent and it was followed by below 5 members and above 9 members respectively which constitute 44.17 per cent and 15.00 per cent. Land holding was small with a mean size of 2.25 hectares as many respondents (40.83%) had 1.1 to 2.0 hectares available and 25.83% had less than one hectare. 77.50 percent of respondents had medium income group followed by high (13.33%) and low (9.17%) income groups along with mean annual gross income of 2,55,266.67 Rupees per year. Respondents were having mostly medium level of experience in dairy farming (8.73 to 19.54 years) followed by high (>19.54 years) and low (<8.72 years) with mean of experience in dairy farming 14.13 years.

The mean score of extension contacts with the respondents were 7.35 and almost 66.67 percent of respondents had medium level of extension contact in dairy farming followed by low (20.00%) and high (13.33%) level of extension contact. 65.00 percent of respondents had medium level of mass media exposure, while high and low (17.50% each) level of mass media exposure. The above finding is agreement with that of Nishi *et al.* (2011). The most of the respondents (40.83%) had low level of social participation while 39.17%

and 20.00% medium and high level of social participation respectively. Most of them (57.50%) had medium level of economic motivation followed by high 25.83% and low 16.67% level of economic motivation (Table1).

Change in social empowerment status of WDCS members

Table 2 depicts the changes that occurred in social empowerment status of the members during pre and post WDCS membership. Before joining WDCS 78.33% women had insufficient economic independency whereas after joining WDCS 58.33% and 7.50% women were partially and full sufficient income. Highly significant ($P<0.01$) change was observed from about 1.27 (Pre WDCS) to 1.73 mean score (post WDCS) on the aspects of economic independency. About 70.83% respondents who had no control over their income earlier moved to moderate (29.17%) and full (3.33%) control over their income after WDCS membership. The above finding is contraindicated with the earlier findings of Sharma and Vanjani (1993) ^[9]. The changes were much less pronounced regarding control over income where increased mean score of respondents from 1.31 to 1.36 with 0.05 difference of mean score was examined between pre WDCS and post WDCS. The analysis of variance revealed that the significant ($P<0.05$) change in control over income of members after WDCS membership. About 36.67 per cent of moderate and 3.33 per cent of highly confident members moved to moderately (39.17%) and highly (5.00%) confident after WDCS membership. The mean score of respondents changed from 1.43 to 1.49 with the level of self-confidence and revealed highly significant ($P<0.01$) change in self-confidence level of respondents. This finding is similar with that of Gangwar *et al.* (2004) ^[4]. Before joining WDCS 67.50% women had not participated in any decision making process within family whereas after joining WDCS 35.34% members started participating in decision making process which comprised of 34.17% partially and 4.17% fully participating members. The above finding is line with that of Tesfay and Tadele (2013) ^[14]. About 74.17 per cent members had not participated in any decision making process within group or community earlier moved to partially (23.33%) and full (3.33%) participation category after WDCS membership. Overall, there was non-significant change in participation of members in decision making process within family and group or community. Before WDCS membership about 82.50% of the respondents had no power to freedom of mobility. However, after WDCS membership, their freedom of mobility changed significant ($P<0.05$). 71.67 per cent members were unsecured in home and society earlier moved to partially (25.83%) and fully (5.00%) secured category after WDCS membership and observed non-significant change in personal security of the members. The changes were significant ($P<0.05$) regarding social liberty where increased from partial (32.50%) and full liberty (3.33%) to partial (35.00%) and full liberty (4.17%) for attending cultural ceremonies or national festivals after WDCS membership (Table 2).

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of WDCS members

Personal attributes	Frequency (f)	Per cent (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Age			43.78	±9.96
Young (<30 years)	15	12.50		
Middle (31 to 50 years)	76	63.33		
Old (>50 years)	29	24.17		
Education				
Illiterate	95	79.17		
Primary level	12	10.00		
Middle level	7	5.83		
High school level	2	1.67		
Intermediate level	1	0.83		
Graduate & above	3	2.50		
Occupation				
Agriculture	85	70.84		
Dairy farming	20	16.67		
Agricultural labour	5	4.17		
Non-agricultural labour	7	5.83		
Trade & commerce	3	2.50		
Family size			7.22	±4.49
Small (<5 members)	53	44.17		
Medium (6 to 9 members)	49	40.83		
Large (>9 members)	18	15.00		
Land holding			2.25	±0.03
No land (Landless)	5	4.17		
Marginal(<1 hectares)	31	25.83		
Small (1.1 to 2.0 hectares)	49	40.83		
Medium (2.1 to 4.0 hectares)	23	19.17		
Large (>4 hectares)	12	10.00		
Annual gross income (Rupees)			255266.67	±129666.46
Low<125600.21	11	9.17		
Medium125600.22 to 384933.13	93	77.50		
High >384933.13	16	13.33		
Experience in dairy farming			14.13	±5.41
Low (< 8.72 years)	18	15.00		
Medium (8.73 to 19.54 years)	79	65.83		
High (>19.54 years)	23	19.17		
Extension contact			7.35	±2.13
Low (< 5.21scores)	24	20.00		
Medium (5.22 to 9.48 scores)	80	66.67		
High (> 9.48scores)	16	13.33		
Mass media exposure			4.16	±2.67
Low (<1.49 scores)	21	17.50		
Medium (1.50 to 6.82 scores)	78	65.00		
High (>6.82scores)	21	17.50		
Social participation			4.81	±1.77
Low (<3.03 scores)	49	40.83		
Medium (3.03 to 6.58 scores)	47	39.17		
High (>6.58 scores)	24	20.00		
Economic motivation			12.24	±2.66
Low (<9.58scores)	20	16.67		
Medium (9.59 to 14.89scores)	69	57.50		
High (>14.89scores)	31	25.83		

F-Frequency, % - Per cent

Table 2: Change in social empowerment status of WDCS members

Variables	Before WDCS membership			After WDCS membership			Difference of M.S.
	f	%	M.S.	f	%	M.S.	
Economic independency			1.27			1.73	0.46**
Insufficient	94	78.33		41	34.17		
Partially sufficient	20	16.67		70	58.33		
Fully sufficient	6	5.00		9	7.50		
Control over income			1.31			1.36	0.05*
No control	85	70.83		81	67.50		
Moderate control	33	27.50		35	29.17		
Full control	2	1.67		4	3.33		
Self-confidence			1.43			1.49	0.06**
Not confident	72	60.00		67	55.83		
Moderately confident	44	36.67		47	39.17		
Highly confident	4	3.33		6	5.00		
Decision making within family			1.36			1.40	0.04 ^{NS}
No participation	81	67.50		77	64.17		
Partial participation	35	29.17		38	31.17		
Full participation	4	3.33		5	4.17		
Decision making within group/community			1.28			1.30	0.04 ^{NS}
No participation	89	74.17		88	73.33		
Partial participation	29	24.17		28	23.33		
Full participation	2	1.67		4	3.33		
Freedom of mobility			1.85			1.89	0.04*
No freedom	99	82.50		97	80.83		
Partial freedom	18	15.00		19	15.83		
Full freedom	3	2.50		4	3.33		
Personal security			1.33			1.36	0.03 ^{NS}
Unsecured	86	71.67		83	69.17		
Partially secured	29	24.17		31	25.83		
Fully secured	5	4.17		6	5.00		
Social liberty			1.39			1.43	0.04*
No liberty	77	64.17		73	60.83		
Partial liberty	39	32.50		42	35.00		
Full liberty	4	3.33		5	4.17		

Conclusion

The Women Dairy Cooperative Societies are playing a vital role in empowering women by providing sustainable livelihood to millions of households in India. The study revealed a leap of change in the social empowerment of the members after WDCS membership. There was significant change in economic independency, self-confidence level, control over income, freedom of mobility and social liberty. The study result suggest that government and women dairy cooperatives advocated policy reforms that improve women decision making power and their active participation in community matters, provides platform for social interactions.

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