



Analyzing the Feedback from Women Dairy Farmers in the East District of Sikkim

Chimi Yangzom Lepcha^{1*}, Asif Mohammad² and Waris Ali³

¹Ph.D. Scholar, Division of Agricultural Extension, ICAR-Indian Agriculture Research Institute, New Delhi-110012, India

²Senior Scientist, Dairy Extension Section, ICAR-Eastern Regional Station-National Dairy Research Institute, Kalyani-741235, West Bengal, India

³Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Agricultural Extension & Communication, Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi-221005, Uttar Pradesh, India

*Corresponding author email id: yangzomchimi4@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The dairy sector is a women-centric endeavor. It is an instrument for elevating the vulnerable section of society, particularly the farm women. Farm women contribute diligently towards dairy activities. The study was conducted in the East district of Sikkim in the year 2021. A simple random technique was used for selecting four blocks, five villages from each block, and ten respondents from each village were randomly selected. A personal interview schedule was used for the collection of data. Data were collected from 200 dairy farm women owning at least one dairy cattle. The study analyzes the feedback of dairy farm women based on five aspects, i.e., economical, technical, administrative, information networking, and independent decision-making. The result revealed that the high cost of concentrate, feed, and fodder, delayed service of animal health officials, lack of financial support from the government, irregular information on government schemes on dairy, and non-availability of financial support to women farmers were some of the major feedbacks given by the respondents.

INTRODUCTION

India is bestowed with abundant of resources. In term of human resources, women labors are a significant asset of the nation. The contribution made by women in development of nation is remarkable. Especially, the farm women are the foundation for upliftment of country. In India, majority of the population depends on agriculture and allied sector for their livelihood. The livestock sector provides the farm families with additional income for sustaining their living. Around 15-40 per cent of the total farm income is generated from livestock sector (Ahuja et al., 2003). Dairy farming is one of the sub sectors under the livestock sector, which is proved to be a profitable enterprise. It has evidenced to be an advantage for the women farmers, as dairy production employs around 95 per cent of women (World Bank, 1991). In India participation of women engaged in dairying is about 75

million compared to 15 million men (Thakur & Chander, 2006). Dairy farming has become a female-based enterprise as farm women are having more control over this enterprise (Jadav et al., 2014). They are playing major roles in decision making on “labour management” and “retaining milk and its products for family consumptions” (Yadav et al., 2021). Community leadership and time allocation dimensions empowered the farm women (Raj et al., 2022). The women in the farm are spending more time on collection of fodder (254.68 hrs/year) and transporting of the fodder (132.07 hrs/year) (Kishtwaria et al., 2009). Farm women are seen as a covert worker. Their contribution to the dairy related activities is often scanty acknowledged as these activities are not determined in profit- making term. Farm women have low support from the family in participation in culture and social activities. Diversified workload, lack of interest in handling technical gadgets was some problem faced by the farm women (Niketha et al., 2018).

Introduction of women friendly technologies can impart drastic change in the present scenario of the farm women (Shamna et al., 2022). Migration of labour during different seasons, low literacy rate of the tribal women, poor economic condition and their shy nature were some limitations faced by women dairy farmers (Dhayal & Metha, 2020). In Sikkim, dairy farming is a traditional practice of sustaining the livelihood of people living in hilly region. The farm women are the functional mechanism behind the dairy sector in the state. East district of Sikkim act as milk pocket in the state due to its active functioning of milk cooperative society, leading to involvement of many dairy farm women. There is a need to acknowledge the contribution made by the dairy farm women in the state. Thus, the study was conducted in this regard with the objectives to analyse feedback from women dairy farmers in East district of Sikkim.

METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted in East district of Sikkim. It covers an area of 964 km sq. It lies between 27 °19' N and 88 °36' E. It is situated in the south-east corner of the state. Four blocks namely, Ranka, Nandok, Rakdong Tintek and Khamdong were selected randomly. Under the selected block, five villages were selected through random sampling and ten respondents were

selected randomly from each village. Thus, the total sample size was 200 in number. The criteria for selection of the respondents were according to possession of at least one dairy cattle. The study was conducted during the month of January to February 2021. Personal interview technique was used for data collection. For analyzing the feedback from the women dairy farmers, five aspects were selected related to dairy activities and Garret ranking technique had been applied, where the obtained values were transformed into scores by using the following formula.

$$\text{Percent position} = \frac{100(R_{ij} - 0.5)}{N_j}$$

Where, R_{ij} = Rank given for i^{th} factor by j^{th} individual, N_j = Number of factors ranked by j^{th} individual

The percent position was altered in to score as per table given by Garret and Woodworth (1969). Then for each statement the scores of the individual respondent were added together and divided by the total number of respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Table 1 showed, the ranking of feedback given by the respondents regarding different aspects. According to economical

Table 1. Feedback from women dairy farmer according to different aspects

S.No.	Feedbacks	Total score	Garrett mean score	Mean Rank
A.	Economical aspect			
1.	High cost of crossbred animal	9978	49.89	VI
2.	High cost of concentrate, feed and fodder	13743	68.72	I
3.	Difficulty in getting loans from bank	11087	55.44	III
4.	Lack of schemes for purchasing milch cattle	9059	45.30	V
5.	High cost of medicine for cattle	7453	37.27	VI
6.	Low productivity of local breed	11569	57.85	II
7.	Lack of transport facility for milk and animal.	7232	36.16	VIII
B.	Technical aspects			
1.	Lack of bulk milk cooler in the milk centre	8390	41.95	V
2.	Lack of machine milking system	11007	55.04	III
3.	Lack of training on scientific cattle management.	11719	58.60	II
4.	Lack of awareness on disease management	10668	53.34	IV
5.	Delayed service of animal health officials	12173	60.87	I
6.	Problem in heat detection	6032	30.16	VI
C.	Administrative aspects			
1.	Lack of financial support from govt.	13215	66.08	I
2.	Lack of veterinarian service in the village	9400	47.00	III
3.	Lack of schemes promoting dairy farming	10255	51.28	II
4.	Lack of training availability on new technology to the farmers	8860	44.30	IV
5.	Lack of extension contacts in the village	8275	41.38	V
D.	Information networking aspects			
1.	Irregular information on govt. schemes on dairy	13325	66.63	I
2.	Lack of information on new technology	10035	50.18	III
3.	Lack of information on training of dairy practices	11105	55.53	II
4.	Lack of information on disease and pest management	9370	46.85	IV
5.	Irregular information on AI	6165	30.83	V
E.	Independence decision making aspect			
1.	Non availability of financial support to women farmers	12572	62.86	I
2.	Lack of knowledge on dairy activities	7657	38.29	IV
3.	Poor managerial skills	9808	49.04	III
4.	Lack of self-confidence	9963	49.82	II

aspect, it can be seen that; “high cost of concentrates, feed and fodder” was given first rank with mean score (68.72). The reason behind this might be due to the fact that, the area for fodder cultivation is very limited and there is lack of availability of good fodder variety to the cultivators. The feeds are usually bought from outside the state making it costly for the respondents to purchase. Similar results were seen in study of Shankar et al., (2017) & Patel et al., (2016). Availability of concentrates, feed and fodder should be provided to the respondents at a subsidized rate by the government. Followed by second rank given to “low productivity of local breed” with mean score (57.85). The reason behind this can be due to the fact that local breeds of the area were producing milk on an average 5 kg/day resulting in low productivity. Comparable results were found in the study of Adhikari et al., (2020). Suitable training on feed management can be conducted in the area to improve the productivity of breeds in the area. Third rank was given to “difficulty in getting loans from bank” with mean score (55.44). Similar results were reported by Patel et al., (2015) & Das et al., (2015). As majority of the respondents were marginal land holder and less educated to apply for loans in the bank. According to feedback with respect to technical aspect, it was observed that, first rank was given to “delayed service of animal health officials” with mean score (60.87). Second rank was given to “lack of training on scientific cattle management” with mean score (58.60) and third rank was given to “lack of machine milking system” with mean score (55.04). The reason behind this is due to, lack of availability of veterinary clinics at each village and lesser number of veterinarians. The state being an organic state, focuses more on agricultural activities, thus there is limited emphasis on scientific training on dairy management. Apart from that, the majority of the respondent possesses small herd size and belongs to low income category therefore, availability of machine milk in their household is not possible. Similar results were reported by Singh et al., (2016); Shankar et al., (2017) & Singh et al., (2019). The feedback with respect to administrative aspect, showed that, the first rank was assigned to “lack of financial support from government” with mean score (66.08). Followed by second rank assigned to “lack of schemes promoting dairy farming” with mean score (51.28) and third rank assigned to “lack of veterinarian service” in the village with mean score (47.00). Similar findings were reported by Patel et al., (2015) & Hundal et al., (2015). The reason for this might be that, the administrative setup in the study area has no proper plan and programmes for implementing dairy related schemes and developmental activities. Regarding feedback with respect to information networking aspect, the first rank was given to “irregular information on government schemes on dairy” having mean score (66.63). Second rank was assigned to “lack of information on training of dairy practices” having mean score (55.53). Similar findings were reported by Patel et al., (2015) & Adhikari et al., (2020). The third rank was allotted to “lack of information on new technology” having mean score (50.18). The reason for this can be due to weak functioning of extension workers in the area, inappropriate communication technique and method followed by the officials and communication gap between the farmers and government officials. The feedback with respect to independence decision making aspect, the first rank was given to “non-availability of financial support to dairy farmer” having

mean score (62.86). Similar result was in line with research of Fatima and Gupta et al., (2013); Akhtar (2014) & Hundal et al., (2015) who found that financial empowerment was lacking in dairy women farmers. Second rank was given to “lack of self-confidence” with mean score (49.82). Similar result was observed by Singh et al., (2017); Dhayal & Mehta (2020) reported that farm women were shy in nature and lacked self-confidence and third rank was allotted to “poor managerial skills” with mean score (49.04). The reason behind this may be the fact that, majority of the respondent practiced agriculture and dairy farming as their occupation. They had no other source of income thus making them financially unstable. Majority of the respondent possessed only primary education leading to lack of self-confidence and poor managerial skills.

CONCLUSION

High cost of concentrate, feed and fodders, delayed service of animal health officials, lack of financial support from government, irregular information on government schemes on dairy and non-availability of financial support to women farmers were some of the major feedbacks given by the women dairy farmers. In depth study needs to be conducted in other region of the state to gain intense knowledge about the dairy farm women, so to predict future roles. The study suggests, availability of high yielding fodder variety to the dairy farm women, provision of concentrates, feed and fodder at a subsidized rate, accessibility of credit facility to the target women groups to overcome the financial constraints and recruitment of animal health care officials in the village centers for providing timely service and information regarding the dairy activities.

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