

Strategies for women empowerment in dairying

K. Ponnusamy*, Priya Sharma, Latha Sabikhi and G S Meena

ICAR-National Dairy Research Institute, Karnal, Haryana 132 001

The potential of women to promote secondary agriculture is now well-established. Since their involvement in dairying is significant and strong, they can be motivated to enter into entrepreneurial ventures by adequate facilitation through gender sensitization, training, demonstration, access to credit and market and involvement of local development organisations. ICAR-NDRI, Karnal under a DST project ably promoted ten women self-help groups in three districts of Haryana. These groups generated an additional income ranging between ₹ 5,000 and 20000 per month, leading to better livelihoods for the poor rural households.

Keywords: Dairying, Entrepreneurial, Self-help group, Women empowerment

INDIA stands first in the total milk production in the World with 187.7 million tonnes of milk production (2018-19). It is the largest producer and consumer of milk in the World. It contributes approximately 21% in the global milk production, with a 6% annual growth rate of the dairy industry. Livestock plays a critical role in the livelihood of majority of the rural households. About 80% of livestock farmers are

small farmers with landholding with less than 2 ha. In dairy farming, 70% of activities are carried out by women. These activities encompass feeding, watering, milking the animal, managing and cleaning of animal sheds. Although they undertake these jobs in addition to their household responsibilities, they are not given their due credit in terms of income and decision making authority in the family. Providing

livelihood opportunities and empowering farm women with entrepreneurial intent would not only benefit them and their families but also ensure overall development of rural India.

Hurdles for women empowerment in dairying

If farming is practised with entrepreneurial intent, it can generate employment and livelihood for a



Fig. 1. Demonstration and training of dairying in Haryana

large number of people in the country. Small scale entrepreneurship in dairying can pave the path for women empowerment, but this is not an easy feat. Women face family and societal restrictions due to patriarchal mindset prevailing in the country. They have limited access to credit, education, need-based trainings in addition to lack of awareness about marketing opportunities, which result in lack of confidence in mobilising the resources for starting of any enterprise. Low profit margin can also demotivate farm women to venture into business. Small marketable surplus of farm produce would not encourage the women to go for value addition, which prompt them to sell their produce to locally available marketing channels such as vendors and milk collection centres. In addition, lack of institutional mechanisms at grassroot level for promoting milks and milk products with business orientation are not available. Women are not exposed to aspects such as certification, quality packaging and branding in these modern days of highly competitive and volatile business environment. An appropriate approach is required to break the societal and institutional barriers, which prohibit women from taking up the dairying activities in a business mode by building strong entrepreneurial characteristics.

DST project of ICAR-NDRI

ICAR-National Dairy Research Institute, Karnal undertook a project titled 'Improving Livelihood of Rural Women through Dairy Based

Secondary Agriculture' sponsored by Department of Science and Technology, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India. This project aims at promoting farm women to take up dairy-based small scale enterprise by using the Self Help Group (SHG) approach. The rural women have indigenous knowledge, skill and resources, but lack technical guidance and training. Women can be motivated to take up any enterprise by providing need-based or skill-based training, which will increase their knowledge and skill level, ultimately paving the way for additional income and thereby better livelihood.

Approaches for capacity building

This project is implemented in ten villages of Karnal, Panipat and Sonipat districts of Haryana, where farm women were sensitized about livelihood and entrepreneurship opportunities in dairying by organizing awareness camps and sensitization meetings in villages. After formation of SHG, they were provided training on preparation of value added milk products like *paneer*, whey based beverage, *khoa*, coconut *burfi*, *kalakand*, *lassi*, *ghee*, *gulab jamun* and *rasogolla*. These groups were provided training in the Women Empowerment Lab of NDRI as well as in their respective villages. After providing initial training, farm women were also provided guidance on improving the quality of their products by conducting follow-up training in their villages. Sale of quality products prepared by women

SHGs would ensure the availability of unadulterated and healthy dairy products to consumers in their localities.

Organizations like Haryana State Rural Livelihood Mission (HSRLM), ATMA, state line department (Agriculture and Animal husbandry Department), KVK, NABARD and Jan Kalyan Samiti (NGO) have facilitated the group formation and providing training on preparation of value added milk products to these SHGs. These SHGs were also facilitated with market linkages after completion of their training on preparation of value added milk products with the help of HSRLM and NABARD. Fifty sensitization meetings and 45 demonstrations have been carried out where approximately 635 farm women from selected villages were trained on preparation of value added dairy products (Fig. 1). The project team assisted in the formation of several SHGs, out of which ten SHGs (seven from Karnal, two from Panipat and one from Sonipat districts) have fared remarkably well in the field of dairy based entrepreneurship. These SHGs have started earning additional income of ₹ 5,000 to ₹ 20,000 per month and are selling dairy products in their own village and nearby areas during marriages, village and family functions.

Successful women groups

Shri Ram SHG from Manglora village of Karnal district sells products like *paneer* and *gulab jamun* in their own village and in



Fig. 2. Successful dairying SHGs units under the ICAR-NDRI

government fairs organized by State Bank of India (SBI), NABARD and other state line departments. Bharti SHG from Sadarpur village of Karnal district took training in the preparation of *gulab jamun* and *paneer*. They participated in *Saras Mela* of International Gita Mahotsav (November 23 - December 10 2019) at Kurukshetra as well as International Saraswati Mahotsav (January 27-29 2020) at Pehowa, where the group earned ₹ 35,000 and ₹ 70,000, respectively, from the sale of *gulab jamun*. Bharti group also won the Best Stall Award in the International Gita Mahotsav. ICAR-NDRI had organized a National Dairy Mela during February 15-17, 2020, where Bharti SHG and Sashakt SHG from Memarpur village of Sonipat district participated and showed their skills by displaying value added dairy products. Bharti SHG earned ~ ₹ 5,000 from the sale of *gulab jamun*, while Sashakt SHG earned ₹ 15,000 from the sale of *desi ghee*. Shivam SHG from Bharatpur village of Karnal district is selling *desi ghee* in their own village and government fairs organised by state line department.

These groups were provided assistance initially for market linkages with canteens of schools, colleges and government departments and fairs and functions organized by various organizations like NABARD, SBI, ICAR and other state line departments. Market linkages were also facilitated by HSRLM and NABARD. Lakshmi SHG from Dinger Majra village of Karnal district had obtained training on preparation of *paneer*, whey based beverage, coconut *burfi* and *gulab jamun*. They were given an opportunity to display their products in Delhi Public School (DPS), Panipat Refinery, where they exhibited their products like *lassi*, *paneer*, whey based beverage and coconut *burfi*. Feedback was also collected from the staff and faculty of the school, who were highly satisfied with the taste and quality of products.

Facilitating and motivating women SHGs for taking up any livelihood activity will enhance their

self confidence. This will make rural women economically and emotionally empowered and will strengthen their position in their family as well as in society. Women empowerment will help society as a whole, because women constitute around half of the total population of the country. Increasing women participation in work force will strengthen the economic development of our nation in a practical and tangible manner.

Tips for promoting entrepreneurship among rural women

Following steps should be religiously followed for promoting entrepreneurship in farm enterprises among farm women.

- Assessment of available resources in a locality or cluster of villages or region by the development organisations.
- Estimating the level of resource utilisation by the concerned stakeholders.
- Documentation of involvement of women in the farm enterprises along with their existing skills, access to resources and constraints.
- Enlisting the opportunities for promoting women in the enterprises.
- Identification of appropriate organisations at local level for their involvement in the proposed enterprise promotion.
- Locating Key Resource Persons (KRP) in the village for using them as motivational forces in the selected villages.
- Organising gender sensitization meetings two to three times in the villages with the active participation of all stakeholders.
- Identification of key women agents - While conducting gender sensitization meetings, extension agents should look for two or three active women who have “a fire in the belly” with keen interest and enthusiasm in the enterprises, which are aimed at promoting in the villages.
- Further mobilisation of women with the help of identified active women in the village either by strengthening the existing self-help

groups or formation of new groups. Series of meetings among the group members would solidify the efforts, enhance confidence and develop entrepreneurial intent.

- Organising on-campus and off-campus trainings and demonstrations of technologies which have potential market for immediate selling such as *paneer*, *gulab jamun*, *ghee* etc.
- Taking the trained women groups to ventures and institutions where similar types of activities are being run for their confidence building.
- Facilitating women groups for continuous practice of learnt techniques followed by constant monitoring for the quality attributes.
- Gathering feedback on prepared products from family members, neighbours, relatives, friends, similar SHG members in the village and officials which would serve as harbinger of business venture.
- Survey for identifying the potential products, customers as well as expectations for quality attributes of the products which have good market command.
- Arrangement for tie-ups with banking institutions for getting loan wherever it is needed.
- Starting the ventures in select locations initially on small scale after identification of potential customers.
- Helping women groups for display of their products in local, regional, national and international fairs, exhibitions, festivals and programmes of development organisations.
- Strengthening the monitoring and enlisting the feedback from the customers.
- Hand-holding support in terms of further trainings, market facilitation, extension and other needed resources for motivating the rural women.
- Planning of gradual exit in a phased manner, of the promoting organizations after assessing the impact of their interventions for upscaling the success stories. Thereafter, the women groups

should be able to run their ventures successfully on socially and economically sustainable basis.

Conclusion

Women play dominant role in dairy farming and other livestock management activities. They have indigenous knowledge and skill in farming but do not get enough opportunities to harness and improve their skills and knowledge due to family restrictions, lack of basic education, technical guidance, lack of finance and other societal restrictions. They can be encouraged and

motivated to come forward and take up any livelihood activities for generating additional income for their families. Women and their families should be sensitized about equal rights and status of women in the society. Farm women can actively participate in the development of the nation by opting a dairy-based enterprise by forming SHGs. They should be provided with need and skill based training and appropriate guidance and hand-holding support so that they can confidently run their enterprise. The project team has tried to maintain the regular contact with the women SHGs and also keep them

updated with information on market demand, quality product preparation and any government and non-government functions and fairs.

Women have gained confidence in their skill of preparing quality dairy products and marketing of their products. Farm women are the backbone of rural economy and therefore, government should focus on empowering and uplifting them for ensuring holistic development of the country.

*Corresponding author's e-mail:
ponnusamyk@hotmail.com



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