

Impact of Dairy Cooperative on Women Empowerment: A case of Nani Borvai village in Gujarat

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Abstract

A case study on the role of small-scale dairy farming and the factors which help women was undertaken in Nani Borvai village, Aravalli District of Gujarat State, India. Data were collected through personal interview from 75 rural women who were involved in dairy farming. For analyzing the impact of dairy cooperatives on women's empowerment, this study mainly focused on Decision Making, Social Index, Economic Index and Psychological Index. The intervention helped the women to earn Rs 13000 to 16000 per month as compared to Rs 5000 per month before the intervention. Better utilization of this higher earning was observed on food, clothing, health and education of children, social gathering and festivals. The women were also able to save Rs. 60,000 per year. The interventions also helped the women to improve their decision making capacity, reduce alcoholism and domestic violence, participate in group meetings and develop self-confidence. This can be further facilitated by increasing milk productivity in every household where women dominate in dairy farming management.

Keywords: Nani Borvai village, Aravalli District, women empowerment, dairy farming.

Introduction

Amrita Milk Cooperative Society-Nani Borvai [AMCSN] was engaged in a variety of activities to provide its members an assured market for their milk. It was registered under AMUL-SABAR Himatnagar Co-operative Societies in October 2018 with seventy-five members initially and capable of handling 700 liters of milk daily. The project has made great strides in the improvement of livestock farming at Nani Borvai Village and has succeeded in integrating better technology and management in the traditional small milk holder production system. It directly and indirectly provides 100 jobs in the village and approximately distributes Rs14 lakh among its members every month.

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The milk quality was tested using MILKO Tester and Automatic Milk Collection Unit [AMCU]. MILKO Tester helps to determine the fat per cent rapidly in milk while AMCU reduced the waiting period of farmers and elimination of unfair practices. After entering the milk measurement twice every day, by the end of the week the cashier settles the account.

Study Design

The study was conducted in the year 2018-19 at Nani Borvai village, Aravalli District, Gujarat. The location was selected seeing the number of buffalos and cows and the scope for dairy farming. Most of the farmers possessed five to eight buffaloes or cows or both. There were 350 buffaloes and 75 cows in the village. Seventy-five women who were engaged in dairy farming were selected for the interview.

Impact on Women

The formation of AMCSN helped the women for systematic collection of milk, translating into increased rural incomes, reduced wastages, ensured value addition and generated employment opportunities.

The milk cooperative society consists of eleven women members headed by the president. All routine meetings are conducted in the presence of the president and the elected members. The reports are to be regularly sent to AMUL-Sabar Himatnagar .

Previous attempts to collect and market milk had been unsuccessful, largely due to the absence of a collection center. Seema Ben, a village coordinator, recalls the adverse conditions under which women and children labored to earn a few rupees. "They used to sell milk in some other villages 3 to 4 km away." She recounts, "During the rainy season, this was especially difficult, for the milk would often spoil. Either the children had to leave school to sell it or the women had to leave their household work and go themselves."

The increase in demand for milk and dairy products provides greater opportunities and potential for milk producers and for development of milk production in the village. In the backdrop of self-employment or group employment the small unit of AMCSN is seen as a potential source for driving rural economy and it brings synergy between industry and agriculture.

Women started involving themselves in day-to-day activities and supplying milk to the collection unit at a common point, which in turn resulted in gathering, more interaction and participation. Milk reading was recorded each day and proper registers were maintained and all data recorded in the computer. Due to regular activities, women came to know each other in the village. Meanwhile, unnecessary misunderstanding and conflicts were resolved. There was co-operation among the women which led to a healthy environment in the village as a whole.

Women have started interacting with government officials about their problems for a solution, without any hesitation. It helped them in acquiring freedom of speech, mobility and involvement in decision making both at home and in the community as well.

Decision Making Pattern

Five indicators have been used to measure the dimension of decision making namely Women involvement in day to day activities, taking independent decision, determining own health care, protest against alcoholism and protest against domestic violence. It could be observed that a majority of the women could take better decisions on these aspects (Table 1).

Table 1. Decision Making

Subject	Total No of women involved in Dairy Activities	Women involved in day to day household activities
Women involved in day to day household activities	75	60
Take independent decision	75	50
Determining own health care	75	60
Protest against alcoholism	75	70
Protest against domestic violence	75	60

Social Involvement

Five indicators have been used to measure the dimension of Social Involvement namely Participation in meetings, Membership in SHG or Micro finance, Governing Marriages & Divorces, Education and Nutritional standards among girls. In all the five indicators, women

were found to perform better which showed their empowerment due to their involvement in dairy cooperatives.

Table 2. Social Involvement

Subject	Total No of women involved in Dairy Activities (X)	Women involved in day to day household activities (Y)
Participate in meetings	75	70
Membership in SHG or Micro finance	75	75
Governing Marriages & Divorces	75	60
Education	75	50
Nutritional standards among girls	75	60

Economic Performance

Economic performance comprised of five indicators which include gender equality, decent work for all, food security, Earning Income and saving. Women perceived that their economic conditions have greatly improved due to their active participation in dairy cooperatives.

Table 3. Economic Empowerment

Subject	Total No of women involved in Dairy Activities	Women involved in day to day household activities
Gender equality	75	60
Decent work for all	75	50
Food security	75	60
Earning Income	75	75
Saving	75	50

Psychological Empowerment

Five indicators have been used to measure the dimension of Psychological empowerment due to involvement of women in dairy cooperatives. They were reduction in the rigidity of social and caste system, rise in household income, more time engaged in work, self

confidence and self esteem. These indicators also showed better improvement in self-confidence and self-esteem.

Table 4. Psychological Empowerment

Subject	Total No of women involved in Dairy Activities	Women involved in day to day household activities
Reduction in the rigidity of social and caste system	75	40
Rise in household income	75	75
More time Engaged in work	75	75
Self Confidence	75	75
Self Esteem	75	75

Conclusions

The study indicated that small-scale dairy farming had increased confidence and self-esteem among women. Rural women become more empowered when they have a regular job and seem to make good decisions in achieving social, economic and psychological growth. All indicators showed a positive trend that implies that all five dimensions are dynamic, interlinked and mutually reinforcing at the household level. These findings have important implications for the potential growth of small-scale dairy farming and more women may be empowered. Such economic activity gives freedom to think independently, the women have come to know each other and unnecessary misunderstanding and conflicts have been resolved. Greater cooperation, in turn, has led to a healthier village environment. The women were able to substantially allocate their earnings to children's education.

References

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