

An executive summary of the final report of work done on the Minor Research Project of Ms. Chethana B, entitled “Problems and prospects of women cooperatives in dairy sector - A study in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi Districts” sanctioned by UGC, vide sanction letter No. 1447-MRP/14-15/KAMA002/UGC-SWRO dated 4-2-15

Executive Summary:

India is an agriculture based economy, where large population lives in villages. Majority of rural population depend on farming for their livelihood and farming depend on monsoon which is unpredictable. Hence rural people engaged themselves in generating income from alternate sources; dairy farming is one of the best alternate sources.

Now India is one of the largest milk producers in the world. On 31 October 1964, Shri Lal Bahadur shastri prime minister of visited Anand as result of this visit National Dairy Development Board was establishes in 1964 and in 1970 dairy development program operation flood came in to force. The main focus of operation flood to organize small unorganized milk producers in rural areas by forming dairy cooperative societies at the primary level and collecting milk, there by linking these cooperatives to the district level unions for processing the milk, and state level federations for promoting sales.

A dairy cooperative society is formed by milk producers to collect milk from its members daily at the village level and dispatch milk to the district milk unions. Milk producers of a particular area become member of dairy cooperatives by purchasing one share and entrance fee payment as per the requirement of concerned society. Women play important role in dairying. As women take active part in taking care of animals, collecting fodder, animal husbandry and milking .Earlier their role was limited only to the extent to the extent of dairying activities but now the main agenda is forming women dairy cooperatives, taking act part in managing and decision making. ‘The government of India supports milk unions to form women dairy cooperatives by providing finance under Step program.

Dairy farming is mainly practiced by middle age group of people between 31 to 50 years. Other age groups of women also represent dairy cooperatives is an advantage as all age groups participate in dairy cooperatives activities. Majority of the women members are literate and married, Women dairy cooperatives provides strong support to the widows, divorcees to earn their livelihood. These members have agriculture as a main occupation and dairy farming as a

secondary source of income as these two sectors depend on each other. Non-agriculturists women members of the society have taken dairy farming as well as other occupations like beedi rolling, tailoring, small shops etc. Only a small group of people have dairy farming alone as their occupation.

Women dairy cooperatives were successful in increasing financial position, majority of respondents opined that WDCs provided opportunities to increase income. But some poor women members could not exploit this opportunity as they supply low quality of milk because they could not afford to buy cross-breed cows from the margin money provided by the dairy cooperatives. Women dairy cooperatives were successful in increasing financial position, majority of respondents opined that WDCs provided opportunities to increase income. But sometimes male members of the family receive payments for the sale of milk from these cooperatives so the female members of the family are not in a position to judge their financial status. Transportation of cattle feed from the dairy cooperatives to the house of women members is a difficult process as they have to hire vehicles and these vehicle drivers may be reluctant to unload cattle fodder to their cow sheds, even male members may not help.

Margin money Rs.5000 is granted to the members for purchasing milk animals under STEP Programme but poor women members could not purchase as margin money is very less compared to the cost of the cows. Dairy cooperatives also promoted Self Help Groups. Self Help Groups help women members to save their income and avail loans. Training programmes on literacy, leadership, self-confidence, gender sensitization, health and nutrition and animal husbandry programmes helped women members to build self-confidence, status in the society. Finally women dairy cooperatives are suffering from certain drawbacks like irregular payments, non-availability of cattle feed, lack of computers and modernized infrastructural facilities, cooperative rules not followed, misuse of authority etc.

Conclusion

Women dairy cooperatives play an important role in the dairy sector by creating employment opportunities, generating income for the rural women and thereby contributing to the development of the economy. There is a need for continued support in the future from the government to strengthen women dairy cooperatives and motivate the youth to take dairy

farming as a venture. Women dairy cooperatives and their members face problems as well as they have opportunities if these cooperatives are managed efficiently they have better future prospects as they create opportunities to the dairy farmers to access the market and improve their financial conditions.