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Dr. P Selvamani
Post-Doctoral Fellow
(UGC), Department of
Cooperation, The Gandhigram
Rural Institute-Deemed
University, Gandhigram,
Dindigul, Tamil Nadu, India

Perception and participation of rural women on dairy cooperatives: A study

Dr. P Selvamani

Abstract

Success of every programme depends on the active participation of people on it. Their participation provides basic and depth knowledge on various aspects of their respective organizations and may bring new perception on the development programme. It also provides opportunities for the participants to have long-term socio-economic development. After thorough understanding and magnitude of participation of people on development schemes and programme, Governments in the world have been encouraging their people to actively participate in all development schemes and programme being implemented by them. Both Central and State Governments in India have also been implementing number of welfare programme through grassroots level socio-economic organizations for the development of people, particularly for rural women. Dairy cooperatives (Primary Milk Producers Cooperative Societies - PMPCSSs), are socio-economic organizations, have been functioning for the development of rural people in their areas of operation. In this background, an attempt was made to know the level of perception and participation of rural women members in dairy cooperatives and their socio-economic development.

Keywords: Women, dairy cooperatives, perception, participation, and growth

1. Introduction

Development of the countries depends on its healthy people from children to aged citizens. It seems that healthy food is required for human beings not only for their health but also for their countries' development. Milk is one of the liquid healthy foods providing required minerals and vitamins to people who drink it and have it in any form of milk products (sweet, cake, chocolate, ice-cream, etc.). In India, large quantity of milk is being produced in rural areas by both private and socio-economic organizations of both Central and State Governments. Dairy cooperatives, especially PMPCSSs, one of the socio-economic organizations of the people, by the people, and for the people, provide a platform for the people to come together, and functioning at the villages for the advancement of dairy farmers through production of milk and milk products. Milk production depends on the level of active participation of the dairy farmers on it and in turn it decides their progress. In this milieu, there is an imperative need to study the perception and participation of rural women members of dairy cooperatives functioning at the villages. Therefore, an attempt was made to know the existing facts through this field based empirical study.

2. Objectives of the Study

- To study the socio-economic status of rural women members of dairy cooperatives
- To find out the perception of rural women members of dairy cooperatives on it
- To learn the level of participation of rural women members of dairy cooperatives on it
- To identify the problems faced by rural women members of dairy cooperatives, and
- To offer suggestions to overcome the problems faced by rural women members of dairy cooperatives

3. Methodology

The study is based on descriptive research method and areas are Primary Milk Producers Cooperative Societies (PMPCSSs) functioning in selected villages in Nilakkottai and Athoor blocks in Dindigul District of Tamil Nadu State, India. Those blocks (dry and wet areas respectively) were selected randomly. From each block three PMPCSSs were arbitrarily

Correspondence

Dr. P Selvamani
Post-Doctoral Fellow
(UGC), Department of
Cooperation, The Gandhigram
Rural Institute-Deemed
University, Gandhigram,
Dindigul, Tamil Nadu, India

selected and from each PMPCS ten members were haphazardly selected using simple random sampling method. The universe is randomly selected 60 rural women members of selected PMPCSSs. An interview schedule was prepared, drafted and used to collect primary information/data directly from the rural women members of chosen PMPCSSs. Primary data were mostly collected from them during evening time and convenience to them. Further, observation method was used to know the grassroots realities on the status of development of rural women. Primary data were analysed using percentage and Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation for hypothesis testing. Every respondent got score ranging from 0 to 6 for perception and from 0 to 6 for participation through scoring method.

4. Operational Definitions

- a. **Dairy Cooperatives:** It refers to Primary Milk Producers Cooperative Societies functioning in selected villages of Dindigul district in Tamil Nadu State.
- b. **Rural Women:** It means women who are living in selected villages and having membership in chosen PMPCSSs functioning in Dindigul district in Tamil Nadu State.
- c. **Perception:** It refers to the awareness of rural women members of dairy cooperatives on the selected indicators on PMPCSSs.
- d. **Participation:** It means to the physical participation of rural women members of dairy cooperatives on the chosen indicators on PMPCSSs.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Age: Any person can become a member of PMPCSSs only after attaining 18 years of age. It decides the ripeness altitude of the persons. One can develop sound mind only after completing certain age. Further, it enables them to decide good and bad in the society.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Age

Sl. No.	Age (in years)	No. of Respondents	Percent
1	18 – 28	6	10.0
2	29 – 38	38	63.3
3	39 – 48	12	20.0
4	Above 49	4	6.7
	Total	60	100.0

Source: Computed from primary data

Table 1 illustrates that 10.0 percent of the respondents were in the age group of 18-28 years, 63.3 percent were in the age group of 29-38 years, 20.0 percent were in the age group of 39-48 years and 6.7 percent were in the age of above 49 years. Further, it is obvious from the table that 83.3 percent of the respondents were in the age group of 29-48 years. It also shows that rural women members in PMPCSSs were in the young and productive / active age group in the study areas can able to contribute more towards dairy cooperatives.

5.2 Caste: It plays an important role not only in the process of development in rural areas but also in the decision making process of where and whom will implement the development programme for them. People have their caste name with their names in the back side.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Caste

Sl. No.	Caste	No. of Respondents	Percent
1	BC	51	85.0
2	SC	9	15.0
	Total	60	100.0

Source: Computed from primary data

This table shows that 85.0 percent of the respondents were belonging to BC (Backward Caste), and the rest 15.0 percent were SC (Scheduled Caste). Further, it is clear from the table that majority (85.0 percent) of the respondents were BC and their vital role in the milk production in the study areas followed by SC. Further, it was observed that respondents had a feeling that their social status is now higher in their areas due to dairying.

5.3 Religion: People have been identified by their religion in rural areas and associated with their religion people more closely than the others. They are having higher level of mutual sharing and exchange of goods and services with their religion people.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Religion

Sl. No.	Religion	No. of Respondents	Percent
1	Hindu	58	96.7
2	Christian	2	3.3
	Total	60	100.0

Source: Computed from primary data

The above table indicates that 96.7 percent of the respondents were Hindus, and the remaining 3.3 percent were Christians. It is also pragmatic from the table that vast majority (96.7 percent) of the respondents hailed from Hindu religion in the chosen study areas. It seems that the involvement of Hindus in milk production is higher compared to others and was observed that Hindus believe that milch animals as their 'God'.

5.4 Education: It is a base of progress for people and has been playing an essential role to everyone to come up in their life. The level of development depends on not only the efforts of the individuals but also the level of education of the individuals. People have recently been encouraging their children irrespective of gender to go for higher education at the international level.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Education

Sl. No.	Education	No. of Respondents	Percent
1	Uneducated	56	93.3
2	Primary	4	6.7
	Total	60	100.0

Source: Computed from primary data

The above table exhibits that 93.3 percent of the respondents were uneducated, and the rest 6.7 percent finished primary school. Further, it is evident from the table that vast majority (93.3 percent) of the respondents were uneducated in the study areas. It seems that mostly uneducated respondents have been involved in dairying which hardly requires higher education to carry out its activities.

5.5 Occupation: The level of education decides the type of occupation. Occupation decides the social and economic status of the individuals and determines the income level for

everyone. People generally have one or more occupations to earn continuous and additional income.

Table 5: Distributions of Respondents by Occupation

Sl. No.	Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percent
1	Dairying and Daily wage	44	73.3
2	Dairying	16	26.7
	Total	60	100.0

Source: Computed from primary data

Table 5 reveals that 73.3 percent of the respondents were having both dairying and daily wage as their occupation and 26.7 percent were involving dairying alone. It is also clear from the table that 73.3 percent were having both dairying and daily wage as their occupation for their livelihood. It was observed that respondents were involving additional occupation (daily wage) in their areas to meet additional family and personal expenses. During that time, milch animals were taken care of by other family members and they believe that dairying is their major livelihood source for them.

5.6 Possession of Milch Animals: Dairy farmers always keep one or two milch animals under milching in order to get continuous income throughout the year. They have different varieties of milch animals depend on the geographical areas and climate conditions.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents by Possession of Milch Animals

Sl. No.	Number of Milch Animals	No. of Respondents	Percent
	1 – 2	46	76.7
	3 – 4	11	18.3
	5 and above 6	3	5.0
	Total	60	100.0

Source: Computed from primary data

This table proves that 76.7 percent of the respondents were having upto two milch animals, 18.3 percent were having three to four milch animals and 5.0 percent were having five and above six milch animals. Further, it is found from the table that majority (76.7 percent) of the respondents were having upto two milch animals in the selected study areas. It was observed that almost two-third of the respondents were having two milch animals and considered milch animals as their 'family assets'. While returning from their regular daily wage work, respondents bring either dry or green fodder for their milch animals.

5.7 Milk Production: The income of dairy farmers depends the quantity of milk production which also depends on type of fodders (green or dry or both) given to milch animals. They naturally want to increase the milk production for their livelihood through various ways.

Table 7: Distribution of Respondents by Milk Production (Per day both Morning and Evening)

Sl. No.	Milk Production (in litres)	No. of Respondents		Percent
		No.	%	
	Below 15	46	76.7	
	16 - 30	11	18.3	
	Above 31	3	5.0	
	Total	60	100.0	

Source: Computed from primary data

Table 7 illustrates that 76.7 percent of the respondents were getting upto 15 litres of milk per day both morning and evening from their milch animals, 18.3 percent were getting 16–30 litres of milk, and 5.0 percent were getting above 31 litres of milk per day both morning and evening from their milch animals. It is further noticeable from the table that majority (76.7 percent) of the respondents were getting upto 15 litres of milk per day both morning and evening from their milch animals. It was heard and cross checked that two-third of the respondents usually wake up in the very early morning 4.00am to carry out dairying.

5.8 Income: The income level varies from dairy farmer to dairy farmer and depends on type and time of fodders given to milch animals. They provide more quantity of locally available free green or dry fodders to their milch animals in order to reduce the cost of fodders and increase the income.

Table 8: Distribution of Respondents by Monthly Income through Dairying

Sl. No.	Monthly Income	No. of Respondents		Percent
		No.	%	
	Upto Rs.10,000	46	76.7	
	Rs.10,001-20,000	11	18.3	
	Above Rs.20,001	3	5.0	
	Total	60	100.0	

Source: Computed from primary data

The above table demonstrates that 76.7 percent of the respondents were earning upto Rs.10,000/- as monthly income through dairying, 18.3 percent were getting from Rs.10,001 to Rs.20,000, and 5.0 percent were receiving above Rs.20,001 as a monthly income through dairying. It is statistically concluded from the table that majority (76.7 percent) of the respondents were earning upto Rs.10,000/- as monthly income through dairying. It was observed that the respondents had a feeling that their income has increased through dairying and after becoming members of PMPCSSs.

5.9 Perception: Every individual has their own views and perception on everything. It depends on their interest and desire to come up in their life. Individuals interest on personal development motivate them know everything around them.

Table 9: Selected Perception of Respondents on Dairy Cooperatives

Sl. No.	Particulars	Respondents					
		Yes		No		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Owner of PMPCS	53	88.3	7	11.7	60	100
2	Age to become a member of PMPCS	56	93.3	4	6.7	60	100
3	Benefits from PMPCS	54	90.0	6	10.0	60	100
4	Functions of PMPCS	54	90.0	6	10.0	60	100
5	Area of Operations of PMPCS	51	85.0	9	15.0	60	100
6	Who can vote in cooperative election for PMPCS?	60	100	-	-	60	100

Source: Computed from primary data

This table explains that 88.3 percent of the respondents were aware of the owners of PMPCSs and the rest 11.7 percent do not aware the same, 93.3 percent were knowing the minimum age to become a member of PMPCSs and 6.7 percent do not know such age to become a member in it, 90.0 percent were identifying the benefits from PMPCSs and the remaining 10.0 percent do not identify the benefits from PMPCSs, 90.0 percent were recognizing the functions of PMPCSs and 10.0 percent do not recognize the functions of PMPCSs, 85.0 percent were knowing the area of operations of their PMPCSs and the rest 15.0 percent do not know the area of operations of their PMPCSs, and cent percent were knowing that whom can exercise their voting right in cooperative elections for PMPCSs.

The analysis of this table indicates that 88.3 percent of the respondents were aware that members are the owners of

PMPCSs, 93.3 percent were knowing that the completion of 18 years is the minimum age to become a member of PMPCSs, 90.0 percent were identifying the benefits from PMPCSs such as fair price for milk, loan facilities etc., 90.0 percent were recognizing the functions of PMPCSs such as milk production, milk collection, issue of loans etc., 85.0 percent were knowing the area of operations of PMPCSs, and cent percent were knowing that only members can exercise voting right in cooperative elections for PMPCSs.

5.10 Participation: Individuals development depends on their participation on development schemes and programme being implemented by the socio-economic organizations and both Central and State Governments. It provides exposure and experience on them.

Table 10: Participation of Respondents in Selected Activities on Dairy Cooperatives

S. No.	Nature of Participation	Respondents						Total	
		Inactive		Active		V. Active			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
	Milk supply to PMPCS	-	-	-	-	60	100	60 100	
	Cooperative week celebrations	48	80.0	7	11.7	5	8.3	60 100	
	Getting milch animal loan	11	18.3	42	70.0	7	11.7	60 100	
	Getting fodder	47	78.3	9	15.0	4	6.7	60 100	
	Voting in cooperative elections	3	5.0	53	88.3	4	6.7	60 100	
	Attending general body meeting	49	81.7	8	13.3	3	5.0	60 100	

Source: Computed from primary data

This table confirms that cent percent of the respondents were very active in supply of milk to their respective PMPCSs, 80.0 percent were inactive in participating cooperative week celebrations in their PMPCSs while 20.0 percent were either active or very active in participating such programme, 70.0 percent were active in getting milch animal loans from PMPCSs to purchase either first time or additional milch animals whereas 30.0 percent were either inactive or very active in getting such loans for the same purpose, 78.3 percent were inactive in getting fodders from dairy cooperatives but 21.7 percent were either active or very active in getting fodders, 88.3 percent were active in exercising their voting rights in cooperative elections for PMPCSs where 11.7 percent were either inactive or very active in it, and 81.7 percent were inactive in attending general body meeting in PMPCSs while 18.3 percent were active or very active in attending those meeting.

The overall observation of the data in this table reveals that cent percent of the respondents were very active in supply of milk to their respective PMPCSs which is a base for their financial soundness, 80.0 percent were inactive in participating cooperative week celebrations in their PMPCSs due to their timing of their work, 70.0 percent were active in getting milch animal loans from their PMPCSs to purchase either first time or additional milch animals as majority of them wanted to avoid high rate of interest charged by local moneylenders, 78.3 percent were inactive in getting fodders from PMPCSs as green fodders available in their areas at a free of cost and they want reduce cost of milk production, 88.3 percent were active in exercising their voting rights in cooperative elections for PMPCSs as their relatives contested in the cooperative elections they were active in it, and 81.7 percent were inactive in attending general body meeting of PMPCSs due to household works and timing of such meeting.

Table 11: Major Problems of Respondents and Suggestions made by Respondents

Sl. No.	Major Problems	No. of Respondents	Percent
1	Poor price for milk from PMPCS	60	100.0
2	Inadequate loan facilities from PMPCS	56	93.3
3	Non-availability of veterinary service	55	91.7
Sl. No.	Major Suggestions	No. of Respondents	Percent
1	Higher price for milk from PMPCS	60	100.0
2	More loan facilities from PMPCS	56	93.3
3	Timely payment for milk from PMPCS	47	78.3
4	Veterinary services for milch animals	46	76.6

Source: Computed from primary data

According to this table, cent percent of the respondents were not satisfied with the existing price for milk being paid by PMPCSs, 93.3 percent mentioned that inadequate loan facilities from PMPCSs to purchase additional milch animals, and 91.7 percent said that they have not received

adequate veterinary service for their milch animals. Under suggestions made by the respondents, cent percent suggested that the PMPCSs have to increase the price for milk procurement, 93.3 percent recommended that additional loan facilities from PMPCSs to purchase

additional milch animals, 78.3 percent suggested that the PMPCSS have to pay the milk amount on time and 76.6 percent advised for availability of adequate veterinary service to their milch animals.

It is apparent from the table that cent percent of the respondents felt that the existing price for milk in PMPCSS is inadequate and unfair, 93.3 percent mentioned that loan facilities available from PMPCSS to purchase additional milch animals is scarce, and 91.7 percent said that they have not got adequate veterinary services for their milch animals. Under suggestions made by the respondents, cent percent suggested that the State Government has to increase the price for milk procurement immediately, 93.3 percent recommended that additional loan facilities from PMPCSS /State Government enable them to purchase additional milch animals to increase milk production, 78.3 percent suggested that the PMPCSS have to pay the milk payment on time, if possible they may pay advances during festival time, and 76.6 percent advised for adequate veterinary service to their milch animals to protect the health of milch animals and improve the milk production.

6. Hypothesis Testing

"Perception of rural women members is correlated with their participation on dairy cooperatives" which means that there is a relationship between the scores of selected perception on dairy cooperatives and selected participation on dairy cooperatives scores secured by the respondents.

Table 12: Selected Perception Vis-a-Vis Participation of Respondents

Perception Scores	Participation Scores			Total
	Low (0 - 2)	Medium (3 - 4)	High (5 - 6)	
Low (0 - 2)	13 (65.0)	-	-	13 (21.7)
Medium (3 - 4)	7 (32.0)	40 (100)	-	47 (78.3)
High (5 - 6)	-	-	-	-
Total	20 (33.3)	40 (66.7)	-	60 (100.0)

Source: Computed from primary data, Note: Numbers in brackets are percent

This table shows that 21.7 percent of the respondents with low perception come under the low level of participation as against 78.3 percent with medium level perception come under either low or medium level of participation. It is clear from the table that all (cent percent of the respondents) were having medium level of perception on dairy cooperatives and participation on it. Further, it brings out that there is a positive correlation between the scores of perception and participation (Karl Pearson Coefficient Correlation (r) = 0.99). Hence, the hypothesis "Perception of rural women members is correlated with their participation on dairy cooperatives" is accepted.

7. Major Findings

- It is apparent from the study that 83.3 percent of the respondents were in the age group of 29-48 years. It also shows that rural women members in PMPCSS were in the young and productive / active age group in the study areas can able to contribute more towards dairy cooperatives.
- It is obvious that majority (85.0 percent) of the respondents were BC and their vital role in milk production in the study areas followed by SC. Further, it was observed that the respondents had a feeling that

their social status is now higher in their areas due to dairy.

- It is realistic that vast majority (96.7 percent) of the respondents hailed from Hindu religion in the chosen study areas. It seems that the involvement of Hindus in milk production is higher compared to others and was observed that Hindus believe that milch animals as their God.
- It is plain that vast majority (93.3 percent) of the respondents were uneducated in the study areas. It seems that mostly uneducated respondents have been involved in dairy which hardly requires higher education to carry out its activities.
- It is understandable that 73.3 percent were having both dairy and daily wage as their occupation. It was observed that respondents were involving additional occupation (daily wage) in their areas to meet additional family and personal expenses. During that time, milch animals were taken care of by other family members and they believe that dairy is their major livelihood source for them.
- It is establish that majority (76.7 percent) of the respondents were having upto two milch animals in the selected study areas. It was observed that almost two-third of the respondents were having two milch animals and considered milch animals as their 'family assets'. While returning from their regular daily wage work, respondents bring either dry or green fodder for their milch animals.
- It is noticeable from the table that majority (76.7 percent) of the respondents were getting upto 15 litres of milk per day both morning and evening from their milch animals. It was heard and cross checked that two-third of the respondents usually wake up in the very early morning 4.00am to carry out dairy.
- It is lucid that majority (76.7 percent) of the respondents were earning upto Rs.10,000/- as monthly income through dairy. It was observed that the respondents had a feeling that their income has increased through dairy and after becoming members of PMPCSS.
- It is unambiguous that 88.3 percent of the respondents were aware that members are the owners of PMPCSS, 93.3 percent were knowing that the completion of 18 years is the minimum age to become a member of PMPCSS, 90.0 percent were identifying the benefits from PMPCSS such as fair price for milk, loan facilities etc., 90.0 percent were recognizing the functions of PMPCSS such as milk production, milk collection, issue of loans etc., 85.0 percent were knowing the area of operations of PMPCSS, and cent percent of the respondents were knowing that only members can exercise their voting right in cooperative elections for PMPCSS.
- It is comprehensible that cent percent of the respondents were very active in supply of milk to their respective PMPCSS which is a base for their financial soundness, 80.0 percent were inactive in participating cooperative week celebrations in their PMPCSS due to their timing of other works, 70.0 percent were active in getting milch animal loans from their PMPCSS to purchase either first time or additional milch animals as majority of them wanted to avoid high rate of interest charged by local moneylenders, 78.3 percent were

- inactive in getting fodders from PMPCSs as green fodders available in their areas at a free of cost and they want reduce cost of milk production, 88.3 percent were active in exercising their voting rights in cooperative elections for PMPCSs as their relatives contested in the cooperative elections they were active in it, and 81.7 percent were inactive in attending general body meeting of PMPCSs due to household works and timing of such meeting.
- It is perceptible table that cent percent of the respondents felt that the existing price for milk in PMPCSs is inadequate and unfair, 93.3 percent mentioned that loan facilities available from PMPCSs to purchase additional milch animals is scarce, and 91.7 percent said that they have not got adequate veterinary services for their milch animals. Under suggestions made by the respondents, cent percent suggested that the State Government has to increase the price for milk procurement immediately, 93.3 percent recommended that additional loan facilities from PMPCSs /State Government enable them to purchase additional milch animals to increase milk production, 78.3 percent suggested that the PMPCSs have to pay the milk payment on time, if possible they may pay advances during festival time, and 76.6 percent advised for adequate veterinary service to their milch animals to protect the health of milch animals and improve the milk production.

8. Suggestions

- The State Government may increase the milk procurement price and additional loans to members of dairy cooperatives to purchases additional milch animals, which in turn increase the milk production.
- The State Government may give importance and provide special initiatives to enrol more SCs as members of dairy cooperatives. This will bring better socio-economic status for them in rural areas and ensures their long-term livelihood.
- The State Government and Department of cooperation may provide awareness on basic and all activities of dairy cooperatives to its members and non-members
- The State Government and Department of Animal Husbandry and Cooperation have to take appropriate measures to supply adequate fodder inputs to milch animals of members through dairy cooperatives, and
- The State Government may provide effective and efficient veterinary service to milch animals of members of dairy cooperatives

9. Conclusion

Dairy cooperatives play a significant role for the durable socio-economic development rural women including widows and downtrodden in the country and in turn contribute to the long-term development of rural economy. This development process is more practically possible only when they actively participate in all the activities of dairy cooperatives with full involvement and commitment. To sum-up, dairy cooperatives bring silent socio-economic revolution in rural areas.

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