

## ROLE OF WOMEN IN MILK PRODUCTION AND IT'S UTILISATION OF DAIRY FARMING

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### Abstract

Rural women have now demonstrated that they not only contribute significantly to India's socioeconomic growth but also play a critical role in dairy farming. As a supplementary activity to the agriculture sector, milk production in India is mostly centred on marginal and small farm size groups in rural regions. In addition, the cooperatives milk producers' union represents a handful of organised dairy farms. In this nation, the animals' limited genetic potential contributes to their high cost and insufficient milk output.

Farming methods in the poor countries differ greatly in how profitable milk production is. This is a result of low animal production and an ineffective marketing-chain structure, which makes it difficult for farmers to make money from their dairying operations. Customers are not effectively provided for due to the absence of cooling facilities for milk storage and the necessity of adulterating the raw product along the market chain to increase profit margins. The purchase of higher-quality feeds and veterinary medicines, along with cooperative milk sales, have increased the financial resilience of small-holder farming communities all over the world. However, the co-operative model has not been successful in many areas, largely due to a lack of trust between families even within the communities. Commercial realities requires agricultural communities to collaborate in order to attain financial sustainability, albeit the specific model used by each group may vary.

**Keywords:** C-Operatives, Dairy Production, Developing Economies, Marketing Chains, Milk Properties.

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### INTRODUCTION

Dairy farming plays a crucial role in the rural economy of Rajasthan, particularly in Zone III, which comprises districts like Jodhpur, Pali, Nagaur, and Barmer. In this region, women have emerged as key contributors to milk production and its utilization, playing multifaceted roles in various aspects of dairy farming. This article aims to shed light on the significant role women play in milk production and the utilization of dairy farming in Zone III of Rajasthan. More than 60% of Indians rely on agriculture as their primary source

of income, and this includes everyone who lives in rural areas and is either directly or indirectly reliant on it. While landless people labour for owned cultivation, the owned farmer is directly reliant on agriculture. They carry out the operation from preparation of the land through harvest and threshing or from a dairy farm. Building a woman's ability to be independent and cultivating her sense of inner strength is known as "woman empowerment." In India, women predominate in the dairy industry. There is

no question that women have long contributed to the dairy and animal husbandry industries in addition to their regular domestic duties. When it came to dairy production, women spent more time than males. One of the key components of empowerment is training, which may help rural women gain information, develop their skills, and alter their attitudes. The most popular areas of instruction in dairy farming included breed selection, blending balanced feed with items that could be found nearby, feeding during pregnancy, and banking and insurance. Compared to untrained dairy farm women, trained dairy farm women had a higher overall adoption rate.

#### Women's Involvement in Milch Animal Management:

In Zone III, women actively participate in the day-to-day management of milch animals, which includes activities such as feeding, watering, cleaning, and milking. They possess valuable traditional knowledge and skills in handling and caring for livestock. Women's involvement ensures the well-being of the animals and contributes to increased milk production.

At both the national and regional levels, the involvement of women in the process of economic growth is crucial. The majority of women's roles at home are as employees. The obligations of caring for children, the elderly, managing the family, doing the home tasks, and providing for the family, among other things, have made women's lives complicated and varied, and this is especially true in developing countries.

The many government initiatives made for the welfare of these disadvantaged people are currently having a negative impact on rural India. By this point, it appears that very little progress has been achieved in this direction. It is now obvious that programmes designed to feed the impoverished on a spoon-feeding basis failed to end poverty. It is also obvious that establishing a triangle link between people, land, and cattle is necessary for the rural population's problems to be solved.

#### Milk Collection and Marketing:

Women play a pivotal role in milk collection and marketing. They are often responsible for collecting milk from households or village-level milk collection centres. Women cooperatives and self-help groups have been formed to streamline milk collection and ensure fair pricing for the producers. They manage the logistics, quality control, and financial aspects of milk collection and marketing.

#### Dairy Processing and Value Addition:

Women contribute significantly to dairy processing and value addition activities. They are involved in making dairy products like ghee, curd, paneer (cottage cheese), and traditional sweets. Women's traditional knowledge and expertise in dairy processing techniques add value to the raw milk, making it suitable for various consumer preferences and demands.

#### Entrepreneurship and Dairy Business Management:

Women in Zone III are increasingly taking up entrepreneurial roles in dairy farming. They establish small-scale dairy enterprises, set up milk chilling units, and manage milk retail outlets. Women entrepreneurs bring innovation, efficiency, and sustainability to the dairy business, thus contributing to economic growth and rural development.

#### Skill Development and Capacity Building:

Various government and non-government organizations have initiated programs to enhance women's skills and knowledge in dairy farming. Training programs on animal husbandry, fodder management, and dairy processing are conducted to empower women with the necessary technical know-how. Skill development enables women to take on more responsibilities and improve their income-generating capabilities.

#### Women and Cooperative Dairy Farming

•Significant Women's Participation: There are over 1.9 million dairy cooperative organisations across the nation, with almost 6 million women as members.

- Higher incomes: Millions of women dairy farmers in India now make more money thanks to the cooperative model, which offers the advantages of more farmer control, economic benefits for small and marginal farmers, transparency, regular payment, and training opportunities. A list of 10 female dairy farmers who made a million dollars by selling milk to Amul Dairy was published in 2020.

- Freedom from middlemen's snares: Operation Flood's core dairy cooperative models improved backward and forward linkages in the dairy value chain, paving the way for small farmers to be released from middlemen's snares and providing a minimum procurement price for milk.

- Greater accessibility to skill training: The National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) currently coordinates farmer orientation workshops around the nation, wherein women farmers receive training in scientific best practises for animal health, the quality of feed, the production of clean milk, and financial management.

- Rise of female-led dairy unions and businesses: The NDDB took the initiative to establish female-led producer businesses like Shreeja Mahila Milk Producer Company, which began with 24 women and has grown to have over 90,000 members and a 450-crore annual revenue.

- Encourages Women to Take Leadership Positions: Women-led cooperatives are a good place to start for developing rural women into leaders. In many cases, this serves as the initial step for women to rebel against societal norms.

- Development of better assets: According to research conducted in Rajasthan, 31% of the women had changed their mud homes into cement constructions using the money they received from dairying, and 39% had built concrete calf barns.

- Assists in overcoming structural barriers: Many women who never had access to formal education or work have seen a change in their lives after joining the Cooperative Milk Union. This aided women in leading respectable lives and

increasing their salaries, particularly single mothers.

- Overcomes information asymmetry: Farmers' lack of knowledge is a major problem in the dairy industry. According to statistics, big and medium farmers have access to between 50 and 70 percent more resources than small and marginal farmers. However, the existence of collectives, such as milk unions and cooperatives, significantly contributes to the empowerment of women's knowledge and negotiating power.

- Developing New Skills: Although many female dairy producers lack formal schooling, they have learned the intricacies of marketing and economics via working with bigger groups like milk unions and cooperatives.

#### **Empowerment and Social Impact:**

The involvement of women in dairy farming has far-reaching social impacts. It provides women with economic independence, enhances their decision-making power, and improves their social status within the community. Women's active participation in dairy farming contributes to poverty alleviation, women empowerment, and overall rural development.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

In Zone III of Rajasthan, women have emerged as key stakeholders in milk production and the utilization of dairy farming. Their active involvement in various aspects of dairy management, including milch animal care, milk collection, processing, entrepreneurship, and skill development, showcases their significant contributions. Women's participation not only enhances milk production and quality but also leads to economic growth, empowerment, and social development in the region. Recognizing and supporting the role of women in dairy farming is crucial for sustainable rural livelihoods and the overall progress of Zone III in Rajasthan.

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