

Women Empowerment through Women Dairy Cooperative Society in Uttarakhand

Neha Upreti¹ and Neelam Bhardwaj²

1. Research Scholar, Department of Extension Education, IASc., BHU, Varanasi

2. Professor and Head, Department of Agricultural Communication, GBPUAT, Uttarakhand

Corresponding author e-mail: nehaagritian@hotmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Dairying is an occupation that supports the livelihoods of many women, especially rural poor in India. There is no denying fact that women are relatively more active workers in animal husbandry sector and their contribution to Indian economy is quite substantial. Women empowerment is often described as a key factor in well-being of women and their households and as such has been quantified, measured and described in variety of ways. It is a dynamic process that cannot be observed directly but approximated. WDCS under Women Dairy Development Project (WDDP) was conceived as a vehicle forum not only for economic benefit throughout this project but also for managing and forming the village level cooperatives and training in scientific management of milk animals, health and environment, kitchen gardening, food preservation and income generating activities. Uttarakhand is one of the difficult and economically developing regions of India and the socio-cultural set up is mainly based largely on a system in which class and gender largely determine the socio-economic status of various segments of populations. Hence this state has been selected for the study and the data has been collected through interview schedule by applying all the suitable and standard statistical tools. This study mainly focuses on the women empowerment in the dairy cooperatives.

Key words : *Dairying; Women Dairy Development Project (WDDP); Scientific management; Women empowerment;*

Indian dairying is emerging as a 'Sunrise Industry'. Livestock contributes nine per cent to total GDP which is over one-fourth of the GDP from agricultural sector. Dairy development has been acclaimed as an effective instrument capable of bringing about speedy socio-economic transformation, among the rural community by providing milk production as a subsidiary occupation. Looking at the dairy scenario of India, the country with 1/5th of the world's bovine population contributing 13.7 per cent of the total milk production *i.e.*, 112.5 MT is the largest producer in the world and known as 'Oyster of Global Dairy Industry'. As per dairy industry profile of India from the adult human population of 1170 million, 90 million are dairy farmers. According to a report of *Govt. of India (2001)*, 75 million women against five million men are engaged in dairying in India. Bringing better prospects in rural areas is possible only by rural women and dairying is an occupation that supports

livelihood of many women, especially in rural India and dairy cooperatives have provided a platform to women to demonstrate their capabilities and competence through their activities. Today in India, there are 70 million households involved in dairy out of which 16 million are in cooperative sector. As per Indian dairymen the milk production in India is predominantly rooted in cooperative system contributing to development. *Sevamani and Rani (2008)* stated that women can strengthen their social, economic and political development by increasing sale to dairy cooperatives. Dairy is an instrument of women empowerment.

Women Dairy Cooperative Society was found to be such a synergistic approach aiming at total development of women by bringing out necessary institutional and attitudinal changes and by developing package of various services, seeking to achieve rural productivity and greater socio-economic equality.

Considering all these factors, this paper mainly focuses on the empowerment and their relationship associated with selected socio-personal characteristics.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Nainital District, of Uttarakhand state in Haldwani block in five villages. In the selected villages five Women Dairy Cooperative Societies which were active since last ten years (Chharaval Nayabad, Isai Nagar No 2, Lamachaur Khas, Ramari Chhoti, and Haldu Pokhra Daramval) were selected purposively. Out of total 329 members in the societies, 60 respondents were selected on the basis of their involvement in the society for the period of at least five years, using probability proportionate sampling (11 from Chharaval Nayabad, 9 from Isai Nagar No2, 12 from Lamachaur Khas, 12 from Ramari Chhoti, and 16 from Haldu Pokhra Daramval). Also 60 non-members from nearby areas who belong to similar socio-economic conditions possessing at least one milch cattle from at least one year were selected (*i.e.*, total sample size of 120 respondents). Data regarding socio-cultural, economic and psychological profile of members and non-members and extent of empowerment was collected. Data was collected with the help of pre-tested interview schedule. Informal discussion was done with the members to support quantitative data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Women empowerment :

Income from Dairy : Table 1 represents annual income of the respondents they obtained from dairy by selling milk, milk products and animals. The income of the individual strengthens the position of the individual contributing to its empowerment.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents on the basis of income (Rs.) from dairy

Category	Members n1=60	Non-members n2=60	Total N=120
Low (<11581)	08 (13.34)	32 (53.34)	40 (33.34)
Medium (11581-162101)	23 (38.34)	22 (36.67)	45 (37.5)
High (>162101)	29 (48.34)	06 (10)	35 (29.16)

Note: Figures in parenthesis indicate the percentage in respective category

As the Table 1 indicates that more than half (53.34%) of the non-members belonged to 'low' income category. One third of the non-members (36.67%) had

medium income level whereas only ten per cent of them had high income. In case of members 48.34 per cent of the respondents belonged to high income level followed by medium income level (38.34%) and only 13.34 per cent had low income level. It can be concluded that members of the Women Dairy Cooperative Societies earned more annual income from dairy than non-members. This might be due to availability of proper and regular marketing channel to the members along with better remunerative prices. The results are in accordance with *Seth (2004)* who also reported increase in income from dairy in members.

Participation in Social Activities : The perusal of data in Table 2 shows the participation of members of Women Dairy Cooperative Societies and non-members in social activities other than formal social organizations such as educational activity, religious activity. This participation refers to active involvement of the respondents in society which indicate owing the responsibility towards the society thus contributing to the empowerment.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents on the basis of involvement in social activities

Category	Members n1=60	Non-members n2=60	Total N=120
Low (<4)	01 (1.67)	02 (3.34)	03 (10)
Medium (4-8)	37 (61.67)	52 (86.67)	89 (74.16)
High (>8)	22 (36.67)	06 (10)	28 (23.34)

The values above indicate that in case of members 61.67 per cent had medium involvement in social activities followed by 21.67 per cent with high involvement and 16.67 per cent with low involvement in social activities. In case of non-members majority of the respondents (86.67%) had medium level of involvement in social activities followed by ten per cent of high and 3.34 per cent of low level of involvement. In aggregate 74.16 per cent of the respondents had medium level of involvement in social activities and 23.34 per cent of the respondents were highly involved in social activities. The findings are in similar with *Singh (2010)* who reported majority of the respondents with medium level of involvement in social activities followed by high level of involvement. Only ten per cent of total respondents had low level social involvement. Comparing the values it was revealed that members of the Women Dairy Cooperative Societies had been more socially active than nonmembers reported by *Chander et al. (1986)* as higher involvement in case of members.

Shift in work load : One aspect contributing to women empowerment was taken as the shift in household work scenario not restricted to women only but shared by the male counterpart as well. The sharing of members of Women Dairy Cooperative Societies and non-members in household work load is represented in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of respondents on the basis of shift in work load

Category	Members n1=60	Non-members n2=60	Total N=120
Low (<12)	1(1.67)	7(11.69)	8(6.64)
Medium (12-19)	48(80.16)	46(76.82)	94(78.02)
High (>19)	11(18.37)	7(11.69)	18(14.94)

As the Table indicates, majority of the members (80.16%) reported medium level of sharing by their male counterpart in household work. In case of 18.37 per cent members, high level of sharing in household workload by their husbands was reported. Negligible percentage of members reported low level of household workload sharing by the husbands. In case of non-members 76.82 per cent reported medium level of sharing by the husbands in household work. Equal per cent age of non-members (11.69%) reported high and low level of sharing by the husbands in household work. In total 78.02 per cent respondents had medium level of sharing by their husbands in household works. During the interview it was found that work like cooking was performed by most of the respondents themselves in both the groups. In member group work like attending guests, helping children in education, taking care of children, shopping etc. were either performed by their husbands or shared jointly. In case of non members work like household repair or taking care of education of children only were reported by the respondents taken up by their male counterpart and most of the work was done by the respondents themselves. From the data it can be concluded that sharing of the household workload by male counterpart had increased in case of members. This may be due to the involvement of members of Women Dairy Cooperative Societies in societal work which require time and involvement outside the house. And it also increases mobility of women outside the home and freedom to work contributing to women empowerment.

Financial decision making : The level of financial decision making at household level of both the groups is

represented in Table 4. From the data 55 per cent of the members were found to have high level financial decision making right at household level followed by 33.34 per cent with medium level of financial decision making and 11.67 per cent had low financial decision making level.

Table 4. Distribution of respondents on the basis of Financial Decision Making

Category	Members n1=60	Non-members n2=60	Total N=120
Low (<15)	7 (11.67)	23 (38.34)	30 (25)
Medium(15-30)	20 (33.34)	35 (58.34)	55 (45.83)
High (>30)	33 (55)	2 (3.34)	35 (29.17)

Comparing non-members, majority of them (58.34%) had medium level of decision making right on household financial matters followed by 38.34 per cent with low level and 3.34 per cent had high level household financial decision making right. Cumulatively most of the respondents (45.83%) had medium level financial decision making right. 29.17 per cent had high level and 25 per cent had low level decision making right concerning financial decisions. The members were found to have an upper hand in financial decision making than non-members. This might be due to increase in family income of the members due to Women Dairy Cooperative Societies, that the members of Women Dairy Cooperative Societies enjoy more financial rights.

Table 5. Distribution of respondents on the basis of decision making in dairy Enterprise

Category	Members n1=60	Non-members n2=60	Total N=120
Low (<8)	06 (10)	27 (45)	33 (27.5)
Medium (8-13)	22 (36.67)	32 (53.34)	54 (45)
High (>13)	32 (53.34)	01 (1.67)	33 (27.5)

Decision making in Dairy Enterprise: Majority (53.34%) of the members of Women Dairy Cooperative Societies were found with high level of involvement in decision making related to dairy enterprise followed by medium level of involvement in decision making (36.67%). Most of the non-members (53.34%) had medium level of involvement in decision making in dairy enterprise. The percentage of non-members in high level involvement in decision making related to dairy enterprise was found negligible. The findings of the present study are in accordance with *Tipawan, K. (1988)* and *Seth (2004)*. They also reported higher status of members

in decision making related to dairy enterprise. The fact of designating wholesome responsibilities of the dairy enterprise to women in Women Dairy Cooperative Societies might be the reason which encouraged the members for higher degree of involvement.

Social Recognition : The distribution of respondents on the basis of their social recognition is represented in Table 6. The social recognition of majority of members (68.34%) was found to be at medium level. 31.67 per cent of members had low level of social recognition. None of the members had low level of social recognition. In case of nonmembers majority (75%) were at low level of social recognition and 15 per cent at medium level and ten per cent were highly socially recognized. In total 41.67 per cent of the respondents were at medium level of social recognition followed by low (37.5%) and high level (20.84 %) of social recognition.

Table 6. Distribution of respondents on the basis of social recognition

Category	Members n1=60	Non-members n2=60	Total N=120
Low (<3)	-	45 (75)	45 (37.5)
Medium (3-8)	41 (68.34)	09 (15)	50 (41.67)
High (>8)	19 (31.67)	06 (10)	25 (20.84)

From the data it can be inferred that members of the Women Dairy Cooperative Societies are more socially recognized than non-members. This may be due to their status as the members of cooperative organization and their representation at various levels in the society through dairy cooperative society.

Self esteem : Table 7 represents the distribution of both the groups, members and nonmembers on the basis of self-esteem. Respect for itself and confidence in oneself pave the way towards development of individual and thus contribute to women empowerment. As indicated in Table 7, approximate half of the members (51.67%) possessed medium level of self-esteem and 48.34 per cent had high self-esteem. In case of non-members majority of respondents (98.34%) were having medium level of self-esteem. The percentage of non-members with higher self-esteem was found to be negligible. In total majority of the respondents (75%) were in medium self-esteem level. None of the respondents from either of the group possessed low level of self esteem.

From the Table 7, it is revealed that members of Women Dairy Cooperative Societies had higher self-

esteem than non-members. It may be due to the higher educational status, raise in income, increase in awareness and higher level of societal recognition.

Table 7. Distribution of respondents on the basis of self-esteem

Category	Members n1=60	Non-members n2=60	Total N=120
Low (<40)	-	-	-
Medium (40-50)	31 (51.67)	59 (98.34)	90 (75)
High (>50)	29 (48.34)	01 (1.67)	30 (25)

Control over benefits and resources : The data in Table 8 shows the control of respondents over the resources such as cash, milch animals, drought animals, implements, inputs and benefits obtained from them like cash, milk consumption, milk sale and livestock.

Table 8. Distribution of respondents on the basis of control over resources and benefits

Category	Members n1=60	Non-members n2=60	Total N=120
Low (<2)	-	-	-
Medium (2-4)	23 (38.34)	54 (90)	77 (64.16)
High (>4)	37 (61.67)	06 (10)	43 (35.84)

It is inferred from the data that majority (61.67%) of the respondents in members group had high control over benefits and resources followed by 38.34 per cent with medium level in terms of control over benefits and resources. In case of non-members 90 per cent of the respondents had medium control over benefits and resources followed by ten per cent with high level control over benefits and resources. Cumulatively majority of the respondents (64.16%) held medium level control over resources and benefits followed by high level (35.84%). None of the respondents had low level of control over resources and benefits. During interview it was also found that members of the Women Dairy Cooperatives had higher control over cash, milch animals and dairy implements in terms of resources and income from dairy, milk consumption and sale and livestock while non-members were found to have less or no control over cash and dairy implements though they had possession over milch animals. In terms of benefits income from dairy or milk sale or livestock were controlled by either the spouse or the family. They had control over milk consumption to some extent. From the above data, it can be seen that members of the Women Dairy Cooperative Society had higher control over the

resources and benefits as compared to non-members. The findings are in agreement with *Thakur (2005)* where members were reported with increase in control over benefits and resources. This may be due to the independent working of women in women dairy cooperatives handling all the operations and thereby the resources and benefits.

Extent of women empowerment : Looking over all the indicators of the women empowerment, Table 9 represents aggregate result of the members and non-members empowerment status. As the Table indicate majority of the respondents (78.34%) from members group had medium level of empowerment, 21.67 per cent with high empowerment extent. None of the members were found at lower empowerment status. In case of non-members 88.34 per cent of the respondents had medium level of empowerment followed by 6.67 per cent with low level of empowerment. Only five per cent of the non-members were found at high level of empowerment.

Table 9. Distribution of respondents on the basis of extent of women empowerment

Category	Members n1=60	Non-members n2=60	Total N=120
Low (<18)	-	04 (6.67)	04 (3.34)
Medium (18-23)	47 (78.34)	53 (88.34)	100 (83.34)
High (>23)	13 (21.67)	03 (5)	16 (13.34)

From the Table 9, it can be stated that members of Women Dairy Cooperative Societies were more empowered in comparison to non-members. The difference in empowerment extent of members and non-members might be due to the increase in income, status, confidence, decision making in household and financial activities, social recognition and increased control over resources and benefits. Comparing the t stat value (-0.145) with t critical (1.98) at one per cent significance level, significant difference was found between the empowerment extent of members of Women Dairy Cooperative Society and non-members. Similar results were also reported by *Bhagyalakshmi (2001)* and *Rao (2004)*, that members of dairy cooperatives with higher empowerment status than non-members in their respective areas of study.

Relationship of empowerment of members of Women Dairy Cooperative Societies with selected independent variables : In order to find out the

relationship between women empowerment and different selected independent variables of members of Women Dairy Cooperative Society, correlation analysis was carried out.

Table 10. Correlation analysis between empowerment of members and selected independent variables

Variables	Correlation coefficient (r)
Age	0.1168*
Family type	0.1158*
Family size	0.1361*
Occupation	0.2848*
Herd size	0.2998**
Milk Production	0.2723*
Milk Sale	0.2434*
Milk Consumption	0.2802*
Family income	0.0631
Farm and dairy implement	0.1589*
Household materials	0.0024
Transportation materials	0.1258*
Communication media possession	0.0927*
Access to livestock extension services	0.2328*
Extension contact	0.3373**
Information behavior	0.0226
Livestock management behavior	-0.1218
Social participation	0.1337*

* Significant at .05 level of probability = 0.6715

** Significant at .01 level of probability= 2.3924

Data in Table 10 depicts that the variables like herd size, extension contact were found to have positive correlation at one per cent level of significance with the empowerment of dairy women. The results of the present study were supported by *Seth (2004)* and *Shreeshailja (2010)* who concluded extension contact, mass media exposure to be significantly and positively associated with increase in income of members of dairy cooperatives leading to their empowerment. The variables, age, family type, family size, occupation, milk production, sale and consumption, farm and dairy material possession, transportation material possession, communication media possession, access to livestock extension services and social participation was positive relationship with women empowerment at five per cent level of significance. Similar findings were reported by *Oladele (2004)*. Significant relationship between access to extension services and benefits from livestock leading to economic empowerment was reported by *Oladele (2004)*. It can be noted that the variables

namely family income, household material possession and information behavior had no influence on empowerment of women respondents.

This led to the conclusion that if the value of the twelve variables out of eighteen variables namely herds size, extension contact, family type, family size, occupation, milk production, sale and consumption, Farm and dairy material possession, transportation material possession, communication media possession, access to livestock extension services and social participation increased, they had significant influence on women empowerment.

CONCLUSION

Dairying is an occupation that supports the livelihoods of many women, especially rural poor in India. To contribute particularly for women development in dairy sector, the Support to Training and Employment (STEP) Programme had under taken establishment of Women Dairy Cooperative societies at grass root level. Recognizing the contribution of women, as major pillar

of development in state of Uttarakhand, inspired by the pioneering 'Anand' model of Cooperative Dairy Farming in Gujarat, 1025 Women Dairy Cooperative Societies were constituted. The main objective of these dairy cooperatives was improving the social and economic status of women in family and community through dairy enterprise providing them necessary facilities and services. There was considerable difference between the extent of empowerment of members of WDCS and non-members. Members were able to obtain more income through dairy than non-members. They were more involved in social activities and enjoy high sharing by their husbands in household works. They hold higher decision making rights in financial and dairy enterprise. They possessed high self-esteem, medium social recognition and high control over resources and benefits through dairy. In all it can be concluded that Women Dairy Cooperative Society contributing substantially in bringing dairy women to front stage strengthens them financially, socially and psychologically and plays a vital role in empowering dairy women.

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