Socio-personal and economic profile of ITK practicing dairy farmers in Palghar district of Maharashtra

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 Received: 23.8.2019/Accepted: 4.9.2019

ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted in Palghar district of Maharashtra with the sample size of 120 tribal dairy farmers. Out of eight blocks in Palghar district three tribal blocks namely Dahanu, Talasariand and Jawhar, two villages from each block and 20 respondents (who had at least one milch animal at the time of study) were selected randomly. It was found that the majority (70.00%) of the farmers were old (>50 years), illiterate (57.50%) with medium family size (61.67%) having 7 to 11 members in the family living in joint families (98.33%). Agriculture with dairying was the main occupation of the respondents (97.51%); most of them (65.83%) were small farmers (1-2 ha landholding) and all had cattle. It was observed that the milk production was very low as majority of the households (85.00%) got only less than 1 litre milk per day whereas 73.33 per cent households consumed medium level of milk (1-2 litres). Majority of the respondents (66.67%) did not sell milk. The annual income of majority (80.00%) of the respondents was low (up to Rs 31,000). Majority of the farmers (87.50 and 76.67%) were having medium level of exposure to mass media and extension contact respectively. But their (65.83%) social participation was low.

Keywords: Tribal dairy farmers; socio-personal profile; economic profile; milk

INTRODUCTION

Traditional knowledge is not an abstract scientific knowledge. It is concrete and relies strongly on historical experience. It is environmental and cultural friendly approach for development. It refers to the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities around the world developed from experience gained over the centuries and adapted to the local culture and environment which is transmitted orally from generation to generation. Indigenous practices are unique in nature and are considered to be better in terms of cost effectiveness and treating the ailments without side effects. These techniques are still followed in villages by the farmers without knowing the scientific rationale of these ingredients. Dairy sector has generated an employment potential for most of the tribal community that belongs to the weaker section of the society (Senthil Kumar et al 2012). In India 70 per cent of the rural households own livestock and it is an important source of employment for them especially for women. But livestock rearing in India is highly segmented. The under-privileged livestock producers such as tribal farmers face a number of constraints. Their access to modern livestock services especially veterinary services and access to the marketing support is also poor and prices received by them for products are also low. Keeping this in view the present study was conducted in Palghar district of Maharashtra to find out the socio-personal and socio-economic characteristics of the tribal farmers and their communication behavior and utilization pattern of information sources.

Vekariya et al (2016) in a study conducted in Junagadh and Gir Somnath districts of Saurashtra region reported that majority of dairy farmers had animal husbandry plus agriculture as their main occupation. The socio-economic parameters viz extension participation among farmers was of medium level; they had medium level of experience in animal husbandry activities and used medium level of sources of information. Kumar et al (2018) examined the socio-economic condition of tribal dairy farmers in Godda district in Jharkhand and reported that majority of the respondents were under the category of low to medium level socio-economic standards.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in purposively selected Palghar district of Maharashtra. Out of eight blocks in the district, three blocks namely Dahanu, Talasari and Jawharwere, two villages from each village and 20 tribal respondents from each village were selected randomly who had at least one milch animal and were practicing ITK regarding animal healthcare at the time of investigations. Thus a total of 120 tribal dairy farmers were selected for the present study. An interview schedule was developed in the light of the objectives of the study. Before starting the final data collection the entire schedule was pre-tested in non-sampling area for elimination, alteration and modification if any. Data collection was done by applying participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools which included personal and direct observations, transect walk and focus group discussion (FGD). The respondents were interviewed individually at their home. The data included information about socio-personal and socio-economic status of the respondents and about their social participation. The data were collected in Marathi language with the help of local key communicators. Suitable statistical tools were used for analysis of data.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

The data given in Table 1 show that majority (70.00%) of the farmers were old (>50 years) followed by 30 per cent who were medium-aged (35-50 years).

Most of them were illiterate (57.50%) followed by functionally literate (20.83%). Their family size was mainly medium (61.67%) having 7 to 11 members in the family. Mainly they lived in joint families (98.33%). Family size influences various activities in terms of family labour availability, annual income of family etc.

The data given in Table 2 show that agriculture with dairying was the main occupation of the respondents (97.51%) as these two are interdependent on each other. It was also found that most of them

Table 1. Socio-personal profile of tribal dairy farmers

Variable	Respondents (n= 120)		Mean	SD
	Frequency	Percentage		
Age (years)			56.25	8.44
Young (up to 35)	00	0.00		
Medium (35-50)	36	30.00		
Old (>50)	84	70.00		
Education			0.73	1.09
Illiterate	69	57.50		
Functionally literate	25	20.83		
Primary	22	18.33		
Middle	01	00.83		
Secondary	00	00.00		
Higher secondary (up to 12th)	02	01.67		
Graduate and above	01	00.83		
Family size (number)			8.15	2.188
Small (up to 7)	33	27.50		
Medium (7-11)	74	61.67		
Large (>11)	13	10.83		
Family type			1.98	0.12
Nuclear	02	01.67		
Joint	118	98.33		

Table 2. Socio-economic profile of tribal dairy farmers

Variable	Respondent (n= 120)		Mean	SD
	Frequency	Percentage		
Occupation				
Agriculture + dairy	117	97.51		
Agriculture + dairy + service	01	0.83		
Agriculture + dairy + business	01	0.83		
Labour + dairy	01	0.83		
Landholding (ha)			2.33	0.71
Landless (0)	01	0.83		
Marginal (<1)	03	02.50		
Small (1-2)	79	65.83		
Semi-medium (2-4)	32	26.67		
Medium (4-10)	02	01.67		
Large (>10 ha)	03	02.50		
Herd size (number of heads)			8.50	4.18
Small (<7)	43	35.83		
Medium (7-11)	48	40.00		
Large (>11)	29	24.17		
Milk production (litres/day/household)			1.23	0.65
Low (<1)	102	85.00		
Medium (2-3)	15	12.50		
High (>3)	03	02.50		
Milk consumption (litres/day/household)			0.85	0.49
Low (<1)	25	20.83		
Medium (1-2)	88	73.33		
High (>2)	07	05.83		
Milk sale (litres/day/household)			0.42	0.74
No sale	80	66.67		
Low (<1)	33	27.50		
Medium (1-2)	06	05.00		
High (>2)	01	0.83		
Milk disposal pattern			0.45	0.73
Sold occasionally	80	66.67		
Sold directly to consumers	33	27.50		
Sold through cooperatives	0	0.00		
Sold to hotels or sweetmakers	07	05.83		
Total annual income (Rs)				
Low (up to 31,000)	96	80.00		
Medium (32,000-42,000)	12	10.00		
High (>42,000)	12	10.00		

(65.83%) were small farmers (1-2 ha landholding) followed by 26.67 per cent semi-medium farmers with 2-4 ha landholding. All were having cattle and among them 40.00, 35.83 and 24.17 per cent possessed 7-11 (medium), <7 (small) and >11 (large) heads per household respectively.

It was observed that the milk production was very low as majority of the households (85.00%) got only less than 1 litre milk per day whereas 73.33 per cent households consumed medium level of milk (1-2 litres) per day followed by 20.83 per cent who consumed less than 1 litre per day.

Since the production of milk was very low hence majority of the respondents (66.67%) did not sell it and only 27.50 per cent sold less than 1 litre per day. Majority of the respondents (66.67%) sold milk occasionally followed by 27.50 per cent who sold it directly to the consumers. Due to lower landholding and herd size the annual income of majority (80.00%) of the respondents was also low (up to Rs 31,000).

Data in Table 3 depict that majority of the farmers were having medium level of exposure to mass media (87.50%) and extension contact (76.67%). But their social participation was low as majority

Table 3. Communication behavior of tribal farmers

Variable	Respondents (n= 120)		Mean	SD
	Frequency	Percentage		
Mass media exposure			6.05	0.74
Low (up to 6)	13	10.83		
Medium (6-8)	105	87.50		
High (>8)	02	1.67		
Extension contact			2.86	1.57
Low (up to 2)	04	3.33		
Medium (2-3)	92	76.67		
High (>3)	24	20.00		
Social participation			0.97	0.94
Low (up to 1)	79	65.83		
Medium (1-2)	39	32.50		
High (>2)	02	1.67		

(65.83%) of them were under this category whereas 32.50 per cent had medium level of social participation. The results revealed that majority of the respondents had medium level of extension contacts and mass media exposure.

In a study conducted by Kumar et al (2016) on socio-economic status and role of livestock to improve livelihood of tribes of Jharkhand it was found that livestock gave more annual income for tribes as compared to other sources like wage employment, remittance, shop keeping etc. Majority of the respondents had medium level of extension contacts and mass media exposure. The level of social participation was low as they were tribals living in far off, isolated geographical region. Mooventhan et al (2015) while conducting a study on the tribal farmers in northern hills zone of Chhattisgarh reported that about 65.33 per cent of the tribal farmers were between 36 and 50 years of age group; more than one-third (34.67%) were educated up to primary level; less than half (39.00%) had subsistence dairy farming + minor forest products collection + labour as their sole occupations; nearly half (43.67%) were marginal farmers; more than half (62.00 %) had medium level of farming experience; about half (49.00%) were in the income range of Rs 25,001 to 75,000; about half (44.67%) possessed medium herd size and more than half (56.33%) fell under the category of subsistence level of dairy production system.

Sarita et al (2016) conducted a study in Hisar district of Haryana to ascertain the socio-economic and psychological characteristics of farmers and it was found that majority of the respondents were middle-aged, literate, having nuclear family with medium family size. Majority of the respondents had small landholding and low extension contact as well as mass media exposure. Majority of them had medium economic motivation but showed very poor social participation.

Bhanotra et al(2016) in a study conducted in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir state to find out the socio-economic status of the dairy farmers it was revealed that majority of farmers belonged to medium socio-economic status and had medium information source utilization pattern. Their reach of extension contact to remote villages of the state was found to be low.

Chandrasekar et al (2017) conducted a study on relationship between socio-economic and psychological factors of dairy farmers in Bengaluru rural district of Karnataka. The study revealed that majority of the respondents were middle-aged (58.00%) with most (87.50%) of them as literates. More than half of the respondents lived in nuclear families (77.00%) with medium size families (51.67%). They had high farming experience (46.00%) and animal husbandry with agriculture (93.00%) was found to be their occupation; 50 per cent had low annual income and were marginal land holders (89.00%). Majority (58.00%) of the respondents were not growing any fodder and had medium livestock possession (50.00%) and with 40 per cent securing financial assistance.

CONCLUSION

The present study highlighted the socio-personal and socio-economic profile of dairy farmers. There was need to develop appropriate policies to enhance the standard of living and livelihood status of the farmers in the study area. There was also need to run awareness campaigns and use of mass media in a big way to promote the profitable farming enterprises. A clear understanding of the situational and psychological realities of the dairy farmers is of paramount importance in designing need-based and farmer-centred extension programmes to improve their knowledge and skill in bringing about better productivity of the milch animals. There was need to focus on inclusion of recommended dairy farming practices through mass media that would help in improvement of dairy farming status of farmers in the study area. Study results found that majority of respondents were illiterate and having medium category of mass media exposure, social participation and low extension contact. So emphasis should be to strengthen the communication channels and various sources of information and implement large scale extension work.

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