Socioeconomic Profile of Dairy Farmers in Maharashtra: A Case Study of Latur District

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ABSTRACT

If we look at the state's population growth patterns, milk and milk products must be used to ensure both food security and nutritional security. Another possibility is that the populace expresses various concerns like food insecurity, perceived insecurity, unemployment, etc., and the government responds by taking quick and effective action to address these concerns. The current study examines various facets of dairy farming and the current state of milk production, consumption, and sales. The city of Latur was deliberately chosen for the investigation. Two tehsils were randomly chosen from the zone, and two blocks were randomly chosen from each tehsil. Each block has two villages drawn at random. 10% of dairy producers were chosen proportionately and randomly from among all the households in each community. Dairying was the primary occupation of 12.81% of the respondents, whereas the major occupations of 8.75%, 7.18%, and 4.68% of the respondents were business, labour, and services, respectively. In contrast, the majority of respondents (64.68%) chose dairying as their secondary occupation, followed by agriculture (22.81%) with 20.00% of the respondents. The respondents stipulated that dairy farmers had to have at least one lactating dairy animal at the time of the inquiry. The majority of respondents (45.93%) sold 4 to 7 liters of milk per day, followed by 40.31% and 13.75 % of respondents who sold less than 4 liters and more than 7 liters of milk, respectively. Agriculture was the main industry in the study region, and dairying was the secondary one. As increased milk production was the farmers' primary goal, respondents had more crossbred cattle and buffalo than native livestock. Farmers often sell their milk in cooperative societies, while some also sell in independent shops.

Keywords: *Dairy Farmers, Socioeconomic Profile, occupation, Rural Development.*

INTRODUCTION

India is primarily an agricultural country, with animal husbandry serving as the foundation of the economy. Next to agriculture, the dairy industry boosts family nutrition standards and continuously generates cash and partially lowers unemployment (Kumar, 2020). More than 80 per cent of all agricultural workers are employed in the dairy sector.

Dairy farming is currently a significant source of livelihood in India, giving farmers a steady stream of cash and eventually assisting in improving the socioeconomic situation of rural people. The dairy producers' socioeconomic makeup reflects how the local social dynamics shape the economic activities. As a result, it is seen as a crucial prerequisite for making decisions that eventually impact any economic organization's profitability (Mohapatra, 2021). For small farmers, marginal farmers, and agricultural laborers in the state, dairy production is a significant source of supplemental revenue. For low- and moderate-income households, dairy farming plays a significant part in both commercial and subsistence farming. The dairy industry has a lot of promise for improving the socioeconomic circumstances of small, marginal farmers and agricultural employees since it produces more and makes profits faster than other businesses. In a shorter amount of time, it has increased the state's income, the creation of jobs, and the labor force. In Latur, dairy farmers raise lactating animals to generate income that is complementary to crop farming. If we look at the state's population growth patterns, milk and milk products must be used to ensure both food security and nutritional security. Another possibility is that the populace expresses various concerns like food insecurity, perceived insecurity, unemployment, etc., and the government responds by taking quick and effective action to address these concerns (Wetal, 2023) .His paper depicts the socioeconomic profile of dairy farmers and the constraints experienced by them during dairy farming in the Latur district of Maharashtra.

STUDY AREA:

Latur district is in the Marathwada region in Maharashtra in India, located between 17°52' to 18°50' latitudes North and between the 76°18' to 79°12' longitudes East in the Deccan plateau. The district is situated on the Maharashtra Karnataka boundary on the eastern side of the Latur is the Bidder district of Karnataka. In contrast, Nanded is on the Northeast, Parbhani on the Northern side, and

Beed on the Northwest and Osmanabad on the Western and Southern side. The entire district of Latur is situated on the Balaghat Plateau, 540 to 638mts from the mean sea level.

Objectives:

- To study the socioeconomic and personal characteristics of dairy farmers.
- To find out the knowledge of improved dairy management practices.
- To highlight facilitating factors that could help promote dairy development to improve.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study aimed to investigate the various facets of dairy farming as well as the utilization and sales of milk. The Latur district was purposefully chosen for the study. Two tehsils were randomly chosen from the zone, and four blocks were chosen at random from the tehsil. Each block has two villages drawn at random. Out of all the farmers in each community, 10% of them were dairy producers, chosen proportionately and randomly. Thus, 320 samples were taken in total. According to the requirements of the responders, dairy farmers must have at least one dairy cow that is nursing at the time of the research. A structured interview schedule that was created for this purpose served as the main method of data collecting. Age, education, family size, herd size, operational land holding, annual income, dairying experience, milk output, milk use, milk sale, social participation, one-on-one interaction, personal cosmopolite, and media exposure were among the study's variables. The acquired data was examined using straightforward statistical tools like frequency and percentage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Age:

Results in Table 1 show that the majority of the dairy farmers belonged to the middle age group (50.93 %), and 26.87 per cent of farmers have the old age group. The remaining 22.18 per cent of farmers are young age. These results indicate that middle-aged farmers take up dairying as income generating activity as

they are more capable physically and could shoulder more family responsibilities. Almost similar findings were observed by (Rahul Choudhary, 2018), who found that the majority of the respondents belong to the medium age group.

Family Size:

According to the distribution of respondents (Table 1), it was observed that most (48.12 %) of the respondents belonged to the medium family size (5-7 members), followed by small family size (less than 5 members), accounting for 21.56 per cent and lastly large family size (>7 members), accounting for 30.31 per cent of respondents. These findings agree with the findings of (Subhash et al., 2023), as they also reported that most of the respondents belonged to medium families.

Education:

When evaluating dairy farmers' knowledge and capacity to adopt sound farming practices, their educational background is a crucial factor. Table 1's perusal revealed that the bulk of respondents (24.37%) had completed middle-level education, while 29.68 per cent had completed secondary education. In addition, it was discovered that 16.56% and 14.68 %, respectively, of the respondents, had degrees from secondary and primary education levels. 10.31 per cent of respondents, or more than one-tenth, had graduated from high school or above. 4.37 %, respectively, of the respondents, fell into the illiteracy category (Prashad, 2019). The study found that the majority (68.75 %) of dairy farmers had a high school diploma or more, followed by intermediate (16.56 %) and middle school (24.37%).

Occupation:

The respondents' occupations were divided into Primary and Secondary occupations, wherein the primary occupations contribute to more than 50 percent of the annual income of the respondents.

Primary Occupation

From Table 1, it was observed that 66.56 per cent of respondents practiced agriculture as their primary occupation, followed by business accounting for 8.75 per cent, service

accounting for 7.18 per cent, dairy accounting for 12.81 per cent of respondents, lastly, 4.68 per cent of respondents practiced labor as their primary occupation. This trend could be due to the limited job opportunities in the area.

Secondary occupation:

From Table 1, it was found that the majority (64.68 %) of respondents practiced dairy farming as their secondary occupation, followed by agriculture accounting for 22.81 per cent, labor accounting for 6.56 per cent, business accounting for 5.93 per cent and lastly (Rajadurai, 2018) These findings were similar to the findings of, who also reported that majority of the respondents practiced dairy as their secondary occupation.

Herd size:

From Table 1, it was found that 30.00 per cent of respondents were in the small herd size category (up to 3 animals), followed by medium herd size (3 to 4 animals), accounting for 58.43 per cent and lastly, large herd size (Above 6 animals) accounting for 11.56 per cent of respondents. This trend could be due to the lower annual income of the respondents and dairy farming is the secondary source of income for most of the respondents. These findings are similar to those of (Vekariya et al., 2016) who also reported that most respondents had small herd sizes.

Operational land Holding (OLH):

In this research, the actual land possessed by the respondent was indicated. Perusal of Table: 1 found that the majority of the respondents (42.05%) were marginal land Holders which were followed by 30.93 percent and 11.25 per cent of the respondents who were small and landholders, respectively. A much less proportion of the respondents (6.87%) had medium land holding, followed by 8.43 per cent of the Land less respondents. None of the respondents had land holdings. (Rajadurai et al., 2018) observed that Maximum number of respondents were landless (71.40%), while small farmers (17.70%).

Annual income:

According to Table 1, the majority of respondents (57.18%) had medium income levels between 0.75 and 1.5 lakhs, followed by respondents with low-income levels of less than 0.75 lakhs and respondents with high-income levels of more than 1.5 lakhs at 1.87 % and 19.06 %, respectively. (Atreya et al., 2018)

Milk production:

Milk production was calculated in terms of the amount of milk produced in Litre per day basis from the lactating animals. In Table 1 it was found that majority (41.87%) of the respondents had Lactating animals that produce 5 to 9 liters of milk per day. Dairying on a small scale followed by 27.18 % and 30.93 % of the respondents, had lactating animals that produced more than 9 liters and less than 5 liters of milk, respectively. (Prasad et al., 2017) revealed that the average milk yield of cattle was 69.00 %.

Milk consumption:

The amount of milk drank by the household of the sampler expressed in liters, and was used to calculate consumption. Each respondent's daily basis. Table: 1 analysis revealed that just over half (51.56%) of the respondents drank 2 to 3 liters of milk per day, which was followed by respondents who drank less than 2 liters and more than 3 liters of milk on a daily basis for household consumption, respectively, by 35.00 percent and 13.43 percent of the respondents.

Milk sale:

Milk sale was presented as the amount of milk being sold by the respondents on daily basis. A glance at Table: 1 was found that majority (45.93%) of the respondents sold 4 to 7 liters of milk per day followed by 40.31 per cent and 13.75 per cent of the respondents who sold less than 5 liters and more than 8 litres of milk respectively. (Koli et al., 2020) revealed that most respondents (82.50 %) had a medium level of milk sale category.

Social participation:

According to Table 1 majority (52.18%) of the respondents had a medium level of social Participation followed by 37.18 percent and 10 percent of the respondents who had low and high social participation respectively. The social participation of the respondents was satisfactory because some farmers engaged in cooperative society as a member. (Sachan, 2013) reported that the majority (68.00%) of the respondents had a low level of social participation, followed by 27.00 percent a medium level.

Mass Media Exposure:

A glance at Table 1 was found that near about half of the respondents (49.06%) had medium mass media exposure, followed by 36.87 percent and 14.06 per cent of the respondents who had low and high mass media exposure, respectively because most of the farmers having Smartphone's, internet connection, television etc. (Manjunath et al., 2020) in his study observed that majority (62.00%) of the respondents belonged to medium mass media exposure.

Table 1: Socioeconomic and Communication Respondent (n=320)

Category		Frequency Percentage	Frequency Percentage
Age	Young age (up to 35)	71	22.18
	Middle age (36-50)	163	50.93
	Old age (above 50)	86	26.87
Family Size	Small (<5)	69	21.56
	Medium (5to7)	154	48.12
	Large (>7)	97	30.31
Education	Illiterate	14	4.37
	Primary	47	14.68
	Middle	78	24.37
	Secondary	95	29.68
	Intermediate	53	16.56
	Graduate and above	33	10.31
Occupation			
Primary	Agriculture	213	66.56
	Dairying	41	12.81
	Service	23	7.18

	Business	28	8.75
	Labor	15	4.68
Secondary	Agriculture	73	22.81
	Dairying	207	64.68
	Business	19	5.93
	Labor	21	6.56
Herd size	Small (<3)	96	30
	Medium (3to4)	187	58.43
	Large (>4)	37	11.56
Operational land holding	Landless (0 ha)	27	8.43
	Marginal	136	42.5
	Small 1-2 ha	99	30.93
	Semi-medium 2.1-4 ha	36	11.25
	Medium 4.1-10 ha	22	6.87
	Large >10 ha	0	0
Annual Income	Low (<0.75 lakh)	76	1.87
	Medium (0.75to1.5 lakh)	183	57.18
	High (>1.5 lakh)	61	19.06
Milk production	Low (<5)	87	27.18
	Medium (5to9)	134	41.87
	High (>9)	99	30.93
Milk consumption	Low (<2)	112	35
	Medium (2to3)	165	51.56
	High (>3)	43	13.43
Social participation	Low (<3)	121	37.81
	Medium (3to5)	167	52.18
	medium (>5)	32	10
Milk Sale	Low (<4)	129	40.31
	Medium (4to7)	147	45.93
	High (>7)	44	13.75
Mass Media Exposure	Low (<7)	118	36.87
	Medium (7to8)	157	49.06
	High (>8)	45	14.06

CONCLUSION

In Latur, small and marginal farmers rely heavily on the money generated by the dairy industry. The majority of responders had a medium level of age, according to the survey. Agriculture was the main industry in the study region and dairying was the secondary one. As increased milk production was the farmers' primary goal, respondents had more crossbred cattle and buffalo than native livestock. Farmers often sell their milk in cooperative societies, while some also sell in independent shops. Respondents had a moderate amount of exposure to the media because the majority of farmers had smartphones, internet connections, televisions, etc. Respondents' social participation was good because some farmers were members of cooperative societies.

Conflict of Interest:
There is no such evidence of conflict of interest.

Author Contribution
Both authors have participated in critically revising the entire manuscript and approving the final manuscript.

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