

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Dairy Farmers Sourcing Information from Digital and Traditional Media in Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract: Dairy farming has enormous potential to augment dairy farmers socioeconomic status. The present study was conducted in purposively selected Visakhapatnam, Prakasam and Chittoor districts of Andhra Pradesh. Twenty dairy farmers were chosen randomly from each of the selected villages based on their media exposure to digital and traditional media. Then, they were divided into two groups of 10. the ones who use digital media and those who use traditional media as their source of information. The study included 60 traditional and 60 digital media farmers. Thus, a total of 120 farmers were involved in this study. A simple statistical approach was employed to evaluate the data acquired. The study revealed that most respondents (70.00%) were middle-aged men (96.67%), literate (73.35%), and 46.67% were from the Backward caste (BC). The majority of respondents had agriculture (56.65%) as their main occupation, medium (69.165%) herd size, medium income (65.00%) and medium social participation (89.17%). Most of the respondents (60.83%) had medium media exposure, with medium information seeking behaviour (72.5%) and medium extension contact (50.83%) respectively.

Keywords: Socio-economic characteristics, Dairy farmers, Digital media group and Traditional media group.

Received: June 19, 2021. Revised: April 11, 2022. Accepted: May 12, 2022. Published: June 29, 2022.

1. Introduction

Dairy farming has become a major source of income for millions of rural Indian farmers. It contributes significantly to the socio-economic development of landless and marginal farmers and requires little capital. The livestock sector has emerged as one of the key drivers of agricultural development in India, with a population of 536.76 million, showing an increase of 4.8 percent over the livestock census 2012. The livestock sector's share of agricultural GDP has risen dramatically. The dairy and animal husbandry sector contributes around 4.2 percent of India's

GDP and 25.6 percent of the total agricultural GDP. In 2018, India produced 176.4 million tonnes of milk, representing around 20% of global milk production. In 2019, India produced 191,000 metric tonnes of milk, representing 40.37 percent of global milk output. Meanwhile, global milk production grew by roughly 2%. Milk production in 2017-18 was valued Rs 7.01 lakh crore (at current prices), more than the combined output of paddy (Rs 2.72 lakh crore) and wheat (Rs 2.72 lakh crore), according to National Accounts Statistics 2019. (Rs 1.73 lakh crore). The agricultural and allied sector in India

produces roughly Rs 28 lakh crores. It signifies milk contributed more than 25% of total output. Improving dairy husbandry necessitates a shift from traditional to scientific methods of production. The only approach to enhance livestock production capacity is to develop superior technology for mass adoption by livestock farmers, which necessitates effective communication and information sources. Several studies have found that socioeconomic characteristics such as age, education, herd size, land holdings, information-seeking behaviour, mass media exposure, and extension contact always have a substantial impact on the growth of animal husbandry. Taking the aforementioned facts into consideration, the current study was carried out. The purpose of this research is to investigate the socio-economic characteristics of dairy farmers.

2. Methodology

The current study focused on purposively selected Visakhapatnam, Prakasam, and

Chittoor districts in Andhra Pradesh. Two mandals from each of the selected districts and one village from each of the selected mandals were chosen at random. Twenty dairy farmers were selected randomly from each village. Twenty farmers from each village were split into two groups of ten based on their media exposure. Farmers exposed to digital media (10) are progressive dairy farmers who utilize WhatsApp and YouTube on their smartphones, whereas the other ten dairy farmers rely on traditional media for information on dairy husbandry practices. The study included 60 traditional and 60 digital media farmers. Thus, a total of 120 farmers were involved in this research. For the current study, all of the major components of dairy husbandry were picked and organized under three key aspects: feeding practices, breeding practices, health care, and management practices. Data were collected using a standardized questionnaire. Simple statistical tools were employed to evaluate the acquired data.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of dairy farmers of Andhra Pradesh.

S. No	Category	Digital media group		Traditional media group		Total	
		Frequency (N=60)	Percentage	Frequency (N=60)	Percentage	Frequency (N=120)	Percentage
1.	Age						
	Young	6	10.00	10	16.67	16	13.33
	Middle	45	75.00	39	65.00	84	70.00
	Old	9	15.00	11	18.33	20	16.67
2.	Gender						
	Male	58	96.67	58	96.67	116	96.67
	Female	2	3.33	2	3.33	4	3.33
3.	Education						
	illiterate	2	3.33	30	50.00	32	26.65
	Can read – only	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Can read and write	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Primary School	6	10.00	16	26.67	22	18.35
	Secondary School	5	8.33	8	13.33	13	10.83
	Intermediate	22	36.67	4	6.67	26	21.67
	Graduate and above	25	41.67	2	3.33	27	22.5
4.	Social status						
	OC	25	41.67	27	45.00	52	43.35
	BC	28	46.67	28	46.67	56	46.67
	SC	6	10.00	5	8.33	11	9.15
	ST	1	1.66	0	0	1	0.83
5.	Family size						
	Small	12	20.00	21	35.00	33	27.51
	Medium	46	76.67	39	65.00	85	70.83
	Large	2	3.33	0	0	2	1.66
6.	Landholding						
	Landless	4	6.67	3	5.00	7	5.83
	Marginal	16	26.67	26	43.33	42	35.00
	Small	32	53.33	28	46.67	60	50.00
	Medium	5	8.33	3	5.00	8	6.67
	Large	3	5.00	0	0	3	2.5
7.	Occupation						
	Agriculture	33	55.00	35	58.33	68	56.65
	Dairying	25	41.67	22	36.67	47	39.17
	Labor	1	1.67	3	5.00	4	3.35
	Any other job	1	1.66	0	0	1	0.83

8.	Herd size						
	Small	4	6.67	16	26.67	20	16.67
	Medium	47	78.33	36	60.00	83	69.165
	Large	9	15.00	8	13.33	17	14.165
9.	Income						
	Low	12	20.00	10	16.67	22	18.33
	Medium	39	65.00	39	65.00	78	65.00
	High	9	15.00	11	18.33	20	16.67
10.	Social participation						
	Low	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Medium	49	81.67	58	96.67	107	89.17
	High	11	18.33	2	3.33	13	10.83
11.	Mass media exposure						
	Low	1	1.67	18	30.00	19	15.83
	Medium	36	60.00	37	61.67	73	60.83
	High	23	38.33	5	8.33	28	23.34
12.	Information seeking behavior						
	Low	6	10.00	7	11.67	13	10.83
	Medium	37	61.67	50	83.33	87	72.50
	High	17	28.33	3	5.00	20	16.67
13.	Extension contact						
	Low	17	28.33	18	30.00	35	29.17
	Medium	38	63.33	23	38.33	61	50.83
	High	5	8.33	19	31.67	24	20.00

The majority of Andhra Pradesh dairy farmers (70.00%) were in the middle age category, followed by the old (16.67%) and the young (13.33%). 73.35 percent of farmers were literate (from elementary school to graduation), whereas 26.65 percent were illiterate. In addition, the emergence of social media has fueled interest among middle-aged populations, as YouTube and WhatsApp enabled virtual communication while obtaining knowledge/income. Younger generations are exposed to diverse professions and move to cities/towns, whilst middle-aged dairy farmers are lured to social media. In this study, only dairy farmers who use YouTube and WhatsApp were chosen as respondents and the preceding pattern was observed. The majority (96.67%) of respondents were males, with very few females (3.33%). Due to agricultural and domestic duties, rural women may not be aware of

scientific procedures and practices.

Table 1 showed that the majority of respondents (46.67%) were from BC, followed by OC (43.35%) and SC (9.15%), with only 0.83 percent from ST. In the study area, open category (OC) farmers are generally interested in business and marketing, while backward caste farmers prefer dairying. Most respondents (70.83%) had a medium-sized family, followed by small (27.51%) and large (1.66%). This tendency may be because young and middle-aged people choose nuclear families whilst older people prefer joint families. Landholding revealed that the majority (50.00%) of respondents had small landholdings followed by marginal (35.00%), medium (6.67%), landless (5.83%) and large (2.5%). This is due to high population density and urbanization has reduced the per capita availability of land.

From Table 1 it was observed that agriculture (56.65%) was the most common occupation, followed by dairying (39.17%), labour (3.35%) and other jobs (0.83%). Farmers have been practicing agriculture as the primary source of livelihood since ancient times, with dairy farming as a subsidiary occupation, which might have resulted in the above trend. The majority of respondents (69.165%) had medium herds, followed by small (16.67%) and large herds (14.165%). Lack of housing facilities for more animals, high livestock prices, etc., would have resulted in most dairy farmers maintaining a medium herd size. Table 1 shows that most dairy farmers (65.00%) had medium income, followed by low (18.33%) and high (16.67%). This could be attributed to poor utilization of livestock potential, as well as lack of adequate technical knowledge support.

Social participation revealed that the majority of respondents (89.17%) had a medium level, followed by a high (10.83%) and low level. Poor social participation may be explained by conventional societal limits. The majority of respondents (60.83%) had a medium level of media exposure, followed by high (23.34%) and low (15.83%). Most respondents used mass media for information on dairy husbandry, which indicates their exposure to scientific and modern technologies and practices.

Table 1 revealed that the majority of respondents (72.50%) were in the medium category for information seeking, followed by high (16.67%) and low (10.83%). This could be due to respondents interest in dairy husbandry practices, which may drive them to increase their profit margins in dairy farming. Most respondents (50.83%) had medium extension contact, followed by low (29.17%) and high (20.00%). The

extension contacts will strengthen dairy farmers' scientific knowledge, eventually leading to the adoption of scientific practices.

4. Conclusion

The majority of respondents belonged to the middle age group and were males, literate from primary school to graduation and from Backward caste (BC). Most respondents had a medium family size with agriculture as their main occupation and had small landholdings. The majority of respondents had a medium herd size, income and social participation. Most respondents had a medium level of media exposure, information seeking behaviour and extension contact. The socioeconomic characteristics of Andhra Pradesh dairy farmers suggested that there is room for socioeconomic improvement, ultimately leading to animal husbandry development.

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