Original Research

Technological Empowerment of Women through Dairy Cooperatives in Jaipur (Rajasthan)

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Abstract

The present study was carried out on 120 randomly selected Women Dairy Cooperative Society (WDCS) members in Jaipur district of Rajasthan to assess their technological empowerment through dairy cooperatives. The data was collected by using a structured interview schedule. The study revealed that there was significant (P<0.05) change in freedom to consult the experts, awareness about improved fodder production practices, access to communication gadgets but non-significant in change decision to choose and use the technology, awareness about scientific dairy farming practices, knowledge about solid not fat & fat estimation tests and skill acquisition in handling improved equipments by the members after WDCS membership.

Key words: Technological Empowerment, Women Dairy Cooperative Society

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Introduction

Women are major producers of food in terms of value, volume and number of hours worked in India (Dommati and Chittedi, 2011). Despite their dominance of the labour force, women in India still face extreme disadvantage in terms of pay, land rights, control over income, lack of health, sanitation, education(Ahluwalia, 1990). They often lack access to information and support services that would directly

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affect their income in existing production activity. The condition of women in Rajasthan is not different from this. The total literacy rate of Rajasthan is 66.11% in which male hold the upper hand with 79.19% literacy and female around 52.12%. Rajasthan is among the states having worst sex ratio (928/1000 male) in the country (Anonymous, 2011).

Women empowerment is one of the challenging tasks in the present scenario (Sreenivasaiah, 2015). Bringing women into the mainstream is one of the major challenges for every government (Singh, 2013). The Government of India has initiated plethora of women empowerment programmes with the objective of ensuring empowerment of women from all angles (Shivashankar and Waghamare, 2014). In this context, the cooperatives being the embodiment of values and the principles are the appropriate instrument for espousing the cause of women empowerment. They addressed the issues related to the poverty, vulnerability and the social exclusion which the women face reflecting on their physical mobility, political participation and gender equality (Jabvala, 2013). The dairy cooperatives are vital to overcome the impediments such as illiteracy, economic ignorance, social handicaps and have a potential for promoting socio-economic development of the women and their poverty alleviation (Irvine, 1997). Women Dairy Cooperative Societies (WDCS) are heralded as pioneers of a silent rural change in India (Sudha, 2015). The scenario is fast changing with the increasing recognition of the dynamic role played by women and the inherent advantages of women empowerment for smart economics and superior society (Bala and Chugh, 2015). Dairy farmers are simply unaware of the technologies currently available (Russell and Bewley, 2013). Keeping these facts in view, the present study was undertaken with the objective to assess the contribution of dairy cooperatives in the technological empowerment of women.

Materials and Methods

The present study was conducted in purposively selected Jaipur district of Rajasthan owing to prospective rate of dairying, good cooperative network, livestock wealth status and large numbers of dairy cooperatives. Four tehsils viz. Amber, Chaksu, Chomu and Phagi were selected randomly from Jaipur district and two villages were selected randomly from each tehsils. From each village, 15 women who were active members of WDCS for at least three years were selected randomly. Thus, total 120 respondents were selected for the study. The data was collected by using a structured interview schedule.The change in the technological empowerment status of the respondents was assessed by studying the variables such as decision to choose and use the technology, freedom to consult the experts, awareness about scientific dairy farming practices, awareness about improved fodder production practices, knowledge about solid not fat and fat estimation tests, access to communication gadgets, skill acquisition in handling improved equipments by members before and after WDCS membership. Statistical tools like frequency, percentage and paired t-test (Snedecor and Cochran, 1994) were used to draw the inferences.

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Results and Discussion

Change in Technological Empowerment Status of WDCS Members

Table 1 depicts the changes that occurred in technological empowerment status of the members during pre and post WDCS membership. Before joining WDCS 79.17% women had no decision to choose and use the technology whereas after joining WDCS 20.833% and 2.50% women were partially and full category. Non-significant change was observed from about 1.22 (Pre WDCS) to 1.26 mean score (Post WDCS) on the aspects of decision to choose and use the technology.

Table 1: Change in technological empowerment status of WDCS members

Variables	Before WDCS Membership			After WDCS Membership			Difference of Mean Score
	f	%	Mean Score	*f*	%	Mean Score	
Decision to choose and use the technology			1.22			1.26	0.04^{NS}
No	95	79.17		92	76.67		
Partial	24	20		25	20.83		
Full	1	0.83		3	2.5		
Freedom to consult the experts			1.18			1.2	0.04*
No	103	85.83		99	82.5		
Partial	13	10.83		16	13.33		
Full	4	3.33		5	4.17		
Awareness about scientific dairy farming practices			1.2		1.23		0.03^{NS}
No	99	82.5		97	80.83		
Partial	18	15		19	15.83		
Full	3	2.5		4	3.33		
Awareness about improved fodder production practices			1.15			1.2	0.05*
No	106	88.83		102	85		
Partial	10	8.33		12	10		
Full	4	3.33		6	5		
Knowledge about SNF and fat estimation tests			1.17			1.21	0.04^{NS}
No	104	86.67			99	82.5	
Partial	12	10			16	13.33	
Full	4	3.33			5	4.17	
Access to communication gadgets i.e. Mobile, Computer, Internet etc.			1.35			1.39	0.04*
No	83	69.17			80	66.67	
Partial	32	26.67			33	27.5	
Full	5	4.17			7	5.83	
Skill acquisition in handling improved equipments			1.31			1.33	0.02^{NS}
No	86	76.67			85	70.83	
Partial	31	25.83			30	25	
Full	3	2.5			5	4.17	

*NS-Non-significant, * Significant at (P<0.05) and f- frequency*

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About 85.83% respondents who had no freedom to consult the experts, earlier moved to moderate (29.17%) and full (3.33%) freedom to consult the experts after WDCS membership. The changes were much less pronounced regarding freedom to consult the experts where increased mean score of respondents from 1.18 to 1.20 with 0.02 differences of mean score was examined between pre and post WDCS. The analysis of variance revealed that the significant ($P<0.05$) change in freedom to consult the experts of members after WDCS membership. About 82.50 per cent members had no awareness about scientific dairy farming practices earlier moved to partial15.83% and full3.33% category after WDCs membership. The mean score of respondents changed from 1.20 to 1.29 with the level of awareness about scientific dairy farming practices and revealed non-significant change in awareness level of respondents. Gunaseelan *et al.* (2018) reported similar results in their respective studies i.e. majority of the peri-urban farmers had medium level of knowledge in scientific dairy farming practices. Before joining WDCS 82.50% women had not awareness about improved fodder production practices whereas after joining WDCS 19.16% members started to awareness about improved fodder production practices which comprised of 15.83% partially and 3.33%fully awareness category. The above finding is in line with that of Meena *et al.* (2017).

Before WDCS membership about 86.67% of the respondents had not knowledge about SNF and fat estimation tests. However, after WDCS membership, changed non-significant into their knowledge about SNF and fat estimation tests. 69.17 per cent members were not accessed to communication gadgets (mobile, computer and internet) earlier moved to partial (25.83%) and full (5.00%) accessed category after WDCS membership and observed significant ($P<0.05$) change in access to communication gadgets of the members. About 76.67 per cent members had not skilled acquisition in handling improved equipment's earlier moved to partially (25.00%) and full (4.17%) skill category after WDCS membership. Overall, there was non-significant change in skill acquisition in handling improved equipments. The above finding is contraindicated with the earlier findings of Deepti *et al.* (2009).

Conclusion

The Women Dairy Cooperative Societies are playing a vital role in empowering women by providing sustainable livelihood to millions of households in India. The study also revealed a leap of change in the technological empowerment of the members after WDCS membership. There was a significant change in freedom to consult the experts, awareness about improved fodder production practices and access to communication gadgets. The study results suggest that government and dairy cooperatives should organize need based training programmes, camps, exhibitions, farmers fair to enhance their awareness of scientific dairy farming practices, to provide demonstrations of milk fat estimation tests and skill acquired in handling of improved equipments.

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