

PERCEPTION OF YOUNGER DAIRY FARM WOMEN TOWARDS ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AS OCCUPATION

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ABSTRACT

Animal husbandry is a significant economic activity in rural areas, and that it provides livelihood and economic support to rural families. The investigation focused on the decision-making ability of young dairy farm women in the Navsari district of South Gujarat, specifically in the talukas of Navsari, Gandevi, and Vansda. The study selected respondents from six villages using simple random sampling methods, with a total of 360 young farm women participating in the research. The ex-post facto research design was followed, which involves the collection and analysis of data from past events. The study found that the majority of the respondents had a medium level of perception about animal husbandry as an occupation. Additionally, factors such as age, education, occupation, annual income, herd size, types of ruminant kept, experience of animal husbandry, and mass media exposure were positively and significantly correlated with the perception of animal husbandry as an occupation during the study. Overall, the findings suggest that there is potential to increase the perception of animal husbandry as a viable and lucrative occupation among young dairy farm women in rural areas of Navsari district. The factors identified by the study could be used to inform interventions and policies aimed at promoting animal husbandry as a means of livelihood and economic support in rural areas.

Keywords: animal husbandry, dairy farming, perception, younger dairy farmers

INTRODUCTION

Livestock sector is prominent sector among agriculture and allied activities in India. The livestock sector alone contributes nearly 25.6 % of value of output at current prices of total value of output in agriculture, fishing & forestry sector. The overall contribution of livestock sector in total GDP is nearly 4.11 % at current prices during 2018-19 (Anon., 2019). Livestock systems operate under a wide range of environmental conditions, causing production to be increasingly affected by climate change. India is the largest milk-producing country globally, with a vast network of dairy farmers. The dairy sector supports the livelihoods of millions of rural households and contributes substantially to the country's milk production. Share of dairy income to total income had a positive and significant effect on total family income which showed the importance of dairy is much more in marginal and land less household than larger farmers (Yasmeen *et al.*, 2020). Women play significant and crucial role in agricultural development and allied fields like dairy farming, sugarcane farming, rice farming and horticulture products etc. Magagula and Tsyakirai (2022) found that economic perceptions have an influence on the intentions of youth to participate in agripreneurship. Although economic perceptions form part of how perceptions are formed, literature shows that there are also other factors that have

an impact on perceptions towards the agricultural sector. Limited attention has been paid to factors such as aspirations and perceptions and are therefore poorly understood as factors that influence youth participation in agriculture. Dairy farming is an important economic activity in the region, and women are often involved in various aspects of the industry, from milking cows to selling milk and dairy products. Overall, the perception of dairy farm women in Navsari District is complex and varies depending on factors such as social and economic status, access to resources, and cultural norms. While women's contributions to the dairy industry are significant, there is still a need for greater recognition and support to address the challenges they face.

OBJECTIVES

- (1) To know the perception of young farm women about animal husbandry as occupation
- (2) To ascertain the relationship between personal and socio-economic characteristics of younger farmwomen with their perception in animal husbandry as occupation.

METHODOLOGY

The study selected a total of 360 young farm women from three talukas in Navsari district using a combination

of simple random sampling with purposive. The selection of participants from each village and talukas using these methods helps to ensure that the sample is representative of the larger population areas. The data collection process involved the use of a well-structured interview schedule, which was administered by the researcher through face-to-face interviews. This method of data collection is useful

for obtaining detailed information from participants and ensuring that there is a clear understanding of the questions being asked. The study used descriptive statistical tools such as frequency, average, and percentage to analyze the collected data. These statistical measures help to summarize the data and provide a clear picture of the characteristics and perceptions of the young farm women in the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 : Distribution of rural youth farm women according to their perception towards factors of animal husbandry as an occupation (n=360)

Sr. No	Factors	f	%	Rank
01	Animal husbandry profession is not considered as professionals	300	83.33	I
02	Younger generation looks down upon physical work	278	77.22	II
03	Status of animal husbandry stands at lowest ladder as the occupation in society	263	73.05	III
04	Family members desire their children to select high status occupation	259	71.94	IV
05	Occupations other than animal husbandry are more lucrative options in market	238	66.11	V
06	Animal husbandry is associated with low income	222	61.66	VI
07	Youth farm women are not satisfied with their household economic conditions	213	59.16	VII
08	Dairy farmers are always at risk due to exposure of zoonotic diseases and physical injuries.	207	57.50	VIII
09	Availability of dairy nutritional information	203	56.38	XI
10	Availability of technologies to improve milk yields	193	53.61	X
11	Availability of veterinary service	177	49.11	XI
12	Availability of marketing information	158	43.88	XII
13	Availability of credit	143	40.83	XIII
14	Prices paid by buyer for milk selling	121	33.61	XIV
15	Availability of marketing information	105	29.16	XV

It appears that a study was conducted in Navsari district to determine the factors that affect the perception of rural youth farm women towards animal husbandry as an occupation. Based on the frequency and percentage of the responses, the researchers identified fifteen factors, of which five factors were considered major part of study. The five major factors identified were: Animal husbandry profession is not considered as a professional occupation (83.33%), younger generation looks down upon physical work (77.22%), status of animal husbandry stands at the lowest ladder as an occupation in society (73.05%), family members desire their children to select high status occupations (71.94%) and occupations other than animal husbandry are more lucrative options in the market (66.11%). These factors suggest that there are societal and cultural barriers to animal husbandry as a profession, and that there is a perception that it is a low-status occupation that does not offer many opportunities for career growth or financial stability. This may be discouraging for younger generations who may be looking for more

prestigious (govt or private sector jobs) or financially rewarding career paths. Onima *et al.* (2017) in their study on attitude of farmers towards farming as an occupation in Gujarat found that the majority (74.28%) of farmers agreed that farmers were least privileged category in modern society. This finding was supported by the findings of Christian and Chauhan (2019)

(1) Perception about animal husbandry occupation

It is observed from table-2 that majority (46.90 per cent) of the respondents were found with medium level of perception about animal husbandry as occupation, followed by 35.60 per cent with high and 17.50 per cent with low level of perception about animal husbandry as occupation, respectively. The might be due to variations in socio-economic and psychological characteristics of dairy farm women in selected talukas in Navsari district. Dairy Farm women's participation in dairy farming in Navsari District is significant, but their contributions are often undervalued

and unrecognized. Women’s work on dairy farms is often unpaid or underpaid, and they may face barriers in accessing resources and training to improve their skills and productivity. Widiyanti, *et al.*, (2019) and Mahammad *et al.*, (2022) indicated that youth had a positive perception of farming because of the independence factor and authority to manage time and resources in farming and make farming an alternative work choices because the job requirements in the formal sector are becoming more and more difficult.

Table 2: Distribution of the respondents according to their perception about animal husbandry as occupation

(n=360)

Sr. No	Categories	Frequency	Per cent
1	Low	63	17.50
2	Medium	169	46.90
3	High	128	35.60

(2) Association between selected socio-economic characteristics of young dairy farm women and their perception about animal husbandry as occupation

Table 3: Association between selected socio-economic characteristics of young dairy farm women and their perception about animal husbandry as occupation

(n=360)

Sr. No.	Explanatory Variables	Coefficient of correlation
X ₁	Age	0.469*
X ₂	Education	0.432*
X ₃	Type of family	0.078 ^{NS}
X ₄	Occupation	0.392*
X ₅	Marital status	-0.059 ^{NS}
X ₆	Annual income	0.545*
X ₇	Land holding	0.152 ^{NS}
X ₈	Herd size	0.423*
X ₉	Types of ruminant kept	0.625*
X ₁₀	Experience of animal husbandry	0.587*
X ₁₁	Mass media exposure	0.766**

NS=non-significant

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The data in table 3 revealed that the age, education, occupation, annual income, herd size, types of ruminant kept, experience of animal husbandry and mass media exposure found to be positive and significant correlation with perception about animal husbandry as occupation by young

dairy farm women in south Gujarat district. Whereas type of family and marital status were found to be non significant correlation with perception about animal husbandry as occupation by young dairy farm women in south Gujarat.

This suggests that these factors play an important role in shaping young women’s perceptions of animal husbandry as a viable and attractive occupation. Overall, the perception of dairy farm women in Navsari District is complex and varies depending on factors such as social and economic status, access to resources, and cultural norms. While women’s contributions to the dairy industry are significant, there is still a need for greater recognition and support to address the challenges they face. Singh (2015) reported that farmers could not fulfill their basic needs only through farm income.

CONCLUSION

Younger dairy farm women in Navsari District are increasingly involved in various aspects of dairy farming, including managing the entire milk production cycle, taking care of the animals, handling finances, and marketing dairy products. They are also being trained and educated to improve their skills and knowledge in dairy farming practices, animal health, and business management. Women’s participation in dairy farming has not only helped to increase household income but has also empowered them socially and economically. It has given them a sense of independence, self-reliance, and confidence. Additionally, younger dairy women’s involvement in dairy farming has also led to positive changes in gender roles and relationships within families and communities.

However, it is important to note that challenges and barriers still exist for younger dairy farm women in Navsari District and other parts of rural India. These challenges can include lack of access to resources such as credit, technical training, and markets, as well as cultural norms and traditional gender roles that may limit their decision-making power and mobility.

In conclusion, the perception of younger dairy farm women in Navsari District and rural India has undergone a significant transformation, shifting from traditional roles to more active and empowered roles. The participation of women in dairy farming has led to positive changes in their lives and communities. However, it is important to acknowledge that challenges and barriers persist. Ongoing efforts are being made to address these challenges and promote gender equality within the dairy farming sector. By fostering an inclusive and supportive environment, we can further empower women and ensure their equal participation

in shaping the future of dairy farming in India.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

This is to declare that there is “No conflict of interest” among researcher.

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