SITUATIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILE OF DAIRY FARMERS OF KANNUR DISTRICT IN KERALA*

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Abstract

A study was carried out to know the situational and psychological characteristics of dairy farmers of Kannur district in Kerala. Sixty dairy farmers were selected as respondents for the study by proportionate random sampling technique amongst the member dairy farmers of four milk co-operative societies identified in Kannur block. The findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents possessed small herd size, medium level of milk production (3.66 to 11.2 litres per day), medium contact with extension agency, innovation proneness, economic motivation and decision making behaviour with considerable yeasr of experience in dairy farming. Their mass media exposure was medium to high and most of them were old aged with primary to secondary education.

Key words*: Profile, dairy farmers*

India's milk production registered a quantum jump from 22.5 million tonnes in 1970-71 to 76.87 million tonnes in 1998-99 and thus reached the envious position of largest milk producer of the world (Mathur, 2001).The milk business of dairy co-operatives in India comes from more than 13 million small producers with an average herd size of just about two animals. Small and marginal farmers (< 2 hectares) together with the landless, account for more than 75 per cent of those 13 million rural milk producers who raise 60 per cent of the cattle in India (Ghanekar, 2008).

Improved productivity of milch animals and higher returns of dairy entrepreneurs crucially depend on the quality of extension services. The focus of extension is on improving the capacity of the people. This capacitating calls for providing access to information, innovation and appropriate technologies, skill and knowledge building which requires integrated, need-based and timely delivery of services as close to the people as possible (Campbell and St.Clair, 1997). A clear understanding of the situational and psychological realities of the dairy farmers is of paramount importance in designing need based and farmer centered extension programmes to improve their knowledge and skill in bringing about better productivity of the milch animals. Considering these facts, the present study was conducted with the specific objective of knowing the situational and psychological profile of dairy farmers in Kannur district of Kerala.

Materials and Methods

The study was carried out in Kannur block of the district, selected on the basis of higher milk handling capacity. From the six milk co-operative societies of the block, four *viz.,* Mayyil, Kannur, Chirakkal and Kannadiparamba societies were selected based on daily milk procurement. From the list of member dairy farmers in each of the dairy co-operatives selected, sixty dairy farmers were selected by proportionate random

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sampling technique which constituted the sample for the study. A total of 10 independent variables *viz.,* age, education, experience in dairy farming, mass media exposure, contact with extension agency, milk production, herd size, innovation proneness, economic motivation and decision making behaviour were selected for the study considering the objectives set, through the judges rating method. The selected characteristics were measured through appropriate scales and schedules.

Results and Discussion

Distribution of respondents according to their situational and psychological characteristics is furnished in the table.

The study revealed that majority (41.67 %) were old aged, nearly one-third (31.67 %) young and just over one-fourth (26.67 %) middle aged. 56.67 % belonged either to primary, middle or secondary education group, whereas 11.67 % possessed higher secondary education. A meagre 8.33 % each belonged to 'can read and write' and 'graduation and above' category. One-tenth (10.00 %) of the dairy farmers were illiterate. This is in agreement with the findings of Sudeepkumar (1992) who stated that most of the respondents belonged to old age group.

With regard to dairy farming experience, 56.67 % of respondents had more than 12 years of practice in dairy farming, 26.67

Table. Distribution of respondents according to their situational & psychological characteristics

S.No.	Attribute	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Situational Characteristics				
1.	Age	Young	25	41.67
		Middle	19	31.67
		Old	16	26.67
2.	Education	Illiterate	6	10.00
		Can read only	3	5.00
		Can read and write	5	8.33
		Primary to secondary	34	56.67
		Higher secondary	7	11.67
		Graduation and above	5	8.33
3.	Experience in dairy farming	>12 years	34	56.67
		6-12 years	16	26.67
		<6 years	10	16.67
4.	Mass media exposure	Low	5	8.33
		Medium	45	75.00
		High	10	16.67
5.	Contact with extension agency	Low	15	25.00
		Medium	34	56.67
		High	11	18.33
6.	Herd size	Small(≤4 animals)	53	88.33
		Large(>4 animals)	7	11.67
7.	Milk production	Low	6	10.00
		Medium	43	71.67
		High	11	18.88
Psychological Characteristics				
8.	Innovation proneness	Low	9	15.00
		Medium	38	63.33
		High	13	21.67
9.	Economic motivation	Low	9	15.00
		Medium	44	73.33
		High	7	11.67
10.	Decision making behaviour	Low	10	16.67
		Medium	42	70.00
		High	8	13.33

% possessed 6 to 12 years experience and the rest (16.67 %) had less than six years of farm experience. These findings are also in agreement with Sudeepkumar (1992) who reported that more than a half of the respondents had high level of farm experience.

Seventy five percent of respondents possessed medium exposure to mass media, 16.67 % & 8.33% having high and low exposure respectively. Contact with extension agency was medium in 56.67 % of the respondents, one–fourth (25 %) had low contact while the rest (18.33 %) maintained good contact with extension agency. Higher literacy rate among the respondents, availability of more number of satellite televisions, better newspaper reading habits, etc., might be the reasons for medium to high level of mass media exposure among the respondents.

Regarding herd size, a high majority (88.33 %) possessed small herd and the rest (11.67 %) had large herd. Daily milk production in majority (71.67 %) ranged between 3.66 and 11.2 litres, and 18.88 % attained over 11.2 litres per day while one-tenth (10.00 %) had low milk production.

Majority (63.33 %) exhibited medium innovation proneness while 21.67 % and 15.00 % had high and low innovation proneness respectively. The findings were in agreement with those of Manivannan (2003), who reported that majority of the dairy farmers in urban, peri-urban and rural areas of Thanjavur district in Tamil Nadu exhibited medium level of innovation proneness. This character signified that the dairy farmers were willing to try new and recent developments in scientific dairying to achieve higher production and productivity from their animals.

Economic motivation was medium in 73.33 % respondents, while 15.00 % and 11.67 % belonged to low and high category respectively. Around 70.00 % of respondents had medium decision - making behaviour, 16.67 % fell in low and the rest (13.33 %) in high category. The trend showed that the dairy farmers preferred better standards of living and were interested in earning more income by adopting scientific dairy farming practices. They were decisive and determined with regard to the actions that were concerned with efficient management of dairy enterprise to obtain better productivity and higher profit.

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