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Socio-Cultural Effect of Training and Dairy Extension Services on Milk Producers of Rural Punjab

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ABSTRACT

The research paper aimed at how milk production can be achieved by training of milk producers through extension services and training programmes in rural Punjab. During these training camps, the emphasis was on improving dairy practices like breed improvement, clean milk production, deworming, mineral mixture, feeding practices, etc. It was examined what were the perceptions and effectiveness of farmers regarding the training camps in improving the overall efficiency and socio-cultural status of the milk producers in rural villages? Although there were less women employed in the profession of dairying, how much impact the training has on their self esteem and social participation, was also examined. The objectives of the study was to study the socio-cultural profile of milk producers, study the up gradation in skills and knowledge after undergoing dairy training and finally, to study the attitudinal changes in adoption of dairy practices after attending dairy training and camps. The findings of the study were that lack of awareness, lack of finance, lack of technical guidance and higher costs remained some of the impediments which are faced by the milk producers. The study also indicated that conducting of training programmes were extremely beneficial for increasing and updating the knowledge of milk producers regarding dairy farming practices.

Key Words: Awareness, Dairy extension services, Empowerment, Social participation, Training, Women.

INTRODUCTION

Dairy farming is an age old subsidiary profession in the rural areas of Punjab. After being in the forefront of the green revolution, the state also led the country in the white revolution. The profession of dairying is strongly integrated into the crop livestock production of the state. It supplements and compliments the crop farming systems in several ways. The dairy development programmes in the state are being organised by the Dairy Development Department, Animal Husbandry department and Milkfed, etc. Ahuja and Sharma (2014) observed that 45.3 per cent farming families were not keeping any dairy animals and therefore the milk availability was only 0.456 kg/d/ family in comparison to those having 1 to 5 animals (1.2 kg/d) and more than 5 animals (1.1kg/d). Thus, the data regarding milk consumption by the farm women followed the same trend as per the availability of the milk in a family. Further, Sharma (2015) reported that poor knowledge about the nutritive value of feed ingredients (86.5%), high cost of raw feed ingredients (28%), shortage of skilled and committed labour (32.5%) were found to be major bottlenecks regarding adoption of cattle feed formulation technology at the dairy farm. Likewise, Sharma *et al* (2020) showed that for making the dairy farming a profitable market, farmers must follow the recommendations of the research institutes and take maximum care so that productivity as well as profitability can be sustained. The present study was conducted, to study the socio-cultural profile of milk producers, to examine the up gradation in skills and knowledge after undergoing dairy training, to study the attitudinal changes in adoption of dairy practices after attending dairy training and camps.

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Table 1. Socio–Cultural Profile of Milk Producers . (N=100)

Sr. No	Variable	Category	Percentage
1.	Gender	Male	88
		Female	12
2.	Caste	General	71
		SC	16
		OBC	13
3.	Marital Status	Married	83
		Unmarried	17
4.	Age (yr)	20-35	16
		35-50	70
		50-65	14
5.	Educational Qualification	Illiterate	21
		Up to 5th Matriculation	19
		10+2	34
		Graduate	17
			09
6.	Type of	Nuclear	53
	Family	Joint	47
7.	Family Size	Up to 5	48
		6-10	50
		Above 10	2
8.	Main Occupation	Dairying	54
		Agriculture	46
9.	Herd size	Small	68
		Medium	19
		Large	13

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The pretested interview schedule consisted of both closed ended and open ended questions and both quantitative and qualitative data. The secondary data were collected from books, research journals, newspaper, internet etc. Appropriate statistical tools were used for analysis of data for drawing inferences. The collected data were tabulated, classified and analysed using SPSS. The dairy milk production training programmes were conducted by the team of dairy experts in the villages of Punjab state. For the present study, five districts namely Patiala, Ropar, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar, Fatehgarh Sahib and Mohali were selected randomly. Out of each five districts, 4 villages were selected randomly. From each village, five milk producers were selected randomly. The perception survey and likert scale were used to study the respondents gain in knowledge after attending the training programmes.

Table 2. Changes brought after Attending Milk Production Training and Programmes. (N=100)

Sr. No.	Improvement in Dairy Practice	Percentage
1.	Better Animal Health Care	20.72
2.	Satisfied with Training Programmes	20.29
3.	Aspire to attend Programmes in future	19.23
4.	Mineral Mixture Feeding	8.11
5.	Growing Green Fodder	7.05
6.	Deworming	6.41
7.	Balanced Feed	5.55
8.	Clean Milk Production	4.91
9.	Better Care of Heifers	3.21
10.	Improvement in Cattle Shed	2.56
11.	Opened Milk Society	1.70

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It was found that a large majority of the milk producers were men (88%) followed by women (12%). This indicated that men predominated women as far as setting up entrepreneurship in milk production in rural areas was concerned. As far as the caste-wise distribution was concerned, a majority of the milk producers belonged to general castes (71%) followed by scheduled castes (16%) and other backward castes (13%). Incidentally, Punjab has the highest proportion (31.84%) of scheduled caste population amongst all the Indian states (Census of India, 2011). A majority of the milk producers, whether men or women, were married (83%) and 17 per cent were unmarried. The age of most of the households lies in the age bracket of 35-50 yr (70%), followed by 20-35 yr (16%) and 50-65 yr (14%). The majority of the milk producers being young and middle-aged suggested that age and that too, middle-age was the causal factor behind the earners taking to profession of milk production, a form of rural entrepreneurship. Furthermore, when the analysis of the respondents educational qualification was carried out; 34per cent were educated up to matric, whereas, 21 per cent illiterate, 19 per cent up to fifth standard, 17 per cent up to 10+2 standard and finally, 09 per cent graduates. The overall literacy rate in the state of Punjab was 74 per cent with urban and rural differentials (Census of India, 2011). This indicated that milk producers were educated up to matric and 10+ 2 levels. The distribution of type of family indicated that 53 per cent belonged to nuclear families, followed by 47 per cent joint families. It was also concluded that 50 per cent respondents were having 6-10 family members and 48 per cent were consisting of 1-5 family members, followed by 2 per cent respondents whose number of family members were above 10. Whereas 54 per cent of the respondents' occupation was dairying and 46 per cent were engaged in agricultural occupation. The distribution of herd size was 68 per cent small, 19 per cent medium and 13 per cent large (Table 1).

The feedback after attending the milk production training camps revealed better animal health care (20.72%), satisfied with training programmes (20.29%), aspire to attend training programmes in future (19.23%), mineral mixture feeding (8.11%), growing green fodder (7.05%), deworming (6.41%), balanced feed (5.55%), clean milk production (4.91%), better care of heifers (3.21%), improvement in cattle shed (2.56%) and opened milk society (1.70%). As a result of these training, eight milk societies were opened and respondents were happy to get money on fat basis from Verka. It can be concluded that majority of the respondents were satisfied with the conduct of

Table 3. Perceptions regarding Gain in Knowledge after undergoing Training. (N=100)

Sr. No.	Dairy Practice	Excellent	Very Good	Good
1.	Improvement in Breed	68	28	4
2.	Balanced Feed	61	31	8
3.	Care of animals	59	24	17
4.	Green Fodder cultivation	49	44	7
5.	Hay and Silage making	51	38	11
6.	Better Cattle Shed	47	41	12
7.	Clean Milk Production	57	33	10
8.	Marketing of Milk	67	19	14
9.	Rearing of Heifers	42	43	15

training programmes, better animal health care and the milk producers aspire to attend such training programmes in future also.

It was inferred that 68, 67, 61, 59, 57, 51, 49, 47, 42 percent of the milk producers had excellent increase in knowledge regarding improvement in breed, marketing of milk, balanced feed and care of animals, clean milk production, hay and silage making, green fodder cultivation, better cattle shed and rearing of heifers, respectively. It was also depicted that 44, 43, 41, 38, 33, 31, 28, 24 ,19 per cent of the respondents witnessed a very good increase in knowledge regarding green fodder cultivation, rearing of heifers, better cattle shed, hay and silage making, clean milk production, balanced feed, improvement in breed, care of animals, marketing of milk, respectively. It was also revealed that there was good gain in knowledge of 17, 15,14,12,11,10,8,7 and 4 per cent respondents in care of animals, rearing of heifers, marketing of milk, better cattle shed, hay and silage making, clean milk production, balanced feed, green fodder cultivation and improvement in breed, respectively.

CONCLUSION

After attending training, the respondents had brought desired changes in dairy farming practices. It was reported by large majority of the respondents that there was 1 to 2 kg increase in milk production per day per household. The study also threw light on the fact that milk production by women entrepreneurs supplemented income of the rural households. As far as social participation and women empowerment is concerned, these training programmes had an overall positive impact. However, while organizing the training programmes, time-slots, location, span of training and preferably, more women trainers should be involved. Hence forth, more such training programmes should be planned by Krishi Vigyan Kendras and Skill Development Centre, Panjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana for dairy farm women, so that it brings in social transformation in rural society. The rural development of the villages can further lead to overall inclusive and holistic development of the country.

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