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Socio-economic profile of dairy farmers in Latur district of Maharashtra

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Abstract
The socio-economic profile of dairy farmers in the Latur district of Maharashtra, India, a region characterized by its agricultural diversity and growing dairy industry. With a focus on understanding the demographic, economic, and social factors influencing dairy farming practices, this research utilizes a combination of quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with local dairy farmers. The present study was conducted in Deoni, Udgir and Ahmedpur tehsils of Latur district from Marathwada region of Maharashtra State in 2024-2025, four villages from each tehsil were selected. Total twelve villages were selected for research study. Ten respondents were selected from each village and hence 120 respondents were selected for the study. Ex-post facto research design was used for the study. As regard with the profile of dairy farmers it was observed that, 63.34% farmers belong to middle age group, about half of farmers educated up higher secondary level, more two third (62.50%) of dairy farmers have middle size family, majority (39.17%) of farmers having semi medium land holding, majority (75%.00) dairy farmers having medium level of annual income, 70.00% of dairy farmers having medium dairy experience, majority (70.00%) of dairy farmers medium social participation,74.00% farmers used medium sources of information, maximum farmers possessed medium herd size of animals, about 30.00% of dairy farmers having Tie-stall housing pattern, less than half (46.67%) of dairy farmers possessed medium category of feeding pattern, less than two third (62.50%) of dairy farmers possessed medium category of economic motivation and about three forth (75.83%) of dairy farmers possessed medium category of Market orientation.

Keywords: Ex-post facto, Latur, dairy farmers, socio economic profile

Introduction
Dairy farming is one of the important activities of the rural population of our country. The importance of the dairy, as a subsidiary industry to agriculture has stressed by the National Commission on Agriculture. Dairying is promising enterprise as far as its potential and prospects in India are concerned. Dairy development in India is the basic strategy for Dairy development aims to lift rural populations out of poverty. Its primary goal is to create income opportunities. This particularly benefits disadvantaged groups. It also improves nutrition for everyone. Milk availability is key. Dairy farming changes rural lives. It offers year-round employment. Beyond farming, dairy boosts income. It raises family diets. It helps reduce rural joblessness. India leads the world in livestock numbers. India has nearly 14 per cent of the world's buffaloes. It also holds over 35 per cent of the world's cattle. These figures come from the 20th livestock census.

India leads global milk output. It accounts for a quarter of world production. Milk offers vital vitamins and minerals. Calcium in milk supports bone health. The dairy sector is India's largest farm sector. It adds 5% to the economy. This sector grew 6.4% in five years. About 150 million families globally produce milk. Small farms in developing nations rely on milk. Milk production aids their income, food, and health. Buffalo milk is key to India's economy. It provides needed nutrients. It fuels the economy. It supplies protein for food. India's milk supply per person is high. It is 471 grams daily. This exceeds the world average of 322 grams. India's total livestock count reached 535.78 million.

This includes cattle, buffalo, sheep, goats, pigs, horses, mules, donkeys, camels, mithun, and yaks. Cattle represent the largest portion, numbering 192.49 million. This total is comprised of 50.42 million exotic cattle and 142.11 million indigenous cattle. Cattle make up 35.94 per cent of all livestock. The 2019 census recorded 192.49 million cattle. This is a slight increase of 00.08 per cent from the 2012 census. Overall livestock numbers grew by 04.06 per cent since 2012. The bovine population, which includes cattle, buffalo, and yak, was 302.79 million in 2019. This indicates a 01.00 per cent rise from the prior census. The number of milk-producing animals, both in milk and dry, among cows and buffaloes increased by 06.00 per cent. There are now 125.34 million such animals. Female cattle numbers saw a significant jump of 18.00 per cent. In 2019, there were 145.12 million female cattle. Exotic and crossbred dairy cattle rose by 26.09 per cent to 50.42 million. Indigenous dairy cattle grew from 48.12 million to 142.11 million, a 10.00 per cent increase. The count of cows and buffaloes currently in milk rose to 125.34 million from 80.52 million, a 06.00 per cent increase. The 20th Livestock Census reported a 04.06 per cent decrease in total livestock compared to 2012. However, states like Uttar Pradesh showed different trends (20.00%), Rajasthan (16.00%), Madhya Pradesh (10.00%), Andhra Pradesh (10.00%), Gujarat (09.00%), Panjab (08.00%), Maharashtra (08.00%) and Haryana (07.00%) have shown an increase in their total livestock population. The total livestock population of Maharashtra state according to 20th Livestock Census (2019) is 3.31 million. Total cattle population in Maharashtra was 13.90 million which was 07.22 per cent and total buffalo population in Maharashtra was 05.60 million which was 05.10 per cent of national population. First milk scheme was started at Udgir region of Maharashtra state in the year 1971 in Deoni and non-descript cows of dual purpose animals are attracted by farming community of this region. In addition to cattle, buffalos are also reared with the objective of milk production, mostly non-descript ones, however breeds like Muraha and Jafrabadi buffalos are maintained by the farmers for higher milk production. Due to massive cross breeding programme taken up by the state department and also by Bhartiya agro industries foundations, the cross-breed progeny are coming up in this area. These cross-breed animal are meant only for milk production. However, only selection of animal does not solve the problem, management of livestock is much important factor for increasing the productivity.

Objective

To study the socio-economic profile of dairy farmers.

Materials and Methods

This research took place in Latur district, Maharashtra. This district is in the Marathwada region. Latur district has ten sub-districts. These are Latur, Chakur, Renapur, Ahmedpur, Shirur (Anantpal), Jalkot, Udgir, Deoni, Nilanga, and Ausa. We chose three of these sub-districts. We picked Deoni, Udgir, and Ahmedpur. This choice was made because these areas have many dairy farmers. We then selected four villages from each chosen sub-district. Again, this selection was deliberate. This gave us twelve villages for our study. From each of these twelve villages, we randomly chose ten farmers. This resulted in a total of 120 farmers. These farmers participated in the study as respondents. The study used an ex-post-facto research design. Data was gathered directly from the farmers. We used interview schedules that were tested beforehand. This data collection happened at the farmers' homes or farms. The gathered information was then organized. It was put into tables and analyzed. We used simple statistical methods for analysis. These included frequency counts, calculating means, and percentages.

Results and Discussion

It was observed from Table 1 that, 63.34% farmers belong to middle age group, about half of farmers educated up higher secondary level, more two third (62.50%) of dairy farmers have middle size family, majority (39.17%) of farmers having semi medium land holding, majority (75%.00) dairy farmers having medium level of annual income, 70.00% of dairy farmers having medium dairy experience, majority (70.00%) of dairy farmers medium social participation,74.00% farmers used medium sources of information, maximum farmers possessed medium herd size of animals, about 30.00% of dairy farmers having Tie-stall housing pattern, less than half (46.67%) of dairy farmers possessed medium category of feeding pattern, less than two third (62.50%) of dairy farmers possessed medium category of economic motivation and about three forth (75.83%) of dairy farmers possessed medium category of Market orientation. It was found that, more than more than two third (70.83%) of dairy farmers had medium level of adoption of management practices whereas 20.00 per cent and xiv 9.16 per cent of dairy farmers had low and high level of adoption management practices respectively. Similar findings were noticed by Londhe (2015) [4], Gupta (2017) [2] and Thul (2018) [7].

Conclusion

It was observed that, less than two third of dairy farmers were from middle age, more than half of dairy farmers had education up to higher secondary school, less than two third of the dairy farmers had medium size of family, majority of the dairy farmers belongs semi-medium and to small land holding category, about three fourth of dairy farmers had medium category of annual income, approximately two third of dairy farmers had medium level of dairy experience, while more than two third of the dairy farmers had medium social participation, about three fourth of dairy farmers had medium category of sources of in-formation, about half of the farmers had the medium herd size, majority of farmers had Tie-stall housing pattern, less than half of dairy farmers had medium category of feeding pattern, nearly two third of dairy farmers had medium category of economic motivation and about three fourth of dairy farmers had medium category of market orientation.

Table 1: Distribution of farmers according to their profile

Sr. No	Category	Farmers (N=120)	
		Frequency	Percentage
A. Age			
1	Young (Up to 25)	28	23.33
2	Middle Age (26 to 48)	76	63.34
3	Old age (Above 48)	16	13.33
B. Education			
1	Illiterate (1)	6	05.00
2	Primary School (2)	8	06.67
3	Secondary School (3)	15	12.50
4	Higher sec. School (4)	62	51.67
5	Graduation (5)	18	15.00
6	Post-Graduation (6)	6	09.16
C. Family size			
1	Small (Up to 3)	22	18.33
2	Medium (4 to 8)	75	62.50
3	Large (Above 8)	23	19.17
D. Land holding			
1	Marginal (Up to 1 ha)	22	18.33
2	Small (1.01-2 ha)	34	27.50
3	Semi-medium (2.01-4ha)	47	39.17
4	Medium Farmers (4.01-10 ha)	15	12.50
5	Large Farmers (10.01 and Above ha)	3	02.50
E. Annual income			
1	Low (up to 80000)	13	10.83
2	Medium (80001 to 376000)	90	75.00
3	High (376001 and above)	17	14.17
F. Dairy experience			
1	Low (Up to 7)	17	14.17
2	Medium (8-16)	84	70.00
3	High (17 and above)	19	15.83
G. Social participation			
1	Low (up to 20)	18	15.00
2	Medium (20-36)	84	70.00
3	High (36 and above)	18	15.00
H. Sources of information			
1	Low (Up to 33)	21	17.50
2	Medium (34 to 58)	74	61.67
3	High (59 and above)	25	20.83
I. Herd size			
1	Small (Up to 3)	38	31.67
2	Medium (4-8)	60	50.00
3	Large (9 and above)	22	18.33
J. Housing pattern			
1	Loose housing (1)	28	23.33
2	Tie-stall housing (2)	36	30.00
3	Free stall housing (3)	27	22.50
4	Constructed housing (4)	29	24.17
K. Feeding pattern			
1	Small (Up to 3)	43	35.83
2	Medium (4-6)	56	46.67
3	Large (Above 6)	21	17.50
L. Economic motivation			
1	Low (Up to 11)	26	21.67
2	Medium (12-24)	74	61.67
3	High (25 and above)	20	16.66
M. Market orientation			
1	Low (Up to 8)	10	08.33
2	Medium (9-23)	91	75.83
3	High (24 and above)	19	15.84

Conflict of Interest
Not available

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