

Role of Cooperative Dairy Movement in Gender Equality with reference to Kolhapur District (M.S.)

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1. Introduction:

Involvement of Indian women in national progress at multiple levels is an indisputable reality, although the degree of their involvement varies according to time and region. Dairy management in rural India is increasingly becoming a female activity. Millions of poor women in rural India work hard in dairying. Dairy production is traditionally an important source of livelihood for the rural population of India and an integral part of the crop-livestock production system. Cattles and buffalos are fed on by-products of the crop-production and in turn provide dung to increase fertility of the fields and are a source of draft-power. Milk, butter and ghee produced within the household are an important source of nutrition for the families and with increasing market access, allow for a regular cash inflow. This is, however, not only specific to India but prevails all over the developing world. Studies in India show that despite women being intricately involved in management of the dairy farm, their role remains unrecognized as an economic activity, and they are relegated mostly to the background, providing a support role, without being credited at the professional or monetary front. However, little research has been conducted on the role of dairy cooperatives in gender equality. Against this background the present study endeavors to investigate the position and status of women in the dairy industry and their participation in the different activities of dairying vis-a-vis their control over the resources.

According to Roy and Niranjana (2004), cited in Ibrahim & Alkire (2007), Empowerment is associated with indirect indicators like Education and work participation of women, and direct indicators of female autonomy (empowerment) such as decision making, mobility and access to economic resources that can be viewed both as an outcome and a process. This paper proposes to examine the role of dairy cooperatives in gender equality by focusing on the three dimensions of women's empowerment; Social, Economic and Political.

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2. Research Methodology and Data Collection:

2.1 Sampling:

This is an empirical study aimed at finding out the level of Gender Equality from Dairy cooperatives. The study employs both qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the questions. The study is with special reference to dairy cooperatives from Kolhapur district of Maharashtra. The primary dairy cooperatives are selected by purposive sampling technique. The present study was conducted in 28 women Dairy societies of 25 villages from 11 talukas of Kolhapur district. 6 women dairy farmers were selected randomly from each of dairy society to represent the group. Thus a total of 140 women dairy members were selected for the study purpose. The dairy Societies selected were from three different dairy Unions of Kolhapur district viz., Kolhapur Zilla Sahakari Dudh Utpadak Sangh Ltd (Gokul Dairy), Shree Warana Sahakari Dudh Utpadak Prakriya Sangh Ltd, (Warana); Shri. Hanuman Sahakari Dudh Vyavasaik Va Krushipurak Seva Sanstha Ltd, Yalgud (Sahakar). Women dairy Cooperatives Members, Board of Directors, Chairpersons as well Office Bearers have been selected for the study. The interviews were realized in the absence of male family members to minimize bias. The data was collected through personally interviewing the respondents with the help of a pre-tested structured interview schedule. The responses were scored, quantified, categorized and tabulated using frequencies and percentage.

The Secondary data was collected from related to dairy societies from their annual reports, written material on the dairy cooperatives and text book related articles, journals periodicals. The statistical tools such as scaling techniques, averages were applied for the analysis of the data to know extent of women empowerment among the dairy members.

The primary data was collected with the help of questionnaire which includes questions on economic gains, Awareness of Cropping pattern, Awareness of dairy cooperative membership, Milk production, dairy activities, Dairy Production/Income activities and dairy Expenses. Questions relating to decision making activities like control over and use of income, ownership of assets / Purchases, Sale or transfer of assets, access to and decisions about credit, leadership and public speaking ability were also asked. The questionnaire was framed considering the following objectives.

2.2 The objectives of the study are:

1. To assess the knowledge and adoption level of scientific dairy management practices by women dairy members;
2. To analyse the socio economic conditions of women members in dairy cooperatives.
3. To assess the decision making behavior of the women members in dairy management activities.
4. To analyse the income utilization from dairy by women members.

2.3 Rational of study:

Kolhapur District was princely State ruled by Chh. Shahu Maharaj. Due to his progressive reformist leadership and encouragement Kolhapur district leads in industrialisation, Agriculture and education. At present, Kolhapur District is having about 10,000 total Cooperative Societies comprising of 1504 PACS, 62 Urban Cooperative Banks, 17 Cooperative Sugar Mills, 47 Cooperative Spinning Mills and Others. The district has a unique feature that, there are two well known and few more milk processing Unions in cooperative sector in kolhapur. The two well-known milk unions, viz. Kolhapur District Sahakari Dudh Sangh (Gokul) and Warana Sahakari Dudh Sangh cover almost all Kolhapur district. There are in all about 2755 Milk producers cooperative societies with total membership of 3.41 Lakhs in Kolhapur district and one of the Primary Dairy Cooperative Society; Hanuman Sahakari Dudh Sangh, Yalgud, is also processing milk and it has number of by-products. In the district the total milk procurement is Rs.323.32 crore and total sellout price is about Rs.600.54 crores. With such a massive cooperative structure in general and dairy cooperative movement in particular is the reason for choosing the dairy for the research. Kolhapur district provides a wide canvas and opportunity for women to participate in to social, economic and political fields.

2.4 Summary of Profiles of selected Women Dairy Cooperative Societies:

The primary data was collected from below mentioned women dairy societies. These dairy cooperatives special features are given briefly below.

2.4.1 Kolhapur Zilla Sahakari Dudh Utpadak Sangh Ltd (Gokul Dairy)

The Kolhapur Zilla Sahakari Dudh Utpadak Sangh Ltd., Kolhapur was established on 16th March 1963 under Co-operative societies Act. Initially the dairy started with

collecting 700 liters of milk per day from 22 primary co-operative societies. The Kolhapur Zilla Sahakari Dudh Utpadak Sangh Ltd market its milk with its popular brand 'Gokul'. At present the dairy has 3501 numbers of members with milk handling capacity of the 7 Lakh Liters per day and chilling centers is 5.25 lakh liters per day. Gokul's annual turnover is Rs.1728 crores. The Milk is been collected from 1433 villages in and around the Kolhapur district with 307 milk routes for Milk procurement every day. During the year 2015-2016, the average milk procurement was 9.81 Lakh Liters per day. Gokul produces products like Milk, Shrikhand, Ghee, Table Butter, Dahi, Skimmed Milk Powder, Desi Butter (Desi Loni), Lassi, Paneer, Cooking Butter, Full Cream Shrikhand-Mixed Fruit ,Table Butter Chiplet. The Gokul dairy offers various schemes for their dairy members. The schemes have played important role in maintaining the quality of the milk as well increasing milk collection.

Gokul has established "Women Leadership Development Cell" separately since 1995. The cell is constituted of qualified and experienced five women officers from Dairy, who in turn developed other 22 resource persons. These women are well educated, young and enterprising. They have their own cattle and they are milk producers. They work honorary with Gokul and attached to primary milk cooperatives. These women not only train the members in dairy activities/ business but encourage them in social-economic activities through practical training, competitions and counseling through experts. Gokul has provided them all infrastructure for grass root level continuous interaction. They have earned confidence of men also. The cell solves the day to day problems of primary dairy cooperatives and become a bridge between all members and Gokul. The activities, performance of Women Leadership Development Cell are personally monitored by the Managing Director of Gokul.

2.4.2 Shree Warana Sahakari Dudh Utpadak Prakriya Sangh Ltd.,

The Warana Sahakari Dudh Utpadak Sangh was established on 20th July 1968. The dairy has most hygienic plant of milk processing with the capacity of 10 lakhs liters per day. The dairy has acquired the ISO 9001-2008 and H.A.C.C.P. food safety certificate. The turnover of dairy is Rs 900 crores per annum. The large scale training camps are being organized at the women and farmers level to improve the feeding and management status. Warana Dairy established BMC units at different places

to maintain and enhance the quality of milk. The dairy has cattle feed plant 100 MT/Day capacity. Warana dairy produces various Milk and Milk products like Pasteurized Milk, Ghee, Butter, Cheese, Paneer, Chass, Dahi, lassi, ice cream, Packaged drinking water and many more. The product Shrikhand has set a record of highest selling in India.

2.4.3 Shri Hanuman Sahakari Dudh Vyavasayik & Krishipurak Sewa Sanstha Maryadit, Yalgud

The dairy was established on 14th July 1967 primarily to collect milk from milk producers and to supply milk to the government milk scheme. Its main objective is to aid and provide assets in the form of milch animals and increase milk production. There were total 797 members of the society. The primary societies are located nearby Yalgud. They distribute milk & milk products in Kolhapur, Ichalkaranji, Miraj, Nipani, Jat and Kawathemahankal. The annual turnover of dairy is Rs 33.19 crores.

The research team visited Kolhapur District two times for 4/5 days each time. During these visits researchers covered 11 blocks out of 12 blocks of Kolhapur districts. From each block, the team visited 2/3 Primary Dairy Cooperative Societies (PDC's) mainly women Primary Dairy Cooperative Societies and very few general dairy cooperative societies. The oldest dairy cooperative society is established in 1972 and the youngest one in 2011. The maximum membership of the selected PDC is 650 and minimum member is 80. The maximum share capital of a PDC is Rs. 2.5 lakhs whereas the minimum share capital is Rs.2900/- only. Most of the PDC's have their own buildings and very few (6 nos.) operate from rented buildings. It is observed that most of the villages have more than 3 PDCs in one village and as much as 7 PDCs in a village. This has affected badly on the milk collection of the PDCs and their financial position. One of the PDC is collecting merely 55 liters a milk per day whereas the maximum milk collection per day by a society is 2800 liters per day. It is further observed that the most of the PDCs are working on minimum surplus or rather cost to cost basis.

2.5 Limitations of Study:

1. Kolhapur District is geographically very large district and hilly, due to paucity of time the Research Team could not visit PDCs in interior part of blocks. Due to distance and time one block, Bhudargad also could not be covered.
2. Kolhapur District though has a good literacy rate; the communication had limitations due to language differences.

3. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS:

3.1 Personal profiles of the respondents:

The personal information of the respondents like Membership, family type, age and educational qualification are categorized below:

Table 1: Personal Information

Dairy Membership	
Member	102
Non- Members	38
Total	140
Family Type of the Respondent	
Joint Family	47
Nuclear Family	93
Total	140
Age wise Category	
Below 25	6
26- 35	37
36-45	59
46-55	20
Above 56	21
Total	140
Education Qualification	
Uneducated	30
Below 10	52
SSC	38
HSC	13
Graduation	6
Post graduation	1
Total	140

The above table shows the personal information of the respondent. The table shows that:

- Total of 140 respondents were selected from Gokul, Warna and Yalgud dairy. Out of 140 women members 102 were holding membership and 38 were non members. Of the 102 members 2 were board of Directors, 3 were Chairman, 1 was director and 3 were dairy cooperative society's secretaries.
- Out of 140 respondents, 47 respondents were in joint family type and 93 respondents were in nuclear family. The dominant family system among the members is the nuclear family System.
- Most of the respondents were between the age group 26years to 45years. 59 respondents were in the age group of 36years to 45years. Nearly 40 respondents were from the age group of above 50 years.

- 30 of the respondents were illiterate, 13 respondents completed their twelve years of schooling. 52 respondents were below SSC. Since the young age group is only 6 respondents, the graduation and post-graduation respondents were very less. Only 7 respondents were graduation and post graduation. The most literacy level of the members of the study was school level.
- 138 women were Hindus and belong to open castes. Two women belong to Muslim.
- Nearly 130 women were married, ten were widows. The household size is between two and nine members.
- Out of 140 respondents, 128 respondents were agricultural, 132 respondents were involved in agriculture, dairy farming and home makers. The main occupational background among the members was agriculture and dairy farming.

3.2 Membership Profile of the Respondents:

- The members have experience level from 4-20 years tenure of membership in the society.
- The majority of the respondents stated that main reason for joining the dairy Co-operative society is for regular income, loan facility and regular milk collection by the society.
- The majority of the sample members owned 2-3 numbers of animals.

3.3 Awareness of cropping pattern:

Table 2: Cropping pattern

Awareness of Cropping pattern	Score
Crop Grown	92.85%
Land Area (acre)	88.57%
Output	82.14%
Qty. Sold	69.28%
Price (Rs)	66.42%
Unaware	7.14%

- Nearly 88.57 percent respondent have the own land.
- The households are small and marginal farms with less than one hectare land.
- The average land holding is 1.20acres. 12 households owned more than five hectares of land. 7 respondents are unaware of their land holding.

- 82.14 percent respondent was aware of the output of their grown crop. 66.42 percent respondent was aware of the price which is been grown in the land.
- 66.42 percent respondent the market value of the crop. Nearly 7.14 percent respondents are unaware of what is been grown in their own land.

3.4 Awareness of Dairy cooperative membership:

Table 3: Dairy cooperative membership

Dairy cooperative membership	Score
Which household member(s) is/are shareholders?	Women members Aware – 90.70% Unaware – 9.30%
Year of membership in Cooperative:	91.42%
Did you ever attend a Dairy co-operative meeting?	57.71%
How many times did you attend a dairy training?	64.28%

- 90.70 percent of respondents were aware of shareholders in dairy cooperative societies.
- 91.42 percent respondents were aware of their membership starting year with the dairy cooperative society.
- Only 57.71 percent of respondents participate in regular meeting. 64.28 percent of respondents have attended the training programmes offered by dairy.

3.5 Information regarding dairy cooperative:

Table 4: Information regarding dairy cooperative

Who gave you information regarding dairy Cooperative?	Score
Family members	42.21%
Dairy co-operation	40.71%
Neighbors	6.42%
Nobody	5.71%
Others	5.0%

- The majority of the respondents' main motivators to join the society were family members, dairy cooperatives and friends.
- Nearly 42.21 percent respondents got the information regarding the dairy cooperatives from their own family members.
- 40.71 percent of the respondents were motivated by the dairy cooperative members.

3.6 Benefits from Dairy cooperative society:

Table 5: Benefits from Dairy cooperative society

Which benefits do you get from co-operative membership?	Score
Higher Price	67.14%
Input supply	49.28%
Processing	53.57%
Veterinary services	82.85%
Credit	57.14%
Marketing	55.71%
Training	67.14%
Others	-

- The most important benefits perceived by dairy cooperative members are the supply of concentrated feed stuff, the provision of veterinary service, and a higher price paid.
- 82.85 percent respondent perceived that veterinary service as the benefit.
- 67.14 percent respondent feels they get higher price for their milk. 67.14 percent respondents feel that training is other benefit from the dairy cooperative.
- 57.14 percent respondents feel that loan credit is also an important benefit from the dairy societies.
- 53.57 percent felt processing and 55.71 percent felt marketing are other important benefits that they avail from the dairy cooperative societies.

3.7 Awareness of problems faced from Dairy cooperative society:

Table 6: Awareness of problems faced from Dairy cooperative society

Which problems do you face regarding your cooperative membership?	Score
Delayed payment	0.00%
Low price	0.00%
Increased workload for yourself	0.00%
Difficulties to attend meetings	0.00%
Too strict controls for quality	6.18%
Others	0.00%

None of the respondents faced problems. Only 6.18 percent respondents state that they face problem of too strict quality controls.

3.8 Economic situation among the members:

Table 7: Economic situation among the members

How did your economic situation change since you entered the co-operative?	Score
Worse	0.00%
Same	13.57%
Better	86.42%

- Majority 86.42 percent of respondents felt that the economic situation is better since joined the dairy cooperatives.
- 13.57 percent respondent felt that the economic situation prevail to be same.

3.9 Awareness level of the Women members about the dairy Society:

Table 8: Awareness level of the Women members about the dairy Society

Awareness level of the Women members about the dairy Society?	Score
What is the Share capital of the Society	2.85%
Have you ever read the By- Law of the Society	10.71%
Does Dairy own its Building?	71.42%
Where does the Dairy owns its bank Account	65.71%
What is profit& loss Account?	12.14%
Where does the procure milk go?	74.28%
When do you get Meeting Notice?	68.57%
Do Subject of the meeting mentioned in notice	66.42%
Does the Society perform election for the members?	46.42%

- Only 2.85 percent respondents are awareness of the share capital of the society.
- 10.71 percent of the respondents are aware of By- Laws of the society.
- Majority of the women respondents say 71.42 percent were aware about the dairy building.
- Maximum of 65.71 percent respondents are aware of where the dairy holds its bank account
- 12.14 percent of respondents know what profit & loss account is all about.
- Majority of 74.28 percent respondents know where the procured milk goes.
- Nearly 68.57 percent respondents are aware of meeting notice.
- 66.42 percent of respondents know about the subject of the meeting.
- 46.42 percent of the respondents are aware of the society's election for members.

3.10 Status of Dairy Activities Performed by Women members:

Table 9: Performance of Dairy Activities.

How do you milk the cows?	Score			
Manual	97.85%			
own machine	0.00%			
in dairy community center	2.14%			
Who is mainly carrying out:	Women	Joint	Maid	Others
- milking the cow(s)	72.85%	17.14%	0.71%	9.28%
-feeding the cow(s)	63.57%	25.00%	0.71%	10.71%
-grazing the cow(s)*	45.71%	31.42%	0.71%	15.00%
-taking care of calve(s)	60.00%	15.71%	0.71%	23.57%
-taking the milk to the dairy	63.57%	22.14%	0.71%	13.57%
- shed and animal cleaning	73.57%	19.28%	0.71%	6.42%
- receiving weekly payment	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

(*7.14% don't not graze their cattle)

The above table depicts the work carried out by the women herself during the process of milk production and cattle management.

- Majority of the 97.85 percent of respondents milk their cattle manually.
- Only 2.14 percent of respondents milk their cattle in dairy community centre.
- None of the respondents milk their cattle by own machine.
- 72.85 percent of respondents perform the activity of milking the cow by self.
- 17.14 percent of respondents perform the milking activity by both self and husband.
- Only one respondent out of 140 had kept maid to perform the activity of milking the cow.
- 9.28 percent of respondent say that other members like their son, father-in- law, Mother – in – law, perform the activity of milking the cow.
- According to the feeding of the cow, 63.57 percent respondents say they themselves perform the feeding activity.
- 25.00 percent respondents say that both they and their husband perform the activity of feeding the animals.
- Marginal percent say 0.71 and 10.71 percent say the feeding activity is performed by maid and other members respectively.

- With regard to grazing of animal 45.71 percent of the women members themselves perform the activity.
- 31.42 percent of the respondents say that they and their husband perform the grazing activity of the cow. 0.71 percent of the respondent said that the grazing activity is performed by maid. 15.00 percent respondents said that the other members in the family perform the grazing activity. Important point to be noted that 7.14 percent women members said that they don't perform the activity of grazing the cow.
- According to the activity of taking care of the calves 60.00 percent of the respondents said that the activity is performed by themselves.
- 15.71 percent women members said the activity is performed by both by them and their husband. 0.71 and 23.57 percent of respondents said that maid and other members in the family perform the activity of taking care of the calves respectively.
- The activity of taking the milk to dairy is mostly performed by the women member's themselves. 22.14 percent respondents said that the activity of taking the milk to dairy was performed by themselves and their husband. Only 0.71 percent respondent said that the activity is performed by their maid. 13.57 percent of the respondents said that the other members in the family perform the activity of the taking the milk to the dairy.
- Regarding the activity of cleanness of shed and animals, most of the 73.57 percent of women members perform the activity. 19.28 percent of respondents said the cleaning activity is performed by themselves and their husband jointly. 0.71 percent of the respondents said the activity of the shed cleaning and animal cleaning is performed by their maid. 6.42 percent of the activity is performed by other members in the family.
- 100 percent of the women members receiving the payment from the dairy within 10 days.
- 68.46 percent women themselves perform the overall dairy activities. 18.67 percent of the overall activities are performed by themselves and their husband. 11.22 percent of the overall activities are performed by other family members.

3.11 Awareness of Dairy Production/Income among the women members:

Table 10: Awareness of Dairy Production/Income among the women members

Dairy Production/Income			
	Morning	Evening	Total
Quantity of milk in liters for all cows.	693.8 liters	602.1 liters	1295.9 liters
Home consumption in liters	193.5 Liters		
Awareness of Milk Price	At the cooperative		At private sale
Price for a liter of milk (Rs)	58.57%		0.00%

The quantity of milk produced from all animals of one household is between 2 liters per day, on average, 9.2 liters per day. The milk yield per lactating animal was between 1.2 and 12 liters per day. Members keep a smaller share of the milk produced for home consumption. Average consumption of home consumption is 1.3 liters per day. Out of this quantity butter and ghee is produced for home consumption. 58.57 percent of the respondents are aware of the price of milk per liter at the dairy cooperatives. None of the respondents are aware of the milk price at private dairy.

3.12 Awareness of Dairy Expenses among the women members:

Table 11: Awareness of Dairy Expenses among the women members

Awareness of Dairy Expenses (for all cattle)	Score
Feed for cows per month	79.28%
Medicine and veterinary service per year	63.57%
Labor per month	1.42%
Other costs (specify)	0%

The above table shows the awareness level dairy expenditure for all cattle among women members. The table depicts that 79.28 percent of the respondents are aware of the expenditure cost spent by them for feed stuff for cattle's. Most of the respondents said that the feed for the cattle is utilized from their own farm land. 63.57 percent of the respondents are aware of the expenditure made by them on medicine and veterinary service and 1.42 percent of the respondents spend on labor charges for maid.

3.13 Decision making status among the women members over Crop & Dairy Activities:

The table no 12 shows the decision making status of women members in the dairy. It depicts that:

- Especially, 85.82 percent of respondents said the decisions about which inputs to buy is mainly taken care of the male member independently in the house.

Whereas 8.47 percent of respondents contribute their decision along with their male members towards the buying of crop inputs. Only 5.71 percent of the respondents said that they independently take decision regarding the buying of agricultural inputs.

- The decision about crops to grow is decided by the male members in the household of the respondents. 87.15 percent respondents said the decision regarding the crop to be grown is decided by their male members, often taken without consulting their female members. Only 4.28 percent woman states that she takes decisions on her own about which crop to be grown. 8.57 percent of women perceive the choice of crops to grow as a joint decision.

Table 12: Decision making status among the women members

Domain		Score
Crops	Who takes decisions about which inputs to buy?	Women – 5.71% Joint – 8.47% Others - 85.82%
	Who takes decisions about which crops to grow?	Women – 4.28% Joint – 8.57% Others -87.15%
	Who takes decisions about when and who takes crops to market/sales-man?	Women – 10.71% Joint – 15.71% Others -18.57% Unaware – 55.00%
Dairy	Who takes decisions about construction of cattle shed?	Women – 08.30% Joint – 07.85% Others -83.85%
	Who takes decisions about selection of breeds?	Women – 12.85% Joint – 15.71% Others -71.44%
	Who takes decisions about management of fodder?	Women – 49.28% Joint – 22.85% Others -27.85%
	Who takes decisions about health care of animals?	Women – 37.85% Joint – 15.71% Others -46.42%
	Who use of income from milk?	Women – 35.00% Joint – 12.71% Others -52.29%
	Who takes decisions about the sale of milk?	Women – 37.85% Joint – 15.71% Others -46.42%

- According to the decisions about marketing of crops, 10.71 percent of respondent takes decision independently. 15.71 Percent respondents said the decision is taken jointly and 18.57 percent respondents said the decision is taken exclusively by male members in the family.55.00 percent of the respondents are unaware of the subject.
- 49.28 percent of respondents said that decisions regarding the management of feed and fodder of dairy animals are done by the women herself.22.85 percent respondents' doe's joint decision. 27.85 percent of respondents are done by their male members
- Male dominate in the decision making of construction of cattle shed (83.85%), selection of breeds (71.44%), health care of animals (46.42%). 52.29 percent of respondents said that the use of income from milk is done by male members, 35.00 percent only by women and 12.71 percent are done jointly.
- Male Members of the respondents are more empowered to take production decisions in dairy farming as well.

3.14 Decision making status among the women members over use of income:

Table 13: Decision making status among the women members over use of income

Control over and use of income	Score
Do you have a bank account?	Hold Bank A/c -74.28% Doesn't hold Bank A/c 25.72%
Do you alone have any money you can decide what to spend on?	32.85%
Do you keep record of your income and expenses?	32.14%
Who takes decisions about minor household expenditures (e.g. food, cloth, cooking utensils, ornaments)?	Women – 48.57% Joint – 18.5% Others -32.85%
Who takes decisions about large household expenditures (e.g. furniture, bike, ceremonies)?	Women – 31.42% Joint – 17.14% Others -51.42%

From the above table it clearly states that,

- 48.57 percent of the respondent's decision-making about minor household expenditures is done by women only. 18.5 percent respondents perform it jointly and 32.85 percent are done only by men.

- Decision regarding large household expenditures is mainly done by male with 51.45 percent. 14.14 percent respondents said large house hold expenditure decisions are shared by both them and their husband.
- The 74.28 percent women dairy member own bank account and 32.85% women alone can decide what to spend on and 32.14% keep record of your income and expenses

3.15 Decision making status among the women members over Access on credit:

Table 14: Decision making status among the women members over Access on credit

Access to and decision on credit	Score	Who made the decision what to do with the money from (source)?
NGO	10.00%	Women – 5.15% Joint – 10.01% Others - 84.84%
Informal lender	4.28%	
Formal lender (Bank/Institution)	19.28%	
Friends, relatives	0%	
Micro credit SHG	8.57%	
Dairy Cooperative	12.85	
Other source (specify)	0%	
If you're household didn't take any credit, why not?	0.7%	

- Almost 19.28 percent of the households have loans from formal lenders like banks. 12.85 percent of households access loans through dairy cooperatives.
- 84.84 percent of the respondents said that the decision on the expenditure on loan money is performed by male members independently.
- 10.01 percent decided jointly and only 5.15 percent women decided autonomously about the expenditure of the credit money.

3.16 Decision making over Ownership of assets / Purchase, Sale or transfer of assets

According to the table no 15, regarding land, 75.44 percent the respondents felt that a decision about sale/purchase of land would be taken by male members in the home like either husband, father in law or son without consulting them. 8.85 percent of respondents assume that they them self would take the decision to sell and purchase land without consulting others. 15.71 percent of respondents presume that their husbands would take the decision to sell and purchase land with consulting them. It seems that even though

women usually don't own land they considerably participate in decisions about this important asset.

Only 12.85 percent of women own agricultural land. Considering decision-making about sale and purchase of large animals the situation is similar. Most women state that both decisions are taken jointly regarding sale and purchase of large and small animals. Nevertheless, a notable minority of women feel that their male members in their family take the decision to sell or purchase large and small livestock with low or no female participation

Table 15: Decision making status among the women members over Ownership of assets / Purchase, Sale or transfer of assets

Ownership of assets / Purchase, Sale or transfer of assets	Score	Who can decide whether to Purchase/sell/give away the item?
Agricultural land	12.85%	Women – 8.85% Joint – 15.71% Others - 75.44%
Large livestock (cattle buffalo	8.5%	
Small livestock (goat, sheep, pig)	45.00%	
Poultry	0%	
Farm equipment	8.57%	
Means of transportation (bike, car, cycle, truck, bullock cart)	72.85%	
Cellphone	49.28%	

3.17 Decision making status among the women members over leadership role

Table 16: Decision making status among the women members over Group member

Are you active member in any groups/association:	Score	Have you ever had a leadership role in this group?
- producer/marketing group (not dairy co-operative)	2.85%	4.02%
- water user's group	0%	
- forest user's group	0%	
- credit or microfinance group	0%	
- mutual help or insurance group	0%	
- trade and business association	0%	
- civic/charitable group	0%	
- local government (Panchayat)	2.14%	
- religious group	0.71%	
- women's group	65.71%	
If not member in any group, why not?	0%	

The above table no: 16 depicts that 65.71 percent of the respondents are members in Mahila Mandal group. The 2.85%, 2.14% and 0.71% of respondents are active members

in producer/marketing group, local government group and religious groups. The remaining women don't participate in any group, mostly because of a lack of time availability. Other reasons for non-participation are lack of saving capacity, restrictions imposed by the husband/ mother in law and personal conflict. 4.02 percent of the respondent women hold or have held a leadership role in producer/marketing, local government, religious and women's groups.

3.18 Status of Leisure of Women Dairy Members

The table 17 shows that 45.71 percent of the respondent women feel comfortable speaking publicly among women groups. When it comes to groups of mixed gender, 31.42% of members feel comfortable speaking up in public and 22.85 percent responded that they never speak in public. The interviewed women have free time including resting, eating, watching TV and social activities. However, the large majority of 87.14 percent women are satisfied with their free time. The interviewed women spend most of their time for house hold activities, agriculture and dairy related activities such as feeding, cleaning the cattle shed and taking the milk to the cooperative.

Table 17: Status of Leisure of Women Dairy Members

Leisure	Score
Do you feel comfortable speaking up in public, if only women are present?	45.71%
Do you feel comfortable speaking up in public, if also men are present?	31.42%
Never Speak	22.85%
Are you satisfied with your time available for leisure activities such as visiting friends, watching TV, joining festivities, going to temple?	87.14%
Do you go for Tour/ Picnic during vacation?	62.85%
Who decided the venue for the vacation?	Women – 47.14% Joint – 10.71% Others - 42.15%

4. Socio – Economic status of Women:

From the study it shows the income from dairying is found to be relatively more important to landless, small and marginal rural households. Hence dairy cooperatives provide an opportunity to tackle rural poverty. On the other hand, households that own more land can also keep more dairy animals and benefit more from Dairy Cooperative Societies in absolute terms because of the availability of fodder from their own fields. According to the data accessed in this study it is suggested that women are more likely to

spend extra income on nutrition and family maintenance. In the sample, women who are cooperative members are less empowered to take independent decisions about dairy production as compared to the men. The higher economic significance of dairy farming in complete terms and the requirement to incur higher expenses, e.g. for the purchase of cross breed cows and improved feeding, may explain the higher involvement of men in the dairying. There is significant need and time has come to give importance for involvement of the next generation, especially young boys and girls from the cooperative members' households. The increased male participation in dairy production doesn't translate into a more equal decision-making about the household and farm economy as a whole, since control over crop production for women remains low in member households.

5. Summary of Findings:

The present study has focused on different dimensions of economic empowerment and gender equality among the women members in dairy cooperative societies in Kolhapur district. The aim of this study is to contribute to the understanding of the impact of members in a dairy cooperative on women equality and empowerment. The data indicates that households who sell through dairy cooperatives produce marginal amounts of milk per day and achieve reasonable returns per day from dairying. This is due to a small number of animals as well as a low productivity per animal. The share of dairy income is relatively higher for member households, especially, for small and marginal farmers. The study implies that the members feel averagely empowered in terms of access to and control over credit, including the participation in groups and the ability to express ones opinion in public.

In the sample, women who are cooperative members have very low levels of empowerment and Gender Equality regarding leadership and access to and control over credits.

6. Suggestions:

- Increasing women membership in dairy cooperatives can recognize the potential of this segment as decision makers having practical knowledge about animal husbandry practices.

- Members need to participate in various training programmes, which included repository of individual skills available within the organization to facilitate quick strategic manpower decision-making.
- Special incentives should be given to the women dairy cooperative societies in order to encourage participation of women in governance of the cooperatives

7. Conclusions

The Cooperative Dairy movement aims to enhance the Gender Equality and empowerment of women members and women dairy societies in the district of Kolhapur. It has facilitated marketing of their milk and enabled them to earn more income, generating employment opportunity, get training in the cattle management etc. Gokul has also supported the 'future' of its members as well to keep the milch animals by implementing insurance schemes. Dairy co-operative societies have also inculcated a habit of thrift and savings by making them to use banking facilities availed to the members. It is observed that, Kolhaupur Zilla Sahakari Dudh Utpadak Sangh Ltd (Gokul Dairy) plays a significant role in women empowerment and equality to uplift the lives of rural women. As dairy cooperatives are run on democratic system, they have inculcated in the farmers a more democratic approach regarding the problems of their lives and also increased their awareness of their rights in society.

The study discovers that most of the cooperatives members-producers are small and marginal farmers with less than two hectares of land. Additional cash income is essential for them to maintain the household and farming economy. Even though women are traditionally responsible for dairy farming and provide most of the labour force for dairy production, gender aspects were largely ignored by policy-makers when establishing dairy cooperatives. Till date most of the village dairy cooperatives are managed and controlled by men. Women's role is generally limited to the domestic sphere and women participation in economic activities is restricted. With growing interest in the promotion of women economic autonomy by Gokul dairy in the last few decades' attention is focused increasingly on women's participation in dairy cooperative societies. Considering this, women dairy cooperative societies have been established instead of conventional mixed-gender cooperatives, with the idea that these would be more effective in promoting gender equality and empowering women in social status.

From the present study, it is identified the gradual impact on women empowerment and gender equality in women dairy co-operatives societies. No doubt that the earnings from the dairy cooperatives women achieve self reliance, to educate their children, participation in other social organizations, to uplift their live hood etc. In rural areas women members in the society are becoming self reliant, no doubt they improve in the standard of living gradually.

Finally, it is observed that the women members of cooperative dairy societies are on the path of Gender Equality and empowerment through social activities, progressive participation in economic activities. However, they have to go miles ahead in political equality and empowerment. This is challenge before the Cooperative Dairy Movement of Kolhapur district.

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