

# ROLE OF COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN RURAL AREAS

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## ABSTRACT

*Empowerment of women is a new ideology for carrying democratic values into the family and society. Empowerment of women means equal status to women. Women and children, equal ownership of productive resources, increase participation in economic and commercial sections, awareness of their rights and responsibilities.*

*Rural women suffer the curse of being both socially and economically 'invisible'. The civil society organizations work towards making them visible in these areas. Among these organizations, one with an open membership and democratic control, i.e., a cooperative organization will be more effective than other organizations working for the promotion of social and economic development. A dairy cooperative is one such civil society organization which aims at improving the rural people. Dairying has been an agriculture allied sector and indoor economic activity for women living in rural areas. It gives mass employment and thereby helps to promote economic development of the rural masses. Rural landless, small and marginal agricultural farmers and women are involved in the process of milk production. Dairy cooperatives, as workers level socio-economic organizations, have been working for the strengthening of the rural masses. In this context, the present study aims at examining the Social Change and Economic Development of Rural Women through Dairy Cooperatives. The purpose of the study specifies that the socio- and economic background, awareness of dairy cooperatives and participation of rural women members in dairy cooperatives have helped them achieve social change and economic development.*

**Keywords:** *Cooperative, Women empowerment, Economic, Rural areas, Dairy cooperatives, Mass employment*

## 1. Introduction

The strength of chain is the strength of its weakest link. In a society, women are the weakest links, so that they may be strengthened for strengthening the society as a whole and that is possible only by empowering them. It is said, "Women should be uplifted for the upliftment of the nation, if a woman is uplifted, society and nation is uplifted." Empowerment of women is essential to harness the women labor in the mainstream of economic development. Women either solely or largely support an increasing number of families. In Chhattisgarh the cooperative movement was sponsored by the Government of India. Initially it started as a credit movement of small size with a limited volume of operations. Consequently it spread to diverse spheres of economic activities and has grown into a massive complex organization. Cooperatives are socio-economic development organizations of the people. Cooperatives are founded on the principle of equality and equity. Their plan is to effect social advancement through economic improvement. The success or failure of a cooperative is judged by its economic performance and its social service to the community. An organization with an open invitation and democratic control has more impact than other types of civil society organizations working for upholding social change and economic development.

## Review of literature

**A.Paramasivam<sup>12</sup> (2005)** attempts to study the growth and development, quantity of milk procured and sold, and profitability position of selected Primary Milk Producers Cooperative Societies (PMPCSs) in Tirunelveli District Cooperative Milk Producers Union Limited, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu. The secondary data for the period of 1992-2002 was collected from the records of concerned societies. The study found out that the spread 15 of PMPCSs succeeded to make a laudable increase in not only the total membership but also the network of its activities, the quantity of milk supplied by the selected PMPCSs to the union registering a growth rate of more than 6 times and the number of societies making profit has gone up from 114 in 1992-1993 to 206 in 2001-2002. The researcher suggested and concluded that the membership coverage must be widened, new societies must be started in the areas uncovered by the existing societies, all dairy loans sanctioned by the commercial banks must be channelized through the dairy societies and payment for the milk supplied must be prompt and transparent

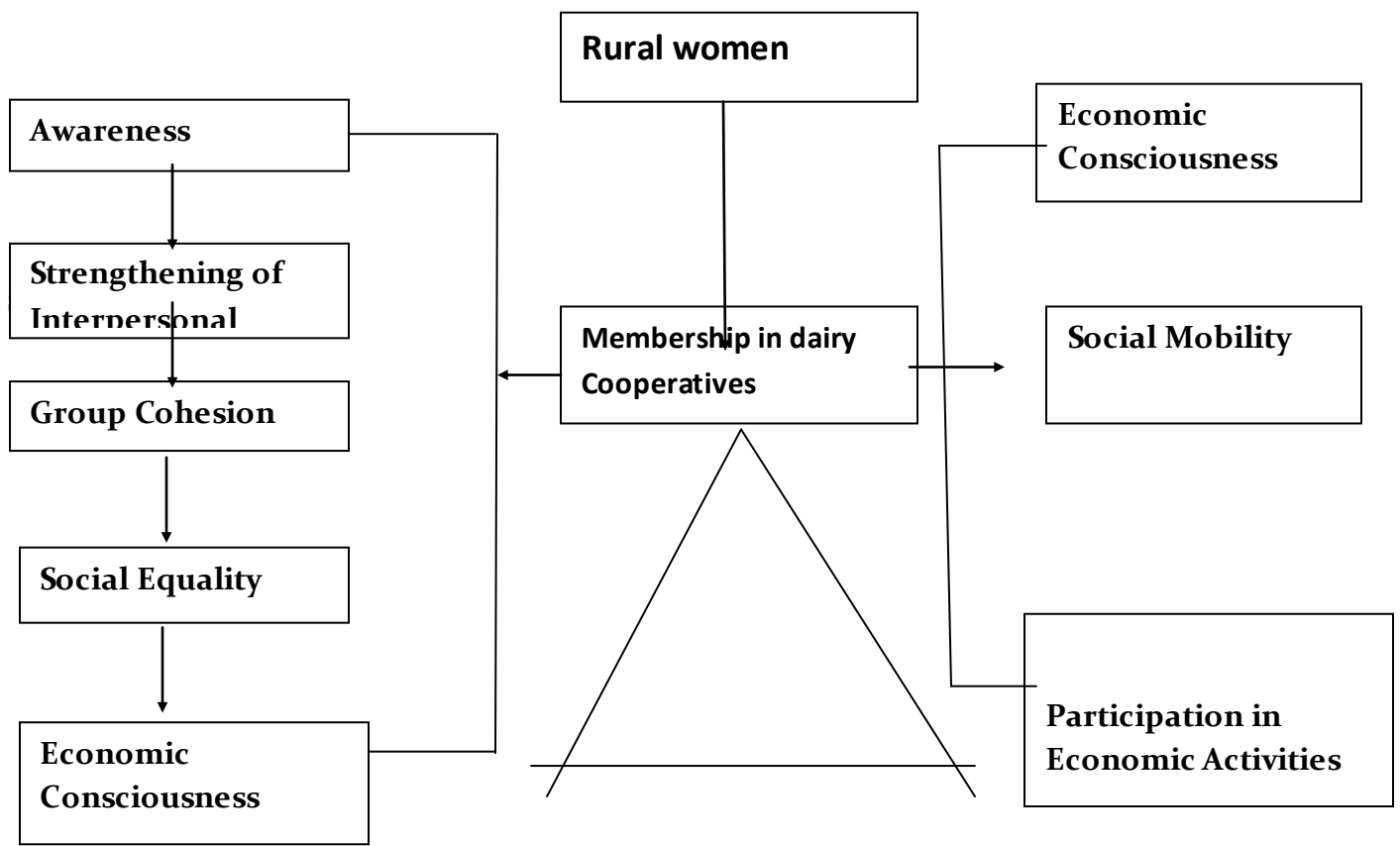
**P.Raji Reddy<sup>14</sup> et al. (2006)** analysed the factors for growth, efficiency, and thereby employment, income generation and women empowerment. They studied 200 sample farmers by adopting survey method. Respondents were selected at the rate of 50 each from four selected villages. The study revealed that four-fifths of members belong to farm size groups of less than 5 acres, dairy has provided monthly revenue in the range of less than Rs. 10,000 for about one-fourth of respondents and cent per cent respondents have perceived the income and employment benefit from dairy cooperatives. The study concluded that the overall effect of the union on 17 effective participation in the dairy operations and the positive impact on economic gains and qualitative aspects may reflect in the empowerment of women.

**K. Sivachithappa<sup>23</sup> (2002)**, analyzed millions of man-hours of work is generated right in the back-yard of several lakhs of farmers household spread over thousands of villages producing a flood of milk and resulting in perennial flow of cash into village economy. It revealed that although the income from dairying forms a small percentage of the gross village product, it has a myriad of multiplier effects having far reaching impact on socio-economic fabric of the village. It also revealed that the dairying as practiced sensitizes the village community to several changes such as discipline by way of waiting in queue, either to pour milk or to receive payment and improved the time sense to catch up the milk lorry twice a day. The researcher suggested that day-today management of the institution necessitate medium and long term planning to meet the needs of the dairy farmers, diversion of dairy cooperative profits for village improvement, gradually improves the management skills and promotes development of leadership traits. The researcher concluded that the dairy development activities are being extended further to touch every nook and corner of the country ushering in white revolution and making an impact on 24 the socio-economic front of the rural scene.

**K. N. Ramanujam<sup>24</sup> (2003)**, examined role of cooperatives in milk marketing venture, through his work "A study on the Distribution of Milk and Milk Products by Cooperatives". The study suggested that while fixing the price for milk and milk products both Governments and Federation have to consider the cost of unions, in order to reduce the cost the unions should pay to the vehicles route wise, instead of kilometer wise and milk products may be transported during the same time while milk is distributed, and enterprise resource planning may be strengthened by using computers. The researcher concluded that sound distribution system of milk and milk products is a must for an effective marketing. Then only our country will emerge as the world's leading dairy nation.

Social Change and Economic Development of Rural Women through

Dairy Cooperatives - A Conceptual Framework



**Factors for development**

**Awareness** Rural women are getting basic development information and **fruitful** knowledge on ways to achieve the production of high quality milk and milk products through PMPCSs. They become aware of the utility of milk production and its related business dealings. Awareness induces them to enlarge their knowledge of animal husbandry practices and milk marketing networks. Moreover, awareness programme of PMPCSs present them with the basic insight of cooperation and the way to live as a fine social being.

**Strengthening of Interpersonal Relations** While participating in the meetings of General Body and the Board of Directors and being the basic component of cooperatives, rural women build up strong interpersonal relations with employees and other members of their PMPCS, irrespective of their socio-economic status, caste, religion, etc. This enhances common kindness with neighborhood and other women in the village community. By having pleasant relations with other members in the neighborhood, and sharing growth information and production knowledge with others, rural women can improve their capacity and prospective to tap the hidden values and skills in individuals. In other words, 41 membership and participation in PMPCS can enhance leadership qualities of women.

**Group Cohesion** Through group solidarity, women in rural areas can develop their skills and potential to make better decisions not only on issues and concerns of health care and medical facilities, but also on their children’s education and in the well-being of the family members. PMPCSs provide chances for them to extend their problem solving capacity and abilities to manage gender issues. Collective decision making strengthen the socioeconomic base of rural women and their families.

**Social Equality** PMPCSs are legally created democratic bodies. So women in the villages can have equal opportunities to contribute in all the meetings, development planning and verdict making process in PMPCSs. They can freely complete their views and concerns in general body meetings and even directly to the employees. The equal opportunity for rural women in PMPCSs foster their managerial skills and democratic attitude, which in turn promotes the familial and national development. As a result, they get due respect by the family members, society and community in the development works and celebration of ceremonies.

**Social Mobility** While rural women have understanding on community, society and themselves, good interpersonal relations with employees and other members of PMPCSs and cohesion with neighborhood, it is possible for them to enhance their social mobility. By having active membership and involvement in the collective action of basic level organizations, women can afford to change and challenge the traditional principle. It will make them to move from lower to higher level in the community, village and society. As a result, they can get better positions in other socio-economic organizations and will gain desired goals and will increase larger acceptance.

**Economic Consciousness** Women in rural India are gaining avenues for developing their economic positions through dairy cooperatives. They get awareness and understanding on economic independence. Dairy cooperatives make rural women realize their full ability, capability and potential for the economic betterment. It makes them to be aware of their own duties, rights and tasks in the family, community, and society. The dairy cooperatives pave the way for improving their attitudes, values, insight and consciousness in relation to their economic position. The economic consciousness creates desire for rural women's self-development and induces them to engross in extra income producing activities.

**Participation in Economic Activities** Participation in productive activities is the important factor for an individual's economic improvement. To achieve long term economic improvement, constant participation is necessary. Enrollment as members of Primary Milk Producers Cooperative Society (PMPCS) is readily accessible for rural women. As members of PMPCS, they can take part not only in the day-today business transactions but also in the production and distribution of milk and milk products.

### **Status of Dairying in Chhattisgarh**

The dairy cooperative societies of the country are federated into 198 district milk producer unions, which in turn have 22 state cooperative dairy federations. There are 421 dairy cooperative societies are registered and having 18923 registered members. Chhattisgarh State Cooperative Dairy Federation (CGCDF) playing an important role in development of dairy industry of the state.

**Production and per capita availability of milk in Chhattisgarh**

Year	Production (000 tonnes)	Per Capita Availability (gms/day)
2000-01	777	100
2001-02	795	105
2002-03	804	103
2003-04	812	102
2004-05	831	103
2005-06	839	103
2006-07	849	102
2007-08	866	103
2008-09	908	106
2009-10	956	110
2010-11	1029	117
2011-12	1119	129

**General Objective of the Study**

The main aim of the study is to examine the Social Change and Economic Development of Rural Women attained through Dairy Cooperatives in Chhattisgarh.

**2. Conclusion**

Bringing women into the mainstream of development has thus been major concern of the government since independence. In order to empower and bring them into the mainstream, an enabling environment with requisite policies and programmes, training at various levels and adequate financial resources has all along been tried and created an awareness among the women perspective towards empowerment. A **dairy cooperative** is one such society organization which aims at improving the rural people especially women. Dairying is certainly an agriculture allied sector and indoor economic activity for women living in rural areas. It provides mass employment. There exists a relationship between the social and economic background of rural women members of dairy cooperatives and their level of awareness of dairy cooperatives. Higher the level of awareness of rural women members, the greater will be the level of their participation in dairy cooperatives. And is thereby correlated with the extent of their participation in dairy cooperatives. The conclusion of the present study is that there is a positive relationship between the socio economic and supporting background and awareness level of the women through different approach and change of the mindset towards earning level and empowerment.

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