

Enhancing Livelihoods of Rural Women through Livestock Farming

Collective actions coupled with the adoption of improved science and technology accelerate the attainment of gender equality

Kulumai Milk Producer Company

Context ●●●

Agriculture is the major livelihood in semi-arid agro-ecosystems in Reddiarchatram Block, Dindigul district. Sugarcane, banana, paddy and vegetables were the dominant crops cultivated intensively in all three seasons in the past. But in the recent past, it has been shifted to maize, cotton and vegetables and is reduced to just one season rather than two to three seasons. Groundwater levels have been declining drastically as well. Animal husbandry has now turned out to be the main source of income for small and marginal farmers and farm labourers in the district.

Lack of quality-based pricing, late payments and lack of transparency in measurements are the major challenges in selling milk to the local traders. The public extension system is inadequate to provide vet care services and technological innovations related to livestock management including the use of machinery for feed preparation and milking. Ultimately farmers end up with an increase in production costs. On average, 30 per cent of the production cost is for animal health care, about Rs 1000-1500 per month/animal. Similarly, there is an increasing dependency on concentrate feeds, which is also partly responsible for the spike in production costs by up to 30 per cent.



25 milk collection centres

●●● Intervention

Kulumai Milk Producer Company Limited (KMPCL) is formed by 135 milk producer's activity groups of small-scale dairy producers, predominantly women from 45 villages. The main objectives are building the capacity of women in scientific technologies, facilitating credit linkages, and input and output market services. The aggregation and marketing of milk to processing units are prioritized among the different services. It is accomplished through a marketing agreement between the KMPCL and the milk processing company. Village-level milk collection centres with quality milk analyser facilities were established across 25 villages and women members in the respective villages are trained as centre managers. A weekly payment system is ensured, and all payments are made through bank transfer to the account of women producers.





40
women
para-vets



Outputs

- * Twenty-five milk collection centres established in partnership with the milk processing unit and the average milk collection is 4,500 litres/day.
- * Earning higher income up to due to Rs. 4000 per animal/month, due to quality milk production with the higher fat content of milk
- * Self-milking was first introduced among ten women milk producers in one village and later it was extended to 250 members.
- * Forty women dairy producers from 25 villages were trained as Para-veterinarians.
- * Eight hundred and fifty members accessed the services and reduced animal health expenses to an extent of 20 to 25 per cent.

Outcomes

Collectives and social capital to access productive resources and services: 43 women's groups at the village level are linked with the farmers collective which facilitates a bundle of services to the members including bank linkages and convergence with line departments for entitlements. Otherwise accessing the services as individual women is very challenging due to gender-based constraints.

Women's leadership - Role models - 40 women para-vets are serving as role models and getting additional year-round employment opportunities.

- The adoption of catalytic technologies by women supports them to take a lead in managing the dairy enterprise without much dependence.

- Women receive payment to their bank account within a week which supports them to take part in the decision-making process at the household level.

- The dependence on the informal milk vendor for marketing and the intermediary loan was eliminated.

- The women's collective took a dealership for concentrate feed from feed mills and provides a bundle of services that are necessary for milk producers. This reduces the time and energy spent by women in sourcing the different services on their own.



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