

## **SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF LIVESTOCK FARM WOMEN OF THIRUVALLUR DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU**

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**Abstract:** A careful study of the socio economic conditions of livestock farm women is a prerequisite for the suitable design and successful implementation of Governments' developmental programmes. The purpose of this study is to provide such information through survey and description of absolute and relative socioeconomic conditions with emphasis on education, employment, income levels from livestock and other farm and nonfarm activities of livestock farmers of Thiruvallur district of Tamil Nadu, whose numbers have been increasing rapidly in recent past. Thus study was therefore designed to appraise the socio-economic profile of livestock farm women in Thiruvallur district of Tamil Nadu. Results of the study revealed that majority of the farm women were young, illiterate and maintaining nuclear family with less than five members. Most of them belonged to either landless or marginal land holding group and availing credit from private sources. Most of the farm women had low level of annual income, livestock possession, mass media exposure, economic motivation and cosmopolite-localite contact. Their level of social participation was of medium nature with high level of extension agency contact.

**Keywords:** Livestock farm women, farm women, home management, age, annual income, livestock possession, mass media exposure, economic motivation

### **Introduction**

Women as a significant human resource can play their role effectively if they are provided equal opportunities and status as those of the men. Rural women participate in the agricultural activities such as agriculture labour, working in the family, farm land holding, dairying and animal husbandry either directly or indirectly (Team and Cheryl, 2011; Arshad *et al.*, 2010; Pal, 2013). Aggregate data showed that women comprise about 43 per cent of the agricultural labor force globally and in developing countries (FAO, 2011). Women play significant and crucial role in agricultural development and allied fields like dairy farming, mushroom production, pisciculture etc.

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Investigations have shown that conventional indices for the evaluation of the level of inequalities between men and women, such as education and literacy level, do not show enough sensitivity to inequalities and do not reflect on the prevalent discriminations existing between two genders in the society, because, in reality, there also exist several other social, cultural, and psychological indices, such as the level of domestic violence, movement freedom, gender attitudes among women, self-confidence, self-efficacy, and the like, affecting women's situation in the society (Nussbaum, 2001).

Moreover, according to the data of World Bank (2013), global female labour force participation is around 50 per cent. But, in fact, less value is given to their contributions, and rural women are less likely to realize their capacity to make a life better for themselves, families and communities (Akinsanmi, 2005).

Keeping these points in mind, a study was undertaken to find out the socio-economic profile of livestock farm women.

### Materials and Methods

The present study was conducted in Thiruvallur district of Tamilnadu State of India. The district has 10 blocks, out of which one block i.e. Kadambathur was selected as it ranks first in livestock population. From the identified block, five villages falling within radius of 20 kms from each direction of the block headquarter were selected. The selected villages are Kadambadur, Kannur, Kilacheri, Mappedu and Pinjivakkam.

**Fig.1 Study area**



Twenty farm women having at least 2 numbers of livestock in each of the five selected villages constitute the sample size for the study. A well-structured pre-tested interview schedule was developed for collecting data from the respondents according to the objectives of the study. Data were collected from the respondents by conducting personal interview.

## **Results and Discussion**

The results of the investigation carried out are presented through the table.1 showing the socio-economic profile of the farm women.

### **1. Age**

It could be observed from the table that over one half (53.00 %) of the farm women involved in livestock enterprises belonged to young age group followed by middle (27.00 %) and old (20.00 %) age group. The reason for the majority being in the age group of young and middle in livestock farming activities may be due to their capacity for physical exertion. The other reason may be that the young and unmarried women prefer their enterprise for self-employment in addition to their home management. The reason for the low involvement of old women in this enterprise might be due to the physical exertion by way of cutting grass, cleaning of cattle sheds, milking, carrying the milk to the society tea stall etc. for marketing. This finding is in line with the findings of Bhole and Parki (1998) and Nisha (1996) who reported that higher proportion of farm women labourers were young in age. The result of this study was contrasting with findings of Thirunavukkarasu *et al.* (2014) who reported that most farmers were young and Badiger *et al.* (2010) who observed that most farm women were middle aged (above 35 years).

### **2. Education**

The table-1 reveals that exactly one half (50.00%) of the respondents were illiterates, whereas an almost equal per cent of respondents belonged to primary (21.00 %) and secondary (26.00 %) school level and only 3.00 per cent were educated upto higher secondary level. None of the respondents were educated upto collegiate level. This might be due to the reason that women need to look after the home affairs and traditionally they were not encouraged by their parents to go for higher education. The finding is in line with the findings of Nagabhushanam and Nanjaiyan (1998) who reported that 28.30 per cent of farm women were illiterates.

### **3. Nature of the family**

Majority (59.00 %) of the farm women had nuclear family, while the remaining 41.00 per cent had joint family. It could be observed that more than one-half (54 per cent) of the farm

women had less than five members in their family, while their remaining (46.00 %) were having more than five members. This finding is in line with the findings of Bhople and Patki (1998) and Yadav and Grover (2012) who revealed that 68.00 per cent and 55.00 per cent of farm women labourers belonged to nuclear type of families

#### **4. Occupation**

From table-1 it is clear that majority (61.00 %) of the farm women were involved in home management, agriculture and dairy activities, while the remaining (39.00 %) had home management, dairying, and other jobs as their occupation. Majority of the farm women belonged to marginal farmer category, which necessitated them to take up any one of the subsidiary occupation to improve their economic status.

#### **5. Livestock possession**

More than one-half (53.00 %) of the farm women respondents maintained small livestock units, followed by large (36.00 %) and medium (11.00%) livestock units.

This may be due to the limited land holdings and lack of grazing facilities in addition to lack of proper marketing facilities for their products. An overwhelming majority of the respondents were either landless or having marginal land holdings and their capacity to maintain the animals naturally was difficult.

#### **6. Farm Size**

More than one-half (56.00 %) of the farm women belonged to marginal farmer category followed by landless (33.00 %) and small (10.00 %) farmer category. The farmer having large land holding is negligible (1.00 %). The reason attributed for majority of farm women belonging to marginal category may be due to fragmentation, which is a common phenomenon in the nuclear family system than the traditional joint family system.

#### **7. Annual income**

Table-1 reveals that an equal proportional of the respondents belonged to low (50.00 %) and high (50.00%) income groups. The reason might be that most of the respondents hailed from the family of agricultural labourers with limited resources. Those who are having land holdings naturally earn more additional income than that of their landless counterparts. This findings is in accordance with the findings of Govind *et al.* (1992) who found that nearly two-thirds of the farm women involved in farm and home activities had lower annual income. Results of Yadav and Grover (2012) was contrast to this findings where the total income from dairy for men and women was in the middle category (63% and 58%) followed by low (30% and 37%) and high (7% and 5%) respectively.

## **8. Social participation**

Majority of the respondents (83.00 %) belonged to medium level of social participation followed by almost an equal percentage belonged to high (8.00 %) and low (7.00 %) level of social participation. A very meagre per cent of farm women did not have any organizational participation. The medium to high level of organizational participation might be due to the active role of magila mandals in the study area. The reason for the low participation might be the inherent traditional restrictions of the society.

## **9. Mass media exposure**

It is evident from the Table-1 that 57.00 per cent of the farm women had low level of mass media exposure followed by high (43.00 %) level. Illiteracy, poor socio-economic status and lack of leisure time might have deprived them from getting access to various mass media sources. This is in accordance with the findings of the Nisha (1996) who reported that 53.00 per cent of dairy farm women had low level of mass media exposure.

## **10. Extension agency contact**

It could be observed that majority (58.00 %) of the respondents had medium to high level of extension agency contact and others (42.00 %) with low level of extension agency contact. This may be due to the reason that farm women got in touch with extension agents only for getting information on the availability of credit and during disease outbreaks.

## **11. Economic motivation**

It is evidenced from the Table -1 that almost an equal number of farm women were having medium to high (58.00 %) followed by low (42.00 %) economic motivation. This may be due to the fact that young, educated farm women have the urge to earn more so as to improve their standard living. This is in line with the findings of Senthamarai *et al.* (1997) and Kaur *et al.* (2007)

## **12. Credit behaviour**

It is evident from the table that 45.00 per cent of the farm women availed credit while the remaining 55.00 per cent had not availed any credit provided by various sources. Among those who availed credit, majority (40.00 %) of the respondents obtained credit from private sources followed by nationalized banks (31.00 %), Co-operatives (22.00 %) and traders (7.00 %). This finding is in conformity with the findings of Theivavirutham,(1997).

### 13. Cosmopolite-localite contact

It was found that one-half (50.00 %) of the respondents have low level of cosmopolite local contact followed by high (40.00%) and medium (10.00 %) levels, which may be due to the existence of traditional norms and beliefs. Nisha (1996) recorded similar results.

#### Conclusion

It could be concluded that majority of the farm women were young, illiterate and maintaining nuclear family with less than five members. Most of them belonged to either landless or marginal land holding group and availing credit from private sources. Most of the farm women had low level of annual income, livestock possession, mass media exposure, economic motivation and cosmopolite-localite contact. Their level of social participation was of medium nature with high level of extension agency contact.

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**Table-1 Socio-personal Profile of Livestock Farm Women (N=100)**

S.No.	Characters	No.	Per cent
<b>1</b>	<b>Age</b>		
	16-29 years (Young)	53	53.00
	29-42 years (Middle)	27	27.00
	42-55 years (Old)	20	20.00
<b>2</b>	<b>Education</b>		
	Illiterates	50	50.00
	Primary	21	21.00
	Secondary	26	26.00
	Higher secondary	3	3.00
	Collegiate	0	0.00
<b>3</b>	<b>Nature of the family</b>		
	Nuclear family	59	59.00
	Joint family	41	41.00
<b>4</b>	<b>Occupation</b>		
	Home management, agriculture and dairy	61	61.00
	Home management, dairying, and other jobs	39	39.00
<b>5</b>	<b>Livestock possession</b>		
	Low	53	53.00
	Medium	11	11.00
	High	36	36.00
<b>6</b>	<b>Farm Size</b>		
	Landless	33	33.00
	Marginal	56	56.00
	Small	10	10.00
	Big	1	1.00
<b>7</b>	<b>Annual income</b>		
	Low	50	50.00
	Medium	0	0.00
	High	50	50.00
<b>8</b>	<b>Social participation</b>		
	Low	7	7.00
	Medium	85	85.00
	High	8	8.00
<b>9</b>	<b>Mass media enclosure</b>		
	Low	57	57.00
	Medium	0	0.00
	High	43	43.00
<b>10</b>	<b>Extension Agency Contact</b>		
	Low	42	42.00
	Medium	12	12.00
	High	46	46.00
<b>11</b>	<b>Economic Motivation</b>		
	Low	42	42.00
	Medium	17	17.00
	High	41	41.00
<b>12</b>	<b>Credit Behaviour</b>		
	Private Source	40	40.00
	Traders	7	7.00
	Nationalized bank	31	31.00
	Co-operative bank	22	22.00
<b>13</b>	<b>Cosmopolite-localite contact</b>		
	Low	50	50.00
	Medium	10	10.00
	High	40	40.00

N= Number of observations