



**Research Article**

**EXPLORING THE INVOLVEMENT PATTERN OF RURAL WOMEN IN DAIRY ENTERPRISE AT MANIPUR**

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**ABSTRACT**

In the changed scenario there is a critical and utmost need to empower the rural women through involving them in different other vocations than agriculture as the growth of crop production and earning from it is stagnant now a days. In this perspective, the rural women in the state of Manipur are doing a remarkable job in case of involving themselves in dairy farming. Consequently, the present study was conducted to assess the overall involvement of women in dairy farming in Manipur state of India. In this study, overall involvement has been conceptualized as the composite form of physical involvement and decision involvement. Three districts of Manipur namely, Imphal East, Imphal West and Thoubal were selected for the study. Purposive, multistage as well as simple random sampling procedures were followed in this study. The total sample constitutes hundred women dairy farmers. The overall involvement has been taken as the predicted variable. Other than these 19 predictor or independent variables has been considered to characterize the overall involvement of women in dairy farming. The selected respondents were personally interviewed with the help of a structured interview schedule. Majority of the respondents are under the group of low level of overall involvement, 42.19-56.83 (75%). The result reveals that the variable caste, mobility of women and management orientation is negatively and significantly associated with the overall involvement of women dairy farmers. Multiple regression analysis of overall involvement of women with the 19 predictor variables reflects that the variables such as caste and economic motivation are negatively and significantly contributing towards characterizing the overall involvement of women in dairy farming. On the contrary, the variable farm power is positively and significantly contributing towards characterizing the overall involvement of women in dairy farming.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Dairying is an important means of livelihood to millions of rural farmers. Increasing demand for milk and milk products in recent years intensifies dairy farming as profitable enterprise for women (Mohapatra, *et al.* 2012). Dairy enterprise has been emerged as an important tool for socio economic upliftment and supplementing the income and employment to the women. Almost half of the (48.27%) women of our country are mostly associated with the sustainable household activities; not only that but also women are critical to the wellbeing of farm household. Dairy farming also can be a potential way to empower rural women. It is estimated that women compose around two thirds of the 400 million poor livestock keepers who mainly rely on livestock for their income (FAO 2011 and 2012).

Therefore, women can be regarded as the prime mover of the agriculture and livestock sector besides managing their household. Now-a-days empowerment of women is one of the highlighted issues in the development process across the whole country. Hence, there is a need to empower the women not only economically, but also technically, socially and the most important through up-to-date knowledge and skills. Women's decision-making freedom is often linked to whether she is engaged in gainful economic activities or not. Her economic activity and economic contribution helps women to gain more power in making decisions. So to empower women through a holistic approach needs an in-depth assessment of their overall involvement both in terms of their participation in dairy farm activities and also in the decision making process. Several studies have highlighted the activities of women in dairy are preparing and providing feed and water of the animals, caring the health of the animals during sickness, pregnancy, processing activities like purchasing and disposing animal, selling of milk and better management through cleaning of animal shed, milking and making cow dung cake etc. These

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women despite the fact that they are performing several farm activities, their roles have been overlooked by agriculturalist and policy makers as they have less access to improved dairy technology, credit, training etc. But their significant contribution in agriculture and allied sector cannot be neglected. The state of Manipur is associated with dairy farming mostly the women are rearing the livestock, taking care of the livestock nurturing the livestock in the healthy condition. Rearing of dairy animals is an old aged tradition since time immemorial. In such a research situation there is a need to re-emphasize the role of farm women in household activities, livestock rearing, farm activities and in decision making process. Therefore, the present study aims to explore the areas of women’s overall involvement pattern through involvement by physical means and decision making in dairy farming.

**METHODOLOGY**

The study was carried out in Manipur state of India. Purposive, multi-stage and simple random sampling procedures were followed in the present study. The districts Imphal East, Imphal West and Thoubal were selected purposively. Three blocks namely Imphal east I, Imphal west I including Thoubal were selected randomly from the selected districts. Three blocks namely Imphal east I, Imphal west I including Thoubal were selected randomly from the selected districts. From the three selected blocks the two villages in each block were randomly selected. The selected villages were Khaidem Leikai, Kontha Ahallup, Patsoi, Sangaiprou Maning Leikai, Thoubal Wangmataba and Thoubal Kshetri Leikai. An exhaustive list of women dairy farmer of the selected villages was prepared with the help of the Block officials, Panchayat officials and dairy cooperative members. From this exhaustive list, 100 women dairy farmers were selected to constitute the respondent of the present study for final data collection. The overall involvement is considered as predicted variable in the present study and operationalised with the help of overall involvement index through physical involvement index and decision making involvement index. The overall involvement is measured as the composite score of physical involvement and decision involvement. Nineteen other variables were considered as the predictor variables. The data were collected with the help of structured interview schedule through personal interview method. The data were analyzed with the help of statistical tools such as Frequency, Percentage, Range, Mean, Standard deviation, Coefficient of variation, Coefficient of correlation, Multiple regression analysis etc.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Table 1** Distribution of the respondents according to their overall involvement (Y)

Category	Score	Frequency	Percentage	Statistics
Low	42.19-56.83	75	75	Range = 42.19-86.11 Mean = 55.09 SD=8.49 CV= 15.41 %
Medium	56.84-71.48	19	19	
High	71.49-86.13	6	6	

Table 1 presents the distribution of the women dairy farmers in Manipur according to their overall involvement in dairy farming. The results show that majority of the respondents are under the group of low level of overall involvement, 42.19-56.83 (75%), followed by medium level of overall involvement 56.84-71.48 (19%) and overall involvement

group of 71.49-86.13 (6%) respectively. The mean score of total distribution is 55.09 and standard deviation of the distribution is 8.49. The coefficient of variation value within the distribution 15.41% signifies the very high consistency level of the distribution for the variable ‘overall involvement in dairy activities’. Therefore, it is evident from the finding that although the women members in most of the families in Manipur state are physically engaged in dairy farming, but, still they possess low level of overall involvement as due to lesser participation in decision making process related to the dairy farming.

**Table 2** Correlation Coefficient of Overall Involvement (Y) of women in Dairy Farming with 19 causal variables

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)
Age (X <sub>1</sub> )	.004
Caste (X <sub>2</sub> )	-.152#
Education (X <sub>3</sub> )	-.140
Family Education Status (X <sub>4</sub> )	.079
Family Annual Income (X <sub>5</sub> )	-.008
Land Holding (X <sub>6</sub> )	-.052
Farm power (X <sub>7</sub> )	.138
Asset Possession (X <sub>8</sub> )	.006
Livestock possession (X <sub>9</sub> )	.110
House type (X <sub>10</sub> )	-.109
Extension Worker Communication (X <sub>11</sub> )	-.031
Mass media exposure (X <sub>12</sub> )	-.100
Mobility of women (X <sub>13</sub> )	-.205*
Risk preference (X <sub>14</sub> )	-.013
Economic motivation (X <sub>15</sub> )	-.022
Attitude (X <sub>16</sub> )	-.116
Management orientation (X <sub>17</sub> )	-.323**
Awareness and knowledge (X <sub>18</sub> )	.064
Profit from dairy (X <sub>19</sub> )	.024

\*\* Significant at 1% level of significance  
\* Significant at 5% level of significance  
# Significant at 13% level of significance

Table 2 represents the Pearson’s coefficient of correlation among the overall involvement of women in dairy farming with 19 causal variables. The result reveals that the variable caste, mobility of women and management orientation is negatively and significantly associated with the overall involvement of women dairy farmers.

**Caste and overall Involvement of Women in dairy farming**

Caste indicates the dimension of social stratification on the basis of their social recognition by birth in the society. In the present study information related to caste has been collected on the basis of the percentage of respondents belongs to SC, ST, OBC and General category respectively. Most of the respondents of this study belongs to general category and it is discernable from the result that land holding status of the general caste people are much higher than other socially backward communities of the society. Consequently, people from general caste are primarily concerned with crop production activities to sustain their livelihood and not much inclined to seek opportunity from livestock sector. But on the other hand, people belongs to SC, ST community are mostly resource poor farmers and possess small landholding. Therefore, many of them depend mostly on livestock sector more precisely on dairy farming. That is why the variable caste is negatively and significantly associated with overall involvement of women in dairy farming.

**Mobility of women and overall Involvement of women in dairy farming**

Mobility can be conceptualized as the movement of women outside of their household premises for income generating activities and communication with cosmopolite sources of information. So mobility helps to ensure women’s accessibility

to new scientific information. Higher mobility of women dairy farmers makes it difficult to find a suitable span of time within their daily work schedule to make them actively engage in dairy and other farm activities besides their household workload. Though outside contact with various information sources will enrich women with the latest scientific knowledge regarding agricultural and dairy farm practices but it will restrict the physical involvement of women in livestock rearing. Moreover, this affects women’s active involvement in decision making process also. As a result, mostly male members are shouldering the responsibility of managing their own dairy farm. That is why the variable mobility of women outside their residential periphery is negatively and significantly associated with the overall involvement of women in dairy farming.

**Management Orientation and overall Involvement of Women in dairy Farming**

The management orientation includes planning, production and marketing orientation which ultimately reflects the activity to be conducted in case of production through practices and marketing of products on the basis of needs. This variable act as the motivational drive to decide upon the aspect of planning, production and marketing as it is one of the psychological variable of the study. Managing a dairy farm in an efficient manner requires some mobility on the part of the women members of the family. In a male dominated society like India, women are mostly engaged in chore household activities which lessen their opportunity to involve themselves in outside activities. It decreases the degree of physical involvement of women in different outside activities associated with dairy farming though they have sound management orientation. In the present study mostly male members apply their decisions without considering the decision of women in case of planning, managing and marketing related to their own dairy farming. So, management orientation plays a positive role in case of decision making by the male counterpart of the family in dairy farming and women are deprived to make plan, manage the enterprise and market the products. That is why the variable management orientation is negatively and significantly associated with the overall involvement of women in terms of their physical involvement as well as women involvement in decision making process regarding dairy farming.

**Table 3** Multiple regression analysis of Overall involvement Index (Y) with predictor variables

Variables	Standardized regression coefficient (β)	Unstandardised regression coefficient (B)	S.E of 'B'	t-value
Age (X <sub>1</sub> )	-.075	-.086	.139	-.615
Caste (X <sub>2</sub> )	-.164	-8.127	5.282	-1.538#
Education (X <sub>3</sub> )	-.159	-1.227	1.047	-1.172
Family Education Status (X <sub>4</sub> )	.158	2.048	1.561	1.312
Family Annual Income (X <sub>5</sub> )	-.003	-.002	.087	-.024
Land Holding (X <sub>6</sub> )	-.120	-1.087	1.091	-.996
Farm power (X <sub>7</sub> )	.171	1.192	.795	1.500#
Asset Possession (X <sub>8</sub> )	-.002	-.002	.112	-.016
Livestock possession (X <sub>9</sub> )	.112	.350	.353	.992
House type (X <sub>10</sub> )	-.126	-1.895	1.749	-1.084
Extension Worker Communication (X <sub>11</sub> )	.005	.018	.439	.040
Mass media exposure (X <sub>12</sub> )	.052	.234	.670	.349
Mobility of women (X <sub>13</sub> )	-.044	-.234	.684	-.342
Risk preference (X <sub>14</sub> )	-.005	-.026	.572	-.046
Economic motivation (X <sub>15</sub> )	-.158	-1.072	.708	-1.513#
Attitude (X <sub>16</sub> )	-.078	-.417	.586	-.711
Management orientation (X <sub>17</sub> )	-.404	-1.340	.379	-3.533
Awareness and knowledge (X <sub>18</sub> )	.063	.954	1.810	.527
Profit from dairy (X <sub>19</sub> )	.089	.067	.094	.720

R<sup>2</sup> = 0.268

# Significant at 13% level of significance

Table-3 reflects the multiple regression analysis of overall involvement of women with the 19 predictor variables. From the table it is observable that the variables such as caste and economic motivation are negatively and significantly contributing towards characterizing the overall involvement of women in dairy farming. The table also shows that the variable farm power is positively and significantly contributing towards characterizing the overall involvement of women in dairy farming.

**Caste and overall Involvement of Women in dairy Farming**

Caste reflects the social categorization strata to differentiate the people on the basis of their endogamy, hereditary transmission of a lifestyle which often includes an occupation, status in a hierarchy, and customary social interaction and exclusion from society. In the present study, the information related to the variable caste is collected in terms of the percentage of the people belongs to SC, ST, OBC and General category respectively. The majority of respondents in the study belong to the general caste category with a huge amount of family land holding which is distinctly better than other socially backward communities in the society. As a result, the women from general caste with high family land holding status are primarily concerned with crop production activities to sustain their livelihood and not much inclined to maintain the alternative livelihood like livestock enterprise management. In contrary, the farm women belong to SC, ST community are mostly resource poor farmers with a low family land holding. Therefore, in search of alternative livelihood many of them depend mostly on livestock sector more precisely on dairy farming in the study area. In this context, the variable caste is negatively and significantly contributing in case of characterizing the predicted variable, overall involvement of women in dairy farming.

**Economic Motivation and overall Involvement of Women in dairy Farming**

Economic motivation is the drive that energizes an individual to meet the financial needs of the family. It motivates people to strive for seeking information, bearing risks and taking up of profit making ventures. Economic motivation is considered as one of psychological attribute of human psyche that improves the efficiency of an individual regarding making sound decisions in case of running an enterprise smoothly and effectively. Since women have dominance in household activity the male member of the family restricts them to bear the responsibility of managing the dairy farm related outside activities with their strong physical and decision making involvement. Consequently, the women family members are mostly confined themselves within the household activities without taking part physically and mentally through decision making in case of cattle management though they have high level of economic motivation. That is why the variable economic motivation is negatively and significantly contributing towards characterizing the variable overall involvement of women in dairy farming.

**Farm power and overall Involvement of Women in dairy Farming**

Farm power is one of the socio-economic indicators of an entrepreneur which reflects their resource richness. One can easily take decisions to overcome the challenges and risks embedded with an enterprise with the help of their own

resources. Better farm power status helps to develop their problem solving and risk taking ability. In case of women farmers possession of high level of farm power which reduces drudgery associated with livestock rearing and also saves the time leads to increased physical involvement by the women farmers in dairy farming. It is evident that improved farm power will enhance both the physical and decision making involvement of the women dairy farmers. That may be the plausible explanation why the variable farm power is positively and significantly contributing towards characterizing the overall involvement of women in dairy farming.

## **CONCLUSION**

In the present context the women are relentlessly bearing the responsibility of household activities and outside activities. But due to the social obstacles the women are not getting due recognitions in the patriarchal society like India. But still they uphold the banner of appropriate activity conduction in domestic aspects, production oriented aspects and community oriented aspects. The women are mostly associated with the household activities but in different corners of India the women are taking part in different profit making business. Now a days women are controlling an entire organization and also satisfactorily managing an enterprise. In search of alternative livelihood by pro poor women in Manipur the women are contributing to the family income through scientific livestock rearing and dairy farming.

The enabling environment like the local service providers for marketing dairy enterprise product and the dairy cooperatives are also playing the pivotal role in case of successful management of dairy farming by the women. From the present study it is also depicted that in case of improving the status of women dairy farmers in Manipur there is a need to seriously consider the variables like caste, economic motivation, management orientation, farm power etc. of women through future planning and policy implication associated with the unreached women in dairy enterprise.

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