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C H A P T E R : I I I

THE JOB OF MILK-MEN; ITS NATURE

AND THE FACTORS FOR THE ADOPTION

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CHAPTER : IIITHE JOB OF MILK-MEN -ITS NATURE AND THE FACTORS FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE JOB

The job of a milk-men is very laborious one. He has to perform a number of activities relating to his job. He has to get up early in the morning for milk collection from the suppliers and again he has to go for delivering it to the customers. While doing so, he has to be careful, sometime, it is because of the sudden checking by a food inspector for adulteration in milk. The milk is sold with a little profit margin. Also, he has to be careful for the payment to the milk-suppliers and bill collection from the customers. In such matters, the experiences of milk-men are noteworthy. In this chapter, the varied activities of milk-men and their experiences have been examined.

EXPERIENCE OF MILK-MEN IN THEIR JOB :

The south-western Maharashtra is not only known for its green revolution but for white revolution also. The dairy development in the region has a recent

history. It is true, that day-by-day, the market to milk and its products is growing. That is the reason, that many persons irrespective of their castes could adopted the job of dairy. Out of 94, some 26 respondents have put their length of service in their dairy job for more than 15 years. For an average respondent, the length of experience is that of 12 years and 6 months. This it indicates the recent development of a dairy job, which has become a non-caste job during the independence period.

MILK COLLECTING AND SELLING ACTIVITIES :

A milk-man has to perform daily his activities of milk collecting and selling. Daily 4081 litres milk is collected, by 94 respondents and sold in the market of consumers. Daily, in an average a respondent milk-man collects and sells nearly 44 litres of milk to his customers. The milk is collected from the respondents' village places and it is delivered to the customers of Gandhinagar, Ichalkaranji and Kolhapur city. These big towns and Kolhapur city are within the reach from the respondents' village places.

The milk is collected from all caste households. The milk collectors go to the place of the producers and

in their presence they get the milk produced from the buffalo animals.

They collect only buffalo milk because it contains more fats. In this way, they take the care and labour to get the pure milk. The following is the Table which gives the picture of the milk-producers/suppliers,

TABLE NO. : III - 1

DISTRIBUTION OF MILK PRODUCING HOUSEHOLDS BY CASTE

Caste Category	No. of Households	Percentage
Maratha	571	35.10
Jain	484	29.75
Lingayat	27	1.66
Dhangar	69	4.25
Gosavi	4	0.24
Wader (Stonecutter)	1	0.06
Christain	3	0.18
Muslim	170	10.45
Mahar	252	15.48
Chambhar	28	1.73
Mang	18	1.10
Total	1,627	100

It is interesting to note from the above Table no. : III - 3 that the milk suppliers are from the ex-untouchable households as well. On an average 298 litres milk is collected from them. But, about 25 years ago, the upper caste Hindus were taking objection for collecting the milk from the ex-untouchable households. Now when it is not so, it means the notion of untouchability has receded at least in this respect. It is important to note that the producers belonging to Maratha and Jain caste groups appears to be the major suppliers.

Further, it is to note that the customers are from the families ^{of all castes} belonging to rich and middle classes and the big hotel and the small tea stall owners as well.

THE MILK RATE AND THE PAYMENT OF BILLS

TO THE PRODUCERS AND THE CONSUMERS :

So far as the price rate of milk is concerned the variation in the rate changed to the producers and to the consumers is inevitable. The milk-men were paying the bills to the milk producers normally according to the co-operative dairy rate i.e. Rs.6/- per litre. The co-operative dairy rate is important,

because much of milk is supplied to such dairies. In Kolhapur district, there were 1257 co-operative dairies registered on dt. 29-10-1990 and also we were informed that by the end of 1991 as many as 66 per cent of the total villages in the district would be brought under the expansion scheme of the co-operative dairies (Source : The Office of the District Dairy Development, Kolhapur).

But there is a slight variation in a selling rate. Out of 94, as many as 76 respondents told that they were supplying the milk at Rs.6.50 per litre, the rate which was below the market rate i.e. Rs.7/- and the 17 respondents were supplying milk at Rs.7/- per litre. The customers who were paying Rs.7/- per litre, mostly were from the higher, middle and the rich classes.

Regarding the payment of bills to the milk producers, there is no fixed period. Out 94 as many as respondents were paying the bills monthly; whereas 47, 10 and 3 respondents were paying weekly, as and when necessary and daily respectively.

So far as receiving the payment of the bills from the customers, the milk-men revealed the bitter experiences particularly from the hotel and the tea stall customers that they never paid the bills regularly and according to the market rate. In this case, what seems that the milk-men are exploited by the hotel and the tea stall owners.

THE FACTORS FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE JOB :

The number of factors are found to be responsible for the adoption of the dairy job by those 94 respondents. The detail analysis of the factors is given below :

UNEMPLOYMENT :

As many as 56 (i.e. 59.57 per cent) respondents revealed that they have adopted the dairy job as a source of self-employment, an alternative to unemployment. The data show that 64 (i.e. 68.09) per cent) out of 94 respondent had attained their secondary/higher secondary level of education. Now-a-days, it is well known fact that those who possess ordinary S.S.C./H.S.C. qualification have no scope in the official service jobs. Here it

is necessary to mention that, in this region many youngs or adults prefer to adopt the self-employed jobs. "The philosophy of self-employment is already developed in this region by the reformers Shri Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaja of Kolhapur and Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil"¹

EXPERIENCE IN DAIRY ACTIVITY :

In case of 40 (i.e. 42.55 per cent) respondents, the previous experience in the dairy job caused them to become milk-men. Some 24 respondents revealed that their parents were engaged in dairy job and so they continued the activity. Some 10 had an experience to private milk-men and the 6 had the experience in co-operative dairies. Thus the factor of previous experience on dairy activity appears to be meaningful.

IMITATION :

Some 6 respondents told that they have adopted the dairy job just because of imitation. It is already mentioned that since last two to three decades many have entered the job of dairy and so they became the models to these few.

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1. Dahiwale, S. M. : Emerging Entreprnurship Amont Scheduled Castes of Contemporary India; Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1989. pp.77, 79 & 135.

POSSESSING MILCH ANIMALS :

Very few of the respondents were doing the job of milk-selling entirely depending on their own milch animals. It is interesting to note that the respondent belonging to the many community had 25 local buffaloes and the other one who belonged to Maratha community had 8 milch buffaloes.

OTHER SUPPORTING FACTORES :

In spite of the above mentioned factors, some other supporting factors also contributed to the adoption of their job. Those are financing sources, landholding by 77 respondents, rearing to milch animals and the availability of fodder.

FINANCING SOURCES :

For doing the job of milk-selling initial money capital is needed. It is noteworthy that 79 out of 94 respondents managed to have their own financial sources. But the remaining 15 respondents were supported by external sources. Some 8 respondents were supported by their friends; whereas other 7 respondents were supported by the credit co-operative society, the Nationalised Bank, relatives and money lender.

LANDHOLDING AND THE AVAILABILITY OF FODDER :

The factor of landholding is also significant one. Because the fodder is required for the milch animals. One of the sources of fodder is own agriculture land. Those who possess it, rearing of animals is easier to them. The following Table No. : III - 2 indicates the size of landholding by the 77 respondents.

TABLE NO. : II - 2SIZE OF LANDHOLDING BY THE 77 RESPONDENTS

Caste	No. of Respondents	Size of landholding	
		Irrigated (Acres)	Unirrigated (Acres)
Maratha	39 (50.65)	51.28	13.34
Jain	16 (20.78)	15.34	00.20
Lingayat	02 (02.60)	02.00	01.00
Dhangar	03 (03.90)	--	02.00
Muslim	15 (19.49)	43.15	02.04
Mahar	01 (01.29)	00.10	---
Mang	01 (01.29)	00.30	---
Chambhar	--	--	---
T O T A L	77 (100.00)	112.17	18.58



From the above table what appears that the total 54 respondents belonging to Maratha and Muslim communities had possessed the considerable lands. Why is such a big number of respondents from those who caste groups in dairy job is attributable to their possession of landholding.

Agriculture land is the main source of fodder. As a result of green revolution in the south-western Maharashtra, much of lands are under the crop of sugar cane and other food crops. Therefore, the leause of sugarcane, the straw of the paddy, the green grass and other food residues are easily available. Moreover, 48 respondents told that they had own source of fodder from their own field and the remaining had to buy from the market.

Due to the possession of landholding it has been possible to 64 respondents to rear 169 milch animals. Out of 169, 146 were the local milch animals and the remaining 23 were high-yielding animals such as Gaulat, Mehasani or Jafrabadi and Murrah buffaloes, Jersey and Holestein cows.
