



Original Article

**A STUDY OF CHALLENGES BEFORE MILK PRODUCERS IN PANDHARPUR
TEHSIL**

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Abstract:

The dairy sector plays an important role in the rural economy by providing regular income and employment to farmers. Milk production is a major allied agricultural activity in Pandharpur Tehsil of Solapur district. Despite its importance, milk producers face several challenges that affect productivity and income. The present study aims to analyze the major problems faced by milk producers in Pandharpur Tehsil, such as high feed costs, inadequate veterinary services, lack of storage facilities, price fluctuations, and limited access to credit. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires from selected milk producers, and secondary data were gathered from reports, journals, and government publications. The study finds that rising input costs and low milk procurement prices are the most critical challenges. The paper suggests policy measures to strengthen infrastructure, provide financial support, and improve institutional services for milk producers.

Keywords: Milk Producers, Dairy Farming, Challenges, Rural Economy, Pandharpur Tehsil, Livestock.

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Introduction:

Dairy farming is an important subsidiary occupation in India, especially in rural areas where it provides a steady source of income and employment. Milk production contributes significantly to agricultural GDP and nutritional security. In Maharashtra, dairy farming supports small and marginal farmers and landless labourers.

Pandharpur Tehsil, located in Solapur district, has a considerable number of milk producers who depend on dairy farming for their livelihood. However, milk producers in this region face various challenges such as increasing cost of cattle feed, shortage of water, inadequate veterinary facilities, lack of cold storage, transportation problems, and fluctuating milk prices. These



challenges reduce profitability and discourage farmers from expanding dairy activities. This study attempts to identify and analyze the major challenges faced by milk producers in Pandharpur Tehsil.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the socio-economic profile of milk producers in Pandharpur Tehsil.
2. To identify the major challenges faced by milk producers.
3. To examine the impact of these challenges on milk production and income.
4. To analyze the availability of institutional support and services.
5. To suggest measures for improving the condition of milk producers.

Significance of the Study:

The study is significant as it highlights the problems faced by milk producers at the grassroots level. It provides useful information to policymakers, dairy cooperatives, and government agencies for improving dairy infrastructure and support systems. The study also helps milk producers by bringing attention to their challenges and possible solutions

Scope of the Study:

The scope of the study is limited to milk producers in Pandharpur Tehsil of Solapur district. The study focuses on challenges related to production, marketing, finance, and infrastructure in dairy farming.

Limitations of the Study:

1. The study is confined to Pandharpur Tehsil only.
2. The study is based on a limited sample size.

3. The accuracy of the study depends on the responses given by milk producers.
4. Time and financial constraints limited extensive fieldwork.

Review of Literature:

- **Kale (2017)** observed that rising feed costs significantly affect the profitability of small dairy farmers in Maharashtra.
- **Patil and Jadhav (2019)** highlighted inadequate veterinary services and poor breeding facilities as major challenges in rural dairy farming.
- **Sharma (2020)** found that price fluctuation and delayed payments discourage milk producers.
- **Deshpande (2021)** emphasized the need for cooperative support and cold storage facilities to reduce post-production losses.

These studies provide insights into the challenges faced by milk producers and form the basis for the present study.

Research Methodology

Research Design:

The study utilizes a descriptive research design with primary data collection.

Methods of Data Collection:

Primary data were collected from 80 milk producers in Pandharpur Tehsil using structured questionnaires and personal field visits. Simple random sampling ensured representative responses. Secondary data were gathered from government reports, journals, and previous studies to support and validate the primary information.

Sample Size and Sampling Method:

- Sample Size: 80 dairy farmers.



- Sampling Method: Simple random sampling from villages in Pandharpur Tehsil with active dairy producers.

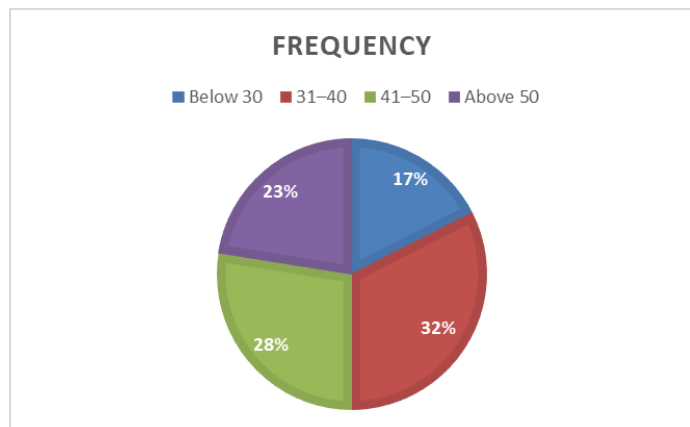
Data Collection:

Data were collected using structured questionnaires during field visits conducted over a period of three months.

Data Analysis:

Table 1: Age Distribution

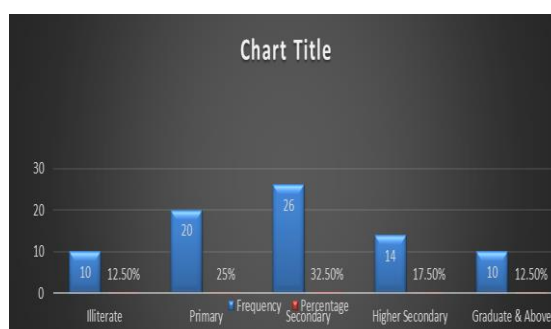
Age Group (Years)	Frequency	Percentage
Below 30	14	17.50%
31–40	26	32.50%
41–50	22	27.50%
Above 50	18	22.50%
Total	80	100%



The largest proportion of dairy farmers (32.5%) are in the 31–40 years age group, showing that middle-aged individuals are the most active in dairy farming. Farmers below 30 and above 50 constitute smaller portions, indicating both young and older age groups are less represented.

Table 2: Education Level

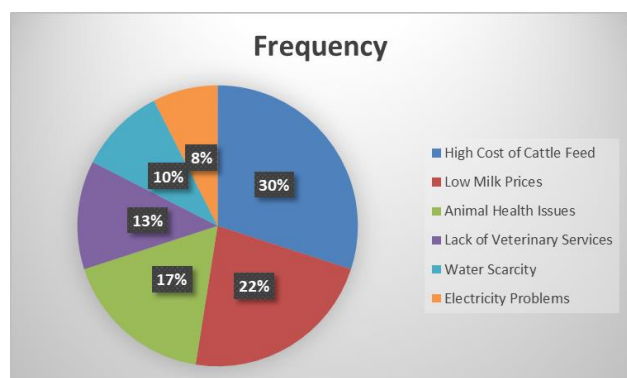
Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	10	12.50%
Primary	20	25%
Secondary	26	32.50%
Higher Secondary	14	17.50%
Graduate & Above	10	12.50%
Total	80	100%



Out of 80 respondents, 26 (32.50%) have secondary education and 20 (25%) have primary education, showing that most milk producers have basic schooling. About 14 (17.50%) have higher secondary education, while 10 (12.50%) are illiterate and 10 (12.50%) are graduates or above, indicating a moderate overall educational level among producers.

Table 3: Major Problems Reported

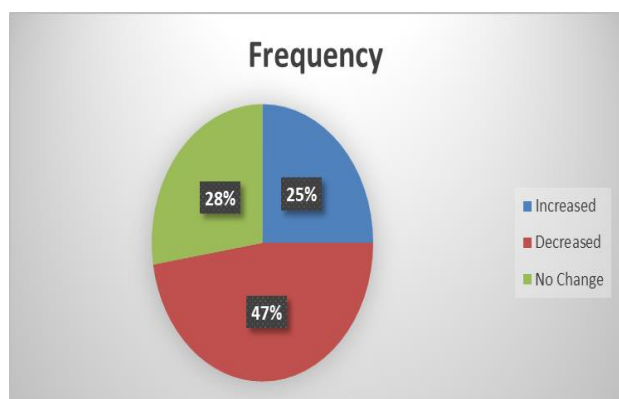
Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
High Cost of Cattle Feed	24	30%
Low Milk Prices	18	22.50%
Animal Health Issues	14	17.50%
Lack of Veterinary Services	10	12.50%
Water Scarcity	8	10%
Electricity Problems	6	7.50%
Total	80	100%



High cattle feed cost (30%) is the most significant challenge, followed by low milk prices (22.5%). These challenges indicate that rising input costs and unstable market prices are the main factors affecting dairy farmers' profitability.

Table 4: Change in Milk Production (Last 3 Years)

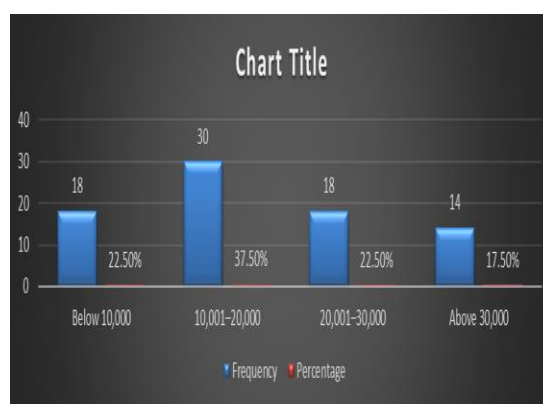
Change in Production	Frequency	Percentage
Increased	20	25%
Decreased	38	47.50%
No Change	22	27.50%
Total	80	100%



Nearly half of the farmers (47.5%) reported a decline in milk production over the last three years, mainly due to increased feed costs and animal health issues. Only 25% experienced an increase, showing that production is under pressure.

Table 5: Monthly Income from Dairy Farming

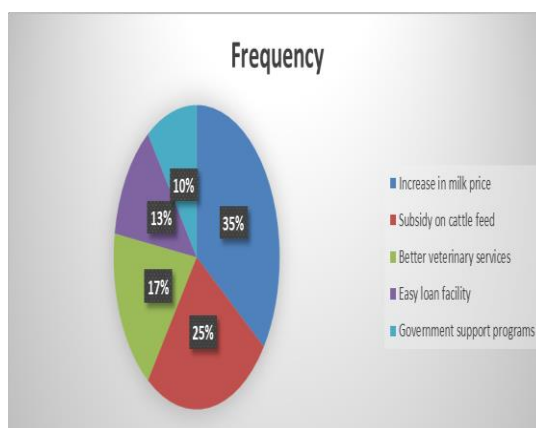
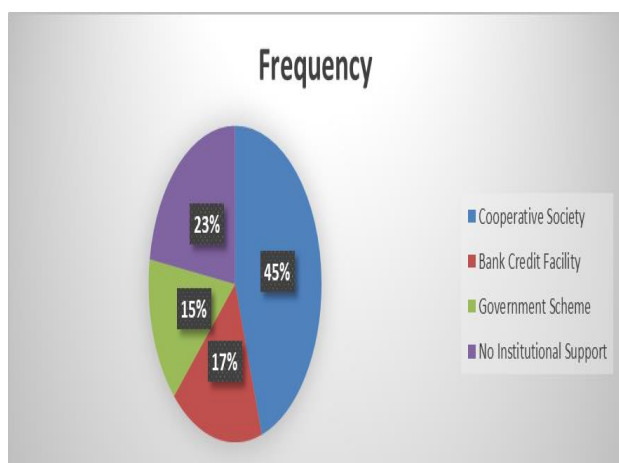
Monthly Income (₹)	Frequency	Percentage
Below 10,000	18	22.50%
10,001–20,000	30	37.50%
20,001–30,000	18	22.50%
Above 30,000	14	17.50%
Total	80	100%



The largest group (37.5%) earns between ₹10,001–20,000 per month, while 22.5% earn below ₹10,000. This shows moderate income levels, but a notable portion of farmers face economic vulnerability.

Table 6: Access to Institutional Support

Type of Support Accessed	Frequency	Percentage
Cooperative Society	36	45%
Bank Credit Facility	14	17.50%
Government Scheme	12	15%
No Institutional Support	18	22.50%
Total	80	100%



45% of dairy farmers are linked to cooperative societies, whereas 22.5% have no institutional support. This highlights the importance of improving access to financial and technical services for all farmers.

Table 7: Suggested Measures to Enhance Socio-Economic Condition of Milk Producers

Suggested Measure	Frequency	Percentage
Increase in milk price	28	35%
Subsidy on cattle feed	20	25%
Better veterinary services	14	17.50%
Easy loan facility	10	12.50%
Government support programs	8	10%
Total	80	100%

The majority of respondents (35%) believe that increasing milk price is the most important measure to improve their socio-economic condition. Subsidies on cattle feed (25%) and better veterinary services (17.5%) are also significant priorities. Easy loan facilities and government support programs are less preferred but still necessary. Overall, income stability and reduced production costs are the key concerns for milk producers.

Findings:

1. The majority of milk producers (32.50%) are in the 31–40 years age group, indicating that middle-aged farmers are more actively engaged in dairy farming.
2. Most respondents (32.50%) have completed secondary education, reflecting a moderate educational background among milk producers.
3. High cost of cattle feed (30%) is identified as the major problem faced by dairy farmers.
4. Nearly 47.50% of respondents reported a decrease in milk production during the last three years.
5. The highest proportion of farmers (37.50%) earn a monthly income between ₹10,001–20,000 from dairy farming.



6. About 45% of milk producers are connected with cooperative societies for institutional support.
7. A majority of respondents (35%) suggested that increasing milk prices would improve their socio-economic condition.

Suggestions:

1. **Increase in Milk Price** – Ensures fair income for farmers, motivating better dairy practices and reducing financial stress from market fluctuations.
2. **Subsidy on Cattle Feed** – Lowers input costs, improves milk yield, and enhances profitability for milk producers.
3. **Better Veterinary Services** – Prevents animal diseases, reduces mortality, and boosts overall milk production.
4. **Easy Loan Facility** – Provides financial support for purchasing cattle and equipment, enabling modernization of dairy farms.
5. **Effective Government Schemes** – Offers financial and technical assistance, increasing productivity and sustainability of dairy farming.
6. **Strengthening Cooperatives** – Supports collective marketing, stable prices, and resource access, reducing dependence on intermediaries.
7. **Training Programs** – Educates farmers on modern techniques and management, improving efficiency and adoption of best practices.

Conclusions:

The study reveals that milk producers in Pandharpur Tehsil face significant challenges that

hinder their productivity and income. High costs of cattle feed, low milk prices, animal health issues, and inadequate veterinary services are the primary problems affecting dairy farmers. Most milk producers belong to the middle-aged group and have moderate educational qualifications, which influences their ability to adopt modern dairy practices. Nearly half of the respondents reported a decline in milk production, and a substantial portion earns only a moderate monthly income, highlighting economic vulnerability. Institutional support through cooperatives, government schemes, and financial services is limited but crucial for improving their conditions. To enhance the socio-economic status of milk producers, measures such as increasing milk prices, providing subsidies on feed, improving veterinary services, facilitating easy loans, and offering training programs are essential. Overall, addressing these challenges through policy interventions, infrastructure development, and strengthened institutional support is vital for the sustainable growth of dairy farming in Pandharpur Tehsil.

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