

Analysis on the Socio-Economic Status of the Goat Farmers of Malabar Region of Kerala

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Abstract: A study was undertaken to assess the socioeconomic status of the goat farmers of the Malabar region of Kerala. The study was conducted at three centers of the All India Coordinated Research Project for the improvement of Malabari goat viz. Thanur, Vadakara and Thalassery. Information were collected through personal enquiry and questionnaire developed at the Centre for Advanced Studies in Animal Genetics and Breeding, College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Mannuthy, Kerala from a total of 2146 randomly selected goat farmers consisting of 685, 587 and 874 farmers from Thanur, Vadakara and Thalassery centers, respectively. The results revealed that majority are marginal farmers with a land holding of <50 cents. Nearly 92% of the heads of the families were educated and 15% of them had high school level education and above. The average monthly income of the majority of the goat farmers was 501-2000 rupees and the average income from agriculture and animal husbandry was 248.60 and 198.23 rupees, respectively. Majority of the farmers (55.73%) had a tiled house with concrete flooring. Females are mainly engaged in goat rearing. Majority of the farmers (66%) listen to the radio/television programmes and equal number of them access to training classes and almost all of them are interested to learn more if classes are arranged.

Key words: Goat farmers, Kerala, Malabar region, socio-economic status, tiled house

INTRODUCTION

Goat plays an important role in generating employment, income, capital storage and improving household nutrition (Panin and Mahabile, 1997). The role of goat farming in the upliftment of small, marginal farmers including landless agricultural laborers in India is well recognized. The goat population in India has increased at a faster rate than that of other species of farm animals and during the last 40 years the increase is by 140%. The Government of India is implementing many numbers of projects through the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) to increase the production potential of the indigenous breeds of goats. The All India Coordinated Research Projects (AICRP) on goats is one among the projects aiming at the genetic improvement of the selected indigenous breeds of goat for milk and meat production at the farmers' flock. The success of any project aiming at the enhancement of the production potential of the animals at the farmers' flock through introducing superior technologies for mass adoption mainly depend the socioeconomic status of the farmers. The results of Chandra *et al.* (2005) also revealed that the education, family educational status and exposure to

the communication sources etc. are vital for the adoption of improved practices in goat keeping for achieving a desired production performance. Considering the above facts it is felt that a study on the socioeconomic status of the Malabari goat farmers of the Northern state of Kerala is highly essential and hence the present investigation was undertaken.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted at three centers in the Northern Kerala in India viz. Thanur, Vadakara and Thalassery where the All India Coordinated Research Project for the improvement of Malabari goat is implemented. A total of 2146 goat farmers consisting of 685, 587 and 874 farmers from Thanur, Vadakara and Thalassery centers, respectively were randomly selected to study their socioeconomic status. Information was collected through personal enquiry and questionnaire developed at the Centre for Advanced Studies in Animal Genetics and Breeding, College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Mannuthy, Kerala. The baseline information on the educational status, monthly income, type of house of goat farmer, land holding size, irrigation facility, members

engaged in goat rearing, average income from agriculture and animal husbandry, mass media exposure were collected. The data collected were tabulated and statistical parameters like frequency and percentage were used for logical conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Educational status of the head of family: The educational status of the head of the families was considered as an indicator of the family educational status and were grouped in to college, high school, upper primary school, lower primary school, student and illiterates (Table 1). Most of the farmers in Thanur and Vadakara centers had lower primary school education (54.60 and 35.09%, respectively) followed by upper primary school education (29.05 and 27.60%).

However, in Thalassery centre the upper primary school education was dominated (38.88%) followed by lower primary school education (37.50%). Farmers having high school education were moderate in all the three centers (Table 1). However, in Vadakara centre some of the farmers were still continuing their education (5.11%). The percentage of illiterates was also high in Vadakara centre (18.57%) followed by Thanur (5.55%) and Thalassery (3.67%) centers. The overall educational status of the farmers indicated that 92% of the heads of the families were educated which is in accordance with the general perception that the higher literacy rate of Kerala State. In contrast to the above, Rajanna *et al.* (2012) reported higher percent (74.65) of illiterates among the sheep farmers in Telengana region of Andhra Pradesh.

Monthly income: The information on the average monthly income of the farmers of the three centers was collected and shown in Table 2. The study revealed that the maximum percentage of farmers in Thanur (24.17%) and Vadakara (24.39%) centers had a monthly income of 1501-2000 Rs. where as in Thalassery centre maximum percentage of farmers (22.46%) had 501-1000 Rs. In all the three centers studied >60% of the farmers were having a monthly income within the range of 500-2000 Rs. and only 8.7% of farmers had an average monthly income of >5000 Rs.

Table 1: Educational status of the head of family

Education	Thanur	Vadakara	Thalassery	Overall
College	0.58	0.85	1.15	0.93
High school	10.07	12.78	17.89	14.07
UP school	29.05	27.60	38.88	32.67
LP school	54.60	35.09	37.50	42.22
Student	0.15	5.11	0.92	1.75
Illiterate	5.55	18.57	3.67	8.34
Total	685.00	587.00	874.00	2146.00

Values in percentage

Type of house of goat farmers: Majority of the farmers (55.73%) had a tiled house with concrete flooring and the percentage was well comparable in all the three centers studied (Table 3). Very few farmers (8.10%) had thatched with mud flooring and the percentage was more in Thanur (10.33) followed by Vadakara (6.53%) and Thanur (6.39%). It seems that the average monthly income had no influence on the type of housing.

Land holding size of the farmers: Majority of the goat owners in the region studied were marginal farmers who had a land size of <50 cents (95.08%). About 52.07% had a land size of <10 cents and below and 43.01% had a size of 11-49 cents. The trend was more or less same in all the three centers studied. It was also seen that very few farmers (0.35%) had a land size of above two acres (Table 4).

Members engaged in goat rearing: The percentage of male and female members engaged in goat rearing is shown in Table 5. The study revealed that females are mainly engaged in goat rearing (83.80%) and their

Table 2: Percentage of farmers in different monthly income group

Monthly income (Rs.)	Name of centre			Overall
	Thanur	Vadakara	Thalassery	
500 and below	17.81	11.46	13.06	14.53
501-1000	13.15	11.83	22.46	15.72
1001-1500	12.89	14.27	12.86	13.27
1501-2000	24.17	24.39	18.11	22.31
2001-2500	6.45	5.98	5.04	5.87
2501-3000	5.00	5.00	7.72	5.87
3001-3500	2.88	6.22	3.32	3.96
3501-4000	6.45	7.32	4.29	6.00
4001-4500	2.04	1.71	3.11	2.29
4501-5000	1.19	1.71	1.71	1.50
Above 5000	7.97	10.02	8.36	8.70

Table 3: Type of house of goat farmers

Type of houses	Name of centre			Overall
	Thanur	Vadakara	Thalassery	
Thatched with mud floor	10.33	6.53	6.39	8.10
Thatched with concrete floor	12.29	23.29	4.12	12.50
Tiled with mud floor	3.92	1.31	12.35	5.93
Tiled with concrete floor	55.82	50.60	59.72	55.73
Concrete with concrete floor	16.80	15.56	16.20	16.29
Others	6.85	2.72	1.23	1.45

Table 4: Land holding size of the farmers

Land holding	Name of centre			Overall
	Thanur	Vadakara	Thalassery	
10 cents and below	51.14	59.16	47.19	52.07
11-49 cents	44.29	35.88	47.51	43.01
50-99 cents	2.90	3.18	3.35	3.13
One-two acre	1.32	1.40	1.62	1.44
Above two acre	0.35	0.38	0.32	0.35

Values in percentage

Table 5: Members engaged in goat rearing

Sex	Name of centre			Overall
	Thanur	Vadakara	Thalassery	
Male	28.88	27.90	6.37	16.20
Female	71.12	72.10	93.63	83.80

Values in percentage

Table 6: Average income (Rs.) from agriculture and animal husbandry

Items	Name of centre			Overall
	Thanur	Vadakara	Thalassery	
Agriculture	194.48 (249)	150.08 (230)	386.01 (263)	248.60 (742)
Animal husbandry	212.16 (98)	240.26 (76)	183.62 (312)	198.23 (486)

Figures in parenthesis indicates number of farmers

Table 7: Percentage of farmers listening radio/TV programmes

Items	Name of centre			Overall
	Thanur	Vadakara	Thalassery	
Yes	59.57	69.64	69.67	66.12
No	40.43	30.36	30.33	33.18

Values in percentage

involvement was more in Thalassery (93.63%) followed by Vadakara (72.10%) and Thanur (71.12%). This clearly shows that the goat rearing in the Malabar region of Kerala is mainly in the hands of the women. Similar to the present findings, Rangnekar (1994) reported the significant role of rural women livestock rearing. The above fact is also supported by the study of Sinn *et al.* (1999) who reported that goat production can be an important tool to ameliorate the conditions of poor women in developing countries thus being seen as source of women's emancipation by the development agencies.

Average income (Rs.) from agriculture and animal husbandry: The overall average income from the agriculture and animal husbandry is shown in Table 6. The result revealed that the income from animal husbandry was comparatively higher than that of the agriculture in Thanur and Thalassery centers where as in Thalassery centre, the agricultural income was twice as that of the animal husbandry. The overall average income from agriculture and animal husbandry was 248.60 and 198.23 rupees, respectively. The income from the agriculture and animal husbandry are considered as the subsidiary source of income to the farmers.

Information on mass media exposure: Nearly 66.12% of the farmers were listening to radio/television programmes and the percentage was more or less same in Vadakara (69.64%) and Thalassery (69.67%) centers and in Thanur centre it was lesser (59.57%) than the above two centers (Table 7). From Table 8 it may be noticed that nearly

Table 8: Farmers having access-classes/ training on goat rearing

Items	Name of centre			Overall
	Thanur	Vadakara	Thalassery	
Yes	70.30	83.90	54.58	69.12
No	29.70	16.10	45.42	30.88

Values in percentage

69.12% of farmers had the chance of attending classes/training on goat rearing and the percentage was very high in Vadakara centre (83.90) followed by Thanur (70.30%) and Thalassery (54.58%).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results obtained in the present study it may be concluded that majority of the goat owners are marginal farmers with a land holding of <50 cents. Nearly 92% of the heads of the families were educated and 15% of them had high school level education and above. The average monthly income of the majority of the goat farmers was 501-2000 rupees and the average income from agriculture and animal husbandry was 248.60 and 198.23 rupees, respectively. Majority of the farmers (55.73%) had tiled house with concrete flooring. Females are mainly engaged in goat rearing. Majority of the farmers (66%) listen to the radio/television programmes and equal number of them access to training classes and almost all of them are interested to learn more if classes are arranged.

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