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A STUDY ON SMALL RUMINANTS AS A SOURCE OF INCOME AMONG THE FARMERS OF PALLIPATTI PANCHAYAT

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ABSTRACT

Indian rural areas in terms of topography, soil, rainfall, water, agro-climatic conditions, agricultural production and productivity. It is useful to broadly classify them into three types of regions drought prone, non-drought prone and mixed. Drought prone or semi-arid regions pose special problems due to their limited resource endowments and uncertain rainfall, low yield in crop production, low fodder base and hence ill-health and lower productivity of livestock and a low diversification of the economy strategies for rural development need to be tailored according to the needs of different regions. Irrigation has been a widely accepted strategy to convert drought prone areas into better endowed ones but obviously it cannot reach all drought prone areas or all villages and households in these areas. There is also the strategy of dry land development but concentrating on crop cultivation alone may not be enough to develop dry areas. In this connection the ten villages selected for the study was Elumathiyankadu, Makkalpatti, Uppupallam, Kaminaicanpatti, Kalandiyur, Nariyanur, Vedikaranur, Nagochipatti, Antikoundanur and Pallipatti respectively. The field investigation was carried out during 2011 and data were related to agricultural year 2010-2011. Similarly the goat rearing farmers also revealed that the sold their goats was repayment of debt and meet out agricultural expenses. Nearly 30 farmers sold their goats in the village itself. On an average each farmer spent ₹ 3240 towards the rearing of goats. Average income of each farmer per annum by way of selling goat was ₹ 5754. Therefore both goat and sheep was a source of income and employment to select farmers of Pallipatti panchayat.

KEYWORDS

Drought, Income, Goat Expenditure, Crop production, Agricultural, Households.

INTRODUCTION

There are wide differences in Indian rural areas in terms of topography, soil, rainfall, water, agro-climatic conditions, agricultural production and productivity. It is useful to broadly classify them into three types of regions drought prone, non-drought prone and mixed. Drought prone or semi-arid regions pose special problems due to their limited resource endowments and uncertain rainfall, low yield in crop production, low fodder base and hence ill-health and lower productivity of livestock and a low diversification of the economy strategies for rural development need to be tailored according to the needs of different regions. Irrigation has been a widely accepted strategy to convert drought prone areas into better endowed ones but obviously it cannot reach all drought prone areas or all villages and households in these areas. There is also the strategy of dry land development but concentrating on crop cultivation alone may not be enough to develop dry areas. That is where the role of animal husbandry becomes relevant particularly in diversifying the rural economy of drought prone areas and providing additional sources of income. There are of course complementarities between crop cultivation and animal husbandry. While the former provides feed to the latter, the latter provides manure, drought power and additional income through products like milk meat wool etc. The diversification of the rural economy of semi-arid areas need not be at the cost of crop husbandry. The complementarities can ensure that both crop and animal husbandry can prosper. Sheep is important livestock species in India. They contribute greatly to the agrarian economy especially in the arid/semi-arid and mountainous areas where crop and/or dairy farming are not economical. They play an important role in livelihood of a large percentage of small and marginal farmers and landless labourers engaged in sheep rearing. A number of rural-based industries use wool and sheep skins as raw materials. Sheep manure is an important source for soil fertility, especially in southern states. Sheep in India are mostly maintained on natural vegetation on common grazing lands, wastelands and uncultivated lands, stubbles of cultivated crops and top feeds (tree loppings). They are rarely kept on grain, cultivated fodder or crop residue. Sheep are mostly reared for wool and meat, sheep skins and manure constitute important sources of earning, the latter particularly in southern India. Milk from sheep is of limited importance and that to in very limited areas of Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan and Gujarat. Indian sheep are not regarded as dairy sheep. The productivity of Indian sheep is lower than those of agriculturally more advanced countries. Yet considering their nutritional and physical environment, their productivity cannot be considered as inefficient. The major reasons for low productivity are inadequate grazing resources, diseases causing high mortality and serious lack of organized effort for brings genetic improvement.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the same state of Rajasthan economics of sheep rearing has been studied by **Ram and Vyas (1984)**, using a different methodology. Three districts – Jaisalmer, Jodhpur and Pali have been selected for the study on the basis of highest sheep population. It has been found that economies of scale do exist in sheep rearing. The net returns in small stock holdings with an average stock strength of around 40 could generate an annual income of ₹ 4 to 10 per head. Whereas in a unit larger by nearly 3 times that of small stock holdings could generate 3 to 4 times larger income per head. Government of India, (1987) It has been brought out in the report of the task force that in India sheep and goats rearing was taken up mainly in those areas where for ecological reasons crop production as well as other agricultural activities have become either difficult or impossible. It is said that about 15 million people in India are partially or fully dependent on income from small ruminant related economic activities, of which more than 1/3 are rural based either engaged in rearing or wool / hair production, weaving, spinning, tanning etc. Mukundan and Balakrishnan (1987) in a study on sheep and goats in four Southern States of India – Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, it has been estimated that these states accounted for about 39 per cent of the total animals slaughtered in India during 1977-78. The density of sheep and goats in south India was about 28 sheep / km² and about 27 goats / km² against 13 sheep / km² and 22 goats / km² for the rest of the country. The study finds that small ruminant production is mainly in the hands of low-income, landless or small scale subsistence farmers who either possess no land or own holdings with low return.

Chauhan and Moorti (1990) have pointed out in their study on Economics of sheep farming in Himachal Pradesh that in India about 40 per cent of the rural population depended directly on animal husbandry particularly sheep rearing. They have also observed that sheep raising had always flourished in India, in areas with scanty and uncertain rainfall and inadequate irrigation. Rath (1992) It is more advantageous to keep goats and sheep as compared with other domestic ruminants like cattle and buffaloes. Particularly so to the poor and landless households with poor resource base. Households with very low level of inputs like capital and fodder can keep sheep and goats for subsistence. It is also easy to maintain sheep and goats and they are less harmful to environment and trees than cattle or buffaloes. It has been found that in the case of cattle, fodder requirement per animals is 2½ to 3 times more than required per sheep or goat. Unlike a cow, a few goats can be maintain more easily and can be disposed of at no great loss in years of drought.

Senthil Kumar and Thirunavukkarasu (2010) in their article "Economic Losses due to Sheep Pox in Sheep Farm in Tamil Nadu", examined the economic losses arising due to sheep pox and to analyze the factors influencing such losses at farm level. The data relating to the two-year period 2000-01 and 2001-02 were collected from the sample of 108 sheep farms randomly selected from 6 blocks in Dharmapuri district of Tamil Nadu. Average annual loss due to sheep pox was found to be ₹ 2098.17, ₹ 4662.18 and ₹ 5599.06 in small medium and large farms, respectively. The loss due to mortality of affected animals ranged from 40 to

60 per cent of total loss in different farm size categories with the highest per cent seen in small farms. The per cent loss in market value in next only to the mortality loss with 26 to 37 per cent share in total loss. The overall per animal economic loss due to sheep pox in ram ewe and lamb was `1048.81, `.744.26 and `.200.22 respectively. The loss due to the reduction in market value formed the greater proportion in survived rams with 64.71 per cent. A regression model was fitted using the possible predisposing factors to explain the variations in the sheep pox disease losses. The coefficient of multiple determination (R^2) in the model fitted was high (0.908) implying that the model was a good fit. The estimated regression coefficients of the variables, viz., number of days of illness, number of adults affected and flock size were found to be significant. The severe economic losses estimated to be arising out of sheep pox indicate that this disease remains a serious economic problem telling upon the profitability of shee farming. Realizing his enormous losses caused by the diseases, the sheep farmers should be made to focus more attention towards this disease through creation of adequate awareness among them through suitable extension programs for prevention and control of sheep pox.

OBJECTIVES

1. To examine cost and returns of goat and sheep rearing farmers in the select study area.
2. To examine the channels and cost of marketing of the select farmers.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Sheeps and Goats plays vital role in the livelihoods of farmers, especially farmers in drought prone areas. In comparison with larger ruminants, the small ruminant can stand higher degree of drought and can manage with the available feeds. These small ruminants are a source of employment and income to farmers during the off season. Therefore studies like this would through light on the farmers who are engaged in agriculture coupled with sheep and goat rearing. These studies would help the researcher, policy makers and governments in taking appropriate steps for their well being.

METHODOLOGY

For the present study, the data was obtained from primary as well as secondary source. The secondary data was collected for obtaining particulars related to the study area. The primary data was collected from the selected respondents who were engaged in goats and sheeps rearing. The goats and sheeps rearers were selected from all the ten villages of Pallipatti Panchayat. From each village ten farmers involved in sheep rearing and five farmers involved in goat rearing was selected randomly, which accounted to 150 farmers in total. A preliminary survey was undertaken with pre-tested interview schedule. The selected respondents were contacted in person and enquired the information required for the study. To instill confidence and to ensure their cooperation in getting the information the purpose of the study was explained to the respondents and also they were assured that the information collected would they kept confidential. The ten villages selected for the study was Elumathiyankadu, Makkalpatti, Uppupallam, Kaminaicanpatti, Kalandiyur, Nariyanur, Vedikaranur, Nagochipatti, Antikoundanur and Pallipatti respectively. The field investigation was carried out during 2011 and data were related to agricultural year 2010-2011.

TOOL OF ANALYSIS

Simple tabular analysis was done to work out percentage and average values were used to describe the socio-economic profile of the selected sample.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Pallipatti Panchayat is situated in Mecheri Block of Mettur Taluk in Salem district. The total area under this panchayat was recorded as 1672.96 hectares, out of which 70.43 hectares was irrigated, 1308.07 hectares was under rainfed area and nearly 30.32 hectares were barren land. The area under other category like forests and small hills accounted for 264.14 hectares. The Pallipatti Panchayat was surrounded by Pottaneri Panchayat in South, Koonandiyur Panchayat in west, Mallikundam Panchayat in East and Dharmapuri district in North.

TABLE 1: CLASSIFICATION AREA UNDER PALLIPATTI PANCHAYAT

S.No	Particulars	Hectares	Percentage
1	Irrigated Area	70.43	4.21
2	Rainfed Area	1038.07	78.19
3	Barren land	30.32	1.82
4	Others	264.14	15.78
	Total	1672.96	100

TABLE 2 CLASSIFICATION AREA UNDER PALLIPATTI PANCHAYAT

S.No	Community	No. of People	Percentage
1	BC	1713	25.57
2	MBC	4598	68.64
3	SC	388	5.79
	Total	6699	100

TABLE 3 DIFFERENT TYPES OF HOUSES IN PALLIPATTI PANCHAYAT

S.No	Particulars	Number	Percentage
1	Concrete House	286	16.12
2	Tiled House	621	35.00
3	Thatched House	867	48.88
	Total	1774	100

Source: Primary Data

The total population was around 6699 people. The community-wise population indicates that majority of people belong to Most Backward Community i.e., 4598, followed by Backward Community 1713 and Scheduled Caste was 388. In Pallipatti Panchayat there were nearly 286 concrete houses, 621 tiled houses and 867 thatched houses respectively. Among the three types, thatched house was recorded to be the highest. Pallipatti panchayat provided different types infrastructure facilities like primary school, high school, ICDS Centre, over headover tank, openwell, public distribution system, post office, village administrative office, community centre and Dairy society. The major occupation of Pallipatti panchayat was goat and sheep rearing. Among the both sheep rearing was carried out by many people. A sheep and goat research station is situated at Mechari (Pottaneri). The major crops cultivated in this Panchayat were Ragi, Cholam, Tomato, Cumbu, Greengram, Blackgram, Chillies, Cotton and Vegetables. Majority of farmers was observed to be small farmers.

TABLE 4: MONTH-WISE AVAILABILITY OF DIFFERENT SOURCES OF FEEDS FOR SHEEP REARING FARMERS

S.No	Particulars	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April
1.	Communal/Grazing	100	9	-	2	7	5	-	1	92	92	93	99
2.	Road side Grazing	2	1	5	5	77	73	66	60	1	1	1	1
3.	Grazing along River side	6	5	7	7	6	3	3	5	4	4	3	3
4.	Private Grazing Land	50	11	5	1	4	3	3	3	52	59	58	55
5.	Crop Residues	79	61	2	2	1	2	2	2	76	86	87	86
6.	Home	19	7	-	-	4	4	4	5	13	12	13	14
7.	Home left over foods and drinks	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
8.	Weeds	28	13	-	6	75	70	67	61	14	15	18	23

Source: Primary Data

The sheep rearing farmers of the study provided supplement feeds to their stocks other than grazing and it was examined in Table 5.17. The farmers provided oil cakes or meals to their flocks. It was reported that among 100 sheep rearing farmers nearly 37 of them gave supplements feeds to lambs, 50 farmers provided supplements to their lactating ewe and nearly 45 of the farmers provided oil cakes to their rams. Another supplement feed was food leftovers in their house and neighbours. In this case nearly 75 farmers to 89 farmers had fed their sheeps with the above mention supplement feed for their lambs, ewe, rams. In order to have healthy and sheeps with more weights the farmers provided certain home made brewages and it was observed that nearly 82 percent of the farmers provided these supplements to their sheep flocks. In order to make the sheep drink more water and make the water tastier the farmers used to mix salt in the drinking water of the sheeps and it was noted that among the 100 sheep rearing farmers nearly 79 per cent of the farmers provided salt to their sheep. Cultivated fodder leaves were also fed to the sheeps. Among the select farmers only 33 percent of them were in a position to give cultivated fodder leaves.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In India, there are about 120 million goats and 62 million sheep. In spite of heavy slaughter rate (27%) and in built prejudice and biases, both goat and sheep population in the country have been growing for the past few decades. Sheep and goat husbandry is an important subsidiary animal husbandry activity in the State. It is the primary source of income for majority of landless agricultural labourers and supplements the income of small and marginal farmers. It provides meat and milk for human consumption and wool and other products for human / industrial use. Moreover, it also earns the much needed foreign exchange through export of leather products. In addition, sheep and goat manure play an important role in enriching soil fertility. As per 17th Livestock Census, Tamil Nadu accounts for 55.93 lakhs sheep and 81.77 lakhs goats. Nearly 79 per cent of the select respondent was observed to be illiterate and maximum number of respondent in the community – wise classification falls in the MBC category. The house hold head and family members involved themselves in other jobs than agriculture. The farmers of this study area engaged in cultivation of various crops like cumbu, cholam, tomato, groundnut, cotton, horse gram, black gram, castor seeds, sesame, ragi, lentil and vegetables respectively. It was observed that maximum number of farmers getting agricultural income fell in the category of `20000 to `40000 and it was same for the secondary source of income of the household income. Nearly 65 farmers had 10 to 15 years of sheep rearing and 31 farmers 5 to 10 years experience in goat rearing. Among the 150 farmers nearly 134 of them revealed that the reason for goat and sheep rearing was for obtaining additional source of income.

The total population of sheep was 1929 among the select respondent, the sheep rearers adopted different sources of feeds like communal grazing, road side grazing, grazing along river side, private grasing land, crop residues, home left over foods and drinks and weeds respectively. Farmers also provide supplement feeds to their sheeps the major reason for selling their sheep was to pay back their debt and this was ranked first by 78 respondent. Nearly 76 sheep rearing farmers sold sheep at village itself. The farmers had incurred expenditure in purchase of various goods and the total cost of expenditure was ₹.3512. The income earned through ewe was more compared to that of Rams, male lamp and female lamp an average the select farmers were able to earn ₹.7119 per annum. The total population of goat among the select 50 respondent was 1055 and nearly 657 female goats was possessed by these farmers. Event he goat rearing farmers took their flocks to various sources like communal grazing land, road side grazing, grazing in riverside, private grazing land, crop residues, conserved feeds, home left over foods and drinks and feeds respectively. Other supplements fees were given to goats by all the 50 select farmers during the dry season. The goat rearing farmers also revealed that the sold their goats was repayment of debt and meet out agricultural expenses. Nearly 30 farmers sold their goats in the village itself. On an average each farmers spent `3240 towards the rearing of goats. Average income of each farmer per annum by way of selling goat was `5754. Therefore both goat and sheep was a source of income and employment to select farmers of Pallipatti panchayat.

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