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CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	DETERMINANTS OF INTEREST SPREADS IN COMMERCIAL BANKS – A CASE OF CRDB BANK TANZANIA <i>DR. SRINIVAS MADISHETTI & JOSEPH KIMEME</i>	1
2.	CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY CSR OF BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS IN NIGER STATE, NIGERIA: AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE <i>DR. HALIRU BALA</i>	6
3.	CHALLENGES OF GOOD GOVERNANCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: THE CASE OF SAESIETSAEDAMBA WOREDA, TIGRAY REGION, ETHIOPIA <i>GEBRESLASSIE KIROS HAILU</i>	11
4.	TOTAL COST OF SMALL ENTREPRENEURIAL CREDIT: AN ANALYSIS ON SELECTED PRIVATE COMMERCIAL BANKS IN BANGLADESH <i>JASMINE JAIM</i>	27
5.	FACTORS INFLUENCING TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF FARMERS IN UTTAR PRADESH <i>AMARENDRA PRATAP SINGH</i>	31
6.	CUSTOMER AWARENESS AND SATISFACTION IN COMMERCIAL BANKS WITH REFERENCE TO COIMBATORE DISTRICT <i>DR. M. VIDHYA & DR. A. RAMACHANDRAN</i>	38
7.	MEASUREMENT OF CONSUMER'S PERCEPTION ON SERVICE QUALITY IN LIFE INSURANCE <i>ALTAF AHMAD DAR & SHABIR AHMAD BHAT</i>	44
8.	GROWTH AND PERFORMANCE OF MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSMEs) IN INDIA: AN OVERVIEW <i>OMKAR P. DASTANE.</i>	50
9.	A STUDY ON THE POSITION OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN KERALA VIS A VIS THE NATIONAL SCENARIO <i>N. RAJEEVAN & DR. M. M. SULPHEY</i>	57
10.	A STUDY ON SOCIO – ECONOMIC STATUS OF PIG FARMERS IN KANCHEEPURAM DISTRICT OF TAMILNADU STATE <i>SASIKALA. V, P. KUMARAVEL & P. MATHIALAGAN</i>	61
11.	STUDY OF EMPOWERMENT STATUS AND THE LEADERSHIP QUALITIES OF WOMEN NGOS <i>DR. MADHAVI S. KULKARNI & KISHOR G. BHIDE</i>	64
12.	IMPACT OF AGE AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT <i>DR. ARTI BAKSHI, ATUL DUTT SHARMA & DR. KULDEEP KUMAR</i>	69
13.	SCAN ON MINIMUM ALTERNATE TAX <i>DR. G. VELMURUGAN</i>	73
14.	SELF HELP GROUPS (SHGs): IMPACT ON WELFARE OF RURAL WOMEN AT IKP (INDIRA KRANTHI PATHAM) <i>DR. M. SUKANYA</i>	76
15.	SELF HELPS GROUPS: A NEW PARADIGM SHIFT FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT <i>DR. K. MANOHARAN NAIR</i>	81
16.	WTO AND INDIA'S FOREIGN TRADE <i>DR. SANJAY TIWARI & DR. TILAK SETHI</i>	85
17.	PERFORMANCE OF VARIOUS BANKING AGENCIES IN INDIA OVER A PERIOD OF TIME <i>K. RANGASWAMY & DR. D.V.GOPALAPPA</i>	94
18.	DIRECT TAXES CODE – AN OVERVIEW <i>DR. A. JAYAKUMAR & R. ELAVARASAN</i>	98
19.	REGIONAL RURAL BANK FINANCE IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH, INDIA: AN IMPACT ANALYSIS <i>DR. TASI KAYE</i>	103
20.	FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT AND RETAILING IN INDIA-ISSUES AND CONCERNS <i>K. BABY & C.A VISALAKSHI</i>	108
21.	SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS: A CASE STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO NORTH DISTRICT OF GOA STATE <i>DR. ACHUT P. PEDNEKAR</i>	114
22.	HUMAN SETTLEMENTS UNDER SRIPADA-YELLAMPALLY PROJECT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY <i>RAMAIAH BHEENAVENI</i>	118
23.	EFFICIENCY STUDY OF LARGE-SIZED BANKS IN INDIA – A DEA APPLICATION <i>MANAS KUMAR BAIDYA</i>	122
24.	GLOBALIZATION AND SMALL-SCALE INDUSTRIES: THE INDIAN PERSPECTIVE <i>SANDEEP AGGARWAL & PARUL MITTAL</i>	130
25.	STRATEGIES FOR SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: MICROENTERPRISE IN ORISSA: PRACTICES TO PROMOTE SUCCESS AMONG LOW-INCOME ENTREPRENEURS <i>DR. BIKRANT KESARI</i>	136
26.	TRENDS AND CHALLENGES BEFORE BANKING SECTOR: A STUDY <i>SATISH TANAJI BHOSALE</i>	140
27.	INDIA & CHINA: THE RISING POWER IN GLOBAL ECONOMY <i>SARITA RANI & INDRA NEHRA</i>	143
28.	PROTECTION OF CHILDREN - ROLE OF PANCHAYATS IN INDIA <i>R.ARUNAJAYAMANI</i>	150
29.	BASEL III: A TOOL OF RISK MANAGEMENT IN BANKING SECTOR <i>SAHILA CHAUDHRY</i>	154
30.	MGNREGA: ITS DRAWBACKS IN J&K 2010 <i>SHEIKH IRSHAD AHMAD</i>	158
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK	162

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A STUDY ON SOCIO – ECONOMIC STATUS OF PIG FARMERS IN KANCHEEPURAM DISTRICT OF TAMILNADU STATE

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ABSTRACT

Pig farming is considered as a crucial enterprise for the livelihood of the socially weakened section of the society. Knowledge about the socio economic status of the pig farmers is very much essential for the policy makers to develop an effective programme. The present study was carried out in the Kancheepuram district of Tamilnadu with the specific objective of finding out the socio economic profile of the pig farmers. A total of fifty pig farmers were randomly selected from four random blocks of purposively selected Kancheepuram district of Tamilnadu. The data were collected from selected farmers through a structured interview schedule after pre -testing. The findings of the study revealed most of the farmers (50 per cent) were old aged and were educated (44 per cent) up to high school level. Majority (66 per cent) of the pig farmers had pig farming as their secondary occupation and 44 per cent were having high level of farming experience. Majority (56 per cent) of pig farmers were low income group and 52 per cent of pig farmers were belonging to marginal farmers. Most of the farmers 54 percent and 52 per cent were having low level of extension agency contact and mass media exposure respectively. Almost all (96 per cent) of the respondents had low level of social participation and 86 per cent of the farmers had medium level of innovativeness. The study concludes that the pig farmers need more extension training regarding pig farming practices to enrich their knowledge level and to improve their standard of living.

KEYWORDS

Kancheepuram, Socio economic profile of pig farmers.

INTRODUCTION

Almost 80 percent of the world's undernourished people live in rural areas (UN Millennium Project, 2004) and most depend on agriculture, including livestock, for their livelihoods. Livestock contribute 40 percent of the global value of agricultural output and support the livelihoods and food security of almost a billion people (The state of food and agriculture, 2009). Evidence suggests that poor people, especially young children and their mothers in developing countries, are not consuming enough animal-based food (IFPRI, 2004) and the role of livestock sector is crucial to fulfill growing food demand which is expected to increase by 40% by 2030 and shall almost be doubled by 2050 (Vision 2030). Among the livestock species pig farming plays an important role in improving the standards of living of the weaker sections of the society. India has about 11.13 million pigs (18th livestock census, 2007) among them 79% are indigenous, 20% are cross bred and 1% are exotic. Pig population in India has increased substantially from 4.4 million in 1951 to 11.13 million in 2007. Indian council of medical research (ICMR) recommends 60g of daily protein intake, 20 g should be from animal protein source. But per capita consumption of meat in India is just 5.1kg/year (The State of Food and Agriculture, 2009) and that of pork is 0.4kg. To meet the recommended level of protein pig is considered as an important component among the livestock species since it possess many economic traits namely high prolificacy, faster growth rate, shorter generation interval, high dressing percentage with better feed conversion efficiency. A very good opportunity exists for opening of employment opportunities for rural youths in this sector. But, this enterprise as compared to other livestock enterprises could not get the wider publicity due to lack of knowledge about its production value and economic feasibility. An analysis of the profile of pig farmers will give an idea of the category of farmers involved in the activity and its importance as a mean of livelihood or subsidiary occupation. Accordingly the present study has been undertaken to know the socio economic status of pig farmers in Kancheepuram district of Tamilnadu.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was undertaken in the Kancheepuram district of Tamilnadu state. The state constitutes 31 districts, out of which the Kancheepuram district was purposively selected for the study due to its high concentration of the pig farmers and majority of the farmers were approached the nearest Krishi Vigyan Kendra for getting information regarding the scientific pig farming activities. The selected Kancheepuram district constitutes thirteen blocks and among these four blocks namely Sriperambudhur, Saint Thomas Mount, Uthiramerur and Kattangalthur were randomly selected. The independent variables were selected by using a five point continuum scale from 30 extension specialists from various parts of the country. A sample of fifty respondents was randomly selected from the above said blocks. A structured interview schedule was prepared and put for pretesting other than the study area. According to the results of pre testing the necessary corrections were made to finalize the interview schedule. The data was collected from the selected farmers through personal interview method by using the interview schedule. The collected data was subjected to the conventional analysis by using the necessary statistical methods. (Snedecor and Cochran 1996). The categorization of the variables was done by using mean and standard error and then the respondents were classified accordingly.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The major findings were discussed in detail and depicted in the following table 1.

TABLE 1: PROFILE OF PIG FARMERS (n=50)

S. No.	Variables of socio economic profile	Classification	Number	Percentage
1	Age	Young (less than or equal to 35 years)	7	14.0
		Middle (36 - 45 years)	18	36.0
		Old (More than 45 years)	25	50.0
2	Education	Illiterate	7	14.0
		Primary	12	24.0
		High school	22	44.0
		Higher secondary	3	6.00
		College	6	12.0
3	Occupation	Primary (Pig farming)	17	34.0
		Secondary (Other than pig farming)	33	66.0
4	Farming experience	Low (Less than 5 years)	8	16.0
		Medium (5-9 years)	20	40.0
		High (10 and above years)	22	44.0
5	Annual income	Low (Up to 65 thousands)	28	56.0
		Medium (65 thousands to 105. 2 thousands)	3	6.00
		High (More than 105.2 thousands)	19	38.0
6	Land holding	Landless (0 acres)	19	38.0
		Marginal (0 -2.5 acres)	26	52.0
		Small (2.6 to 5.0 acres)	2	4.00
		Semi medium (5.1 to 10.0 acres)	1	2.00
		Medium (10.1 to 25.0 acres)	1	2.00
		Large (More than 25.0 acres)	1	2.00
7	Herd size	Small (1-2 pigs)	0	0.00
		Medium (3 -5 pigs)	3	6.00
		Large (Above 5 pigs)	47	94.0
8	Contact with extension agency	Low (Up to 5.54)	27	54.0
		Medium (5.55 - 7.41)	7	14.0
		High (More than 7.41)	16	32.0
9	Mass media exposure	Low (Up to 2.0)	26	52.0
		Medium (2.0 to 2.7)	9	18.0
		High (More than 2.7)	15	30.0
10	Social participation	Low (Up to 0.1)	48	96.0
		Medium (0.2 to 0.7)	0	0.00
		High (More than 0.7)	2	4.00
11	Economic motivation	Low (Up to 18.9)	13	26.0
		Medium (19.0 to 21.35)	10	20.0
		High (More than 21.35)	27	54.0
12	Innovativeness	Low (Up to 2)	5	10.0
		Medium (2 -5)	43	86.0
		High (More than 5)	2	4.00
13	Knowledge level	Low (0-8)	24	48.0
		Medium (9 -16)	24	48.0
		High (17-24)	2	4.00

Note: The classification of low, medium, high were done by using mean \pm standard error.

Source: The data are original on the basis of a survey work conducted by the investigator.

AGE

Among the fifty respondents nearly one – half (50 per cent) of the respondents were old aged and followed by middle (36 per cent) aged and the remaining 14 per cent were young age group. The probable reason for such distribution might be that, old farmers had taken up pig farming as a traditional and subsidiary occupation to agriculture over number of years. This finding is in line with the findings of Bharathy (1996) and Kannan et al (2006) who stated that majority of the respondents belonged to old age group.

EDUCATION

Two – fifth of pig farmers were educated up to high school level (44 per cent) followed by primary (24 per cent), collegiate (12 per cent) and 6 per cent were educated up to higher secondary. This might be due to recent government policies which emphasized on literacy to the rural masses. The study conducted by RaviKumar *et al.* (2007) also reported that among total farmers, only 19.17 per cent were found to be illiterate which is in consonance with the present findings. The findings of the study also correlated with the observations of Jayakumar and Manokaran (1999) who reported the majority of the farmers were educated up to high school.

OCCUPATION

More than one-half (66 per cent) of the respondents were engaged in other occupations primarily with pig rearing as their secondary occupation and only 34 per cent of the farmers had pig farming as primary occupation. The reason might be the lack of awareness and poor knowledge regarding the scientific pig farming practices to increase their profits through pig farming. The findings are similar to the reports of Kaushik and Singhal (1992) and RaviKumar *et al.* (2007) who reported that majority of the farmers had agriculture as major occupation with livestock rearing as the subsidiary occupation.

FARMING EXPERIENCE

More than three fourth (84 per cent) of the pig farmers had medium to high level of farming experience and the remaining 16 per cent had low level of farming experience. This might be due to the old aged farmers and their traditional rearing of pigs. The results of the study is correlated with the findings of Bharathy (1996) who reported that majority of the respondents had high level of farming experience.

ANNUAL INCOME

More than half of the farmers (56 per cent) had low income and 38 and 6 per cent of the respondents had high and medium level of income respectively. This might be due to their lack of knowledge about the scientific farming practices to improve their income. This finding is in line with the findings of Sivakumar et al (2006) who had stated that majority of the respondents belonged to low income group.

LAND HOLDING

Majority (52 per cent) of the respondents belonged to marginal farmers category while over one- third (38 per cent) were landless laborers and only 4 per cent of pig farmers were small farmer category. The remaining 6 per cent of the farmers i.e. each 2 per cent of them constitutes medium, semi-medium and large farmer category. The findings are in consonance with the study conducted by Jassi *et.al* (1997) who reported that 50 per cent of dairy farmers belonged to the small farmer's category possessing 2.5 to 5.5 acres of land. Similar findings were also reported by Oladele (2001) reporting that 57.1 per cent of respondents had the farm size less than 1.6 hectares.

HERD SIZE

Most of the farmers (94 per cent) possessed large herd size and only 6 per cent of the respondents were maintaining medium herd size. The reason attributed might be the farmers perception towards possessing more number of animals yields more income.

CONTACT WITH EXTENSION AGENCY

Majority (54 per cent) of the pig farmers had low level of extension agency contact and the remaining 14 and 32 per cent of the respondents had medium and high level of extension agency contact respectively. This shows the lack of awareness about the extension agencies and the low level of extension agency contact might be due to the lack of facilities to contact the extension agency for getting better solutions. The results of the study are in par with the results of Muruganandam (2003) who concluded that majority of the dairy farmers belonged to low level of extension agency contact.

MASS MEDIA EXPOSURE

Majority (52 per cent) of the respondents were having low level of mass media exposure whereas 18 per cent and 30 per cent of the respondents had medium and high level of mass media exposure. The reason might be the lack of awareness about the mass media sources providing the information regarding pig farming practices and also due to the unavailability of the mass media sources due to their poor standard of living.

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Nearly all (96 per cent) of the respondents had low level of social participation and only 4 per cent of the respondents were having high level of social participation. The reason for their low level of social participation might be due to the pig farmers are socially weakened section. This finding is in line with the findings of Sivakumar *et al* (2006) who had stated that majority of the respondents had low level of social participation.

ECONOMIC MOTIVATION

It is noted from the table that the 54 per cent and 20 per cent of the respondents had high and medium level of economic motivation and the remaining one fifth (26 per cent) of the respondents had low level of economic motivation. This clearly explains about their eagerness and willingness to earn more income by adopting scientific farming technologies.

INNOVATIVENESS

It is clearly evident from the table 1 majority of the respondents (86 per cent) had medium level of innovativeness, whereas a meager per cent of the respondents were possessing high (4 per cent) and low (10 per cent) level of innovativeness. The reason might be due to their contact with krishi vigyan Kendra and other progressive farmers to know about the new technologies to improve their income from pig farming. This finding is in line with the findings of Nathimuthu (1993) and Kumaravel (2000) who had stated that the majority of the respondents had medium level of innovativeness.

KNOWLEDGE LEVEL

It is clearly indicated from the study that the distribution of respondents according to their knowledge level on pig farming practices that majority (each 48 per cent) of the respondents possessed low and medium level of knowledge on scientific pig farming practices and only a meager (4 per cent) had high level of knowledge. The result of the study is correlated with the findings of Dakurah *et.al* (2005) who reported that the respondents were possessed medium level of knowledge on the scientific farming practices.

CONCLUSION

The findings shows that majority of the respondents were old aged, high school level educated, medium to high farming experience and marginal farmers category. Majority of the respondents were having low level of extension agency contact and low level of social participation. Hence, the policy makers and extension agencies should focus on the pig farming community by planning viable development programmes at the block and village level. And also efforts may be taken up to improve their social participation.

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