

Socio-economic Status of farmers vis-à-vis Role of Human Resources in Sheep and Goat Management Practices in Southern Rajasthan

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Abstract

The study was carried out in eight villages of Udaipur and Rajsamand districts of Southern Rajasthan. In totality 240 respondents rearing sheep and goat were covered in the study. The results revealed that majority of sheep and goat keepers belong to young and middle age group and were illiterate (66.67%). Other backward category (43.75%) was predominantly engaged in sheep and goat rearing enterprises and most of them followed nuclear family structure. Most of the sheep and goat keeping practices viz., milking, cleaning, grazing; sale of animal, sale of milk and care of young stock were carried out by men. Women and children were also played considerable role in sheep and goat management practices. Though children were not largely involved in strenuous job but their role could not be ignored. The results suggested that rural people of Southern Rajasthan were looking sheep and goat husbandry as a tool for rural employment, food security and livelihood.

Keywords: Sheep and Goat production, Socioeconomic dimension, management, human resources.

Introduction

Sheep and goat farming in the country contributes greatly to the agrarian economy, specially in the arid and semi-arid as well as mountaneous area where crop production or dairy farming is not economical. Sheep and goat rearing thus become an important source of livelihood of the poorest of the poor in rural areas. These animals provide food security, employment, manure and great social and recreational values. Small ruminants are mostly reared on zero input system.

Mostly tribal's live on hilly top of "Aravali" and utilize the flaxy on plain area, wherever available between the hills for cultivation of crops and keep normally 1 to 3 milch animals including cows, buffaloes, sheep and goat as a part of mixed farming system. These animals are mostly non-descript type and their up keep is far from the scientific lines. Even though this tribal belt is rich in total animal strength yet the progress of animal husbandry does not seem to be satisfactory. The main handicaps in the promotion of sheep and goat farming in these reasons are the adverse climatic condition, poor management, inadequate marketing facilities and poor genetic materials are the fundamental constraints faced by the people. In addition to this lack of knowledge of scientific management practices also appears to be one of the factors for slow growth of this sector. Few efforts are known to have been made to study systematically the sheep and goat management practices in rural area. The information though available particularly regarding role of human resources in sheep and goat rearing practices are scanty

and have been base on assumption, casual observations, experience and reports of some specialists and professional workers. This is hardly adequate to serve the basis on which valid guide lines could be formulated for developing programmes of introducing improved and scientific management practices. Keeping above views the present investigation was undertaken to unearth the role of human resources involved in various rearing practices of sheep and goat in "Aravali" hills of southern Rajasthan.

Methodology

The study was undertaken in Udaipur and Rajsamand districts of southern part of Rajasthan following multistage random sampling technique. Two tehsil from each district and four villages from each tehsil having highest concentration of sheep and goat population were purposively selected. Finally 15 sheep and goat keeping families were taken randomly as respondents. Thus in totality 120 households from each district were surveyed in this study. Thus a total of 240 sheep and goat keepers were covered. The data pertaining to socioeconomic status of respondents and involvement of human resources in various sheep and goat rearing practices were collected through personal interview method involving a semi-structured pre-tested interview schedule.

Results and discussion

Socio-economic Dimensions

Observations recorded revealed that majority of sheep and goat keepers belong to young and middle age group in both the districts. In light of this fact it

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become imperative that extension agencies engaged in promotion of animal production activities should must pay specific attention to the sheep and goat keepers of these districts of Rajasthan (Table 1). Sheep and goat were predominantly reared by other backward category (43.75%) and schedule tribe (23.75%) people. Of the total farmers surveyed only 12.08 per cent belonging to general caste were engaged in sheep and goat rearing practices, which clearly suggests that general caste people were rarely follow the practices of rearing small ruminates and the results are in agreement with the findings earlier reported by Rai and Singh (2004).

Further the results of present study indicated that in totality 66.67 per cent sheep and goat owners were illiterate followed by farmers educated upto primary level (27.92%) and least number i.e. only 5.42 per cent of the total were Matric educated. Since literacy rate plays a pivot role in adoption of scientific knowledge in the field of sheep and goat rearing, this has to be improved for early adoption of scientific management practices. Similar trend was recorded by Kumar and Deoghare (2003).

The distribution of respondents according to their occupation enumerated that in both the districts majority of sheep and goat keepers followed agriculture and animal husbandry as their main occupation (62.50%), chasing closely by servicemen (56.25%). Person doing their own business (16.25%) were little bothered to keep sheep and goat livestock as subsidiary enterprises. The results with this respect were fully corroborated Table 1: Socio-economic dimensions of sheep and goat keepers

by Pathodiya et al. (2004).

Perusal of results elucidate that on an overall average 65.83% households were having nuclear type family followed by 34.17% joint family respondents in Udaipur district while in Rajsamand district the figures constituting were 78.33 and 21.67% respondents possessing nuclear and joint family composition respectively. The observations further indicate that overall majority (72.08%) of the respondents actively engaged in sheep and goat rearing practices were believe in having nuclear family component as compared to respondents belong to joint family structure. Similar results were also reported by Pathodiya et al., (2004).

In general, majority of sheep and goat keeps were involved in agriculture and animal husbandry activities and having less than 6 acres of land holding. Major portion of land holding were rainfed, dependent upon monsoon, hence its failure caused great impediment to their agricultural operations. In such a stricken situation income from sheep and goat rearing played a major role in their sustenance. Rai and Singh (2004) had also expressed the similar views.

Role of Human Resources:

The role of human resources particularly by women in agricultural operations, allies occupations and household activities has, however, been grossly underestimated. Sheep and goat husbandry is a main occupation of small and poor farmers of Rajasthan. Six major operations such as milking, cleaning, grazing, sale of animals, sale of milk and care of young stock

Particulars	Udaipur	Rajsamand	Overall
1. Number of farmers	120	120	240
2. Av. age of farmer (yr.)	38.57±4.72	43.35±4.44	40.96±4.13
3. Caste category			
i) SC	30(25.00)	19(15.83)	49(20.42)
ii) ST	31(25.83)	26(21.67)	57(23.75)
iii) OBC	43(35.83)	62(51.67)	105(43.75)
iv) General	16(13.34)	13(10.83)	29 (12.08)
4. Occupation			
i) Service	70(34.31)	65(54.17)	135(56.25)
ii) Business	20(9.80)	19(15.83)	39(16.25)
iii) Agri + A.H.	30(55.89)	36(30.00)	150(62.50)
5. Educational Qualification			
i) Illiterate	83(69.16)	77(64.17)	160(66.67)
ii) Up to Primary	31(25.83)	36(30.00)	20(27.92)
iii) Up to Matric	06(5.00)	07(5.83)	30(05.42)
6. Family Type			
i) Joint	41(34.17)	26(21.67)	67(27.92)
ii) Nuclear	79(65.83)	94(78.33)	173(72.08)
7. Av. Land holding (Acres)			
i) Cultivated irrigated	1.84 ± 2.92	3.28 ± 1.81	2.56 ± 1.92
ii) Cultivated Unirrigated	4.75 ± 3.02	5.18 ± 3.60	4.97 ± 3.14

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

Table 2: Involvement of human resources in sheep and goat management practices (per cent of households)

Management Practice	Udaipur n = 120			Rajsamand n = 120			Overall n = 240		
	Men	Women	Children	Men	Women	Children	Men	Women	Children
Milking	44.94	37.64	17.41	41.86	35.46	22.67	40.21	33.86	25.93
Cleaning	20.49	56.52	22.98	14.83	60.43	24.72	17.49	58.60	23.91
Grazing	40.83	34.03	25.13	36.23	33.81	29.95	38.44	33.92	27.64
Sale of animal	88.05	11.95	—	81.08	18.92	—	84.40	15.60	—
Sale of milk	60.83	31.66	7.50	50.00	33.33	16.67	55.42	32.50	12.08
Care of young Livestock	63.33	35.00	1.66	66.66	20.83	12.50	65.00	29.92	7.08

of sheep and goat rearing practices were identified to judge the role of human resources in sheep and goat management practices (Table 2).

Milking of sheep and goat was found to be men dominated activity in both the districts. Of the total in 40.21 per cent families this job was performed by men closely followed by women (33.86%) and in 25.93 per cent respondents' milking of sheep and goat was done by children. Proper cleaning of corral plays an important role in maintaining the small ruminant healthy and disease free. Women and children played an exclusive role in these activities in both the districts. Similar views were also held by Kumar (2004).

Results indicated that men, women and children were actively involved in grazing practices of sheep and goat in both the district of Rajasthan. For the present study, on an overall the grazing activity of sheep and goat was performed by 38.44, 33.92 and 27.64% by men, women and children respectively in southern part of the Rajasthan. In most of the cases the women were engaged for grazing of sheep and goat when men were out for some other important households work.

Contrary to above sale of animals was also found to be male dominated activity in both districts of southern Rajasthan. In overall animals were sold by men in 84.40% families and in remaining 15.60% respondents this job was performed by women. Interestingly in none of the families selling of animals was done by children. Surplus goat / sheep milk after domestic used was disposed of by mixing it with cow or buffalo milk. A number of road side restaurants / tea stall and many families prefer goat milk, simply because of its nutritional and therapeutic importance. Role of male community in selling of milk was predominant in both the districts. The pooled data for both the districts revealed that involvement of women and children in selling of milk was least and their contribution to this component was restricted to only 32.50 and 12.08% households surveyed (Table 2).

Once again the observation showed that care of young stock was also men dominated operation in southern Rajasthan. Involvement of men, women and children to this very job of work was recorded to the extent of 65.00, 29.92 and 7.08 per cent in the

households respectively. In sight in to the findings vividly visualized that children were not largely involved in strenuous activities of sheep and goat rearing practices. On the other hands the role of women, in addition to their routine household duties, in sheep and goat management practices in terms of cleaning of corral, milking, grazing and care of young stock is of paramount significance. Similar contentions were also expressed by Chowdhary and Bharat (2003).

In view of the present findings it could be concluded that sheep and goat rearing provides a gainful employment to the family members of the livestock owning households. Though role of men was predominant but contribution of women to various management practices of sheep and goat keeping was also of utmost importance and in no way it was lesser than men when it assessed in terms of their emotional attachment to their flock. Further the results made it imperative that children of sheep and goat farmers' families were not exclusively involved in strenuous activities of livestock husbandry and that a matter of high of relief that children must spare time for their schooling.

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