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A STUDY ON LIVELIHOOD STATUS OF SHEEP REARING IN MECHERI BLOCK OF SALEM DISTRICT

Dr. A. Saravanadurai* & P. Prakasam**

*Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Periyar University, Salem-11

** Research Scholar, Department of Economics, Periyar University, Salem-11

ABSTRACT

Animal husbandry is an integral component of agriculture, supporting livelihoods of more than two-thirds of the rural population. It plays a significant role in the rural economy by providing gainful employment to a large number of small, marginal farmers and landless agricultural labourers and raising their economic status. Livestock form an important resource for the landless agricultural labourers as it is the only major asset for them. The present study focused on the socio economic condition of the mecheri sheep farmers which is an exclusive variety of mecheri block. The general characteristic of farmers, earning pattern, livestock rearing, land holding, assets, age cum weight wise market, feed supplement, labour and shearing, marketing expenditure, hospital, programmers and currently methods are discussed. This study clearly shows that rearing mecheri sheep is profitable venture to other local breed of mecheri block and farmers economics condition improving gradually for sheep rearing.

Keywords: Mecheri sheep, Livestock mecheri block, Socio economics conditions.

INTRODUCTION

Livestock sector plays a critical role in the welfare of India's rural population. It contributes nine percent to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employs eight per cent of the labour force. Sheep plays an important role in Indian economy and source of livelihood and employment to millions of rural households. This sector witnessed significant increase in output of its products like meat, milk and skin. Sheep has a tremendous potential to adapt in harsh agro-climatic conditions and can be performed on scarce input, thus suitable to large number of rural households of entire country. High income elasticity of demand for sheep products is incremental due to increase in per capita income, diet consciousness and increasing urbanization. Rising demand for sheep meat coupled with low capital investment and recurring cost, quick return and less risk make sheep farming a profitable and sustainable enterprise to different categories of rural households.

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Sustained economic growth, fast growing urban population and integration of global agrifood markets are some driving factors of growth in demand for animal food products. Nearly two thirds of farm households in the country are associated with livestock production, and 80 per cent of them are small landholders.

By virtue of its simplicity, sheep rearing is a preferred option among marginal and small farmers and even landless farmers, who depend on common grazing and forest lands for fodder. Low capital intensity, prolific breeding, superior chevon mutton quality, early sexual maturity, high quality skin, low kidding intervals, good adaptability, no religious taboo against consumption, and steady returns are some of the factors accountable for the concentration of sheep rearing among these categories. Sheep in India are mostly maintained on natural vegetation on common grazing lands, wastelands and uncultivated fallow lands, stubbles of cultivated crops and top feeds tree lopping. Rarely are they kept on grain, cultivated fodder or crop residue. Sheep rearing is the backbone of the economy of small and landless farmers in India. It is an insurance against crop failure and provides alternate source of livelihood to the farmers round the year. It provide dependable source of income to 40 per cent of the rural population who are below the poverty line. Sheep are mostly reared for wool and meat. Skin and manure constitute important sources of earning, the latter particularly in southern India. 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, morbidity, consequent reduced production, and lack of organized effort for bringing genetic improvement.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Hossain et al (2018) studied that "Socio-economic status of sheep farmers and the management practices of sheep at Gafargaon upazila of Mymensingh district" the study was conducted at three villages of Gafargaon upazila on sheep production family as their profession from September 2017 to February 2018. Sixty percent farmers used roadside grass and 40% used cultivated and roadside grass. Most of farmers used mixed feed which was bought from local market and 20% farmers used vitamin-mineral supplementation. About 100% farmers used natural breeding. Eighty and 80% farmers practiced vaccination and de-worming, respectively. Ten percent farmers used hormone, antibiotic and growth promoter and 25% farmers removed sick animal from healthy stock. All farmers allowed access to outdoor and pasturing during winter season and none reared male and female sheep separately. Only 10% farmers kept their animal record. Most of farmers were middle aged categories (53%) and education level of farmers was 63, 30, and 7% primary, secondary and higher secondary. Out of 30 respondents

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50% were farmers and 23% businessman. About 57% farmers used own capital, 10%, farmers took bank loan and 33% took NGO loan for sheep production. About 37% farmers purchased sheep occasionally from local market. The major problems in safety sheep production of high cost of vitamin-mineral supplement, unavailable organic fertilizer, lack of technical knowledge and lack of pasture land were 10, 27, 83 and 43% respectively. There are great opportunities and potentialities for safety sheep production in Bangladesh both for satisfying animal protein requirement, production of quality sheep and improve the socio-economic status of farmers.

Arpana et al (2016) explored the study "A Study on Socio-Economic Status of Bandur Sheep Rearing Farmers in Mandya District, Karnataka" The present study focused on the socio-economic condition of the Bandur sheep farmers which is an exclusive variety of Mandya district, Karnataka. The general characteristics of farmers, earning pattern, land holding pattern, other livestock reared, kind and amount of investment, viable marketing channels and currently practicing methods are discussed. This study clearly shows that rearing Bandur sheep is profitable venture compare to other local breed of Mandya district and farmer's economic condition improving gradually.

Amand Rao et al (2013) computed the "Analysis of Sheep Production Systems: North Coastal Zone of Andhra Pradesh" this study was conducted following the socioeconomic status of sheep farmers revealed that agriculture (69.06%) was main occupation and most of them belong to backward community (75.31%). The housing practices revealed that sheep were provided penning only during night time (88.75%). Sheep manure was stored by open method (88.02%). The mean grazing time (h) and grazing distance (km) of sheep was 8.48±0.06 and 6.02±0.17 in summer and 6.08±0.05 and 3.78±0.03 in other seasonal period of the year, respectively. Almost half of the farmers (47.39%) deformed sheep at every 6 months interval. The sheep flocks were vaccinated mainly against Enterotoxaemia (87.60%) and foot and mouth disease (71.87%). The study on the reproductive performance of sheep indicated that the percent lambing, twinning and weaning were 81.33±0.26, 0.48±0.04 and 85.53±0.16, respectively. The mean age at first mating was 12.85±0.10 and 21.17±0.07 in ewes and rams, respectively. The mean body weight (kg) at weaning, 6 months, one year and above one year age were 8.96±0.14, 16.05±0.12, 20.39±0.16 and 26.31±0.15 for ewe lambs and 10.10±0.11, 15.48±0.09, 26.01±0.30 and 40.43±0.26, respectively for ram lambs.

OBJECTIVES

To study the socio economic conditions of sheep rearing in mecheri block.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

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The study pertains to the mecheri sheep rearing farmers presented in Salem district. The farmers are generally suspicious of the motive of any investigation therefore the investigator has confronted with various drawbacks in ascertaining accuracy of data. However greater are was taken to collect the data as accurately as possible. Farther the expressed opinion with regard to various issues of the study may not be totally free from personal. Hence the results of the study cannot be generalized beyond the limits of the study area in mecheri block as a whole.

METHODOLOGY

The socio economic status of sheep rearing in mecheri block of Salem district totally five Panchayat, Mallikundam, Olaipatty,Pallipatty, Vellar, and Virudusampatty were selected because in these five panchayat mecheri sheep were dominating against local breed according to 19 th livestock census. Again from each five panchayat are selected for the purpose of the study 12 village was selected from the five panchayat by adopting the random sampling technique from each village 3- 4 sample farmers was randomly selected for the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The result of socio economics conditions of sheep rearing in Mecheri block. In order to identify the significant role and the economic status of sheep rearing in the Mecheri block.

Table 1: General Characteristics of Sheep Farmers

SI. No	Category		Sheep farmers	Percentage
1.	Gender	Male	90	60.0
		Female	60	40.0
2.	Age	< 35	52	34.7
		36 to 55	43	28.7
		>56	55	36.7
3.	Community	BC	18	12.0
		MBC	93	62.0
		SC /ST	39	26.0
4.	Education	IIIiterate	67	44.7
		Primary Education	35	23.3
		High School	26	17.3

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		Higher Secondary	19	12.7
		PUC	3	2.0
5.	Marital Status	Married	103	68.7
		Unmarried	30	20.0
		Widow	17	11.3
6.	Family Type	Joint Family	33	22.0
		Nuclear Family	117	78.0
7.	Family Size	2-4 Members	83	55.3
		4-6 Members	41	27.3
		>6 Members	26	17.3
Total			**150**	**100**

Source: *Computed from the Primary* Data

Table1.1 Studied the gender wise Classification of the respondents. It was observed from the table that 90(60.0 percent) respondents were found to be male and the remaining 60 respondents (40.0 percent) female. It was clear from the table that majority were male in the study. It was observed from the table that 55 (36.7 percent) respondents belonged to the age group of >56 years as against 52 (34.7 percent) respondents in the age group of <35 years. Followed by 28.7 of the respondents to be in the age category of 36 to 55 years. It could be conclude from the table that majority of the farmers selected for the study were between the age group of >56 years. Show that out of 150 respondents in the study area, 93 (62.0 percent) respondents belong to Most Backward Caste communities,39 (26.0 percent) respondents belong to Scheduled Caste/Schedule Tribe communities and 18 (12.0 percent) respondents belong to Backward Caste. It is inferred from the above table that majority of the sample respondents in the study area belonging to Most Backward Caste community. It was evident from the table that out of selected 150 respondents a maximum of 67 (44.7 percent) farmers were observed to be Illiterate as against 35 (23.3 percent) farmers who completed their Primary Education, followed by 26 (17.3 percent) farmers with high school and 19 (12.7 percent) farmers studied up to Higher Secondary level education. Another point that was observed from the table that 3 (2.0 percent) respondents had completed their PUC level education. It could be concluded that majority of the respondents (44.7 percent) were illiterate. Shows that marital status of the respondents, it was inferred through the table that 68.7 percent of the respondents were married, followed by 17 (11.3 percent) respondents were widow and it was interesting to note that 30 (20.0 percent) respondents were unmarried. It could be concluded that majority of the respondents (68.7percent) were married. It was observed from

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the table that 78.0 percent of the respondent lived in nuclear type of family type, followed by 22.0 percent respondents in the Joint family system in the study area. It was clear from the table that majority of the respondents lived in Nuclear family system. It was observed from the table that 55.3 percent of the respondents family size was 2-4 members as against 27.3 percent of the respondents had more than 4-6 members in the family and 17.3 percent of the respondents had >6 members in the family. It could be concluded that majority (83 respondents) of the respondents family size was 2-4 members and the show high dependency of the working members in the family.

Table 2: Earning pattern of Sheep famers.

Sl. No.	Category		No. of Farmers	Percentage
1.	Main Occupation	Agriculture	85	56.7
		Sheep Rearing	41	27.3
		Daily Wages	24	16.0
2.	Average Income	<10,000	66	44.0
		11,000 to 20,000	45	30.0
		21,000to 30,000	31	20.7
		>31,000	8	5.3
3.	Family Expenditure	<5000	75	50.0
		5001 to 10,000	49	32.7
		11,000 to 15,000	17	11.3
		>16,000	9	6.0
Total			**150**	**100**

Source: *Computed from the Primary* Data

From the table 2 it was has been found that agriculture is the main Occupation of most of the respondents 85 (56.7 percent), followed by sheep rearing respondents 41 (27.3 percent) and daily wages labour respondents 24 (16.0 percent). It could be concluded that majority (85 respondents) of the main Occupation agriculture of a study area. Average annual income of the majority respondents 66 (44.0 percent) was less than Rs 10,000, followed by 45 (30.0 percent) of respondents with Rs 11,000 to 20,000, 31(20.7 percent) of respondents with Rs 21,000 to 30,000 and remaining 8(5.3 percent) respondents with more than 31,000. It could be concluded that majority (66 respondents) of the average income less than Rs 10,000 in the study. it was observed that the family expenditure of the majority respondents 75(50.0 percent) was less than Rs 5000, followed by 49 (32.7 percent) of respondents with Rs 5001 to 10,000 and 17 (11.3 percent) of respondents with Rs 11,000 to 15,000 and remaining 8 (6.0 percent) was more than

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16,000. It could be concluded that majority49 respondents of the less than Rs 5000 in family expenditure.

Table 3: Land Holding Pattern of the Sheep Rearing Farmers

Sl. No	Category Acres		No. of Rearers	Percentage
1.	Marginal Farmers	0 to 2.5	93	62.00
2.	Small Farmers	2.5 to 5	57	38.00
Total			**150**	**100**

Source: *Computed from the Primary* Data

Table 3 the land holding pattern of the sheep rearing farmers of 150 respondents 93 of the respondents (62 percent) has to 0 to 2.5 acres in marginal farmers and followed by the respondents 57 (38.0 percent) has 2.5 to 5 acres in small farmers of the respondents. It could be concluded that majority 93 respondents of the land holding in marginal farmers.

Table 4: Livestock Rearing with Mecheri Sheep.

Sl. No	Livestock	No. of farmers	Percentage
1.	Drought Animal	13	8.7
2.	Cow	52	34.7
3.	Buffalo	27	18.0
4.	Goat	16	10.7
5.	Poultry	42	28.0
Total		**150**	**100**

Source: *Computed from the Primary* Data

Table 4 livestock reared along with mecheri sheep is discussed out of 150 respondents. 52 respondents (34.7 percent) rears cow along with followed by 42 respondents (28.0 percent) who rears poultry, 27 respondents (18.0 percent) rears buffaloes, 16 respondents (8.7 percent) rears goat and remaining 13 respondents (8.7 percent) rears drought animals. It could be concluded that majority 52 respondents of the rears cow.

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Table 5: Assets Owned by the Sheep Rearing Farmers

Sl. No.	Category		No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	House Type	Tiled House	63	42.0
		Thatched House	33	22.0
		Green House	32	21.3
		Asbestos Sheeted House	22	14.7
2.	Moveable Assets	TV	53	35.3
		Fridge	42	28.0
		Bicycle	25	16.7
		Two Wheeler	23	15.3
		Car	7	4.7
3.	Farm Assets	Iron Plough	47	31.3
		Sprayer	66	44.0
		Cart	20	13.3
		Pump Set	12	8.0
		Tractor	5	3.3
Total			**150**	**100**

Source: *Computed from the Primary* Data

The assets owned by the mecheri sheep rearing farmers presented in table 5 out of 150 respondents 63 of the respondents (42 percent) reside in titled house, followed by each 33 respondents reside in thatched house (22.0 percent) and 32 respondents (21.3 percent) reside in green house and remaining 22 respondents (14.7 percent) reside in asbestos sheeted house. It could be concluded that majority 63 respondents of the type of house in title house. Among moveable assets among the total respondents 53 respondents (35.5 percent) by television, 42 respondents (28 .0 percent) has fridge, 25 respondents (16.7 percent) has bicycle, 23 respondents (15.3 percent) two wheeler and remaining 7 respondents (47 percent) has car. It could be concluded that majority 53 respondents of the television. It was observed that the farmers assets in total respondents 66 respondents (44.0 percent) has sprayer, 47 respondents (31.3 percent) has iron plough, 20 respondents (13.3 percent) has cart, 12 respondents (8.0 percent) has pump set and remaining the 5 respondents (3.3 percent) has tractor. It could be concluded that majority 66 respondents of the sprayer in farm assets.

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Table 6: Age cum Weight Wise Market Value of Mecheri Sheep

Sl. No.	Age of Sheep (in months)	Weight of Sheep (Kgs)	Sheep Value (Rs)	No. of. Sheep Rearers	Percentage
1.	<3 Month	<15 Kg	3000 to 5000	31	20.7
2.	4 to 6 Month	16 to 20 Kg	5001 to 8000	50	33.3
3.	7 to 10 Month	21 to 25 Kg	8001 to 12000	31	20.7
4.	11 to 12 Month	26 to 30 Kg	12001 to 15000	24	16.0
5.	12 > Month	31 to 35Kg	>15001	14	9.3
Total				**150**	**100**

Source: *Computed from the Primary* Data

Table 6 shows the market value of sheep according to its age and weight wise for sheep whose age is 4- 6 months weight 16 to 20 has have market value Rs 5001 to 8000, 50 respondents (33.3 percent), age of sheep from less than 3 months weight less than 15 kg have Rs 3000 to 5000 as market value of 31 respondents (20.7 percent) age of sheep from 7 to 10 months weight 21 to 25 kg have Rs 8001 to 12000 as market value of 31 respondents (20.7 percent) age of sheep from 11 to 12 months weight 26 to 30 kg have value Rs 12001 to 1500 market value of 24 respondents (16.0 percent) and remaining 12 more than weight 31 to 35 kg have Rs more than 15001 market value of 14 respondents (9.3 percent). It could be concluded that majority 50 respondents of the respondents age of shep 4 to 6 month weight 16 to 20 kg have Rs 5001 to 8000.

Table 7: Feed Supplement of Mecheri Sheep

Sl. No.	Type of Feed	No. of Sheep Rearers	Percentage
1.	Dry & Green Fodder	36	24.0
2.	Concentrated feed	28	18.7
3.	Horse gram	35	23.3
4.	Oil Cake	31	20.7
5.	Wheat flour	20	13.3
Total		**150**	**100**

Source: *Computed from the Primary* Data

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Feed supplement given of mecheri sheep is show in table 7 out of 150 respondents 36 respondents (24 percent) give dry & green fodder, followed by 35 respondents (23.3 percent) give horse gram, 31 respondents (20.7 percent) give oilcake, 28 respondents(18.7 percent) give concentrate feed and remaining 20 respondents (13.3 percent) give wheat flour. It could be concluded that majority 36 respondents of the dry and green fodder feed supplement.

Table 8: Labour Involved and Shearing Charges in the Mecheri Sheep

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Sheep Farmers	Percentage
Labour Involved			
1.	Hired	28	18.7
2.	Family	122	81.3
Shearing Charges (Rs)			
1.	<15	20	13.3
2.	21	58	38.7
3.	30	31	20.7
4.	42	35	23.3
5.	No Charges	6	4.0
Total		**150**	**100**

Source: *Computed from the Primary* Data

Table 8 respondents the shearing and labour charges on mecheri sheep rearing 58 respondents (20.7 percent) were spending Rs 21 as shearing charge, 35 respondents (23.3 percent) were spending Rs 42 as shearing charge, 31 respondents (20.7 percent) were spending Rs 30 as shearing charge, 20 respondents (13.3 percent) were spending Rs 15 as shearing charge and remaining 6 respondents (4.0 percent) were spending Rs no charge as shearing charges.

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Table 9: Marketing Expenditure on Mecheri Sheep

Sl. No	Particulars	No. of Farmers	Percentage	Particulars	No. of Farmers	Percentage
	Commission Charges for Middlemen (Rs)			Transportation Charges (Rs)		
1.	<50	31	20.7	<50	87	58.0
2.	51 to 100	95	63.3	51 to 100	19	12.7
3.	101 to 200	6	4.0	100 to 150	13	8.7
4.	201 to 300	5	3.3	150 to 200	9	6.0
5.	No expense	13	8.7	No expenses	22	14.7
Total		**150**	**100**	**Total**	**150**	**100**

Source: *Computed from the Primary* Data

Table 9 the marketing expenditure on mecheri sheep is shown in table out of 150 respondents 95 respondents (63.3 percent) spends commission charge for middleman Rs 51 to 100, followed by 31 respondents (20.7 percent) spends commission charges for middleman less than Rs 50, 13 respondents (87 percent) spends commission charges for middleman does not spend any amount, 6 respondents (4.0 percent) spends commission charges for middleman Rs 101 to 200 and remaining 5 respondents (3.3 percent) spends commission charges for middleman Rs 201 to 300 majority of the respondents 87 (58 percent) less than 50 amount as transportation charges, while22 respondents (14.7 percent) spend any amount 51 to 100 as transportation charged by 19 respondents (12.7 percent) spends Rs 100 to 150, 13 respondents (8.7 percent) spends and remaining Rs 150 to 200 9 respondents (6.0 percent).

Table 10: Marketing, Hospital and Programmers of the Sheep Rearing.

Sl. No	Category		No. of Rearers	Percentage
1.	Type of Channel	Through Intermediaries	68	45.3
		Direct Selling in Market	43	28.7
		Through friends and Relative	21	14.0
		Selling to Buchure	18	12.0
2.	Different Methods	Under Cover System	11	7.3

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		Secret Words	52	34.7
		Direct with the Buyer	87	58.0
3.	Methods of Selling	The Same Village	29	19.3
		Small Towns	13	8.7
		Weekly Shandi	108	72.0
4.	Government Hospital	Always	14	9.3
		Sometimes	136	90.7
5.	House and Hospital	<5 K.M	44	29.3
		6 to 10 K.M	79	52.7
		11 to 15 K.M	18	12.0
		>16 K.M	9	6.0
6.	Duration of Sheep Programmers	3 months	30	20.0
		6 months	113	75.3
		1 years	7	4.7
Total			**150**	**100**

Source: *Computed from the Primary* Data

The marketing hospital and programmers of sheep rearing show that the table 10. It was observed from the table that 68 (45.3 percent) respondents who had through intermediaries as against 43 (28.7 percent) of the respondents had direct selling in market, as 21 (14.0 percent) of the respondents had through friends and relative and remaining 18 (12.0 percent) of the respondents had selling to buyer. Show that it was out of the 150 respondents in 87 (58.0 percent) of the respondents has direct with the buyer, followed by the 52 (34.7 percent) of the respondents has secret words and remaining the 11 (7.3 percent) of the respondents has under cover system. It was methods selling 108 (72 percent) of the respondents has the same village and remaining the 13 (8.7 percent) of the respondent had small towns. The government hospital majority respondents 136 (90.7 percent) of the respondents always in government hospital. It found that out of 150 respondents in 79 (52.7 percent) of the respondents had house distance and hospital 6 to 10 k.m, followed by the 44 (29.3 percent) of the respondents less than 5 k.m, as 18 (12.0 percent) of the respondents 11 to 15 k.m and remaining the 9 (6.0 percent) of the respondents more than 16 k.m, show that the out of 150 respondents in duration of programmers 113 (75.3 percent) of the respondents 6 months, followed by the 30(20.0 percent) of the

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respondents 3 months and remaining the 7 (4.7 percent) of the respondents 1 years of the sheep rearing programmers.

CONCLUSION

From the study it reveals that all farmers used socio economic conditions for sheep rearing sheep rearing economic condition, this study clearly shows that rearing mecheri sheep is profitable venture to other local breed of mecheri block and farmers economics condition improving gradually for sheep rearing. So, there was a sample opportunity of applying and approaches for better rearing practices of farmers for uplifting their socio-economic status in the studied areas.

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