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Socio-economic status of small scale pig farmers in rural communities of Tripura

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Abstract

The study was undertaken to obtain baseline information on socio-economic status of rural pig farmers and different management practices in Tripura. A total of 200 rural households owning pigs were interviewed randomly. In the study, the most of the pig farmers were female (76.5%) and small proportion was male (23.5%). Majority of pig farmers were ST (68%) followed by SC (28%) and a small proportion was OBC (4%). Pigs were reared under straw shed raised housing (42.5%) followed by girth tethering (30.5%), fencing system (18.5%) and free grazing (8.5%). In conclusion, there is need to promote extension services on scientific pig farming, proper veterinary services and marketing channel to uplift the pig population.

Keywords: Socio-economic, rural household, pig, management

1. Introduction

Pig husbandry is an important activity that provides opportunity as an income generating activity for small scale farmers, especially in developing countries like India. With the increase demand for meat, fast-growing species like pigs with efficient feed conversion rates likely to solve the meat requirement. The small scale pig sector has seemingly greater potential to reduce poverty [1]. Families usually keep an average of 1-2 indigenous or crossbred pigs for fattening with zero to minimum inputs in terms of family labour and feeding [2]. Due to remoteness and inaccessibility, the rural farmers has evolved a self-sustainable local resource based production system, in which pigs are mainly dependent on local vegetations, crop residues and kitchen waste [3]. To the authors' knowledge, no information is available on socio-economic status of pig rearers in the study area. In this context, the study was conducted to assess the socio-economic status of small scale pig farmers and management practices in rural areas of Unakoti district of Tripura.

2. Materials and Methods

The present study was conducted in different villages of Unakoti district of Tripura. The villages were selected for this study according to pig population. Semistructured questionnaire was employed for data collection and supported with key informant group discussion. The study was conducted from June to November, 2016. A total of 200 households owning pigs were selected for this study and interviewed face to face. Data related to socio-economic status of pig rearers and different management practices were gathered and analyzed by Microsoft excel, 2010. The data presented in percentage scale for comparison of each attributes.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Status of pig farmers

In the present study, the most of the pig farmers were female (76.5%) and small proportion was male (23.5%). The average age of pig farmers was 34 years. However, almost in all cases men showed responsibilities like cleaning, feeding and other managemental duties at their convenient time. In this study, majority of pig farmers were ST (68%) followed by SC (28%) and a small proportion was OBC (4%). However, no Muslim households were involved in pig farming in this area [4]. The literacy level of the farmers was recorded as higher secondary (13%), high school (18%), primary school (24.5%) and illiterate (44.5%).

3.2 Purpose of farming

It was found that 80.5% farmers reared pigs for business followed by 13.5% and

6% for festival and family consumption purposes respectively. However, Patr *et al.*^[2] observed that pig rearing was for fattening (34.23%), breeding (33.33%) and for dual purpose both fattening and breeding (32.43%). Sale of pigs normally occurred in case of emergency need for cash or during celebrations like festivals and weddings ceremonies. Often, farmers slaughtered their pigs to meet up the unexpected needs.

3.3 Land condition

In the present study, all of the farmers have their own land for pig farming backyard of the house as there was no any socio-religious taboo of pig farming. Dematawewa *et al.*^[5] also reported that Hindus were rarely involved in swine farming while no Muslims were involved at all due to socio-religious taboo.

3.4 Housing system

In the study area, pigs were reared under straw shed raised housing (42.5%) followed by girth tethering (30.5%), fencing

system (18.5%) and free grazing (8.5%) as shown in fig. 1. It was observed that the roof of the sty was mainly made covered by thatch (73.5%) followed by G. I. Sheet (26.5%). Majority of the farmers reared their pigs on wooden floor with a raised platform (59.5%) followed by mud (18.0%), stone (12.5%) and concrete (10.0%) flooring. The side walls of the sty were made up of locally available materials like bamboo and/or wood. In contrast, Ritchil *et al.*^[4] opined that girth tethering was the most widely accepted and popular system of rearing where rope was used at the chest girth to keep the pig nearby any hard pillar such as bamboo or tree. Most of the farmer (74.5%) kept all their pigs together irrespective of age and sex followed by small portion (25.5%) practiced separation of pigs in respect of age and/or sex. As separation of various age and sex groups and classes of pigs had great advantage in feeding and management which would help to improve growth because it helped to avoid competition among animals^[6].



Fig 1: Different rearing system of pigs.

3.5 Feeding and watering

In the present study, concentrate supplement feeding practices was almost nil. Those who fed their pig population with concentrate supplement were only the beneficiaries under government scheme. Pigs of this area were mostly fed with kitchen waste, colocasia, tapioca and residue of rice based country liquor, which was in collaboration with the findings of other^[3]. All the farmers fed their pigs population twice a day. Natural reservoir, pond and supply water were the main source of water in this pig population.

3.6 Cleaning practices

In the study area, farmers practiced mostly cleaning of their pig sties twice a week (48.0%) followed by daily (36.5%) and once a week (15.5%). However, according to Mekuriaw and Asmare^[7] the pig house cleaning frequency was that some clean twice a day (26.7%), most of them once a day (46.7%), and the remaining once a week (26.7%). Housing in a barn and removal of manure daily are recommended to keep the floor dry to reduce odour^[4].

3.7 Marketing

In the study area, there was a good demand of pork among the ST, SC and some OBC communities. The main source of piglets in the study area was local weekly market. However, government intervention was noticed by providing male crossbred piglets under Forest Rights Act, particularly in the autonomous district council (ADC) areas. The price of each piglet varies from Rupees 2,500-3,000 depending on various conditions.

3.8 Constraints in pig farming

Many constraints had noticed in pig husbandry. Lack of scientific knowledge, malnutrition, non-availability of veterinary health care facility and malnutrition were major constraints faced by every farmers. Pork had good demand, even though no such marketing developed because piggery entrepreneurs were lack of quality breeding stock followed by lack of linkage with financial institute, lack of training, lack of time, outbreak of disease, lack of proper marketing channel, seasonal fluctuation of price, lack of proper veterinary support, lack of easy access to extension services and scarcity of space in market place^[8].

4. Conclusion

Pig farming has a role in socio-economic status of small scale farmers of Tripura as increasing demand of pork. Though, swine industry is facing multiple constraints. There is need to promote extension services on scientific pig farming, proper veterinary services and marketing channel to erase this gap.

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