



Perception Analysis of Constraints Faced by Sheep Farmers in Northern Tamil Nadu

KEYWORDS

Sheep Farming – Production Constraints – Marketing Constraints – Tamil Nadu.

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ABSTRACT

Tamil Nadu, the southern most state of India is one of the major contributors of livestock to the nation. It accounts for about 7.9 million nos. during 2007 whereas in 2012 it has reduced nearly half to about 4.78 million nos. In order to ascertain the constraints in sheep production, this study was undertaken in Northern Tamil Nadu. A total of 120 farmers were selected using simple random technique. Garret's ranking technique was adopted to analyse the problems perceived by the sheep farmers in the study area. On the basis of number of animals reared, sheep farmers were classified as small, medium and large farmers. The results of Garret ranking technique revealed that Scarce fodder resources was considered to be the major production constraint (60.6 per cent) perceived by sheep farmers followed by Availability of labour (49.61 per cent), Disease outbreak (52.37 per cent) and Theft (43.26 per cent). Absence of organized marketing agency was perceived to be major marketing constraint (55.64 per cent) followed by Improper pricing for the product (51.78 per cent) and Lack of marketing information (45.76 per cent) by all the sheep famers. Housing facility was not considered as a constraint faced by the sheep farmers.

Introduction

Indian economy is mostly agro-based sector and nearly 80 per cent of the total agricultural work forces are involved in livestock rearing, which plays an important role in the national economy. India ranks first in cattle and buffalo population, second in goat, third in sheep and seventh in poultry across the world. As per the 2012 livestock census India accounts about 65.07 million numbers of sheep. Although the population of livestock during last 10 years has been stable around 485 million, sheep population has reduced significantly by 9.07 percent in the country. Tamil Nadu being the southern most state is one of the major contributors of livestock to the nation. It accounts for about 7.9 million nos during 2007 whereas in 2012 it has reduced nearly half to about 4.78 million nos. Small ruminants are an important but neglected resource in developing countries. They are closely linked with the poorest people in pastoral systems and complex crop-livestock systems, and convert low quality resources to high quality protein. Small ruminants make an important contribution to the livelihood of small and marginal landholders and landless rural people in India. Among the small ruminants reared in India, sheep occupy an important place because of its multifacet utility such as meat, wool, skin and manure contributing to agrarian economy especially in areas where crop and dairy farming are not economical (Arora and Garg, 1998). Though sheep farming has its own advantages and its contribution to rural economy is higher, the present day problems/constraints in relation to the availability of grazing lands, conversion of forest and pasture lands into cultivated areas, unskilled labour, insufficient health care, low absorption of available technology, etc., have reduced the scale of profitable sheep production. Therefore,

knowledge about the constraints in sheep farming will help policy makers and planners in making suitable corrective and remedial measures. Given that, this study was undertaken in Northern Tamil Nadu to identify the constraints in sheep rearing as perceived by the sheep farmers.

Materials and Methods

The northern districts of Tamil Nadu viz. Tiruvallur, Thiruvannamalai, Villupuram and Salem were selected as the study area, since these districts are having high concentration of sheep in Northern Tamil Nadu. In order to ascertain the constraints in livestock farming, a total of 120 sheep farmers were chosen adopting simple random sampling technique. Using the structured and pilot-tested interview schedule, the respondents chosen were asked to rank the given factors that were affecting sheep production.

Garret ranking technique was adopted to analyse the problems faced by sheep farmers in the study area. The respondents were asked to rank the given factors that were affecting sheep production. The order of merits that were given by the respondents was converted into ranks by using the following formula (Garret and Woodworth, 1971).

$$\text{Per cent position} = \frac{100(R_{ij} - 0.50)}{N_j}$$

Where,

R_{ij} - Rank given for i^{th} factor by j^{th} individual

N_j - Number of factors ranked by j^{th} individual

The per cent position of each rank thus obtained was converted into scores by referring to table given by Garret. For each factor or problem, the scores of the individual respondents were added together and divided by the total number of respondents for whom scores were given and thus based on the mean scores, the ranks were given. These mean scores for all the factors were arranged in descending order and the most important factor was ranked first and the least important problem was ranked as the last.

Results and Discussion

On the basis of number of animals reared the sheep farmers were classified as small, medium and large farmers. From the Table.1. it could be observed that among the various production constraints perceived by small and medium farmers in sheep rearing, Non availability of required fodder was the first and foremost constraint (58.27 per cent and 63.97 per cent) followed by Disease outbreak (54.53 per cent and 58.55), Availability of labour (50.81 per cent and 54.60 per cent) and theft (50.00 per cent and 46.20 per cent) respectively. Poor credit facility, Poor veterinary health care facility, Less conception rate and housing facility were also perceived as constraints by small and medium farmers to some extent. With respect to large farmers Availability of labour (71.00 per cent) were perceived to be the prime constraint followed by non availability of required fodder (63.08 per cent), Poor veterinary care facility (55.38 per cent) and Less conception rate (52.10). Housing facility was not perceived as a constraint by medium and large farmers. Overall, Scarce fodder resources was considered to be the major constraint (60.6 per cent) perceived by sheep farmers followed by Availability of labour (49.61 per cent), Disease outbreak (52.37 per cent) and Theft (43.26 per cent). Similar results were reported by Kathiravan and Selvam (2011).

Table.2. depicts the marketing constraints perceived by sheep farmers and the results revealed that improper pricing for the product was perceived to be the main constraint (58.59 per cent) followed by Absence of organized marketing agency (54.48 per cent) and Lack of marketing information (50.27 per cent) by small farmers. Medium farmers perceived Absence of organized marketing to be the prime constraint (63.05 per cent) followed by Unremunerative price (51.83 per cent) and Improper pricing for the product (48.60 per cent). Lacks of marketing information, lack of transport facility constraint were also considered important by medium farmers. In contrast to small and medium farmers, large farmers perceived Lack of transporting facility as the most highlighting constraint (63.77 per cent) followed by Unremunerative price (51.83 per cent) and Lack of marketing information (43.56 per cent). On summing up, Absence of organized marketing agency was perceived to be major constraint (55.64 per cent) followed by Improper pricing for the product (51.78 per cent) and Lack of marketing information (45.76 per cent) by all the sheep farmers. This result is in line with the findings of Thilakar and Krishnaraj (2007) who reported that marketing constraint were also a main constraint noticed in sheep farming.

Table.1. Production constraints in sheep farming

Sl. No	Production constraints	Small farmers	Medium farmers	Large farmers	Overall
1	Availability of labour	III(50.81)	III(54.60)	I(71.00)	II(49.61)
2	Housing facility	VIII(35.82)	(0.00)	(0.00)	VIII(32.64)
3	Disease outbreak	II(54.53)	II (58.55)	VII(38.44)	III(52.37)
4	Poor credit facility	V(49.50)	VI(45.40)	VI(41.33)	VI(46.97)
5	Non availability of required fodder	I(58.27)	I(63.97)	II(63.08)	I(60.6)
6	Less conception rate	VII(39.18)	VII (31.10)	IV(52.10)	VII(35.37)
7	Poor veterinary health care facility	VI(45.46)	V(48.88)	III(55.38)	V(46.47)
8	Theft	IV(50.00)	IV(46.20)	V(50.63)	IV(43.26)

Table.2. Marketing constraints in sheep farming

Sl. No	Marketing constraints	Small farmers	Medium farmers	Large farmers	Overall
1	Absence of organized marketing agency	II(54.48)	I(63.05)	IV(43.00)	I(55.64)
2	Lack of marketing information	III(50.27)	IV(44.00)	III(43.56)	III(45.76)
3	Improper pricing for the product	I(58.59)	III(48.60)	V(41.89)	II(51.78)
4	Lack of transport facility	IV(38.58)	V(40.08)	I(63.77)	IV(42.68)
5	Unremunerative price	V(37.83)	II(49.67)	II(51.83)	V(39.53)

(Roman letter indicate rank of respective constraint. Figures in parentheses indicate Garret scores.)

Conclusion

It is observed that lack of fodder for grazing was considered to be a highlighting constraint which could be overcome by supply of fodder at subsidized rate to the farmers through rural Governmental organizations, creating of common pasture land for grazing and imparting knowledge on efficient utilization of feed and fodder resources by Government and extension agencies. To curtail the health constraints and to increase the output in sheep farming can be achieved through proper vaccination and deworming by conducting veterinary health camp at regular periods. Framing of standard rules and guidelines for marketing of sheep, necessary efforts may be taken by the extension personnel to make the sheep cooperatives as this will help farmers to get remunerative prices for their produce will reduce the middle man intervention in sheep market as they are considered to be a major threat. Regular extension programmes will make the farmers to aware about marketing information and channels in sheep marketing. On implementing of the above suggestions would improve the livelihood of sheep farmers and also leads to increase and sustain sheep population in the state.

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