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Socio-economic status of sheep farmers in Tonk district of Rajasthan

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Abstract
The study was conducted in Tonk district of Rajasthan. It comprised of 8 tehsils, out of which one tehsil was selected randomly. The selected tehsil was Malpura. Further, four villages selected tehsil was identified. From each village 20 respondents were selected randomly. Thus, the entire sample consisted 80 respondents from selected four villages in one tehsil of the district. Majority (52.50 per cent) of the respondents were in the middle age group while (27.50 per cent) of respondents belonged to below 28 age categories. About 52.50 percent of the respondents were literate and around 22.5 percent were illiterate. About 45.00 per cent of the respondents had medium flock size followed by small and large flock size i.e. 25.00 and 30.00 percent respectively. Most 53.75 per cent of the respondents had medium land holding followed by large and marginal land holding. With respect to family size, 57.50 per cent of the respondents had joint small size family followed by medium and large size family.

Keywords: sheep, socio-economical, management practices, livestock, Tonk

Introduction
Livestock is one of the fastest growing agricultural sub sectors in developing countries and indispensable to the economic, nutritional, and social well-being of the farmers. Livestock and poultry are important contributors to the national economy. Livestock generated output worth of Rs. 5,91,691 crores, which comprised 4.11 per cent of the GDP and 25.6 per cent of the agricultural GDP (DAHDF, 2016-17). Animal husbandry is an integral part of Indian agriculture providing livelihood support to more than two third of the rural population. Animal husbandry along with agriculture has not only contributed to the food basket but also by maintaining ecological balance.

Rajasthan state has livestock population of 56.80 million (11 per cent) of India contributing nearly 41.5 million Kg. of wool and 187 million tons of milk and 7.4 million tons of meat production to the country during year 2019. In Rajasthan, livestock population comprises large and small ruminants. Cattle and buffaloes are the main large animals while sheep and goats are the major small ruminants. According to estimates of the recent Livestock census, the share of cattle population was about 21 per cent and buffaloes constitutes about one-fifth of the total population.

Animal products play a pivotal role in the human nutrition and food security. Though the consumption of animal products is criticized on the ground that the animals being poor converters of plant protein to animal protein, yet their consumption is desired to produce balanced diet at national level and animals play a complimentary role in crop production for achieving nutrition and food security. Livestock products not only represent a source of high-quality food, but equally important they are as main source of income for many small farmers in developing countries for purchasing food as well as agricultural inputs.

Sheep is a warm-blooded animal and sheep have a unique quality among the domestic animals and are adoptable to a wide range of environmental conditions. Wool is a very valuable product, since it is relatively non-perishable, capable of being stored and transported to markets. Sheep meat is the most palatable and rich in nutrient than any other meat. It is rich in proteins (26-28 per cent), calories, minerals (phosphorous and iron) and vital vitamins (B1, B2, B12 and Niacin). Sheep dung is an important source of plant nutrients such as Nitrogen (0.6 per cent), Phosphorous (0.5 per cent) and Potash (0.65 per cent). An Australian farmer says “take care of the sheep and the sheep will take care of you”.

The Rajasthan state has 7.9 million sheep as per 20th livestock census and ranks 4th in India. During 2001-02 wool production stands at the modest level of 19.67 million kg and from that year to present year (2012- 13) there was a continue decrease (14.07 million kg) in the wool production. Because there was continues decrease in the sheep population in the state and demand for the sheep meat is increasing day by day. Sheep forms a key component of Indian livestock biodiversity. They are lifeline for many marginal farmers and landless labourers surviving in adverse climatic conditions (Arora *et al*. 2011). The production of wool, meat and manure provides different sources of income generation to the shepherd.

Many livestock species maintained by rural households also have socio-cultural links with sheep. Efficient management of high returns per sheep is essential for increasing milk production and addressing socio-economical status of farmer.

Research Methodology

The study was conducted in Tonk district of Rajasthan. which was selected randomly. Tonk district comprises of 7 tehsils, out of one tehsil "Malpura" was selected from the district because sheep farming is major source of income in malpura tehsil. Further, five villages selected from tehsil were identified. From each village 20 respondents were selected randomly. Thus, the entire sample consists of 80 respondents from selected four villages in Malpura tehsils of the district. A list of Sheep owners of selected villages was prepared with the help of village Sarpanch and Patwari with the criteria to select from all strata, was divided in three categories according to Flock size *viz*. small, medium, large.

For the study about socio-economical status, a face-to-face interview method by using an interview schedule was prepared with the help of Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences, Prayagraj (U.P.) and Rajasthan Cooperative Dairy Federation, District Animals Husbandry Department and experts on the subject. The data was collected through personal interview technique from each selected respondent.

Results and Discussions

The profile of sheep farmer in Tonk District, Rajasthan has been studied in terms of age, education, type of family, level of income, size of family, size of land holding, folk size. The same are presented as below.

1. Age

The data from table 1 and fig. 1 revealed that majority (52.50 per cent) were in the middle age group followed by young (27.50 per cent) and old (20 per cent) age groups according to data shown in table 1. These data revealed that majority of the houses were controlled by middle persons. The percentage of old age group involved in animal husbandry was smallest.

These findings are in line with the findings of Nisha *et al.* (2016) [3] and Sridhar (2017) [7].

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to their age

Age group	Frequency	Percentage
Below 28 years	22	27.50
29 to 45 years	42	52.50
Above 45 years	16	20.00
Total	80	100.00

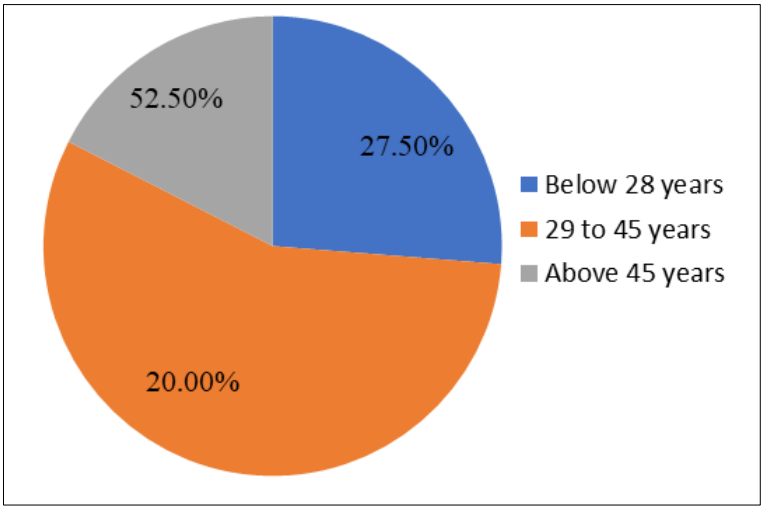

Fig 1: Distribution of respondents according to their age

2. Education

The data presented in table 2 and fig. 2 show that out of the total 80 respondents, only 22.50 per cent were in category of illiterate; whereas percentage of literate and educated respondents were 52.50 per cent and 25.00 per cent, respectively.

These finding are supported by Rajanna *et al.* (2012) [4] and Arpana *et al.* (2016) [1].

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to their education level

Educational group	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	18	22.50
Literate	42	52.50
Educated	20	25.00
Total	80	100.00

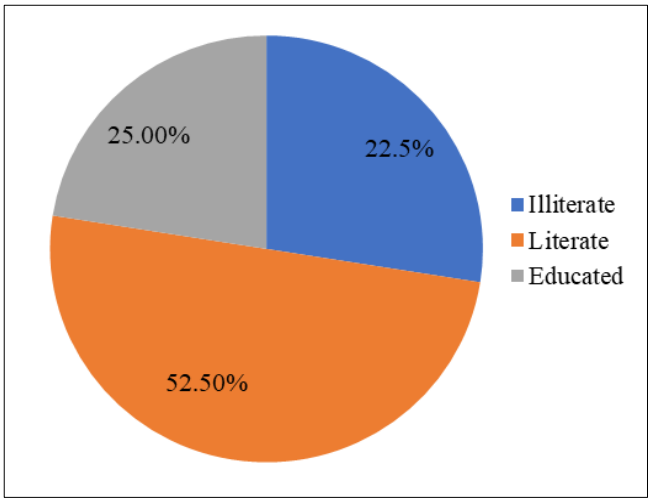

Fig 2: Distribution of respondents according to their education level

3. Type of family

The data presented in the table 3 and fig. 3 clearly shows that out of total 80 respondents, 42.50 per cent belonged to nuclear families while remaining 57.50 per cent families were joint in their compassion.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to their family types

Family Type	Frequency	Percentage
Nuclear families	34	42.50
Joint families	46	57.50
Total	80	100.00

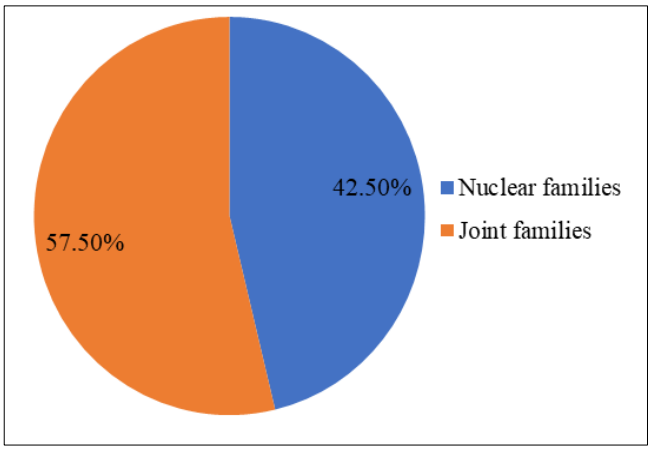

Fig 3: Distribution of respondents according to their family types

4. Size of family

The data incorporated in Table 4 and fig. 4 indicate that majority of respondents i.e. 57.50 per cent were from medium families (6-9 members) while 32.50 per cent from small families (up to 5 members) and 10.00 per cent large families. These findings are in accordance with the findings obtained by Tungu *et al.* (2] and Ramesh (2017) [5].

Table 4: Distribution of respondents according to their family size

Family size	Frequency	Percentage
Small size (up to 5 members)	26	32.50
Medium size (6-9 members)	46	57.50
Large size (above 9 members)	8	10.00
Total	80	100.00

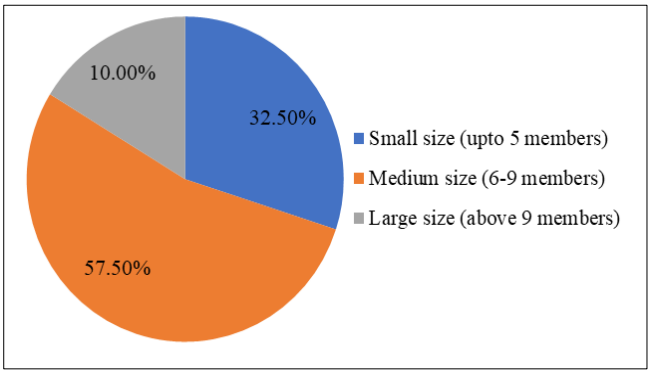

Fig 4: Distribution of respondents according to their family size

5. Size of land holding

Table 5 and fig. 5 shows that out of the total 80 respondents; 53.75 per cent farmers possessed 1 to 2 hectares of land holding, whereas 17.50 per cent farmers having less than 1 hectares of land holding and 28.75 per cent farmers having more than 2 hectares land holding.
These finding are supported by Rajanna *et al.* (2012) [4].

Table 5: Distribution of respondents according to their size of land holding

Size of land holding	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 hectares	14	17.50
1 to 2 hectares	43	53.75
More than 2 hectares	23	28.75
Total	80	100.00

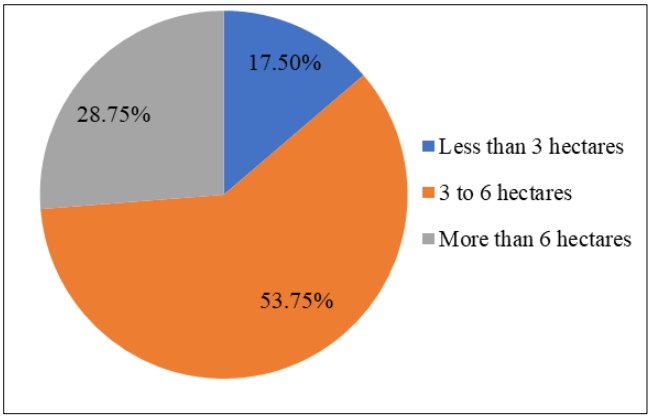

Fig 5: Distribution of respondents according to their size of land holding

6. Income level

The distribution of respondents according to their annual income has been presented in Table 4.4 It indicates that out of total 80 respondents, 13.75 per cent farmers had annual income below Rs. 40, 000 whereas 67.50 per cent and 18.75 per cent farmers had annual income Rs. 40, 000 to Rs. 80, 000 and above Rs. 80,000, respectively.
These findings are in line with the findings of Rao (2013) [6] and Arpana *et al.* (2016) [1].

Table 6: Distribution of respondents according to their income levels

Annual income of respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Below Rs. 40, 000	11	13.75
Rs. 40,000 to 80,000	54	67.50
Above Rs. 80,000	15	18.75
Total	80	100.00

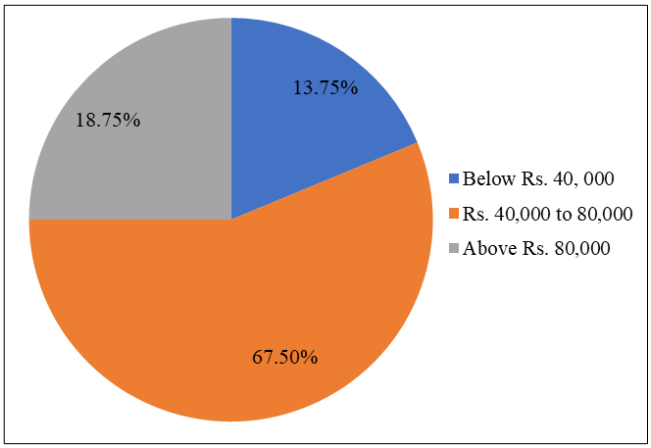

Fig 6: Distribution of respondents according to their income levels

7. Flock size

The flock profile of sheep farmers in Tonk district was presented in table 4.7. In the present study, it was observed that out of the total farmers studied majority (45.00%) were maintaining flocks whose size ranged between 25-50, 25% were maintaining flocks whose size was <25, 30% sheep farmer-maintained flocks with size above 50.

These finding are supported by Hassan *et al*. (2015) [2].

Table 7: Distribution of respondents according to their flock size

S. No	Observation		Frequency	Percentage
1	Flock Size	<25	20	25.00
		25-50	36	45.00
		Above 50	24	30.00

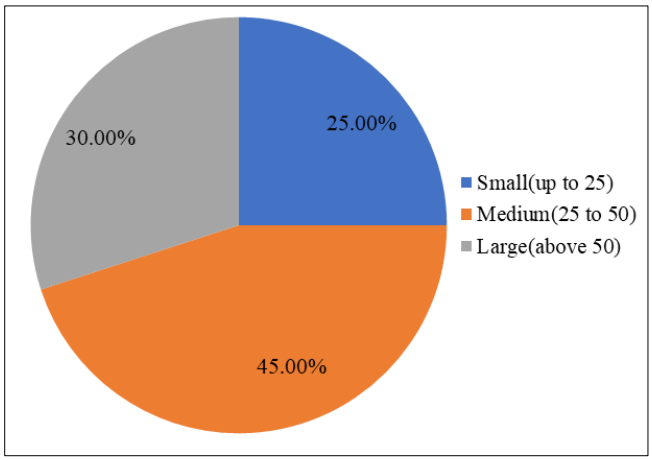

Fig 7: Distribution of respondents according to their flock size

Conclusion

It might be concluded from the results of the present study that; majority of the farmer were from middle age categories, most of them were literate, Medium (6-9 member) family, joint family, categorized under 1-2ha category of land holding, were from medium annual income category and majority (45.00%) were maintaining flocks whose size ranged between 25-50.

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