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Socio-economic status of goat farmers in Lakshadweep

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Abstract

The present study was conducted in 100 randomly selected goat farmers from the Androth and Kavaratti islands of Lakshadweep. The results of the present study indicate that the majority of the goat farmers from Lakshadweep were men (60.0 percent) belonging to the age group of 50 to 62 years (34.0%), 57.0 percent of the farmers belonged to the joint family and they were having an experience of 1 to 11 years (67.0%) and 93.0 percent of the farmers were educated in goat farming. The study revealed that only a few farmers (3.0%) had received formal training on goat rearing. The majority (67.0%) of the farmers are rearing goats as inheritance and only 7.0 percent practiced goat farming as self-employment. Only 10.0 percent of the farmers reported that they had annual income from goat rearing. This was one of the pioneer studies conducted among goat farmers in Lakshadweep Island.

Keywords: Socio-economic status, goat farmers, Lakshadweep

Introduction

Goat farming in India is a well-established form of farming and is generally practiced by farmers who have a very small area of land. Landless labourers also undertake goat farming since the initial investments are much lower than other livestock farming. Lakshadweep is India's smallest union territory, with a total area of 32 sq. km. All islands in Lakshadweep are located between 220 and 440 km away from Kochi, a coastal city in Kerala. The human population of Lakshadweep was 64,473 (Agricultural Statistics at a Glance-2019) and the goat population was 43,190 (Basic Animal Husbandry Statistics, 2019). The islands have long been isolated geographically from the mainland, from where most of the supplies are sourced. A better understanding of the socioeconomic conditions of goat farmers will help in developing strategies to augment production and ensure a sustainable livelihood. Considering the above facts, the present study on the socio-economic status of goat farmers in Lakshadweep was carried out.

Materials and Methods

Lakshadweep is a group of 36 islands, out of which 10 islands are human-inhabited. From these human-inhabited islands, two islands with the highest human population viz., Androth and Kavaratti islands formed the area under study. A survey was conducted on 50 goat farmers on each island of Lakshadweep viz. Androth and Kavaratti islands by personal interviews using pre-tested interview schedules along with direct observation during household visits and focus group interviews wherever necessary. Basic information on age, gender, level of education, annual income from animal husbandry, type of accommodation etc. were collected. The data collected were tabulated and statistical parameters such as frequency and percentage were used for logical conclusions.

Results and Discussion

Age of goat farmers

Table 1 reflects the distribution of farmers based on age. In Lakshadweep islands, the majority (34.0%) of the goat farmers belonged to the 50 to 62 years of age group. May be the younger generation is more interested in white collar jobs, that may be the reason why they are not rearing goats. These findings were in comparison to observation of Kavingna *et al.* (2020)^[4] who reported that the majority of goat farmers in the Jaffna district of Sri Lanka are under the age group of 41-65. However, the results of the present study were contrary to those observed by Fonseka *et al.* (2018)^[2] who opined that in the Ampara region of Sri Lanka, the majority of the farmers were middle-aged (30-45 years).

According to Ajithkumar and Sreekumar (1996)^[1] most of the dairy farmers surveyed in a hamlet in the Thrissur district

were between the ages of 36 and 55.

Table 1: Details of age, gender, marital status, educational status, family type and major occupation of goat farmers in Androth and Kavaratti islands of Lakshadweep

(n=100).

Socio-economic characteristics	Category	Island		Overall
		Androth	Kavaratti	
Age group (In years)	23-36	13 (26.0)	14 (28.0)	27 (27.0)
	37-49	14 (28.0)	9 (18.0)	23 (23.0)
	50-62	18 (36.0)	16 (32.0)	34 (34.0)
	63-75	5 (10.0)	11 (22.0)	16 (16.0)
Gender	Male	34 (68.0)	26 (52.0)	60 (60.0)
	Female	16 (32.0)	24 (48.0)	40 (40.0)
Marital status	Married	41 (82.0)	44 (88.0)	85 (85.0)
	Unmarried	9 (18.0)	6 (12.0)	15 (15.0)
Educational status	Illiterate	0 (0.0)	7 (14.0)	7 (7.0)
	Primary (1-5)	1 (2.0)	11 (22.0)	12 (12.0)
	Middle (6-8)	11 (22.0)	6 (12.0)	17 (17.0)
	Secondary (9-10)	13 (26.0)	7 (14.0)	20 (20.0)
	Senior Secondary (11-12)	19 (38.0)	17 (34.0)	36 (36.0)
	Graduate	4 (8.0)	2 (4.0)	6 (6.0)
	Post-graduate	2 (4.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (2.0)
Family type	Professional	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
	Joint	25 (50.0)	32 (64.0)	57 (57.0)
	Nuclear	25 (50.0)	18 (36.0)	43 (43.0)
Major occupation	Agriculture	1 (2.0)	2 (4.0)	3 (3.0)
	Fisheries	5 (10.0)	4 (8.0)	9 (9.0)
	Goat husbandry	2 (4.0)	2 (4.0)	4 (4.0)
	Government job	4 (8.0)	7 (14.0)	11 (11.0)
	Business	10 (20.0)	6 (12.0)	16 (16.0)
	Government retired	4 (8.0)	5 (10.0)	9 (9.0)
	Daily wages	7 (14.0)	1 (2.0)	8 (8.0)
	Nil	17 (34.0)	23 (46.0)	40 (40.0)

Values in parentheses are percentages within each category of farms

Gender and marital status

The majority of the goat farmers from Lakshadweep were men (60.0%) and were married (85.0%). The finding was in agreement with those of Fonseka *et al.* (2018)^[2] who revealed that the majority of the goat farmers in the Ampara region of Sri Lanka were men and most of them (82.5%) were married and Kavingna *et al.* (2020)^[4] Jaffna district of Sri Lanka, around 66% of the goat farmers were males, and 99 percent of the goat farmers were married (Table 1).

Educational status

The result reflected in Table 1 showed that the majority of the goat farmers in Lakshadweep were educated. Among that, 36.0 percent had a senior secondary level of education (11-12). A similar finding was found by Fonseka *et al.* (2018)^[2] in the Ampara region of Sri Lanka and Sunder *et al.* (2019)^[12] in the Andaman and Nicobar islands.

Family type

More than half (57.0%) of the goat farmers belonged to the

joint family and 43.0 percent belonged to the nuclear family at Lakshadweep, the reason behind the existence of joint family may be due to the prevailing Marumakkathayam inheritance (a system of matrilineal inheritance). A similar result was reported by Smitha *et al.* (2018)^[10] at central Kerala. As per Sharma *et al.* (2007)^[8] in Rajasthan and Ramesh *et al.* (2012)^[7] in southern India, the majority of the goat farmers belonged to the nuclear family (Table 1).

Occupation of the goat farmers

Forty percent of the goat farmers in Lakshadweep were females and the majority of them were homemakers, and other farmers were businessmen (16%), government employees (11%), government retired (9%), fishermen (9%), daily wage labours (8%), only 4.0 percent of the goat farmers had reported that goat husbandry was their major occupation and agriculture (3%). The result of the present study was in contrast with Kunarathinam and Sinniah (2019)^[6] in the Kilinochchi District of Sri Lanka, who found that the majority of the respondents, their major occupation was agriculture.

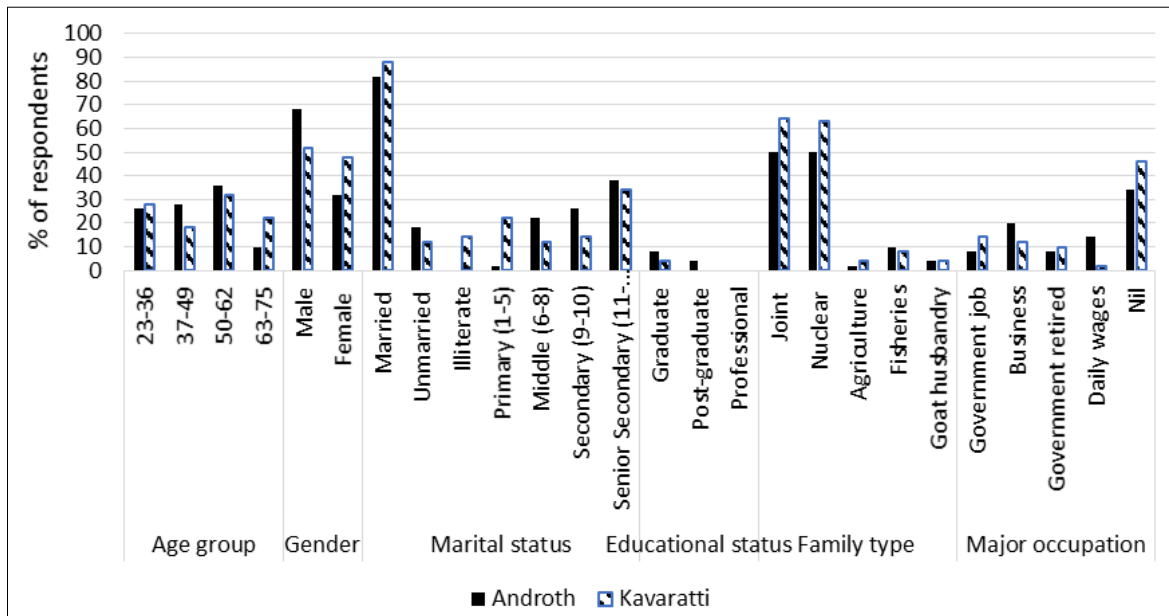


Fig 1: Details of age, gender, marital status, educational status, family type and major occupation of goat farmers in Androth and Kavaratti islands of Lakshadweep

Land holding

Only 46.0 percent of the goat farmers revealed the actual land holding with a mean of 9.6 cents, and the rest of the farmers reported that they had joint property, the reason behind this may be the islanders following Marumakkathayam, and because of that maternal inherited property (Tharavadu

property) could not be divided and thus most of the property is undivided and joint property. This observation was similar to Kunarathinam and Sinniah, (2019)^[6] in Sri Lanka, as they had reported that the majority of the farmers had a land holding of less than one acre (Table 2).

Table 2: Details of landholding, annual income from goat rearing, experience in goat rearing, purpose of goat rearing, training attended and flock size maintained by goat farmers in Androth and Kavaratti islands of Lakshadweep

Socio-economic Characteristics	Category	Island		Overall
		Androth	Kavaratti	
Landholding	Farmers revealed actual land holding	27 (54.0)	19 (38.0)	46 (46.0)
	Joint property	23 (46.0)	31 (62.0)	54 (54.0)
Annual income from goat rearing	Yes	7 (14.0)	3 (6.0)	10 (10.0)
	No	43 (86.0)	47 (94.0)	90 (90.0)
Experience in goat rearing (Years)	1-11	40 (80.0)	27 (54.0)	67 (67.0)
	12-21	7 (14.0)	6 (12.0)	13 (13.0)
	22-31	2 (4.0)	12 (24.0)	14 (14.0)
	32-41	1 (2.0)	5 (10.0)	6 (6.0)
Purpose of goat rearing	Self-employment	4 (8.0)	3 (6.0)	7 (7.0)
	Additional income	7 (14.0)	3 (6.0)	10 (10.0)
	Manure	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
	Quality milk	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
	Inheritance	33 (66.0)	34 (68.0)	67 (67.0)
Training	Passion	6 (12.0)	10 (20.0)	16 (16.0)
	Yes	0 (0.0)	3 (6.0)	3 (3.0)
Flock size	No	50 (100.0)	47 (94.0)	97 (97.0)
	Very small (1-5)	9 (18.0)	21 (42.0)	30 (30.0)
	Small (6-15)	37 (74.0)	27 (54.0)	64 (64.0)
	Medium (16-30)	4 (8.0)	2 (4.0)	6 (6.0)
	Large (> 30)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

Values in parentheses are percentages within each category of farms

Annual income from goat rearing

Only ten percent of the goat farmers reported that they had an annual income from goat rearing with a mean of ₹ 24,500/-. This could be due to the majority of the farmers from both islands reared goats as an inheritance. According to Singh *et al.* (2013)^[9], who reported that farmers from Uttar Pradesh made 19,000 rupees annually with a unit of 5 mature goats (Table 2).

Experience in goat rearing

Table 2 revealed that the majority of goat farmers (67.0%) had an experience of 1 to 11 years. The current study was supported by Kunarathinam and Sinniah (2019)^[6] who reported similar values for farmers in the Kilinochchi District of Sri Lanka and Fonseka *et al.* (2018)^[2] who reported that for goat farmers from the Ampara region of Sri Lanka, 52.5 percent had an experience ranging between 1 to 5 years.

Purpose of goat rearing

Among goat farmers at Lakshadweep 67.0 percent of the farmers reported that they reared goat as inheritance. That may be due to a lack of awareness about the benefits of goat farming and scientific management practices. The findings were contradictory to observations made by Jana *et al.* (2016) [3], who reported that majority of the goat farmers in West Bengal maintained goats to fetch a fair price from low input and Kunarathinam and Sinniah (2019) [6], who had found that in Kilinochchi District of Sri Lanka, most of the farmers (74.0%) reared goats for meat purpose (Table-2).

Trainings attended by goat farmers

Only 3.0 percent of the goat farmers reported that they attended training on goat rearing. The animal husbandry department of Lakshadweep has imparted a very minimal number of training programs in goat rearing as stated by the majority of the farmers. The result was in agreement with Srinivasan and Roopa (2021) [11] who revealed that 98.15 percent of the respondents from Tamil Nadu were not exposed to the training institute. The result was in contrast with Kumar *et al.* (2018) [5], who revealed that in Bangladesh majority (67%) of the respondents had a short training on goat rearing, and only 33.0 percent of the goat farmers had no training on the same.

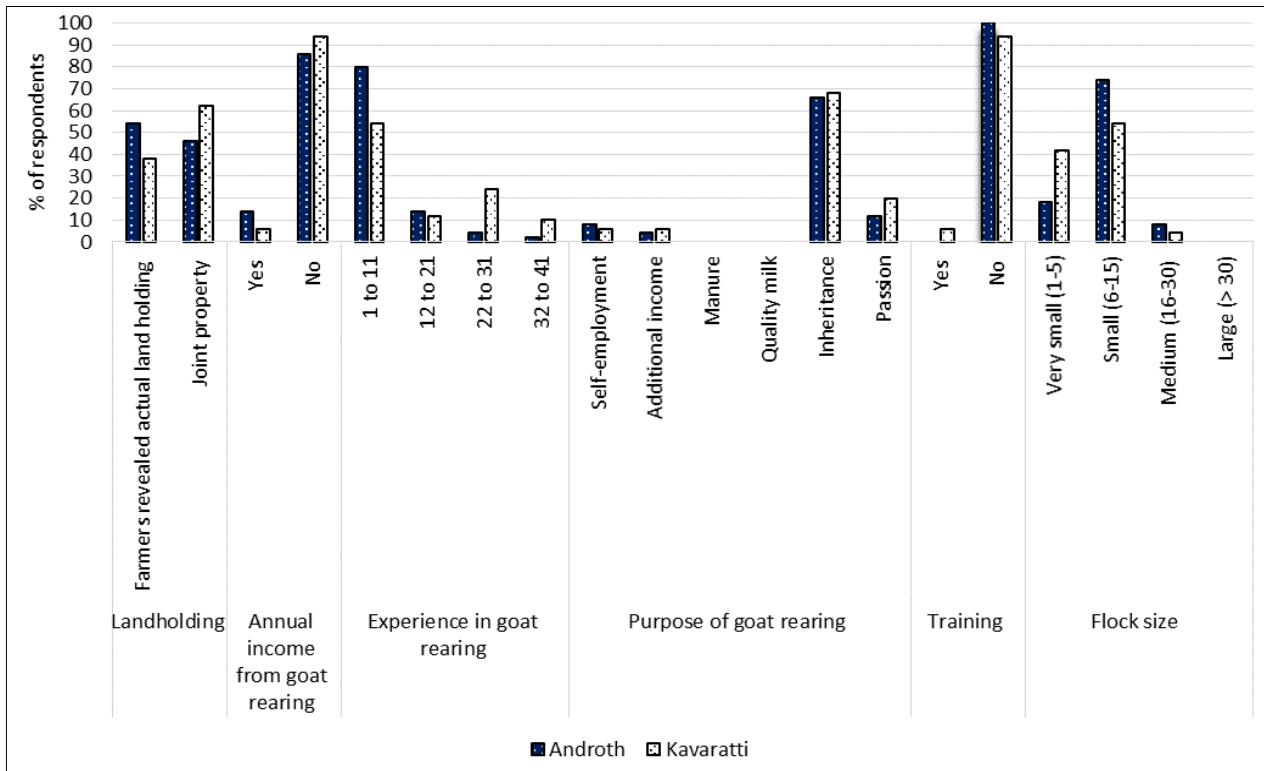


Fig 2: Details of landholding, annual income from goat rearing, experience in goat rearing, purpose of goat rearing, training attended and flock size maintained by goat farmers in Androth and Kavaratti islands of Lakshadweep

Flock size

The majority (64.0%) of the farmers had small flock sizes with 6-15 animals. The result of the study was contrary to Ramesh *et al.* (2012) [7] who opined that 55.0 percent of the farmers were maintaining a flock size of 2 to 9 animals and Sunder *et al.* (2019) [12] who recorded that the farmers rearing Andaman Local Goats were maintaining flock size ranging from 5 to 35 with an average of 8.38 (Table 2).

Conclusion

Based on the results obtained from the present study, it could be concluded that the majority of the goat farmers in Androth and Kavaratti islands of Lakshadweep were males of 50 to 62 years, and 93.0 percent of them were educated. The majority (67.0%) of the farmers were rearing goats as an inheritance with small flock size (6-11 animals) and 10.0 percent farmers reported that they had a mean annual income ₹ 24,500/- from goat rearing. Most of the farmers reported that they had not received any formal training on scientific goat farming and they showed a lean interest in learning the scientific management of goats for augmenting their productivity of animals.

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