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N Giriraj

Department of Veterinary and Animal husbandry extension education Veterinary College Shivamogga , karnataka Veterinary animal and Fisheries Sciences University Bidar, Karnataka, India

KC Veeranna

Honorable Vice chancellor KVAFSU, Bidar, Karnataka, India

Aditya

Department of Veterinary Anatomy and Histology Veterinary College Bidar, karnataka Veterinary animal and Fisheries Sciences University Bidar, Karnataka, India

Dr. Prakashkumar Rathod

Associate Professor and Head (I/C), Livestock Research and Information Centre (Deoni) and Department of Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Extension Education, Veterinary College, Bidar, Karnataka, India

Corresponding Author:

N Giriraj

Department of Veterinary Anatomy and Histology, Veterinary College, Karnataka Veterinary, Animal and Fisheries Sciences University, Bidar, Karnataka, India

Socio-economic profile of the ram lamb fattening entrepreneurs

N Giriraj, KC Veeranna, Aditya and Dr. Prakashkumar Rathod

Abstract

The participatory action research approach coupled with cross-sectional survey and focused group discussion was adopted and identified, mortality of ram lambs during the initial period of fattening, the incidence of diseases, inadequate scientific knowledge in sheep management, lack of proper training and information on ram lamb fattening, lack of knowledge on the selection of lambs, and unorganized markets as the prioritized constraints in ram lamb fattening entrepreneurship in rural areas of south interior Karnataka. To address these prioritized constraints an extension education intervention coupled with strategic health care management intervention was designed and implemented in selected ram lamb fattening enterprises through participatory research methods. The evaluation of strategic health care intervention, indicated maximum benefits in intervention enterprises (89.17 per cent rams available for sale, mortality rate: 10.83 per cent, specific disease incidence level: 20.72 per cent) in comparison with non-intervention enterprises (67.50 per cent rams available for sale, mortality rate: 32.50 per cent, specific disease incidence level: 51.06 per cent). Cost-benefit analysis of ram lamb fattening revealed that the net returns per ram lamb per fattening period of 240 days was Rs 4,600/- and Rs 2,953/- in small and large enterprises respectively. The net return per lamb per day was worked out to Rs. 19.16 /- and Rs. 12.30/- with a cost-benefit ratio of 1: 1.42 and 1:1.25 in small and large ram lamb fattening enterprises. Small entrepreneurs have perceived improvement in their self-reliance, and income stability of their households to some extent. But on the contrary, many large entrepreneurs were ambiguous in their views about transformation to their socio-economic status from lamb fattening entrepreneurship in the study area.

Keywords: Socio-economic, ram lamb fattening entrepreneurs, 20th livestock census

Introduction

As per the 20th Livestock Census (2019), the sheep population in India is 74.26 million having a share of 13.87 per cent of the total livestock population. India ranks third in the world sheep population with 6.8 per cent of the world population sheep contributes to 4.9 per cent of total meat production in the country (GoI, 2019). Karnataka state ranks third in the sheep population with 11.1 million (1,10,50,728) and contributing 14.95 per cent of the total sheep population in India. Fattening has been defined as an intensive feeding of highly nutritious feed to promote fast growth and fat deposition to attain desired carcass growth and quality. Fattening programs want to realize the maximum growth rate and higher carcass yields in a minimum phase of time, which would raise the production per unit of land and the value of the livestock. Ram lamb fattening is a common practice in Karnataka that targets the festive seasons. As a business, it provides wide-ranging economic benefits to communities through the direct sale of fattened rams, which further stimulates economic activities along the Small Ruminant Value Chain (SRVC). The inclination of educated youngsters towards self-employment through ram lamb fattening enterprise has many obstacles for success which need to be analyzed and addressed. In addition, there are fewer efforts exerted to study the ram lamb fattening entrepreneurship that is opted by youngsters as a self-employment option. Identifying the gaps and constraints in ram lamb fattening enterprises will help to design suitable interventions like enhancing the knowledge and skills of the entrepreneur desirable for augmenting the profit margin of the enterprise.

Materials and Methods

1. Research design: The participatory action research approach coupled with cross-sectional survey and focused group discussion was adopted in the present study.

2. Locale of the study for meteorological purposes, Karnataka state has been divided into three subdivisions: Coastal Karnataka, North interior Karnataka, and South interior Karnataka. The study was undertaken purposively in rural areas of south interior Karnataka viz: Vijayanagara, Davanagere, Chitradurga and Chikmagalur districts.
3. Sampling procedure: In the first phase the focused group discussion was carried out among local veterinarians of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services.
4. In the second phase 15 entrepreneurs rearing less than 50 ram lambs and another 15 entrepreneurs rearing more than 50 ram lambs were selected purposively from the four identified districts viz, Vijayanagara, Davanagere, Chitradurga and Chikmagalur
5. In the third phase an attempt of Participatory action research was carried out by implementing selected suitable interventions in selected enterprises. Around four enterprises with a minimum size of thirty lambs of uniform age were selected for the study.
6. Research study duration and monitoring: The study duration lasted for a period of 11 months, which included present situation analysis of enterprises and sensitizing entrepreneurs through telephonic conversations, and informal chats using social media flat forms, followed by farm visits for establishing rapport and for identification of technological/knowledge gaps in the enterprises entrepreneurs.
7. Data collection and analysis: The structured interview schedule was developed for data collection from ram lamb fattening entrepreneurs. The background information and understanding about the study area was obtained through consultation with Veterinary officers, Assistant directors. of Karnataka Sheep and Wool Development Corporation, Krishi Vignyan Kendra, and entrepreneurs working in the study area, and also by referring available secondary information sources. SPSS package version 20.0 for windows was used for statistical analysis of data.

Results and Discussion

The data presented in the Tables from 4.1 to 4.4 depicts the personal and socioeconomic characteristics of ram lamb fattening entrepreneurs.

1. **Age:** Age is a significant factor which determines the level and extent of participation of ram lamb fattening entrepreneurs in this occupation. The age of the ram lamb fattening entrepreneurs in the study area ranged between 26 to 55 years. Majority of the entrepreneurs in the study area were middle-aged, followed by young age in the pooled sample. Further, the researcher did not come across any old age entrepreneur during this study which might be due to younger generation being attracted towards this type of new ventures. From the results, it can be inferred that the participation of middle to young age entrepreneurs in intensive system of small ruminants rearing is a good trend. The results were in line with Shalanderkumar (2007) ^[11], Rathod *et al.* (2011) ^[8], Priyanka and Murthy (2019) ^[7], Kumar *et al.* (2020) and Harisha *et al.* (2021) ^[3].
2. **Education:** Majority (93.33%) of ram lamb fattening entrepreneurs in the study area were educated and only about 6.66 per cent of entrepreneurs were illiterates in pooled sample. Further, among the two categories of

entrepreneurs considered for the research study, majority had graduation level education followed by pre university level, middle school level, and high school level of education in large and small entrepreneurs respectively in study area (Table 4.1). The present constitutional commitment of Indian government, “free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of fourteen” has increased the literacy rate at grass root level. These findings are in accordance with Shalanderkumar (2007) ^[11] and Priyanka and Murthy (2019) ^[7]. Further, these findings are not in accordance with Dinakar *et al.* (2019) ^[2] who in their study on Bannur sheep rearing pattern in Karnataka, reported that majority (84.50%) of the Bannur sheep rearing farmers were as illiterates.

3. **Occupation:** Pertaining to the main occupation, majority of entrepreneurs professed non farming activities like business, salaried employment, and construction related occupations as their main occupation, followed by agriculture and animal husbandry (Table 4.1) in pooled sample. Majority of the large entrepreneurs were professing business, and other jobs including public/private jobs with varying proportions. These findings are in consonance with the findings of Shalanderkumar (2007) ^[11], Naveen *et al.* (2019) ^[5] and partly in consonance with the findings of Thilakar and Krishnaraj (2010) ^[12], Rathod *et al.* (2011) ^[8] and Raina *et al.* (2016) ^[9].
4. **Land holding:** It can be observed from the Table 4.2 that majority of the respondents were large farmers (56.66%) followed by small farmers (30%) and marginal farmers (13.33%) in the pooled sample. Majority of the entrepreneurs (66.66% and 46.66%) were large farmers followed by small (33.33% and 26.66%) in large and small enterprises respectively. But in large enterprises none were marginal farmers and in small entrepreneurs 26.66 per cent were marginal farmers in study area. This can be inferred from this study that ram lamb fattening enterprise was preferred by large farmers since this required heavy investment and large area of land. Also, these large farmers were ready to bear risk as compared to small farmers in the study area. These findings are partly in consonance with the findings of Naveen *et al.* (2019) ^[5].
5. **Social participation:** In the present study, majority of the respondents had the membership of one organization and one by tenth of entrepreneurs did not have any social participation (Table 4.2). These findings were in consonance with the findings of Wani (2015) ^[13]. Further, these observations are not in agreement with findings of Porwal *et al.* (2006) ^[6] and Thilakar and Krishnaraj (2010) ^[12] as they reported that, among the respondent farmers majority had no social participation. Over a period, due to increased awareness, educational level linkage to institutions with public benefits like microfinance through SHG, increased modes of institutional finance, reservation in local elected bodies, government encouragement etc, have led to improvement in social participation among the entrepreneur farmers.
6. **Annual family income:** It was observed from the Table 4.2 that, 46.66 per cent of entrepreneurs had high annual income followed by (30%) medium annual income and (23.33%) low annual income level in pooled sample. Further large entrepreneurs had high to medium income while small entrepreneurs had low to medium income.

These findings are in consonance with the findings of Naveen *et al.* (2019) [5]. Since ram lamb fattening enterprise requires heavy investment and involves risk, farmers with high annual income were attracted towards this enterprise as an investment.

7. **Practical experience in animal husbandry:** With regard to practical experience in animal husbandry, the data analysis from Table 4.3 revealed that 66.66 per cent of large entrepreneurs and 20.00 per cent of small entrepreneurs didn't have any practical experience of rearing livestock before venturing into intensive ram lamb fattening entrepreneurship and in opposite way, majority (80%) of small entrepreneurs and 33.33 per cent of large entrepreneurs had practical experience in rearing animals for livelihood in study area.
8. **Flock dynamics:** It was observed from Table 4.3 that, 50 per cent of the entrepreneurs fatten 30 to 50 ram lambs per year followed by 33.33 per cent fatten 51 to 100 ram lambs and 10.00 per cent entrepreneurs fatten more than 101 ram lambs per year in pooled data. These results are in lines with Shalanderkumar (2007) [11], Swarnkar and Singh (2010) [10] and Dhaliwal, *et al* (2020) [1]. Further, a majority of entrepreneurs (56.66%) fatten ram lambs for 181 to 300 days period followed by 23.33 per cent of the entrepreneur's rearing ram lambs for more than 301 days and 20 per cent entrepreneur's rear for less than 180 days

in their enterprises in pooled sample. Further, majority of the entrepreneurs (80%) practiced one batch of fattening per year and only 20 per cent of entrepreneurs reared two batches per year in pooled sample. These results are partly in consonance with Molla *et al.* (2017) as they have identified 5 sheep fattening feeding durations *viz*, 2 months (10.8%), 3 months (59.2%), 4 months (7.9%), 5 months (0.9%) and 21.3 per cent of the respondents practiced 6 months fattening period in Ethiopia.

9. **Information source for venturing into ram lamb fattening entrepreneurship:** It was observed from Table 4.3 that, majority (63.33%) of the respondents ventured into ram lamb fattening entrepreneurship on the advises of other ram lamb fattening entrepreneur, while remaining 23.33 per cent and 13.33 per cent entrepreneurs started ram lamb fattening enterprise on the advices of veterinarian and social media influence respectively. The high level of youth participation in ram lamb fattening might be attributed to its high social media popularity and increase in demand for meat. Further, some of the ram lamb fattening entrepreneurs in the study area progressed to rear female sheep in intensive system for lamb production (breeding) as weaned ram lambs fetches good market price in reality and can be sold easily in the market in time of financial crisis.

Table 4.1: Distribution of entrepreneurs based on socio-economic characteristics

Sl. No	Variable	Category	Large enterprises n=15		Small enterprises n=15		Overall N=30	
			F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Age (years)	Young (18-38)	2	13.33	7	46.66	9	30.00
		Middle (39-59)	13	86.66	8	53.33	21	70.00
		Old (60-80)	0	00.00	00	00.00	00	00.00
2	Education	Illiterate	0	00	2	13.33	2	6.66
		Middle school	0	00	4	26.66	4	13.33
		High school	1	6.66	1	6.66	2	6.66
		Pre university	4	26.66	2	13.33	6	20.00
		> Graduation	10	66.66	6	40.00	16	53.33
3	Main occupation	Animal husbandry	00	00	4	26.66	4	13.33
		Agriculture	2	13.33	7	46.66	9	30.00
		Other Business Salaried	13	86.66	4	26.66	17	56.66
	Subsidiary occupation	Animal husbandry	3	20.00	5	33.33	8	26.66
		Ram lamb fattening	6	40.00	7	46.66	13	43.33
	Agriculture	6	40.00	3	20.00	9	30.00	

Table 2: Distribution of entrepreneurs on the basis of socio-economic parameters

Sl. No	Variable	Category	Large enterprises n=15		Small enterprises n=15		Overall N=30	
			F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Land holdings (Acre)	Marginal (<2.5)	0	00	4	26.66	4	13.33
		Small (2.5-5)	5	33.33	4	26.66	9	30.00
		Large (> 5)	10	66.66	7	46.66	17	56.66
2	Social participation	Nil	1	6.66	2	13.33	3	10.00
		One organization	7	46.66	11	73.33	18	60.00
		2 and more organization	6	40.00	0	00	6	20.00
		Public representative	1	6.66	2	13.33	3	10.00
3	Annual family income (Its)	Low (Up to 3,00,000/-)	1	6.66	6	40.00	7	23.33
		Medium (3,50,000-5,00,000/-)	4	26.66	5	33.33	9	30.00
		High (> 5,00,000/-)	10	66.66	4	26.66	14	46.66

Table 4.3: Distribution of entrepreneurs based on productive parameters

Sl. No	Variables	Categories	Large enterprises n=15		Small enterprises n=15		Overall N=30	
			F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Practical experience in animal husbandry	No experience	10	66.66	3	33.33	13	43.33
		Experienced	5	33.33	12	80.00	17	56.66
	Practical experience in extensive system of small ruminant rearing	No experience	15	100	13	86.66	28	93.33
		Experienced	8	8	N	13.33	rl	6.66
3	Practical Experience in semi-intensive system rearing	No experience	11	73.33	6	40.00	17	56.66
		Experienced	4	26.66	9	60.00	13	43.33
4	Experience level in intensive ram lamb fattening	< 3 years	11	73.33	8	53.33	19	63.33
		>3 years	4	26.66	7	46.66	11	36.33
5	Average flock size	Up to 50	0	00	15	100	15	50.00
		51-100	10	66.66	0	00	10	33.33
		101-200	3	20.00	0	00	3	10.00
		>201	2	13.33	0	00	2	6.66
6	Number of batches per year	1 batch year	14	93.33	10	66.66	24	80.00
		2 batch year	1	6.66	5	33.33	6	20.00
7	Fattening duration	<180 days	1	6.66	5	33.33	6	20.00
		181-300 days	9	60.00	8	53.33	17	56.66
		>301 days	5	33.33	2	13.33	7	23.33

Table 4.4: Distribution of entrepreneurs based on their information source responsible for ram lamb fattening entrepreneurship

Sl. No	Variables	Category	Large enterprises n=15		Small enterprises n=15		Overall N=30	
			F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Information source	AHVS Department	2	13.33	5	33.33	7	23.33
		Other ram lamb fattening entrepreneur	10	53.33	9	60.00	19	63.33
		Social media	3	20.00	1	6.66	4	13.33

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