SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF LIVESTOCK REARING TRIBAL IN NORTHERN KERALA, INDIA

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Abstract

The present study was conducted with the objective of assessing the socio-economic profile of livestock rearing tribal in Northern Kerala. The tribal livestock farmers as respondents were purposively selected from three northern districts viz. Wayanad, Kozhikode and Kannur since these districts have more tribal population and settlements. The study revealed that majority of the respondents from Wayanad belonged to the age group of above 50 years, whereas in Kozhikode and Kannur majority were below 40 years of age. Majority of the respondents were males. All the tribal livestock farmers from Kozhikode and Kannur belonged to the Paniya tribe, where as in Wayanad district majority from Kurumar tribe (53.33 percent). Larger family size were noticed in Wayanad and the least in Kannur district and around half the respondents in all the three district were literate. The respondents from Wayanad had more number of large animals and poultry compared to Kozhikode and Kannur where goats were more prevalent. Majority of the respondents from Wayanad used plastic sheet as roofing material and wooden floor for sheds. However, most of them other districts had no shed at all.

Key words : *Socio-economic status, profile, livestock rearing, tribals, adoption of practices*

India has the second largest tribal population of the world next to the African countries. A total of two hundred and fifty tribal groups live in isolated regions of India and constitute 8.2 per cent of the total Indian population (GOI, 2008). In the state of Kerala tribes constitute about 1.14 per cent of the total population (Government of Kerala, 2001). Tribal groups with pre-agricultural stage of development, diminishing/dwindling population and very low literacy rates are defined as Primitive Tribe Groups (PTGs). The Cholanaikans, Kurumbas, Kattunaikans, Kadars and Koragas are the five primitive tribal groups in Kerala. They constitute nearly 5 per cent of the total tribals in the State. Kattunaikans are mainly seen in Wayanad district. Their other areas of habitation are Malappuram and Kozhikode district. Cholanaikans are said to be a sub-community of the Kattunaikans and are seen only in Malappuram District. Nearly 59 percent of the Kadar population is found in Thrissur district and the rest in Palakkad district. Kurumbas live in the Attappady Block of Palakkad district.

The Koraga habitations are in the plain areas of Kasaragod district. Animal husbandry has considerable scope for development in the tribal areas, since this sector plays an important role in socio-economic development

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of rural households in India. The contribution of livestock and fisheries to the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in India, during 2006-07 was 5.26 percent (GOI, 2008). Livestock rearing supplements family income and generates gainful employment in the rural sector, particularly among the landless labourers, small and marginal farmers and women. Tribals have their own set of traditional beliefs and practices. Selvanayagam (1986) studied the strength and rationality of the traditional beliefs among the dry land farmers of Tamil Nadu. The study identified strongly held superstitious beliefs that could be blockers of technological diffusion. The present study was conducted with the objective of assessing the socio-economic profile of livestock rearing tribals in Northern district of Kerala with a view to identify the potential areas for further intervention.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted among the tribal livestock farmers as respondents from three district Wayanad, Kozhikkode and Kannur in Kerala State. The respondents were selected from these districts purposively since they have more tribal settlements. The tribal colonies selected were Pookot-Sugandhagiri in Wayanad, Perambra in Kozhikode and Aaralam in Kannur. Data was collected using a structured schedule. Fifteen respondents were selected from each district. The socio-economic data is presented in a comprehensive table for easy comparison.

Results and Discussion

Age

Table 1. Distribution of respondents based on age group

AGE	Wayanad	Kozhikode	Kannur
Below 40	4 (26.67%)	9 (60%)	8 (53%)
40-50	3 (20%)	1 (6.67%)	4 (27%)
Above 50	8 (53.33%)	5 (33.33%)	3 (20%)
Total	**15**	**15**	**15**

Majority of the respondents from Wayanad belonged to the age group of above 50 years, whereas in Kozhikode and Kannur districts, majority were below 40 years of age.

Sex

Table 2. Distribution of respondents based on sex

SEX	Wayanad	Kozhikode	Kannur
Male	14 (93.33%)	8 (53.33%)	10 (60%)
Female	1 (6.67%)	7 (46.67%)	5 (40%)
Total	**15**	**15**	**15**

Data from table 2 shows that majority of the respondents from Wayanad (93.33 %), Kozhikode (53.33 %) and Kannur districts (60 %) were males.

Caste

Table 3. Distribution of respondents based on caste

CASTE	Wayanad	Kozhikode	Kannur
Paniya	2 (13.33%)	15 (100%)	15 (100%)
Kurumar	8 (53.33%)	-	-
Converted Kurichyia	3 (20%)	-	--
Malayarayan	1 (6.67%)	-	-
Pulaya	1 (6.67%)	-	-
TOTAL	**15**	**15**	**15**

The data in the table above shows that all the respondents from Kozhikode and Kannur belonged to the Paniya tribe. However, in Wayanad, majority were from Kurumar (53.33 %) tribe.

Family size

Table 4 . Distribution of respondents based on family size

CATEGORY	Wayanad	Kozhikode	Kannur
Men	28 (40%)	18 (29.51%)	17 (35%)
Women	27 (38.57%)	19 (31.15%)	19 (40%)
Children	15 (21.43%)	24 (39.34%)	12 (25%)
Total size	**70**	**61**	**48**

Data from the above table reveals that the larger family size were noticed in Wayanad district whereas smaller families were observed in Kannur district.

Literacy status

Table 5. Distribution of respondents based on literacy status

LITERACY STATUS	Wayanad	Kozhikode	Kannur
Literate	38 (54.29%)	34 (55.74%)	20 (42%)
Illiterate	32 (45.71%)	27 (44.26%)	28 (58%)
Total	**70**	**61**	**48**

Data shows that more than half of the respondents from Wayanad and Kozhikode were literate and 42 per cent from Kannur were illiterate.

Monthly family income

Table 6. Distribution of respondents based on income

INCOME (Rs)	Wayanad	Kozhikode	Kannur
1000 -1500	-	-	7 (47%)
1500 - 2000	-	3 (20%)	6 (40%)
2000 - 2500	3 (20%)	1 (6.67%)	2 (13%)
2500 - 3000	1 (6.67%)	11 (73.33%)	-
3000 & Above	11 (73.33%)	-	-
Total	**15**	**15**	**15**

Data shows that 73.33 per cent of the respondents from Wayanad had more income compared to the respondents from Kozhikode and Kannur.

Livestock holding

Table 7. Details of types and number of livestock held

Species	Wayanad	Kozhikode	Kannur
Cattle	42	-	9
Goat	11	37	37
Poultry	50	15	18

The respondents from Wayanad had more number of cattle and poultry, whereas those from Kozhikode and Kannur had more number of goats.

Details of animal housing

Table 8. Distribution of respondents based on type of shed

SHED	Wayanad	Kozhikode	Kannur
Pucca shed	1 (6.67%)	-	-
Plastic sheet roof and wooden floor	12 (80%)	4 (26.67%)	5 (33%)
No shed	2 (13.33%)	11 (73.33%)	10 (67%)
Total	**15**	**15**	**15**

Majority of the respondents from Wayanad used plastic sheet roof and wooden floor shed for their animals, whereas majority from Kozhikode (73.33%) and Kannur (67%) had no shed at all.

Results and Discussion

The major findings of the study includes the facts that the majority of the respondents from Wayanad District belonged to the age group of above 50 years, whereas in Kozhikode and Kannur majority were below 40 years of age. This fact may be attributed to the fact that the Wayanad District has natural resources more and the traditional farmers might have been continuing the avocation even without any external supports from Government or NGOs. The District have a traditional background of more experienced farmers with higher milk production. This tradition has been more contributed by the experienced farmers.

The most of the tribal farmers from Wayanad district under study was male where as in other two districts it was with no much difference. This may be due the peculiar hierarchical system existing among the tribal communities enjoying the patriarchal system naturally which might have influenced the livestock rearing The Wayanad District have more diversified population of tribal folk than other two district where only one caste is prevailing. The other district have a relocated population of tribals which had only members from single cast . This rehabilitation might have caused confining of the livestock rearing to single caste (Paniya Tribe).

The largest family size in Wayanad among livestock farmers shall be explained as the peculiarity of the tribal group there following the joint family living set up than from other district. The strength of cultural values and customs exist strongly among the tribal groups.

More than half of the tribal livestock farmers from Wyanad and Kozhikode district were literate where as a majority from Kannur were illiterate. This may be due to the existence of numerous NGOs and Voluntary organization engaged in literacy and development activities in that district.

The tribal livestock farmers from Wayanad District had more income than others and may be due to the existence of supporting facilities and network of cooperative sectors here in dairying.The facilities for small animal rearing are more than large animal husbandary in Kozhikkode District including fodder and other accessory facilities which might have attributed to the fact here that the tribal livestock rearing farmers from Wayanad had more number of cattle and poultry, whereas those from Kozhikode and Kannur had more number of goats. Majority of the respondents from Wayanad used Plastic sheet roof and wooden floor shed for their animals, whereas majority from Kozhikode and Kannur had no shed at all. The extension activities and support offered from Governmental and nongovernmental organizations are commendable in Wayanad District. The coordinated activities of the various departments and volunteers and supporting of the critical input supply with subsidies here might have led to the improved awareness and maintenance of sheds scientifically.

The above findings are in consensus with the similar studies conducted as by Rahman (2007) among the pig farmers of Aizawl district of Mizoram reported that the variables , farming experience and herd size were positively and significantly associated with adoption of improved technologies whereas, age of the farmer was negatively and significantly associated with adoption of improved technologies. The adoption behavior among tribal goat keepers in Terrai belt in West Bengal was studied by Chandra et al. (2005). The study revealed that adoption of improved practice in goat keeping was positively and significantly correlated with education, family income and communication sources. The study also identified communication sources and family education status as key elements that directly and indirectly promoted the adoption of improved practices in goat keeping by the tribal goat keepers.

To conlude, majority of the respondents from Wayanad district belonged to the age group of above 50 years, whereas in Kozhikode and Kannur majority was below 40 years of age. From three districts the majority of the respondents were males. All the respondents from Kozhikode and Kannur belonged to the Paniya tribe. Whereas in Wayanad, majority

from Kurumar (53.33 %) caste. Largest family size was noticed in Wayanad and the least in Kannur district. About half the respondents in all the three district were literate. The respondents from Wayanad had more number of cattle and poultry, whereas those from Kozhikode and Kannur had more number of goats. Majority of the respondents from Wayanad used Plastic sheet roof and wooden floor shed for their animals, whereas a strong majority from Kozhikode and Kannur districts possessed no shed at all.

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