ANALYSIS OF THE CONSTRAINTS PERCEIVED BY SHEEP FARMERS IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

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Received 7-9-2014 Accepted 17-9-2014

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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to analyze the constraints perceived by sheep farmers in sub tropical zone of Jammu and Kashmir. One hundred and twenty sheep rearing farmers were randomly selected from four blocks of Rajouri and Poonch districts of Jammu and Kashmir. Pretested structured interview schedule was used to analyze their constraint levels and the results were expressed in total weighted mean scores and ranked accordingly. The results revealed that inadequate credit facilities, lack of knowledge in scientific practices, poor services and facilities provided by the government, inadequate technical guidance, non-availability of training facilities, non-availability of roughage, lack of veterinary services at farmer's door step and non-availability of organized market for wool/mutton were the major constraints faced by the respondents in the study area. The study highlights the need to formulate schemes to alleviate these constraints so as to empower the farmers of this region.

KEY WORDS: Constraints, Sheep Farmers, Jammu and Kashmir

INTRODUCTION

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 (Aich and Waterhouse, 1999). Small ruminants make an important contribution to the sustenance of small and marginal landholders and landless rural people in India. Among the small ruminants reared in India, sheep occupy an important place. Sheep rearing is an important enterprise in the arid and semi-arid areas of India characterized by sparse vegetation, marginal land and high incidence of poverty. Sheep are reared here for both Mutton and wool. It is the home tract for the famous sheep breed "Kashmiri Merino". In spite of 5.8% growth in sheep population in the state (Kumar *et al*., 2012), productivity of wool and mutton in this region is very low which may be due to various constraints faced by the sheep farmers. In this context, it is important to analyse the constraints perceived by the sheep farmers of this region. This analysis may enable in formulation of specific to alleviate the constraints of sheep farmers, thereby augmenting their production and productivity.

METHODOLOGY

A multi stage sampling procedure was employed for the study. From the state of Jammu and Kashmir, two districts viz. Rajouri and Poonch were selected purposively, on the basis of high sheep population (Anonymous, 2012). Two blocks from each district were selected randomly and from each block, three villages were selected randomly. From each village, ten sheep rearing farmers having a flock size of ten or more were selected randomly. Thus a total of 120 sheep farmers were selected as respondents of the study.

Constraints in the present study were operationalised as the problems faced by the sheep owners in following sheep rearing and marketing practices. A structured interview schedule was employed

to measure the constraints on four point continuum *i.e.* most serious (MS), serious (S), not so serious (NSS) and not serious at all (NSAA), with scores 3, 2, 1 and 0 respectively. Based on the information collected, constraints were categorised as socio-economic, technological, breeding, feeding, health-care and marketing constraints. Direct face to face interview technique was employed to collect the data as this enabled the researcher to build rapport with the respondent. The collected data was compiled, tabulated and analyzed using appropriate methods. Constraints perceived by the sheep farmers were analysed using the Total Weighted Mean Score (TWMS) as suggested by Balaraju (2013). Total weighted mean score of each item in various categories was calculated and then rank was assigned to all the items in each category on the basis of their scores.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

The various constraints perceived by the farmers were categorised into socio economic, technological, breeding, feeding, health care and marketing constraints (Table 1)

Table 1 : The constraints perceived by the respondents of the study area

I	Economic Constraints	MS (3)	S (2)	NSS (1)	NSAA (0)	TWMS	Rank
1	High cost of parent stock	66(55)	23(19.17)	19(15.83)	12(10)	2.19	III
2	High cost of farm equipment	60(50)	29(24.17)	19(15.83)	12(10)	2.14	V
3	High cost of feed	60(50)	30(25)	18(15)	12(10)	2.15	IV
4	High cost of farm labors	30(25)	20(16.67)	10(8.33)	60(50)	1.16	VII
5	High cost of treatment	90(75)	8(6.67)	10(8.33)	12(10)	2.46	II
6	Inadequate loan facilities	120(100)	0	0	0	3	I
7	High cost of good breeds	60(50)	30(25)	18(15)	12(10)	2.15	IV
8	High cost of shed construction	60(50)	28(23.33)	20(16.67)	12(10)	2.13	VI
II	**Technological Constraints**						
1	Lack of knowledge in scientific practices	120(100)	0	0	0	3	I
2	Inadequate technical guidance	120(100)	0	0	0	3	I
3	Non-availability of training facilities	120(100)	0	0	0	3	I
4	Lack of knowledge about the importance of rotational grazing	120(100)	0	0	0	3	I
5	Lack of knowledge of conservation of fodder during lean period	97(80.83)	0	23(19.17)	0	2.61	II

6	Inadequate knowledge about services and facilities provided by the government	120(100)	0	0	0	3	I
III	**Breeding Constraints**						
1	Non-availability of exotic breeds	0	0	120(100)	0	1	IV
2	Less conception rate	90(75)	30(25)	0	0	2.75	II
3	Lack of breed-able rams	0	0	120(100)	0	I	IV
4	Lack of knowledge about teaser ram	120(100)	0	0	0	3	I
5	Lack of knowledge about grading-up	30(25)	12(10)	8(6.67)	70(58.33)	1.01	III
6	Non-availability of indigenous improved breeds	12(10)	12(10)	6(5)	90(75)	0.47	V
IV	**Feeding Constraints**						
1	Non-availability of grazing lands throughout the year	12(10)	35(29.17)	30(25)	43(35.83)	1.08	III
2	Non-availability of roughages	97(80.83)	0	23(19.17)	0	2.61	I
3	Inadequate supply of drinking water	0	0	120(100)	0	1	IV
4	Shortage of feed	60(50)	30(25)	30(25)	0	2.25	II
V	**Health Care Constraints**						
1	Lack of veterinary services at farmer's door step	120(100)	0	0	0	3	I
2	Non-availability of medicines in hospitals	120(100)	0	0	0	3	I
3	High susceptibility of animals to diseases	60(50)	30(25)	30(25)	0	2.25	III
4	High cost of medicines/ treatment/vaccines	90(75)	30(25)	0	0	2.75	II
5	Lack of knowledge about deworming	62(51.67)	0	58(48.33)	0	2.03	IV
6	Non-availability of veterinary doctor in hospitals	120(100)	0	0	0	3	I

7	Difficulty in access to veterinary hospitals	120(100)	0	0	0	3	I
VI	**Marketing constraints**						
1	Non-availability of organized market for wool/mutton	120(100)	0	0	0	3	I
2	Distance to the market	60(50)	30(25)	30(25)	0	2.25	III
3	Middlemen as exploiters	55(45.83)	65(54.17)	0	0	2.45	II
4	Non-remunerative prices	30(25)	60(50)	18(15)	12(10)	1.90	IV

(Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentage)

From the table 1 it could be inferred that inadequate credit facilities, lack of knowledge in scientific practices, inadequate technical guidance, non-availability of training facilities, lack of knowledge about the importance of rotational grazing, lack of knowledge of conservation of fodder during lean period, inadequate knowledge about services and facilities provided by the government, lack of knowledge about teaser ram, non-availability of roughage, lack of veterinary services at farmer's door step, non-availability of medicines in hospitals, non-availability of veterinary doctor in hospitals, difficulty in access to veterinary hospitals and non-availability of organized market for wool/mutton were the major constraints perceived by the respondents of the study area. Similar results were obtained by studies conducted by Singh *et al*. (2006) among the sheep farmers in Himachal Pradesh and also by Dev *et al*. (2003) in Western Himalayas.

The results of the study points to the fact that while formulating schemes for the development of sheep farmers in the area due consideration should be given to perceived constraints of the farmers because the success of any programmes depend on the perceived needs of the farmers (Sandhu, 1994). Moreover the constraints are the primary reason for non adoption of technology by the farmers. Steps to ebb out these constraints can augment the productivity of sheep in the region which can add strength to the livestock sector of India. This will in turn strengthen the economy of the farmers in these regions and lead to their upliftment.

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