Indigenous pig genetic resources of India: Distribution, types and their characteristics

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ABSTRACT

In India, the indigenous pigs are traditionally reared either by the poor, weaker and the tribal sections of the society. Although, the growth rates and feed conversion ratio of indigenous pigs are less than those of exotic or crossbred pigs, they have unique features like heat tolerance, disease resistance, early sexual maturity and ability to produce meat with less fat. In India, the total population of indigenous pigs is 78.35 lakhs constituting 76.14% of the total pig population of the country. Uttar Pradesh has the largest population of indigenous pigs (11.52 lakhs), followed by Assam (10.22 lakhs), Jharkhand (9.21 lakhs) and Bihar (6.26 lakhs). In studies conducted at various centres of All India Coordinated Research Project on pigs, the weight of these pigs at birth, weaning (8 weeks) and 32 weeks of age ranged from 0.44±0.01 to 0.83±0.01, 7.00±0.36 to 8.12±0.18 and 31.32±0.45 to 42.91±1.04 kg, respectively. Although, the indigenous pigs were largely clubbed as local or non-descript but in the last few years many population have been characterized. Some of them have been registered by ICAR-NBAGR as new breeds of indigenous pigs, like Ghoongroo, Niang Megha, Agondagoan, Tenyi Yo, Nicobari, Doom, Zovawk and Gurrah pigs. This review discusses the population trend, attributes and available breeds of indigenous pigs of India.

Key words: Attributes, Breeds, Indigenous pigs

Pig (Sus scrofa) is an important livestock species that can survive in diverse agro-ecological environments and relatively poorer management conditions. They are most efficient domestic animals in converting domestic and agricultural wastes into edible meat. Due to their high growth rate, better feed conversion ratio and large litter size, pigs produce the cheapest meat among all meat producing animals that can be afforded by weaker sections of the society, thus providing an affordable source of good quality protein to poorer people.

In India, pigs are traditionally reared by the poor, weaker and tribal sections of the society, rearing mainly indigenous pigs (Gaur 2001, Bhat et al. 2010, Naskar et al. 2013). Besides indigenous pigs, some exotic breeds like Large White Yorkshire, Landrace and their crosses were also introduced. Although the growth rates and feed conversion ratio of indigenous pigs is less compared to exotic or crossbred pigs (Kumar et al. 1990, Gaur et al. 1997), they have unique features like heat tolerance, disease resistance, early sexual maturity and ability to produce meat with less fat. Due to their smaller size, their requirement for feed and space is much less than the exotic and crossbred pigs, thus making them suitable for rearing by poor people with meagre resources. They are well adapted to survive under most adverse conditions of nutrition and management (Hetzer and Miller 1973, Chhabra et al. 1999, Naskar et al. 2013). This article attempts to review the present status of indigenous pigs of India in terms of their population trends, their productive and reproductive attributes, and the breeds or types of these pigs.

Population trends and distribution

In the past decade, the population of indigenous pigs has declined from 109.39 lakhs in 1992 to 78.37 lakhs in 2012 showing a decline of 28.85%. However, population of exotic and crossbred pigs has increased from 18.49 lakhs (1992) to 24.56 lakhs (2012) during this period. Taking into consideration the trend since 1992, the population of indigenous pigs is estimated to be mere 69.20 lakhs in 2020 and 60.70 lakhs in 2025 (Behl et al. 2018).

As per Livestock Census (2012), Uttar Pradesh has the largest population of indigenous pigs (11.52 lakhs), possessing about 14.78% of the total indigenous pig population of the country followed by Assam (10.22 lakhs), Jharkhand (9.21 lakhs) and Bihar (6.26 lakhs). In terms of population density, Delhi has the highest density of 45.664 indigenous pigs per sq. km followed by Meghalaya (18.268), Tripura (14.199) and Assam (13.034). Only 6 states (Delhi, Meghalaya, Tripura, Assam, Jharkhand and Goa) have the indigenous pig population density of more than 10 pigs per km².

Among states with total pig population of at least 10000, Odisha has the highest percentage of indigenous pigs (98.57) followed by Bihar (96.6), Telangana (95.16) and...
Chhattisgarh (94.9%). Sikkim has the lowest proportion of crossbred and exotic pigs (6.9) followed by Kerala (8.93), Mizoram (13.06) and Nagaland (24.40). Four states, viz. Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram and Delhi, have shown increase in indigenous pig population during 2003–2012. Sikkim has shown maximum decrease in indigenous pigs with a decline of 89.47% followed by Kerala (80.77), Nagaland (56.54) and Goa (54.76) (Table 1) (Livestock Census 2003, Livestock Census 2012, Behl et al. 2018).

Productive and reproductive attributes of indigenous pigs

Studies were conducted at several institutions independently (Gaur 2001) and under the All India Coordinated Research Project on Pigs (AICRPP, Bhatia 1997) to evaluate the attributes of indigenous pigs which were largely clubbed as local or Desi pigs.

AICRPP on pigs was started with the 3 exotic breeds. However, in the mid 1970s, it was realized that traditional pig keepers with their meagre resources were unable to provide proper healthcare and nutrition required for the exotic breeds. The scavenging model continued to be the main system of raising pigs. So, the project was remodelled to incorporate a component to study the performance of indigenous pigs (Bhat et al. 2010).

The productive and reproductive characteristics reported by various centres of AICRPP and other such studies on indigenous pigs, before classification into new breeds of indigenous pigs, are summarized in this section.

Growth and performance

The body weights of indigenous pigs recorded at birth, 8, 16, 24 and 32 weeks of age, at various centres of AICRPP are given in Table 2 (AICRPP Report 1995, 1997; Mukundan and Usha 2000). The birth weight ranged from 0.44±0.01 to 0.83±0.01 kg. The weight at weaning age (8 weeks) ranged from 7.00±0.36 to 8.12±0.18 kg. The weight at 32 weeks of age was recorded between 31.32±0.45 and 42.91±1.04 kg. Similar observations were also made in other studies that recorded the weight at birth, weaning (8 weeks) and 32 weeks of age to vary from 0.52±0.01 to 0.92±0.01 kg, 5.22±0.28 to 7.44±0.10 kg and 28.70±0.52 to 40.54±0.95 kg, respectively (Kumar et al. 1990, Shylla et al. 1991, Deo et al. 1992, Bhatia et al. 1997). Chauhan et al. (1994) reported the live weight of indigenous pigs at slaughter to be 51.6±1.8 kg at a mean age of 28±8.5 days.

Mukhopadhyay et al. (1991) reported the daily weight gain in desi pigs from birth to 8th week, 8th to 22nd week and 22nd to 30th week to be 96.38, 56.98 and 51.13 g/day, respectively. In another study, total gain and daily gain in weight up to weaning was 5.78 kg and 103 g, respectively (Lakhan and Bhadoria 1990), Kumar et al. (1990) has reported average daily weight gain during pre- and post-weaning periods in indigenous pigs to be 53.08±2.25 and 28.83±2.58 g/day. Litter size also has highly significant effect on body weights during pre-weaning period. As the litter size increases, the body weight reduces (Chhabra et al. 2005). The mean overall feed efficiency of indigenous pigs reared at various centres of AICRPP was 5.28±0.14 kg feed consumed/kg weight gain. In other studies too, the overall feed efficiency of indigenous pigs ranged between 4.50±0.12 and 5.76±0.53 kg feed/kg gain in body weight (Kumar et al. 1990, Lakhan and Jogi 2000a).

The head weight, pluck weight and hot carcass weight of indigenous pigs was reported to be 3.92±0.07, 1.86±0.0 kg and 35.98±0.67 kg, respectively. The dressing percentage was 68.89±0.96 (Lakhan et al. 1997, Chhabra et al. 1999). Chhabra et al. (1999) reported the back fat thickness, carcass length and loin eye area to be 1.72±0.23, 59.95±0.46 and 22.53±1.16 cm, respectively. Similar observations were made by Lakhan et al. (1997), who recorded the average backfat thickness, carcass length and loin eye area to be 2.46±0.7, 57.02±0.44 and 17.92±0.54 cm, respectively. Sex of the animal had no effect on carcass traits.

Reproductive performance

The reproductive performance of indigenous pigs recorded at various centres of AICRPP is given in Table 3 (Mukundan and Usha 2000). Age at first farrowing ranged

Table 1. Population statistics of the indigenous pigs in India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Total population of indigenous pigs (2012)</th>
<th>Density per km²</th>
<th>Proportion of indigenous pigs in total pig population of the state</th>
<th>Percent increase or decrease during 2003–2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>1022354</td>
<td>13.034</td>
<td>62.47</td>
<td>−2.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>1152441</td>
<td>4.783</td>
<td>86.36</td>
<td>−45.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jharkhand</td>
<td>920625</td>
<td>11.549</td>
<td>95.64</td>
<td>−15.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>595964</td>
<td>6.715</td>
<td>91.98</td>
<td>−51.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>62533</td>
<td>6.643</td>
<td>96.60</td>
<td>−2.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>409758</td>
<td>18.269</td>
<td>75.37</td>
<td>4.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagaland</td>
<td>122969</td>
<td>7.084</td>
<td>24.40</td>
<td>−56.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chhattisgarh</td>
<td>416916</td>
<td>18.269</td>
<td>94.99</td>
<td>−21.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>148891</td>
<td>14.199</td>
<td>41.05</td>
<td>30.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arunachal Pradesh</td>
<td>318976</td>
<td>3.809</td>
<td>89.61</td>
<td>−0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>288301</td>
<td>0.937</td>
<td>88.62</td>
<td>−30.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>261274</td>
<td>1.362</td>
<td>85.57</td>
<td>−9.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odisha</td>
<td>276052</td>
<td>1.773</td>
<td>98.57</td>
<td>−51.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>94669</td>
<td>4.240</td>
<td>34.17</td>
<td>−54.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telangana</td>
<td>236259</td>
<td>2.108</td>
<td>95.16</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mizoram</td>
<td>32286</td>
<td>1.532</td>
<td>13.06</td>
<td>45.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>216589</td>
<td>0.632</td>
<td>91.17</td>
<td>−30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>153190</td>
<td>1.178</td>
<td>83.15</td>
<td>−43.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>161715</td>
<td>0.525</td>
<td>92.05</td>
<td>−50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>131752</td>
<td>0.809</td>
<td>90.41</td>
<td>−29.50**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>77153</td>
<td>1.745</td>
<td>60.63</td>
<td>−9.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>67765</td>
<td>45.664</td>
<td>88.31</td>
<td>385.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>4965</td>
<td>0.128</td>
<td>8.93</td>
<td>−80.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goa</td>
<td>37611</td>
<td>10.160</td>
<td>86.36</td>
<td>−54.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>14465</td>
<td>0.287</td>
<td>43.75</td>
<td>−17.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikkim</td>
<td>2451</td>
<td>0.345</td>
<td>6.90</td>
<td>−89.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttarakhand</td>
<td>12685</td>
<td>0.237</td>
<td>65.00</td>
<td>−51.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>7837306</td>
<td>2.384</td>
<td>76.14</td>
<td>−30.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Telangana created after 2003; **Undivided Andhra Pradesh.
from 375.2 to 423.3 days. Gestation length varied from 109.8 to 112.1 days. Litter size at birth ranged from 4.87 to 6.82 and at weaning from 4.2 to 5.01. Litter weight at birth ranged from 2.13 to 5.21 kg and at weaning from 32.12 to 37.81 kg, respectively (Mukundan and Usha 2000, AICRPP Report 1995, 1997).

Several other studies conducted on indigenous pigs were in agreement with these observations. Mukhopadhyay et al. (1992) reported the mean gestation length and farrowing interval of indigenous sows to be 111.78±0.18 and 226.89±6.94 days, respectively. Litter size at birth ranged from 6.2±0.55 to 7.56 and at weaning from 3.89±0.43 to 6.2±0.3 (Mukhopadhyay et al. 1992, Chauhan et al. 1994, Chhabra et al. 1996, Lakhani and Jogi 2000b). Average litter weight at birth (4.44±0.6 to 4.84±0.25 kg) and at weaning (21.38±3.05 to 42.02±2.6 kg) were in the similar range as observed under AICRPP (Mukhopadhyay et al. 1992, Chhabra et al. 1996, Mishra et al. 1990, Lakhani and Jogi 2000b). Mishra et al. (1990) reported the average survivability at weaning to be 92.4%.

**Breeds of indigenous pigs of India**

The indigenous pigs were largely grouped as local, Desi or non-descript. Only few references were available which grouped them into some population like Desi pigs of North India, Anakami pigs of peninsular India, Gahuri pigs of Assam and Ghoongroo pigs of West Bengal (Bhat et al. 1981, Bhat et al. 2010). However, new population have been characterized and documented (Boro et al. 2016a). Some of them have been found to be distinct and are registered by ICAR-NBAGR as new breeds of indigenous pigs.

**Registered breeds of indigenous pigs**

Ghoongroo, Niang Megha, Agonda Goan, Tenyi Vo, Nicobar, Doom, Zovawk and Gurrah are the eight registered breeds of indigenous pigs in India.

**Ghoongroo**: The pigs of Ghoongroo breed are black coloured, concave snouted and pendulous eared animals. The height at withers is 84 (66–95) cm in males and 78 (59–92) cm in females. The litter size at farrowing is 12 (8–18). These pigs are distributed in Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Coochbehar, North-Dinajpur and South-Dinajpur districts of West Bengal with an estimated population of approximately 15,000 (Breed Descriptor 2013). Sahoo et al. (2012) had reported the age at first heat of these pigs to be 190.38±4.38 days. Gokuldas et al. (2015) had reported a little higher age of puberty as 7.8±0.41 months for these pigs. Gestation period and age at first farrowing of these pigs is 113.8±0.16 days and 13.1±0.65 months, respectively. Farrowing interval is 213.53±0.4 days. Weight at birth and at weaning is 0.96±0.02 and 7.08±0.25 kg, respectively. Litter size at birth and at weaning is 0.96±0.02 and 8.7±0.25, respectively (Sahoo et al. 2012, Gokuldas et al. 2015). Hot carcass weight is 85 (63–90) kg in males and 82 (61–90) kg in females (Breed Descriptor 2013). Fatty acid profiling of *musculus longissimus thorasis et lumborum* indicated that

Table 3. Reproductive performance of indigenous pigs of India at various centers of All India Coordinated Research Project on Pigs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Izatnagar</th>
<th>Jabalpur</th>
<th>Kattupakkam</th>
<th>Khanapara</th>
<th>Mannuthy</th>
<th>Tirupati</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rate of conception (days)</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>280.70</td>
<td>359.50</td>
<td>311.10</td>
<td>261.80</td>
<td>213.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gestation length (days)</td>
<td>110.00</td>
<td>110.80</td>
<td>131.10</td>
<td>112.10</td>
<td>111.60</td>
<td>131.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Litter size at birth (kg)</td>
<td>6.87</td>
<td>6.20</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>5.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Litter size at weaning (kg)</td>
<td>5.01</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>4.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Litter weight at birth (kg)</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>5.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Litter weight at weaning (kg)</td>
<td>33.77</td>
<td>33.12</td>
<td>36.45</td>
<td>36.80</td>
<td>32.12</td>
<td>37.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth weight (kg-Male)</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth weight (kg-Female)</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight at weaning (kg-Male)</td>
<td>7.34</td>
<td>7.59</td>
<td>7.19</td>
<td>8.20</td>
<td>6.88</td>
<td>8.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight at weaning (kg-Female)</td>
<td>7.30</td>
<td>7.56</td>
<td>6.68</td>
<td>7.80</td>
<td>6.86</td>
<td>8.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the proportion of saturated and unsaturated fatty acids were in the range of 32.17 to 41.19 and 58.98 to 68.15%, respectively. Further, ω-3, ω-6 and essential fatty acids were 0.88 to 1.73, 19.95 to 27.23 and 14.52 to 23.47%, respectively (Thomas et al. 2016). Analysis of subcutaneous fat of these pigs also showed the proportion of saturated and unsaturated fatty acids to be 34.99 and 61.72%, respectively (Nasker et al. 2014).

Ngia-Megha: Pigs of Ngia-Megha breed are found in Meghalaya. They are mostly black in colour with short and erect ears, pot bellies and long snouts. The height at withers of these pigs is 51.4 (48–54) cm in males and 48.2 (45–52) cm in females. The estimated population of Ngia-Megha pigs is about 3.9 lakhs (Breed Descriptor 2013). Age at first heat is 210.5±2.42 days. Age at first farrowing and farrowing interval is 355.25±2.25 and 207.05±8.16 days, respectively. Gestation period is 111.85±0.14 days. Weight at birth and at weaning is 0.485±0.23 and 4.97±0.21 kg. Litter size at birth and at weaning is 6.34±0.26 and 5.63±0.42 (Sahoo et al. 2012, Khargharia et al. 2014, Gokuldas et al. 2015). Hot carcass weight is 40.60 (30–58) kg in males and 44.10 (32–60) kg in females (Breed Descriptor 2013). Fatty acid profiling of *musculus longissimus thorasis et lumborum* indicated that the saturated and unsaturated fatty acids were in the range of 32.75–38.91 and 54.69–69.28%, respectively (Thomas et al. 2018).

Agonda-Goan: The Agonda-Goan pigs are mostly black coloured, short and erect eared, short snout and pot bellied animals. The height at withers of these animals is 55.87 (46–64.5) cm in males and 60.77 (48.2–74.8) cm in females. These pigs are found in Tiswadi, Bardez and Peenem of North Goa district and Mormugoa, Salcete, Canacona and Quepemtaluks of South Goa district with an estimated population of 37,556. Age at first farrowing and farrowing interval is 334.75±27.32 and 185.35±4.11 days. Litter size at farrowing and at weaning are 7.45±0.51 and 5.9±0.55, respectively. Carcass weight is 48.30±1.48 (males) and 48.60±2.47 kg (females) (Breed Descriptor 2015).

Tenyi-Vo: The pigs of Tenyi Vo breed are found in Nagaland. They are mostly black coloured with white patches on bellies. They have long and straight snouts that have white patches around nostrils, short and erect ears, concave top lines and pot bellies. The height at withers of these pigs is 30.48 (28–36) cm in males and 25.4 (23–30) cm in females. They are distributed in Kohima, Peren, Phek and Dimapur districts of Nagaland with an estimated population of 60,000–70,000 (Breed Descriptor 2016). Age at first farrowing and farrowing interval is 298.35±2.03 and 149.99±2.36 days, respectively (Chusii et al. 2015). Litter size at birth and at weaning is 5.8±2.3 and 4.2±1.9, respectively (Borkotoky et al. 2014). Litter weight at birth and at weaning is 1.91±1.92 and 25.60±2.54 kg, respectively (Chusii et al. 2015). Hot carcass weight of these pigs is 38 (35–40) kg in males and 36 (35–40) kg in females (Breed Descriptor 2016). Male animals of this breed have been observed to mature at very early age and are able to impregnate the sows even before they attain the age of 6 months (Kumarasen et al. 2007, Karunakanar et al. 2009).

**Nicobari:** The pigs of Nicobari breed are mostly black or brown in colour. Small percentage of animals is creamy white, reddish brown or black and brown mixed. These pigs have short ears, short to medium snout with slight concave conformity, pot bellies of medium size and concave top lines. The height at withers of these pigs is 67.31 (51–86) cm in males and 61.24 (50–82) cm in females. Nicobari pigs are distributed in Nicobar district of Andaman and Nicobar, with an estimated population of 35,000. Age at first farrowing and farrowing interval is 319.19 (260–450) days and 242.4 (180–360) days, respectively. Litter size at farrowing and at weaning is 7.19 (4–12) and 5.42 (3–8), respectively. Dressed weight of these pigs is 52.6 (24–96) kg in males and 58.53 (44–81) kg in females (Breed Descriptor 2016).

**Doom:** The pigs of Doom breed are black in colour with concave snout, erect ears and straight top lines. The height at withers of these pigs is 60.4–66.2 cm in males and 65–71 cm in females. These pigs are found in Agomani, Gauripur, Golakganj blocks and Bilasipara sub-division in Dhubri district and few areas of Bongoigaon and Kokrajhar districts of Assam with an estimated population of approximately 3,000 (Breed Descriptor 2016). Age at first farrowing and farrowing interval of these pigs is 368.0±1.54 and 213.53±0.4 days. The litter size at farrowing and at weaning is 6.25±0.24 and 5.03±0.21, respectively (Khargharia et al. 2014). Hot carcass weight is 32.04±1.89 kg in males and 35.10±1.2 kg in females (Breed Descriptor 2016).

**Zovawk:** Zovawk pigs are found in Mizoram. These pigs are black in colour. They are small sized animals having bulging bellies. The ears are short and erect. The snout of these pigs is short and concave. The height at withers is 49.15 (45–54) cm in males and 49.04 (47–50) cm in females. Zovawk pigs are distributed in Mamit, Kolasib, Aizawl, Lunglei, Sahai and Champhai districts of Mizoram with an estimated population of about 40,000. The age at first farrowing and farrowing interval is 314.9 (249–350) days and 170 (164–205) days, respectively (Breed Descriptor 2017). Kalita et al. (2018) has also reported the average age at first fertile service, average age at first farrowing, gestation period and service periods as 323.75±9.90, 437.75±9.41, 113.63±0.53 and 113.13±7.81 days, respectively. The litter size at farrowing and at weaning is 7.40±0.40 and 5.2±0.66, respectively. Carcass weight is 28.29 (23–33) kg in male animals and 34.2 (25–43) kg in female animals (Breed Descriptor 2017). The male animals of this breed also mature at very early age and are able to impregnate the sows even before 6 months of age (Kumarasen et al. 2006).

**Gurrah:** Gurrah pigs are black in colour. Their legs are white below hock joints. They are medium sized with angular body and flat belly. Head is elongated with triangular face. The snout is long and straight. A thick line of hair is present on neck from head to shoulders. The ears are short, leaf shaped and vertically erect. The weight of
adult animals is about 46 kg in males and 48 kg in females. Litter size at farrowing and at weaning is 6.85 and 5.65, respectively. These pigs are found in Bareilly division and adjoining parts of Lucknow division in Uttar Pradesh (NBAGR 2018). Boro et al. (2016b) have also described the phenotypic characteristics of Bareilly Desi pigs distributed in Bareilly region which have adult body weight of 53.1±0.40 kg in males and 53.5±0.40 kg in females.

Other population of indigenous pigs of India

Besides, the above described registered breeds, some other population of indigenous pigs have been described.

Ankamali: The Ankamali pigs are black and rusty grey with white patches. The body is small, compact with a little bulge at the belly. The face is long with tapering snout. A distinct bulging can be clearly seen at the joint of the jaws. The back is slightly concave. They attain a body weight of around 37 kg by 8 months. They derive their name from a place of the same name near Ernakulam. These pigs are found predominantly in Kerala and also distributed in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. The weight at birth, 8 weeks and 32 weeks of age were reported as 0.86±0.03, 8.03±0.16 and 46.37±0.93 kg (Gupta et al. 2007, Naskar et al. 2013).

Dome: The Dome pigs are distributed in North and South districts of Tripura. Their colour varies from black to grey with long thick crest of bristles at dorsal line from neck to trunk. Adult body weight is about 50 kg. The litter size varies from 8 to 10 at birth and 7 to 7 at weaning (Naskar et al. 2013, Das et al. 2018).

Golla: These pigs take their name from Golla community of Ganjam district of Odisha that traditionally rear them. They are medium sized with adult weight of 50–80 kg. Litter size is 8–10 with two farrowing per year (Naskar et al. 2013).

Lepchamoun: The Lepchamoun pigs are reared in the Sikkim. They are medium sized. The ears are drooping type. The weight of adult animals is 80–120 kg. The litter size is about 7–10 at birth (Naskar et al. 2013). Nath et al. (2013) has reported the litter size at birth and at weaning of these local pigs of Sikkim to be 4.3±0.45 and 2.79±0.24, respectively. Age at first farrowing and farrowing interval is 365.39±7.96 and 196.27±8.37 days, respectively.

Mali: These pigs are found in Dhalai and North districts of Tripura. Colour is black with white patches. Many animals have star on the forehead. Adult body weight is about 50 kg. The litter size varies between 8 to 10 at birth and 7 to 8 at weaning. Age at first farrowing and farrowing interval is 281.4±1.6 and 178.5±0.9 days (Dandapat et al. 2010, Naskar et al. 2013).

Manipur Desi: They are found in Manipur and sometimes also called Burmese pigs by local population. Ears are large sized and drooping. These pigs are medium sized with an adult body weight of 120–150 kg. Litter size is about 8 to 12 (Naskar et al. 2013).

Indigenous pigs of Tamil Nadu

Kumar et al. (2017) has described the local pigs of Tamil Nadu. These are small sized pigs. The predominant colour is black. The small percentage of animals have white or brown patches. The Legs are white below the hock joint. The ears are leaf like and drooping. The tail is pendulous type with a tuft of hairs at the tip. Belly is mostly flat. These pigs are reared predominantly under scavenging management systems with occasional tethering.

Genetic characterization of indigenous pigs

In order to develop cost effective approach for conservation, it is necessary to evaluate the genetic structure of indigenous pig breeds of India, so as to identify breeds and genetic lines within breeds for conservation and to preserve the maximum variation available at the minimum cost. The microsatellites are useful polymorphic markers for the analysis of genetic variability between and within population. They are being used in ever increasing number of genetic analysis studies of various pig breeds across the globe.

Among Indian pig population, earlier, it was reported that Ankamali pigs of Kerala are genetically distinct population from Desi pigs of North India and Gahuri pigs of Assam. Desi pigs and Gahuri pigs were earlier shown to be genetically closely related based on the genotyping studies using 23 FAO recommended microsatellite markers (Behl et al. 2002, 2006).

Evaluation of Andaman Desi pigs by a set of 23 FAO recommended microsatellite markers revealed that adequate genetic diversity is present in these pigs (De et al. 2013). In a similar study, Niang Megha and Tenyi Vo pigs were evaluated for genetic diversity. The mean F values were 0.15±0.05 (Niang Megha) and 0.05±0.06 (Tenyi Vo). No genetic bottlenecks were observed in these two population (Sahoo et al. 2016a).

Sahoo et al. (2015) evaluated Ghoongroo pigs using 2 FAO-ISAG microsatellite markers. The normal L’ shaped curve in mode shift test based on the genotyping data generated in this study pointed to absence of any bottlenecks in this population. Sahoo et al. (2016b) evaluated genetic identity/distance between Niang Megha, Tenyi Vo and Ghoongroo breeds using genotyping data generated at 22 microsatellite loci. The Nieu’s unbiased genetic identity values of 0.291 indicated lower genetic distance between Niang Megha and Tenyi Vo pigs. The Ghoongroo breed was found distinct from these two breeds.

Besides genotyping with microsatellite markers, Ahanthem et al. (2015) barcoded the pigs of North-East India using cytochrome C oxidase-1. Pramod et al. (2016) has also evaluated erythropoietin receptor gene polymorphism in Ankamali pigs by restriction fragment length polymorphism and found that these pigs are fixed for T allele at this gene.

Conclusion

In India, pig farming is traditionally associated with people of lowest socio-economic strata. They have little means available with them to adopt to the feeding and
management required for intensive pig farming involving exotic and crossbred pigs. Indigenous pigs, due to their smaller size have much less requirement for feed and space, thus making them suitable for rearing by people with meagre resources. Besides their ability to survive and grow in most adverse conditions of nutrition and management, the indigenous pigs can also withstand hot and humid environments. Although, the feed conversion ratio of indigenous pigs is less than that of exotic pigs, they have the ability to produce meat with less fat as indicated by their lower backfat thickness (1.72±0.23 cm) compared to exotic breeds like Yorkshire (barrow – 4.1±0.22, gilt – 3.7±0.19), thus wasting less feed resources (Hetzer and Miller 1973, Chhabra et al. 1999). However, the population of these pigs have shown a declining trend in the last decade. Although, efforts have been made to characterize and register the breeds of indigenous pigs in India, efforts in scientific breeding strategies can further improve their productive and reproductive attributes.

REFERENCES


