

Goat marketing pattern in southern Rajasthan

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ABSTRACT

Livestock marketing plays important role in the economy of farmers, which is generally the most neglected area in the country. It results into strong and pervasive prejudice involvement of middlemen in the market. Sizeable rural populations, especially the economically and socially backward classes, maintain goats and are found in less fertile, arid and semi arid areas of the country. The study revealed that trade is not oligopolistic and farmers did not complain about price fixing. The reason for selling animals is largely financial although sales are made for other reasons also. Majority of the goat farmers in the villages sold their goats to petty traders. However a small percentage of farmers sold their goats directly to rural and semi urban butchers. Goat traders belong mainly to two local groups viz. muslims and khatiks (lower castes). The income from goat rearing was mainly utilized to fulfill the family needs.

Keywords: Goat disposal, Marketing, Purchase agencies and South Rajasthan.

INTRODUCTION

Goat is a unique small ruminant reared by landless, small and marginal farmers. Goat is the only livestock species that thrives on ecology where grazing material is virtually not available for other livestock and survives under diverse harsh environments in low fertility, degraded areas and uncultivated wastelands. Goat rearing requires low initial investment as compared to cattle and buffalo. It is the only meat animal, which in spite of several developmental setbacks and prejudices, has been able to maintain its positive population growth rate with human population. Hence the goat is called the "bank on hooves". The profitability of goat production largely depends on efficient disposal of their produce for which availability of organized market is a must. Economic sustainability is thus the key for the propagation of locally adapted goat biodiversity. Unfortunately, marketing of live animal is generally the most neglected area in the country. Moreover even within the livestock, marketing of goats is one of the most neglected areas. As a result, it involved middleman and commission agents. In villages, animals and their produce are sold to the local traders who visit the village regularly or weekly. The poor farmers are not in a position to hold the produce for longer time to take advantage of better prices. They also do not understand the price trend and terms of selling their animals. Naidu et al. (1992) observed that marketing system for small ruminants, their products and by products is under developed in India. Keeping this in view, a preliminary attempt was made to examine the pattern and method of selling, criteria for fixing price, frequency of selling of goats and reasons of selling goats in Udaipur and Rajsamand districts of Southern Rajasthan.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A sample survey was conducted on 240 households involving 120 goat farmers in Udaipur and Rajsamand districts. Information on marketing structure, mode of marketing and price of animals at the time of sale was

collected by administering a developed questionnaire to the goat owner and also by direct observation in the farmer's flocks. The collected data were scrutinized, collated and subjected to basic statistical analysis as per Snedecor and Cochran (1989).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Trading of goats for the meat market is an important aspect of goat husbandry. Receipts from the sale of animals are in cash while receipts from milk and dung are largely in kind. It is therefore important to understand the market from the point of view of the goat farmers. Generally goat owners retained female kids as replacement stock and males were sold for meat purpose. During the period of extra cash requirements, even surplus females were also sold. The marketing practices observed in the survey area are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Marketing practices followed by households (N=240)

Particulars	Udaipur	Rajsamand
Age When male kid sold	92 (76.66)	84 (70.00)
1) 3 – 6 months	28 (23.34)	36 (30.00)
2) 8 – 10 months		
Criteria for fixing rate	90 (75.00)	75 (62.50)
I) Weight basis	19 (15.84)	27 (22.50)
II) Physical appearance	11 (09.16)	18 (15.00)
III) Both		
Frequency of selling goats	85 (07.83)	78 (65.00)
Once a year	15 (12.50)	22 (18.34)
Twice a year	12 (10.00)	20 (16.66)
Only when male kid available	08 (06.67)	-
Whenever traders comes		

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

Table: 2. Reasons for selling goats

Reasons	Udaipur	Rajsamand
For cash need	76 (63.33)	65 (54.16)
Fear of sickness	10 (8.33)	15 (12.50)
Shortage of fodder and grazing land	8 (6.66)	12 (10.00)
When number of goats increases	7 (5.83)	20 (16.66)
When goats are old enough	6 (5.00)	03 (2.50)
Others	13 (10.83)	05 (4.16)

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage.

It can be concluded that in both the districts majority of respondents (>70%), sold their male kids at the age of 3-6 months followed by 6-8 months (Table 1). Regarding the criteria for fixing rate of male kid, it was observed that most common criteria used by sample households, in descending order, were weight basis (75%), weight and physical appearance (15.84%) and physical appearance (9.16%) in Udaipur district. The corresponding values for Rajsamand district were, 62.5, 22.5 and 15.0 percent, respectively. Majority of goat farmers from both the districts reported that frequency of selling of their animals was once in year and only a few of them sold on specific occasion as evident from the table 1. In almost all villages investigated, majority of the goat farmers preferred to sell their goats in village itself. It might be due to small number of animals available for sale with individual farmers and better bargaining strength at the village. In most of the cases trading was based on muscle thickness at loin and thigh. The traders could precisely estimate the probable meat yield based on the muscle thickness and accordingly decided the purchase price of each animal. Similar observations were recorded earlier also by Rao (1995).

The motives of farmers for selling adult female goats are presented in Table 2. In both the districts the predominant reason for sale of goats was largely financial although sales were made for other reasons also. Among the other reported reasons were anticipated fear of sickness, shortage of fodder and difficulty in grazing. It is realized that goat farming thrives in agriculture and household wastes and barren land in village condition. This clearly indicates that farmers did not want to increase the flock size due to shrinking grazing area in the village. Similar observations were also recorded by Deoghare and Kumar (2003) in a study on social aspects of goat marketing in Etah district of U.P.

The details of goat traders prevalent in the area of study are provided in Table 3. Traders were generally local and belonged mainly to two groups viz. Muslim and Khatik (lower castes). The Khatiks are the local traders or meat sellers of the surrounding villages. The Muslims come from the local area as well as from outside of the district. There is no social or religious taboo in selling goats for meat purposes. Purchasers come almost daily or at least once a week. Animals can be sold whenever the owner wishes to sell them either within the village or

in surrounding area. A large number of sales were made between Decembers to April i.e. 3 to 6 months after kidding.

Table 3 Characteristics of goat traders

Particulars	Udaipur	Rajsamand
1. Who are the traders?		
A. Muslim	92 (76.66)	36 (25.00)
B. Khatik	20 (16.66)	86 (71.66)
C. Others	08 (6.68)	04 (3.34)
2. From where do they come?		
I) Within district.	90 (75.00)	110 (91.66)
II) Outsider district	30 (25.00)	10 (8.64)
3. What do they purchase goats for?		
I) Keep themselves	70 (58.33)	82 (68.33)
II) Business / Trade	30 (25.01)	31 (25.84)
III) For selling as meat	20 (16.66)	07 (5.83)

Note: Multiple responses have been tabulated. Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

The study indicated that in the present system of marketing both the consumer and the producer were affected and the butchers and middlemen were benefited, hence norms have to be fixed for pricing the animals. Necessary steps have to be taken to create infrastructure facilities in the weekly market for free and fair trade of goat. It helps the breeder to know the current demand of various products, consumer choice and the price trend. Trading of goat has better future because of increased domestic consumption and is a key to success of goat development in the area. The Government should, therefore, devise suitable strategies like cooperative societies for marketing of goats and their products so that the farmers get remunerative price and are further encouraged to go for large sale goat rearing.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of present investigation it can be concluded that there is no significant differences in goat marketing practices in the two districts of Southern Rajasthan. It may be due to the similar socio economic condition of the goat farmers. The study also revealed that majority of farmers preferred to sell their goats in the village itself. It was also observed that farmers sold their goats to petty traders in the villages. The farmers were selling their animals mainly to reduce the flock size because of crunch and to meet frequent cash needs of the family. The income from goat rearing was mainly utilized to fulfill the family needs. The farmers must be educated to improve awareness towards development programmes being implemented by government. Formation of cooperative societies of goat breeders may be powerful media to help goat breeder to sell their produce at reasonable price.

129
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