



SMALL RUMINANT MARKETING PRACTICES IN SOUTHERN TAMIL NADU: A CASE STUDY

S. Senthilkumar*, R. Ramprabhu and A. Serma Saravana Pandian

Veterinary University Training and Research Centre, Parakkai-629 601, Tamil Nadu

¹Department of A.H. Economics, Madras Veterinary College, Chennai -7, Tamil Nadu

**E-mail address: usveteng@gmail.com*

Manuscript received on 30.04.2011, accepted on 29.08.2011

ABSTRACT

A study was carried out to analyze the marketing practices of small ruminants in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu. It was observed that majority of farmers preferred to sell animals in their own villages itself to reap the benefits of negotiation. The modes of transportation of sheep and goats to bring them to the market were mainly jeep/truck (32.7% in livestock market-I and 35.4% at market-II), followed by through walking and by autorickshaws. The main reasons for selling the animal was urgent need of money (marked by 52.73 and 58.46%), fodder scarcity (21.82%) and fear about sickness. The most common criterion used by respondents for selling of animals was based on muscle thickness at loin and thigh region (70.91 and 81.54% in livestock market-I and market-II, respectively). In most of the cases trading was based on muscle thickness of animals at loin and thigh region. It was observed that 50 to 60% of respondents sold male kids below 6 months of age. (**Indian Journal of Small Ruminants 2012, 18(1): 129 - 131**).

Key words: Livestock markets, Marketing system, Small ruminant, Tamil Nadu

Small ruminants are mainly reared by socially and economically weaker classes of landless, small and marginal farmers. The profitability of small ruminant's production largely depends on efficient disposal of their produce for which availability of organized market is a must. Livestock marketing involves intensive use of labour and offers significant employment and income opportunities to agricultural labourers, small and marginal farmers. In Tamil Nadu, livestock marketing is confined to the weekly local markets and annual festival fairs. Marketing of sheep and goats is not organized in the country and involves middlemen and commission agents. In villages, animals are generally sold to the traders who visit the villages regularly. The poor farmers are not in a position to hold the produce for longer time to take advantage of better prices. Naidu et al. (1991) observed that marketing system for small ruminants and their products and by-products is under-developed in India. Keeping these facts in view, an attempt was made to study the criteria for

selling and fixing of price, reasons for selling small ruminants and marketing channels operating in livestock markets.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was carried out in Tirunelveli district due to the fact that small ruminant density was higher in this area than other districts of Tamil Nadu. Pre-tested interview schedules were employed for investigating the sale and price setting pattern of small ruminants owned by the 120 respondents from two livestock markets viz., Market-I (Melapalayam) and Market-II (Rediyarpatti) of the study area. The distance covered by small ruminant farmers, mode of transportation, reasons for selling of animals, price received and existing marketing channel at livestock markets were investigated from December 2009 to March 2010. In order to spot the different marketing channels through which the sheep and goats are transacted, the various route traversed by the animals from seller / producer till it

reached the ultimate buyer was traced and recorded. From the recordings, important marketing channels of sheep and goats in the study area were identified.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Various aspects of sheep and goat marketing system in the study area are presented in Table 1. Majority of the respondents, involved in small ruminants trading in the two livestock markets (74.6 % in market-I and 78.5 % in market-II), came from a distance of up to 20 km. However, traders from Kerala state also visit these livestock markets for purchasing the animals. The study revealed that the modes of transportation of small ruminants to bring them to the market were mainly jeep/truck (32.7% at market-I and 35.4% at market-II), followed by through walking and by autorickshaws. Devendra

and McLeroy (1982) and Tripathi et al. (2004) also explained different methods of transport in sheep and goat marketing.

In villages, the majority of farmers preferred to sell their animals in the village itself. It might be due to small number of animals available for sale with farmers and better bargaining strength when sold at their own village. In most of the cases trading was based on muscle thickness at loin and thigh region. The traders assess the probable meat yield based on the muscle thickness and fixes price for animals. These findings were in agreement with findings reported by Rao (1995) and Pankaj Lavania (2008). The main reasons for selling the animals were urgent need of money (52.73% in market-I and 58.46% in market -II), feed scarcity (21.82% in market-I and 15.39% in market-II).

Table 1. Various aspects of sheep and goat marketing system in southern Tamil Nadu

Particulars	Market-1 (Melapalayam, N=55)	Market-II (Reddiarpatti, N=65)
Travelling distance (km)		
< 10	23 (41.81)	19 (29.23)
11-20	18 (32.73)	32 (49.23)
> 20	14 (25.46)	14 (21.54)
Transportation of small ruminant		
Walking	13 (23.64)	17 (26.15)
Bicycle	05 (9.09)	07 (10.76)
Rickshaw / Autorickshaw	12 (21.82)	10 (15.39)
Jeep /Truck	18 (32.72)	23 (35.39)
Tractor / Bus	07 (12.73)	08 (12.31)
Criteria for fixing price		
Muscle thickness	39 (70.91)	53 (81.54)
Physical appearance	07 (12.73)	05 (7.69)
Muscle thickness and physical appearance	09 (16.36)	07 (10.77)
Reasons for selling		
Urgent need for money	29 (52.73)	38 (58.46)
Surplus animals	02 (3.64)	03 (4.62)
Fodder scarcity	12 (21.82)	10 (15.39)
Fear of sickness	08 (14.55)	08 (12.31)
Older animals	04 (7.26)	06 (9.22)
Age of selling male kids (months)		
< 6	29 (52.73)	38 (58.46)
6-12	22 (40.00)	21 (32.31)
> 12	04 (7.27)	06 (9.23)

Figures in parentheses are percent respondents

It was observed that about 50 to 60% of respondents sold their male kids below 6 months of age. Similar observations were recorded by Pankaj Lavania (2008) and Rathore (1993). Generally, farmers retained female kids as replacement stock and males were sold for meat purpose. During the situations of urgent cash needs, even surplus

females were also sold. Marketing channels involved in trading of sheep and goats were studied by Das et al. (1999) and Rathore (1993). Similarly, the channels through which sheep and goat passes from the producers to the consumers were studied which showed following three channels of marketing in the study area:



Out of these marketing channels, majority of respondents preferred channel-III (75% in market-I and 73.5% in market-II). This may be due to fact that both the sellers and buyers were reluctant to get involved directly in the transaction, as they felt handicapped due to lack of market intelligence and information on sheep and goat trading. Hence, the farmers must be educated to improve awareness towards development programme being implemented by government.

It was concluded that in the existing marketing system, both the producer and the consumer are affected and middlemen or brokers are benefited. Hence, there is a need to fix norms for pricing the animals. Necessary steps have to be taken to create infrastructure facilities in the livestock markets for free and fair trade of animals. There is no significant difference in marketing structure and pricing pattern in two livestock markets and it may be due to low investment capacity and unawareness about market information. Formation of cooperative societies of small ruminant may be influential to help sheep and goat breeders to sell their produce at reasonable price.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors thank the Small Ruminant Research Centre, TANUVAS, Tirunelveli for providing necessary facilities for conducting the study.

REFERENCES

- Das, K.S., Srivastva, B.B. and Das, N. 1999. A study of goat marketing system prevalent in two animal markets around Bareilly city. *Indian Journal of Animal Production and Management* 15: 146-149.
- Devendra, C. and McLeroy, G.B. 1982. *Goat and Sheep Production in the Tropics*, Longman, London, pp. 220-221.
- Naidu, A., Rao, S., Chandramouli, A.K. and Seshagiri Rao, K. 1991. Marketing of goats and sheep. In: *Proceedings of Workshop on Meat and Slaughterhouse By-products Handling Systems*. CLRI, Madras. 15-17 July
- Pankaj Lavania and Singh, P.K. 2008. Goat marketing practices in southern Rajasthan. *Indian Journal of Small Ruminants* 14: 99-102.
- Rao, G. 1995. Marketing of live goats and goat meat in India. In: *National Symposium on Production and Marketing of Goat Meat*. CIRG, Makhdoom, 10 -11 January.
- Rathore, M.S. 1993. *Marketing of Goats in Rajasthan*. 1st edn., Classic Publishing House, Jaipur
- Tripathi, A.K., Mishra, A.K. and Singh, Y.K. 2004. Marketing and practicing pattern of goat in Eastern Uttar Pradesh. *Indian Journal of Small Ruminants* 10: 39-41.