



SHORT COMMUNICATION

Assessment of Socio-economic Status of Pig Rearers and Management Practices of Pigs in Assam

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to appraise the in-depth scenario of socio-economic status of pig rearers, management practices in pigs and to identify constraints in rural areas of Kamrup and Darrang districts of Assam. A base line survey was conducted and a total of 300 pig owning households were interviewed randomly. In the study, it was found that majority of rearers were women (84.7%) for the purpose of business (76%) in backyard (92.8%). Neck/girth tethering (72.3%) was the preferable rearing system by the farmers. Pigs were mostly fed twice a day with kitchen waste, colocasia, rice polish and *juguli*. It was concluded that due to lack of awareness, majority of farmers do not follow scientific feeding, breeding and health care practices.

Keywords: Socio-economic status, pig rearers, management system, rural, Assam

Pig farming is an important livelihood source for many household communities in Assam. Pigs are reared to earn family income which in turn used to meet basic needs such as food, medicine and clothing. Pigs in such low-input systems provide value added for farmers by consuming feed that would otherwise be wasted. Small scale pig farming predominates throughout the North Eastern Region including Assam (Khan *et al.*, 2006). The domestic pig is an animal which has been very much neglected by the community. Very scanty informations are available on socio-economic status of pig rearers and different management system of pigs in rural areas of Assam. Therefore, this study was carried out to evaluate the socio-economic status of pig rearers and management practices of pigs in rural areas of Kamrup and Darrang districts of Assam.

The experiment was carried out different villages of Kamrup and Darrang districts of Assam. Villages were selected on the basis of pig population. The study was carried out from September, 2015 to June, 2016. A

questionnaire was prepared on the basis of different objectives of the study and farmers were interviewed face to face. A total of 300, households were interviewed during the study. Data on socio-economic status of pig rearers and different management systems were gathered, compiled and analyzed by Microsoft excel 10. The data presented in percentage scale for comparison of each attributes.

In the study, the majority of the pig rearers were women (84.7%) with a little population was male (15.3%). Among women, majority of the rearers were house wives (63.4%), daily labour (19.1%) and crop cultivator (17.5%) where as among men majority were daily labour (53.6%). The majority of the rearers were between 25 to 46 years of age with an average 15.47 years of experience in pig rearing. These findings were in accordance with earlier observation made by Ritchil *et al.*, (2013). The cleaning, feeding and other managerial duties were done by family members of the owner particularly the male. The native pig farmers were mostly ST (49.4%), followed by SC (32.7) and OBC (17.9%).



Fig. 1: A tribal woman with her pigs

In the present study, people reared pig for business (76%), festival (20.3%), and family consumption (3.7%) purposes. However, Patr *et al.*, (2014) observed that the purpose of pig rearing was for fattening (34.23%), breeding (33.33%) and for dual purpose both fattening and breeding (32.43%). It was revealed that all of the farmers had their own land for pig husbandry. Most of the farmers (92.8%) reared pigs backyard of their house and rest of the population reared pigs away from the human habitation due to some social and religious taboos. However, Ritchil *et al.*, (2013) reported that pigs were mostly reared by poor and landless people.

The pig rearers were mostly literate i.e. primary school (20.5%), middle school (26.8%), high school (32.5%) and higher secondary (12%). In the study, only 8.2% pig rearers were illiterate and none of the pig keepers had graduation, post graduation or any special training on

pig husbandry. The annual income of the rearers from pig husbandry varies from rupees twenty thousand to 1 lakh. They also confessed that pig farming is a profitable business and they used the profits to buy food, medicine, cloths and education of their children.

All the pig rearers procured the piglets from local market especially weekly market. It was reported that no piglets were brought from government farm or organization. In these areas, most of piglets procured by farmers were non-descriptive.

In this study, mostly pig rearers preferred neck/girth tethering (72.3%), and rest preferred straw shed with katcha floor (16.5%), straw shed with concrete flooring (8.4%), CGI roofing with concrete flooring (1.2%) and pen system (1.5%), which is quite similar with the housing pattern observed in other parts of North East (Kumaresan *et al.*, 2009). Free range system of rearing was absent during the study due to socio-religious taboo. There were no separate housing were observed for piglets, male and females.

Pig rearers cleaned their pig sties in variable frequency. Most of the pig rearers cleaned twice a day (48.6%) followed by once a day (28.7%) and once in a week (22.7%); which was also concurred by Mekuriaw and Asmare, (2014). Hygiene and sanitation is important to keep the pigs healthy and disease free which ultimately helps in better growth.

In the present study, use of concentrate ration was negligible. Pigs were mostly fed with kitchen waste, colocasia, rice polish and *juguli* (residue of rice based country liquor). Majority of the pig rearers had a rice



Fig. 2: Tethering system



Fig. 3: Straw shed pig sty



Fig. 4: Feed preparing for pigs



Fig. 5: Rice based country liquor unit

based country liquor production unit. Moreover, all of the ST pig rearers provided dry fish/ fish meal frequently in feed because they believed it had some medicinal value to make their pigs disease free. In the study, 96.2% rearers fed their pigs twice a day and rest fed thrice in a day. Tubewell or natural reservoir was the source of water for pigs.

It was observed that 75.5% rearers took help from veterinary service. However, rest 20.4% had no access to veterinary service and 4.1% farmers depended on traditional medicine. Most of farmer who believed on traditional medicine were belonged to ST community. None of the farmers vaccinated their pigs against any diseases in these areas.

In the current study, pigs had a good demand. Pork was the preferred choice of meat amongst tribal and some other backward communities. In rural areas, consumption was mainly on the day of the local weekly market. The market price of each piglet was rupees 2000-3000. Farmers were facing multiple constraints in pig rearing. Malnutrition, lack of scientific knowledge, non availability of veterinary health care, medicine, vaccine, high cost of concentration, lack of elite breeding boar, disease outbreaks and religious taboo were the major constraints faced by the pig rearers. Pork had a good demand in these areas even though there was no such pork market establishment as Pegu *et al.* (2014) clearly indicated that major constraints faced by piggery entrepreneurs were lack of quality breeding stock followed by lack of linkage with financial institute, lack of training, lack of time, outbreak of disease, lack of proper marketing channel, seasonal fluctuation of price, lack of proper veterinary support, lack of easy access to extension services and scarcity of space in market place.

CONCLUSION

The present study was undertaken to investigate socio-economic status of pig rearers and management practices of pigs in rural areas of Assam. Women were mostly engaged in pig husbandry in backyard of their houses. Pigs were reared for the purpose of business, festival and family consumption. Neck/girth tethering was the preferred method of pig rearing. Pig population was mainly fed with kitchen waste, colocasia, rice polish and *juguli* twice a day. The sanitary condition was satisfactory. Malnutrition, lack of scientific knowledge, non availability of veterinary health care, high cost of concentrate ration, lack of elite breeding boar and disease outbreaks were the major constraints in pig rearing.

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