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SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND LIVELIHOOD CONTRIBUTIONS OF GOAT FARMING HOUSEHOLDS IN NAMAKKAL DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU.

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Abstract
Goat farming represents a vital component of the livestock economy in Tamil Nadu and plays a particularly important role in the livelihoods of rural households in Namakkal district. The present study examines the socio-economic status of goat farming households and evaluates the extent of livelihood contributions derived from goat rearing activities. Primary data collected from selected goat farmers were analyzed to understand demographic characteristics, income patterns, employment generation, production practices, and access to institutional support. The study further assesses the profitability of goat farming through cost and returns analysis and identifies major constraints faced by farmers such as inadequate veterinary services, fluctuating market prices, feed scarcity, and limited credit availability. The findings indicate that goat farming significantly supplements household income, enhances food and nutritional security, and provides substantial self-employment opportunities, especially for women and marginal farmers. However, the full economic potential of goat farming remains underutilized due to persisting socio-economic and infrastructural limitations. Strengthening market linkages, improving access to extension services, and providing targeted financial and technical support are crucial to enhance productivity and ensure sustainable livelihood development. This research contributes empirical insights that can guide policymakers and development agencies in formulating strategic interventions tailored to the needs of goat farming households in Namakkal district.

Key Words: Goat Farming, Livelihoods, Livestock Economy, Socio-Economic, Livelihood Development, Strengthening Market Linkages, Employment Generation, Production Practices, Access to Institutional Support.

Introduction

The livestock sector plays a vital role in the agricultural economy of India by ensuring food security, employment generation, and income diversification for rural households. Among the various livestock enterprises, goat farming has emerged as an important subsidiary occupation, particularly for small and marginal farmers. Goats are widely recognized as “poor man’s cow” due to their low maintenance cost, adaptability to harsh environments, faster reproduction rate, and ability to provide multiple products such as meat, milk, skin, and manure. Hence, goat rearing acts as a sustainable asset that supports livelihood resilience in vulnerable rural regions. Despite its socio-economic relevance, goat farmers in Namakkal district often face several constraints including limited access to veterinary services, market fluctuations, lack of scientific management practices, and inadequate institutional support. These factors influence both their socio-economic status and the overall benefits derived from goat rearing. Given this context, a comprehensive study on the socio-economic characteristics of goat farming households and the livelihood contributions of goat rearing in Namakkal district becomes essential. Such an inquiry will help identify strengths, limitations, and opportunities for enhancing the productivity and profitability of goat enterprises. The findings would support informed policymaking, targeted interventions, and improved support services for rural development.

Goat farming in India is a very profitable business with minimum investment. Goat farming can be done in small to large industrial scale. Here is the complete information on starting a goat farming project. Goat farming in India is a well-established, antiquated form of farming especially in places where dry land farming system is practiced. It is generally practiced by farmers who have a very small area of land for farming. Sometimes landless laborers also undertake goat farming since the risk, initial investments etc. are much lower than other forms of farming. Goats are hence rightly called as "poor man's cow" since it has promises of good return that can serve as investment source.

Review of literatures

Review of literature of Goat forming as (Delgado et al. 1999; LLP, 2006; Van Rooven and Homann, 2008). This means that there is a need to develop strategies for increased meat production; this can only be done through boosting goats' productivity to meet the market demand (LLP, 2006; Van Rooven and Homann, 2008). More than 95% of the world's goat population is found in fragile ecosystems in drylands and mountainous areas of Africa and Asia (Nyathi, 2008) where a high incidence of poverty is observed (Devendra, 1999). Globally, the goat population is increasing in number. There has been a recording of an 8.1% growth rate between 1990 and 1996 (Van Rooven and Homann, 2008). Goats were found to contribute a significant proportion towards national economies of several countries and across the world; the contribution of goats towards the livelihoods of over a billion people has been acknowledged (MINAGRI, 2017). Small scale farmers in rural areas and those that are landless have found goats as a solution to their poor resource endowments (Peacock and al., 2005). At the household level, goats are a source of income generation, food production, and security, employment, manure; goats also positively utilize crop residues, have social values, and are used for recreation (Devendra, 1999; LLP, 2006). For many of the rural poor communities and especially those with small pieces of land, the ownership of goats provides the means for survival as food and cash income (Devendra, 1999; LLP, 2006). The latter also enables the diversification of incomes. Cash money from goat sales can be used for buying household needs, other needed foodstuff and by so doing, improve food security. In the long run, the poor households may aspire to buy or barter goats for large stock like a cow (LLP, 2006). Hence, it is essential for proper research to assist green cardamom firms in India. Therefore, the present study developed the following research objectives.

Objectives of the study

1. To evaluate the contribution of goat farming to household income and livelihood security among farming families.
2. To analyze the role of goat farming in employment generation, particularly for women and marginal farmers.

Statement of the Problem

Goat farming serves as a critical livelihood source for small and marginal farmers in Namakkal district. Despite its socio-economic significance, many goat rearing households continue to remain in low income categories with limited access to resources and institutional support. Challenges such as poor housing conditions, inadequate veterinary services, fluctuating market prices, high mortality rates, and lack of scientific management practices affect productivity and profitability. Moreover, the actual contribution of goat farming to household income, nutrition, employment, and poverty reduction remains insufficiently documented.

Theoretical background

The global Goat Farming Market size was valued at USD xx Billion in 2024 and is projected to expand at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of xx% during the forecast period, reaching a value of USD xx Billion by 2032.

The "Goat Farming Market Research Report" by Future Data Stats delivers an in-depth analysis of the market, utilizing historical data from 2021 to 2023. This thorough examination identifies significant trends, growth trajectories, and key factors influencing the market environment. With 2024 established as the baseline year, the report explores consumer behavior, competitive landscapes, and regulatory contexts. Furthermore, it offers a meticulously researched forecast extending from 2025 to 2033. By employing sophisticated data analysis methods, the report delineates the market's growth path, identifies emerging opportunities, and anticipates potential challenges, thereby providing essential insights for stakeholders.

Market Overview

Goat farming for market purposes involves raising goats primarily for the production of meat, milk, and fiber. It is a specialized agricultural practice that caters to both local and international demand. Farmers focus on breeding and raising goats to supply various industries, including food production, textiles, and cosmetics. The market for goat farming is driven by the increasing consumption of goat meat, a growing demand for dairy products, and the value of goat wool and skins. The practice of goat farming varies depending on the type of product being produced. Meat goats are raised for their lean, flavorful meat, while dairy goats are valued for their milk, which is used in various products like cheese and yogurt. Fiber goats are bred for their wool, used in textiles such as cashmere and mohair. Goat farming has become an essential part of agriculture in many regions, supporting both small-scale farmers and large commercial operations.

Market Dynamics

The growing demand for goat meat, milk, and by-products. As consumers become more health-conscious, they are increasingly opting for goat meat due to its lower fat content and high protein, iron, and vitamin benefits. Additionally, goat milk is gaining popularity as a nutritious alternative to cow's milk, especially among individuals with lactose intolerance. These factors are contributing to the market's expansion, with farmers adopting more efficient and sustainable farming practices to meet consumer needs. Advancements in breeding technologies, animal health management, and feed optimization are likely to improve productivity and sustainability in the industry. As the global demand for organic and locally sourced products rises, goat farming is set to benefit from increased market opportunities, especially in niche segments such as artisanal goat cheese and specialty meat products. The ongoing trend towards sustainable farming practices and eco-friendly production methods presents further growth potential for the market.

As consumers increasingly seek healthier protein sources, goat meat has gained popularity due to its lower fat content compared to other meats. Moreover, the versatility of goat milk in various dairy products has attracted health-conscious buyers. Farmers are capitalizing on these trends, investing in improved breeding techniques and sustainable farming practices to enhance productivity and meet market demands. High initial investment costs and limited access to quality veterinary services often restrict new entrants from establishing successful farms. Additionally, fluctuating market prices can create uncertainty for existing farmers. Despite these constraints, opportunities abound. Advances in technology, such as genetic selection and digital marketing, enable farmers to optimize production and

reach broader markets. By embracing innovation and sustainability, goat farmers can navigate challenges and tap into the growing consumer interest in ethically sourced meat and dairy products.

Market Demand for Goat Farming in India

1. **The Mutton Industry is worth ₹30,000 Cr+.** Goat meat (mutton) is one of the most consumed meats in India, and the demand increases by **8-10% every year** (**Source: Ministry of Animal Husbandry, India, 2023).**
2. **High Reproduction Rate –** A healthy goat gives birth to 2 babies in a year, which helps in fast herd growth.
3. **Low Maintenance & High Adaptability –** Goats can survive in all types of climatic conditions, which makes this business more profitable.
4. **NABARD and Govt. Subsidy Support –** NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development) and State Governments provide subsidies and loans for goat farming.

Material Methods

Research Design is Descriptive and analytical research design. Study Area is selected rural blocks in Namakkal district, Tamil Nadu. Sampling Technique is stratified random sampling to cover small, marginal, and landless farmers. Sample Size is 75 goat farming households (depending on feasibility).

Data Collection

- **Primary Data**: Structured interview schedule covering socio-economic conditions, goat management practices, costs, returns, and constraints.
- **Secondary Data**: Published journals, reports of Government of Tamil Nadu, NABARD, FAO, District Livestock Department, and relevant research studies.

Tools of Analysis

- Descriptive statistics: Percentage, mean, standard deviation.
- The data was analyzed by using percentage, chi-squire, ANOVA, Post Hoc-Tukey HSD Test and One Sample t test

Hypotheses of the Study

1. **H_1:** Goat farming significantly improves the household income of rural farmers in Namakkal district.

   H_0: Goat farming significantly does not improves the household income of rural farmers in Namakkal district.

2. **H_1:** Goat farming provides substantial employment opportunities for rural youth and landless laborers.

   H_0: Goat farming does not provide substantial employment opportunities for rural youth and landless laborers.

Result and Discussions

Analysis on Demographical factors of Goat forming.

Table 1 Describes on the demographical factors of Goat forming.

Table 1, Demographical Factors of Goat forming

Sl.No	Socio- economic characteristics of Respondents		No. of Respondents	Percentage	Total
1	**Residence**	Village	65	86.7	75
		Semi Town	10	13.3	
2	**Age**	Below 30 years	20	26.7	75
		31 to 40 years	15	20.0	
		Above 41 years	40	53.3	
3	**Gender**	Male	25	33.3	75
		Female	50	66.7	
4	**Marital status**	Married	64	85.3	75
		Unmarried	11	14.7	
5	**Educational Qualification**	Illiterate	46	61.3	75
		School level	19	25.3	
		Graduate	10	13.3	
6	**Occupational status**	Full time work	59	78.7	75
		Part time work	16	21.3	
7	**Monthly Income**	Up to Rs. 10,000	44	58.7	75
		Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 20,000	10	13.3	
		Above 20,000	21	28.0	
8	**Experience**	Below 1 years	12	16.0	75
		1 to 5 years	57	76.0	
		5 and above	6	8.0	

A vast majority (86.7%) of the respondents live in villages. More than half (53.3%) of the respondents are above 40 years of age. The majority (66.7%) of the respondents are women. A large proportion (85.3%) of respondents are married. Most respondents (61.3%) are illiterate. About 78.7% of the respondents work as full time earners. The majority (58.7%) of respondents earn up to ₹10,000 per month, revealing a low-income pattern among goat farmers. Around 76% of the respondents have experience between 1 to 5 years, showing that many are relatively new entrants to goat farming, possibly due to the increasing recognition of its livelihood potential

2. Demographical Factors on the perception of Gender of the Goat forming Respondents.

The table 2 describes the results of chi-square analysis in terms of personal factors.

Hypothesis: Gender is not dependent on Demographical Factors of the Goat forming Respondents.

Table: 2, Demographical Factors and Gender

S.No	Personal variables	Pearson Chi-square		Contingency Coefficient	Significant/ Not Significant
		Chi-square value	P values	P Value	
1	**Residence**	5.77	0.016	0.267	S
2	**Age**	60.00	0.000	0.667	S
3	**Marital status**	6.45	0.011	0.280	S
4	**Educational Qualification**	23.64	0.000	0.490	S
5	**Occupational status**	10.17	0.001	0.346	S
6	**Monthly Income**	26.42	0.000	0.510	S
7	**Experience**	29.84	0.000	0.534	S

Pearson chi – square value of the above table is 5% level of significance. P value is less than 0.05, hence null hypothesis is rejected. It concludes that Gender is dependent on Residence, Age, marital status, Educational Qualification, Occupation status; Monthly Income and Experience of the Goat forming Respondents.

Contingency Coefficient has been used by the researcher when number of row is equal to column. The upper limit of C (C=$\sqrt{r-1/r)}) = \sqrt{2/3} = 0.471$. Now the computed value of contingency coefficient is moderate expect residence and marital status. This means that there is a moderate relationship between Age and Educational Qualification, Occupation status; Monthly Income and Experience.

3. Experience associated to level of despondence opinion on Goat forming.

The Table 3 gives the results of ANOVA for Experience on level of employee's opinion on the Goat forming.

Hypothesis: Employee opinion on goat forming factors does not depend on experience.

Table: 3, Details of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Level of opinion on Goat Forming		Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Socio-Economic Factors	Between Groups	51.36	2	25.68	34.64	0.00
	Within Groups	53.37	72	0.74		
	Total	104.74	74			
Economic and Financial Factors	Between Groups	16.50	2	8.25	17.04	0.00
	Within Groups	34.87	72	0.48		
	Total	51.38	74			
Technical and Managerial Factors	Between Groups	46.62	2	23.31	44.68	0.00
	Within Groups	37.56	72	0.52		
	Total	84.18	74			
Environmental and Climatic Factors	Between Groups	16.82	2	8.41	21.71	0.00
	Within Groups	27.89	72	0.38		

	Total	44.72	74			
Institutional and Policy Factors	Between Groups	68.31	2	34.15	49.81	0.00
	Within Groups	49.36	72	0.68		
	Total	117.68	74			
Psychological and Behavioral Factors	Between Groups	25.05	2	12.52	26.89	0.00
	Within Groups	33.53	72	0.46		
	Total	58.58	74			
Nutritional and Household Well-being Indicators	Between Groups	66.84	2	33.42	55.35	0.00
	Within Groups	43.47	72	0.60		
	Total	110.32	74			
Institutional and Support System Factors	Between Groups	59.03	2	29.51	85.31	0.00
	Within Groups	24.91	72	0.34		
	Total	83.94	74			
Market and Economic Linkages	Between Groups	55.15	2	27.57	86.90	0.00
	Within Groups	22.84	72	0.31		
	Total	78.00	74			
Production and Resource Factors	Between Groups	49.71	2	24.85	34.17	0.00
	Within Groups	52.36	72	0.72		
	Total	102.08	74			

The p values of all variables are less than 0.01, at the 1% level of significance. Hence null hypotheses are rejected for all these variables. It concludes that there is a significant difference between these variables and experience of the respondents.

The p values of the all variables are less than 0.05, at the 5% level of significance. Hence null hypotheses for these variables are rejected. It concludes that there is significance difference between these variables and experience of the respondents.

Findings

- **Place of Residence:** A vast majority (86.7%) of the respondents live in villages. This indicates that goat farming is predominantly a **rural occupation**, providing livelihood opportunities to people in village areas where alternative employment options are limited.
- **Age of Respondents:** More than half (53.3%) of the respondents are above 40 years of age, suggesting that middle-aged and older individuals are more actively involved in goat farming compared to the younger generation. This may reflect a lack of youth interest in traditional farming activities.
- **Gender:** The majority (66.7%) of the respondents are women, showing that women play a significant role in goat farming. This highlights goat rearing as an important source of income and empowerment for rural women.
- **Marital Status:** A large proportion (85.3%) of respondents is married, which implies that goat farming supports family-based livelihoods and contributes to household income stability.
- **Educational Status:** Most respondents (61.3%) are illiterate, indicating a **low literacy rate** among goat farmers. This may limit their ability to access government schemes, modern technologies, and market information effectively.

- **Occupation:** About 78.7% of the respondents work as daily wage earners, suggesting that **goat farming serves as a supplementary source of income** for economically weaker sections that depend on daily labor for survival.
- **Monthly Income:** The majority (58.7%) of respondents earn up to ₹10,000 per month, revealing a **low-income pattern** among goat farmers. This reflects the small-scale and subsistence nature of goat farming in the study area.
- **Experience in Goat Farming:** Around 76% of the respondents have experience between 1 to 5 years, showing that **many are relatively new entrants** to goat farming, possibly due to the increasing recognition of its livelihood potential.
- Based on Chi Square result Gender is dependent on Residence, Age, marital status, Educational Qualification, Occupation status; Monthly Income and Experience of the Goat forming Respondents.
- Contingency Coefficient shows that there is a moderate relationship between Age and Educational Qualification, Occupation status; Monthly Income and Experience.
- ANOVA results have concluded that there is significant difference between HR related variables and residence of the respondents.

Suggestions

- Organize regular training programs for goat farmers on modern breeding, feeding, housing, and disease management practices.
- Conduct awareness campaigns through veterinary departments, NGOs, and agricultural universities to educate farmers about improved goat-rearing methods.
- Encourage youth and women participation through skill development workshops to sustain the next generation of farmers.
- Establish mobile veterinary clinics to ensure timely treatment and vaccination in rural areas.
- Promote regular deworming and vaccination programs to reduce mortality and improve productivity.
- Ensure availability of veterinary medicines and qualified staff in all blocks of the district.
- Introduce scientifically proven high-yielding breeds suited to local climatic conditions.
- Provide low-interest loans or subsidies through banks and cooperative societies for purchasing goats, building sheds, and buying feed.
- Implement insurance schemes for goats to protect farmers from losses due to disease or death.
- Strengthen self-help groups (SHGs) and cooperatives for collective credit, feed procurement, and marketing.
- Provide transportation and cold storage facilities to minimize post-production losses.
- Facilitate direct linkages between farmers and consumers to reduce exploitation by middlemen.
- Utilize agricultural by-products and crop residues as goat feed to lower costs.
- Train farmers in balanced feed formulation to enhance growth and milk yield.
- Recognize and reward successful women goat farmers as role models to inspire others.
- Integrate goat farming with rural women's livelihood programs for sustainable development.

Conclusion

The study on the socio-economic status and livelihood contributions of goat farming households in Namakkal district reveals that goat rearing plays a significant role in improving the income, employment, and living standards of rural families. Goat farming serves as an important source of

supplementary income, especially for small and marginal farmers, landless laborers, and women, thereby contributing to rural poverty alleviation and social empowerment. The findings indicate that households engaged in goat farming experience enhanced financial security, better access to education and healthcare, and improved food and nutritional standards. The sector also provides a steady source of employment throughout the year and acts as a reliable buffer against crop failures and market fluctuations in agriculture. In conclusion, goat farming in Namakkal district is not merely a traditional occupation but a vital component of rural economic development. With adequate institutional support and technological interventions, it holds great potential to enhance the socio-economic well-being of farming households and contribute meaningfully to the region's inclusive growth.

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