

MARKETING PRACTICES ADOPTED BY THE SHEEP FARMERS IN TELANGANA REGION OF ANDHRA PRADESH*

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ABSTRACT

A survey was conducted on 576 sheep farmers by multistage stratified random sampling technique from three different zones of Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh to study the marketing practices adopted by the sheep farmers. It was found that majority (73.44%) of sheep farmers sold their lambs between 3-6 months on physical appearance (52.45%). 40.10% of the farmers sold their animals to the middle men once in a year. Results further indicated that 90.80% of the farmers sold their animals in their own villages. In the study area the main reason for selling of sheep was urgent need of cash (60.24%) to meet domestic expenses. Marketing practices in the study area is very poor hence organized market should be developed to make the sheep enterprise more remunerative and to eliminate middle men.

Key words : Marketing practices, sheep, Telangana region.

Sheep is one of the important species of livestock contributing to the livelihood of resource poor farmers in rural areas especially where crop and dairy farming are not economical in arid and semi arid regions and largely in marginal and sub-marginal holdings. According to 2008 census sheep population in Andhra Pradesh is 255.39 lakhs and ranks first in the country.

Andhra Pradesh state is divided into three geopolitical regions viz., Coastal Andhra, Telangana and Rayalaseema. Telangana region consists of ten districts accounting for 41.76 per cent of the states geographical area with mainly semi-arid tropical climate with an average rain fall of 800 mm. Telangana region contributes 52 % to total

sheep population of Andhra Pradesh. Further, Telangana region is subdivided into three zones based on agro-climatic conditions viz., Northern Telangana Zone (NTZ), Central Telangana Zone (CTZ) and Southern Telangana Zone (CTZ). The knowledge on various sheep husbandry management practices followed by the farmers is of great importance as it may help in filling the gap between the existing practices and the recommended scientific practices. Therefore, this study was undertaken to document the existing marketing practices being followed by the farmers under field conditions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh, based on sheep population according to livestock census of Andhra Pradesh, 2008. Selection of respondents was made by multistage stratified random sampling technique. In the first stage two districts from each zone were selected and in the second stage four mandals from each district and in third stage four

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villages from each mandal were selected based on sheep population. From each village 6 respondents were selected randomly for the present study. Information on marketing practices were collected through formal interviews, using a structured questionnaire, from 576 farmers maintaining sheep flocks in Telangana region and spread over 24 mandals and 96 villages. The data was statistically analysed by chi square (χ^2) test⁷.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data on marketing of sheep in the study area (Table 1) revealed that majority (73.44%) of shepherds sold their lamb crop between 3-6 months followed by 6-8 months of age (26.56%). The association between zone and age of selling of lambs was significant ($\chi^2=9.02^*$). Majority of the farmers followed optimum age of marketing to get remunerative price and to produce tender meat to the consumer. These results were in agreement with^{9, 5, 4}.

The zone did not affect the criteria for fixing price of sheep ($\chi^2=8.35$). Majority (52.45%) of the sheep farmers used physical appearance as criteria for fixing price while 47.22% sold their animals on the basis of age, sex and physical appearance and barely 0.35% farmers used sex and physical appearance as criteria. These findings were in concurrence with earlier workers of^{2, 6, 9}.

In the study area, the effect of zone on mode of marketing was significant ($\chi^2=59.21^{**}$). Majority (40.10%) of farmers sold their animals to the middle men followed by consumer and middlemen combined (35.24%), shandy (16.32%) and local butchers (8.33%). This was possibly due to the fact that middlemen finance the sheep farmer to meet their urgent financial needs like medical and festival expenses for which farmers were obliged to sale their stock to middlemen as

a gesture of good will, which results in reduced profit margin to the farmers. Similar observations were made by other workers^{1, 2, 6, 9}. The association between zone and frequency of selling was highly significant ($\chi^2=16.44^{**}$). Majority (61.98%) of the sheep farmers in three districts reported that the frequency of selling of their animals was once in a year followed by twice (38.02 %) in a year. The present findings were in contrast to the earlier reports of^{7, 3}.

The perusal of data shown in Table 1 indicated that in three zones, majority (90.80%) of the farmers sold their animals in their own villages followed by nearby livestock shandy (9.20 %). Significant ($\chi^2=9.19^{**}$) association was observed between zones and place of marketing. This might be that transportation of their animals from villages to shandies was difficult, which were located far away from rural villages. The observations of this study were corroborated with the findings of^{3, 2}.

In the present survey, a significant ($\chi^2=25.24^{**}$) association was noticed between zones and mode of transport to marketing point. The results of Table 1 inferred that majority (90.80%) of sheep farmers in three zone of Telangana driven their sheep on foot followed by auto rickshaw (7.64%) and trucks (1.56%) to nearest market points. Similar type of transport was reported by^{10, 9}.

The main reason of selling of sheep in three zones was urgent need of cash (60.24%) to meet domestic expenses. Among the other reported reasons were fear of sickness (31.42%) and shortage of fodder and grazing lands (8.33%). A Significant ($\chi^2=21.34^{**}$) association was noticed between zones and reasons of marketing. This clearly indicates that farmers did not want to increase their flock size due to decreasing grazing lands in the study area. The findings were in conformity with the observations of¹¹.

Marketing practices adopted by sheep farmers

Table 1. Marketing practices followed by sheep famers in Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh.

S.No	Category	NTZ (n=192)	CTZ (n=192)	STZ (n=192)	Telangana region (n=192)	χ^2 value
1	Age of selling of ram lambs					
	3-6 M	149 (77.60)	126 (65.63)	148 (77.08)	423 (73.44)	9.02*
	6-8 M	43 (22.40)	66 (34.37)	44 (22.92)	153 (26.56)	
2	Criteria for fixing price					
	Physical appearance	109 (56.77)	90 (46.88)	103 (53.65)	302 (52.43)	8.35
	Sex+ physical appearance	2 (1.04)	0 (00.00)	0 (00.00)	2 (0.35)	
	Age+ sex+ physical appearance	81 (42.19)	102 (53.12)	89 (46.35)	272 (47.22)	
3	Mode of marketing					
	Consumer	9 (4.69)	2 (1.04)	83 (43.23)	94 (16.33)	59.21**
	Middle men	87 (45.31)	85 (44.27)	59 (30.73)	231 (40.10)	
	Local butchers	14 (7.29)	24 (12.50)	10 (5.21)	48 (8.33)	
	Consumer+ Middlemen	82 (42.71)	81 (42.19)	40 (20.83)	203 (35.24)	
4	Frequency of selling					
	Once in a year	105 (54.69)	141 (73.44)	111 (57.81)	357 (61.98)	16.44**
	Twice in a year	87 (45.31)	51 (26.56)	81 (42.19)	219 (38.02)	
5	Place of marketing					
	Village	179 (93.23)	180 (93.75)	164 (85.42)	523 (90.80)	9.19**
	Shandy	13 (6.77)	12 (6.25)	28 (14.58)	53 (9.20)	
6	Mode of Transport					
	Truck	6 (3.13)	3 (1.56)	0 (00.00)	9 (1.56)	25.24**
	Auto rickshaw	7 (3.64)	9 (4.69)	28 (14.58)	44 (7.64)	
	On foot	179 (93.23)	180 (93.75)	164 (85.42)	523 (90.80)	
7	Reasons for marketing					
	For cash need	138 (71.88)	112 (58.33)	97 (50.52)	347 (60.24)	21.34**
	Fear of sickness	38 (19.79)	66 (34.38)	77 (40.10)	181 (31.42)	
	Shortage of fodder & grazing lands	16 (8.33)	14 (7.29)	18 (9.38)	48 (8.33)	

Parenthesis indicates percentages. ** Significant at (P<0.01); * Significant at (P<0.05)

CONCLUSION

Based on the results it could be concluded that marketing practices followed under field condition in Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh were very poor, still middle men have been playing vital role in marketing hence there is a need to develop organized market to eliminate middle men and to make the enterprise more remunerative.

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