



SOCIO-PERSONAL PROFILE OF TRIBAL LIVESTOCK FARMERS IN RELATION TO DEGREE OF BELIEF AND EXTENT OF ADOPTION OF SELECTED INDIGENOUS ANIMAL HUSBANDRY PRACTICES.*

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ABSTRACT

The present study was undertaken with the objective of studying the socio-personal profile of tribal Animal Husbandry farmers in relation to the degree of belief and extent of adoption of indigenous animal husbandry practices. Stratified proportionate random sampling procedure was adopted. One hundred and twenty tribal livestock farmers were selected from all the three panchayats viz., Agali, Pudur and Sholayoor of Attappady block. A pilot study was conducted to identify various indigenous animal husbandry practices, which were prevalent in the area, through personal observation, group interviews of tribal animal husbandry farmers, discussion with local healers, head clan ('Moopan') and such other key informants. A total of 53 beliefs/practices were selected for the final study. It was found that age and years of experience in animal husbandry were positively and significantly correlated with degree of belief and extent of adoption of indigenous animal husbandry practices, whereas herd size and literacy had no significant correlation with degree of belief and extent of adoption of indigenous animal husbandry practices.

INTRODUCTION

In the field of animal husbandry, tribal societies have nurtured a vast fund of indigenous knowledge and practices. But they are sparsely documented and studied. These indigenous practices may be an alternative or complementary to modern technology and can generate ideas for future research. Indigenous knowledge in animal husbandry exists as beliefs that are transferred from generation to generation through folklore of people. These are mostly unwritten and are only recorded in the human mind. Grenier (1998) defined indigenous knowledge as unique, traditional, local knowledge existing within and developed around the specific conditions of women and men indigenous to a particular geographic area. Some of the synonyms of indigenous knowledge according to Seeland (2000) were 'traditional knowledge', 'folk knowledge', 'local knowledge' and 'wisdom of the elders'.

Attappady, the location of the present study, is the largest tribal settlement area of Kerala. The tribal folk of Attappady are the most backward among vulnerable ethnic groups of the state. They have a

traditional economy depending mainly on land, livestock and forest. The population of Attappady (2001 Census) was 66,171 of which 27,121 belong to scheduled tribes. Tribes constitute about 41% of total population of Attappady, which comprises mainly of three ethnic groups, viz., "Irula", "Kurumba" and "Muduga".

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Attappady tribal block of Palakkad district was selected as the area of study. This tribal block is comprised of three panchayats which are Agali, Pudur and Sholayoor. Ten hamlets each from peripheral and deep areas were purposefully selected. Sixty respondents each were selected from the hamlets of peripheral and deep area following a stratified proportionate random sampling procedure. The present study was conducted in 2009. A pilot study was conducted to identify various indigenous animal husbandry practices which are prevalent in the area. Personal observations, group interviews of tribal animal

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husbandry farmers, discussion with local healers, head clan ('Moopan') and such other key informants were conducted to document the various beliefs and practices. A total of 53 belief based practices were selected for the final study.

Operationalisation and measurement of variables

- a) The Socio-personal variables selected were age, literacy, occupation, years of experience in animal husbandry and herd size.
- b) The dependent variables selected were degree of belief in the selected indigenous animal husbandry practices and extent of adoption of selected indigenous animal husbandry practices.

i.) Degree of belief in the selected indigenous animal husbandry practices

Degree of belief was conceptualized as the level of agreement or disagreement of the respondent with the selected beliefs that the respondents were aware of. The respondents were individually rated over all the beliefs on a five point continuum viz., strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree with respective weighages of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1. Accordingly respondents were categorized into two as strong (>mean) i.e., (>172.5) and weak (<mean) i.e., (<172.5) believer groups on the basis of total score and mean.

Adoption quotient of selected indigenous animal husbandry practices was calculated as follows

$$\text{Adoption quotient} = \frac{\text{Total number of selected indigenous beliefs adopted (Symbolic + Practice)} \times 100}{\text{Total number of selected indigenous beliefs studied}}$$

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a) Socio-personal profile of tribal Animal Husbandry farmers.

i.) Age

In the case of indigenous animal husbandry practices, among middle and young age categories there were more weak believers than strong believers, whereas among the old there were more strong believers (69.05%) than weak believers (30.95%). In the overall sample there were 44.17 percent strong believers and 55.83 percent weak believers regarding indigenous animal husbandry practices. That means youngsters are generally not interested in indigenous practices.

In the case of indigenous animal husbandry practices, among the literates, weak believers were more (61.36%) as compared to strong believers

Table no. 1 Distribution of respondents based on age. n=120

Category	Respondents	Indigenous animal husbandry practices	
		Strong believers	Weak believers
> 50 years	42 (35.0)	29 (69.05)	13 (30.95)
30-50 years	67 (55.83)	23 (34.33)	44 (65.67)
<30 years	11 (9.17)	1 (9.09)	10 (90.91)
Total 120 (100)	53 (44.17)	67 (55.83)	

ii.) Extent of adoption of selected indigenous animal husbandry practices.

Extent of Adoption of selected indigenous animal husbandry practices was measured in terms of adoption quotient as proposed by Ramkumar (1987). Adoption quotient was calculated for each individual in order to correlate with the independent variable.

(38.64%). But among illiterates 47.37 percent were strong believers and the rest weak believers (52.63%). In the overall sample there were 44.17 percent strong believers and 55.83 percent weak believers regarding indigenous animal husbandry practices. Literates seem to be weak believers and are not interested in indigenous practices.



ii.) Literacy

Table no. 2 Distribution of respondents based on literacy.

n=120

Category	Respondents	Indigenous animal husbandry practices	
		Strong believers	Weak believers
Illiterate	76 (63.33)	36 (47.37)	40 (52.63)
Literate	44 (36.67)	17 (38.64)	27 (61.36)
Total 120 (100)	53 (44.17)	67 (55.83)	

Based on occupation the respondents were categorized into those belonging to the agricultural sector and non-agricultural sector (Table 3). Out of the total 120 respondents, 41.67 percent belonged to the agricultural sector and 58.33 percent belonged to non-agriculture sector.

Weak believers of indigenous animal husbandry practices were more (68.0%) than strong believers (32.0%) among the agriculture category. On the

practices were more among the non-agricultural category. This is in spite of the fact that non-agricultural category included petty businessmen / traders, non-agricultural labourers and government servants.

In the case of indigenous animal husbandry practices, among the highly experienced group, strong believers (68.18%) were more than weak believers (31.81%). But among the low experience group there were more weak believers (92.31%) than strong

iii.) Occupation

Table no. 3 Distribution of respondents based on occupation

n=120

Category	Respondents	Indigenous animal husbandry practices	
		Strong believers	Weak believers
Agricultural sector	50 (41.67)	16 (32.0)	34 (68.0)
Non agricultural sector	70 (58.33)	37 (52.86)	33 (47.14)
Total 120 (100)	53 (44.17)	67 (55.83)	

contrary, strong believers were more (52.86%) than weak believers (45.71) among the non-agriculture category. In the overall sample there were 44.17 percent strong believers and 55.83 percent weak believers regarding indigenous animal husbandry practices.

In the past the livelihood of tribal people was dependent solely upon cultivation, animal husbandry and sale of forest produce. But today, the situation seems to have changed since this study brought to light the fact that for majority of the respondents major occupation is non-agriculture job. This observation agreed with that of Velluva (2004). Strong believers of indigenous animal husbandry

believers (7.69%). In the medium group, there were 50 percent each of strong and weak believers. In the overall sample there were 44.17 percent strong believers and 55.83 percent weak believers regarding indigenous animal husbandry practices.

60 percent of the respondents possessed small herd size were as 40 percent possessed large (Table 5). In the case of indigenous animal husbandry practices, among the small herd size category, 44.44 percent were strong believers and 55.56 percent were weak believers. Among the large herd size category, 43.75 percent were strong believers and 56.25 percent were weak believers. In the overall sample there were 44.17 percent strong believers and 55.83 percent weak believers regarding indigenous animal husbandry practices.

**iv.) Years of experience in Animal Husbandry**

Table no.4 Distribution of respondents based on years of experience in Animal Husbandry. n=120

Category	Respondents	Indigenous animal husbandry practices	
		Strong believers	Weak believers
High (>37 years)	22 (18.33)	15 (68.18)	7 (31.81)
Medium (13-37 years)	72 (60.0)	36 (50.0)	36 (50.0)
Low (<13 years)	26 (21.67)	2 (7.69)	24 (92.31)
Total 120(100)	53 (44.17)	67 (55.83)	

v.) Herd size

Table no.5 Distribution of respondents based on herd size. n=120

Category	Respondents	Indigenous animal husbandry practices	
		Strong believers	Weak believers
Large (>8.7)	48 (40.0)	21 (43.75)	27 (56.25)
Small (<8.7)	72 (60.0)	32 (44.44)	40 (55.56)
Total 120(100)	53 (44.17)	67 (55.83)	

b) Correlation between socio-personal variables and degree of belief and extent of adoption of modern animal husbandry practices

Perusal of the Table 6 revealed that age was significantly and positively related to degree of belief in indigenous animal husbandry practices. This finding agreed with the finding of Kalaivany (1992), Ganadeepa (1991) and Sunil (2001) but was contrary to the findings of Selvanayagam (1986).

Age was significantly and positively correlated

with extent of adoption of indigenous animal husbandry practices. This finding agreed with the findings of Somasundaram (1995) and Sunil (2001). The positive and significant correlation between age and degree of belief as well as extent of adoption of indigenous animal husbandry practices could be due to the fact that older generation had more faith in indigenous animal husbandry practices as compared to the younger generation.

The data further revealed that literacy was negatively and non significantly correlated with the

Table no.6. Correlation between socio-personal variables and degree of belief and extent of adoption of modern animal husbandry practices

Socio-personal variables	r-value of indigenous animal husbandry practices	
	Degree of belief	Extent of adoption
Age	0.508**	0.594**
Literacy	-0.073	-0.087
Years of experience in Animal Husbandry	0.501**	0.591**
Herd size	0.024	0.028

** denotes significant at 1 per cent level.



degree of belief and extent of adoption in indigenous animal husbandry practices indicating that illiterates had a more favourable attitude towards indigenous animal husbandry practices and eventually they were the majority among strong believers of indigenous animal husbandry practices.

Degree of belief of indigenous animal husbandry practices was significantly and positively correlated with years of experience in animal husbandry. This agreed with the findings of Ganadeepa (1991), Kalaivany (1992) and Sunil (2001) but was contrary to the finding of Selvanayagan (1986). The extent of adoption of indigenous animal husbandry practices was positively and highly significantly correlated with experience. This agreed with the findings of Somasundaram (1995) and Sunil (2001). The highly significant correlation could be because more experienced dairy farmers had comparatively more faith in indigenous animal husbandry practices.

The degree of belief in indigenous animal husbandry practices were positively and non-significantly correlated with the herd size. This observation agreed with that of Sunil (2001). The extent of adoption of indigenous animal husbandry practices was also positively and non-significantly correlated with herd size. This observation disagreed with the finding of Sunil (2001) and Somasundaram (1995). The positive correlation indicated that those with large herd size had more faith in the degree of belief and extent of adoption of indigenous animal husbandry practices

To conclude the study revealed that mostly youngsters are not interested in indigenous practices and age and experience in A.H have got a significant relationship with adoption of indigenous practices.

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