CHAPTER I
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INTRODUCTION

Animal husbandry has been an integral part of human civilization and culture from the day primitive man started domestication of animals. As the population grew disproportionate to available natural resources and food gathering became increasingly difficult for the nomadic man, so he settled down to cultivation. Thus he started the gradual shift of his dependency from animal to land. It became subsidiary to civilization. In the agrarian society, the land being the principal means of production was in the hands of the rich. The poor worked in the fields of the rich as labourers and supplemented his income through keeping of a few livestock like cattle, sheep, goat, swine, horses, donkeys, mules or few poultry birds; other animals, such as buffaloes, oxen, or camels may predominate in the agriculture of other areas. Thus animal husbandry has always been the saviour of the weaker.

Animal production in the tropics and subtropics is a complex system, which should be seen not only from the economic point of view but also from socio-cultural and ecological point of view. Livestock and poultry play a critical role in agricultural intensification
process by providing milk, wool, meat, eggs, draft power and manure as fertilizers and fuel. Moreover, they are considered as living bank for farmers and livelihood to the downtrodden people, and also providing flexible financial reserves during periods of economic stress and a buffer against crop failure.

Livestock provides nutritious protein-rich balanced food viz., milk, egg, meat and value added products to the population. Organic fertilizer produced by this sector is important inputs to crop production and dung from livestock and draught power are chief sources of energy in rural areas. Livestock is not only intricately associated with the social, cultural and traditional values of the region but also serves as an insurance substitute. Especially for the poor rural households since it is an asset that can be encashed during times of distress. Livestock also provides the basic raw materials namely, raw hides and skin for leather industry, which has got great employment and export potentiality.

Sheep and Goat rearing has been usual practice of the farmers to keep a few (Sheep and Goats) along with the cattle on the farm for the purpose of refuse, serving as good compost for any crop. The goat is the major supplier of meat in the region as in the rest of the state. In
addition, it yields a valuable source of leather. The rearing of goats is relatively less arduous and cheaper when compared to other livestock. Besides, the high fertility guarantees an assured income to the rearers. The breeders do not incur any expense on feeding goats and sheep, as they have free access to common lands, village fallows and harvested areas. These stocks are ordinarily fed on the reckless chopping of trees. Their habit of nibbling of plants causes great damage to areas under afforestation. The way of Sheep and Goat rearing is practiced in the region presently, it may be inferred that they have no place in the dynamic agro-horticultural economy of Namakkal. Goats are allied to sheep but are much hardier and more active. Sheep being of a docile nature can be reared along with other livestock. They contribute to a farmer’s income, food and clothing. But they cannot withstand heavy rains.

World over sheep are reared under diverse environment conditions hence they have been closely associated with mankind. In India also sheep farming has a pretty long tradition, particularly in rural areas among specific section of rural people viz. shepherds and nomads. They have been good sources of income to the sheep rearers. The export of sheep skins, live animals, and carpets fetch
considerable foreign exchange to the nation. The Sheep and Goat rearing activities will enable the rural weaker section especially landless labours to maintain their livelihood.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The significant point is its employment potentiality for illiterate rural poor especially women. Animal husbandry does not demand for complex skill and is well suited to our landless rural agricultural labourers. The employment opportunity in crop cultivation is increasingly low due to unexpected fluctuations in the vagaries of nature and pressure on land. The alternative source to provide employment in rural area is animal husbandry for which the base resource is already available with people. The small-marginal farmers and agricultural labourers can make high income per unit of their animals; hold in through proper use of the surplus family labour. It is the best source of employment for women folk who are involved in the Sheep and Goat rearing.

MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

India has the second largest number of goats and third largest number of sheep in the world. It has the world’s largest cattle wealth. Animal husbandry provides employment for about 20 millions
directly. But our livestock quality has deteriorated. According to 2002 statistics there are about 51 million goats in the country. About 5 million households in the country are engaged in the rearing of small ruminants (sheep, goats, and rabbits) and other allied activities. Though livestock, more especially Sheep and Goat contributes sizable revenue to the economy and create employment opportunities in the rural sector directly or indirectly it receives less attention in terms of infrastructural development in the country. Therefore the researcher has undertaken the present study.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Livestock plays a vital role in rural life and economy even today. In fact, animal husbandry and agriculture are twin occupations, which are practiced by the rural households since ancient times. Rearing of Livestock is being ‘a way of life’ in rural areas and with more than 70 per cent of the people relying on the above activities. It forms the backbone of the rural economy. In fact, combination of livestock rearing and crop production enables fuller utilisation of farm by-products, conserves soil fertility and increases the household income. It provides productive employment especially self-employment and the most valuable supplementary income to the vast
majority of rural households, majority of them are small and marginal farmers and landless labourers.

The sheep development programme should be divided into two sectors viz. development sector and industrial sector. The distributions of improved genetic material for cross breeding to improve important indigenous breeds and conservation of important genetic materials are applicable under the development sector. Efforts are essential to produce genetically improved crossbred rams in the flock of breeders with a scheme for purchasing back there rams with incentive price for further distribution as improve in other flock. Under the industrial sector, fat lamb production and pelt production should be introduced to attract industrial entrepreneurs with necessary financial help by the NABARD and other financial institutions. The National Commission on Agriculture (NCA) had also recommended that there was a need for reduction in the number of goats and restraining the goats’ farm and causing damage to vegetation through free range browsing.

Sheep and Goat constitute important species of livestock in India and contribute greatly to food, fibre, rural employment and Gross Domestic product. These species are of special economic
importance in arid where crop or dairy farming is not pertaining to small and marginal farmers and landless labourers.

Like “paddy and poverty”, “goat and desert” are referred to go together. The role of goat is desertification is misunderstood. There is a growing appreciation all over the world of the economic importance of goat and revival of interest in improving this important species of livestock. Goat is far more economical than sheep and even cattle in arid and semi-arid conditions. Sheep being close grazie would removes surface vegetation and create great problems for soil erosion than the goats.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Livestock are reared, mostly by small and marginal farmers and landless labourers in the form of 1-3 cattle or buffaloes, 10-30 sheep or goats per household. Livestock are mostly raised on grazing, straws and crop residue, depending on their availability and economy of feeding. The sheep breeders are poor and illiterate but they are very strong in the traditional knowledge systems, which prevented sheep from the incidence of disease, which in fact could have wiped out the entire Sheep and Goat population. Their economy, culture, and society are entirely intertwined with sheep rearing. They belong to
scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes. Sheep and Goat rearing is practiced by numerous castes with fragile economic base. To the traditional sheep and goat breeder's Sheep and Goat rearing is a primary activity to make both ends meet. But to the farmers, as the agricultural income falls very much short of the minimum requirement. They must have some other activities to fill this gap like by rearing Sheep and Goat as an alternative enterprise.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The overall objective is to study the economic aspects of Sheep and Goat rearing in Namakkal district of Tamil Nadu.

The following are the specific objectives of the present study.

1. To study the developmental perspective of Sheep and Goat rearing.
2. To examine the socio economic conditions of Sheep and Goat rearers.
3. To evaluate the costs and returns of Sheep and Goat rearing in the study area.
4. To trace out the employment potentialities in Sheep and Goat rearing.
5. To identify the constraints experienced by Sheep and Goat rearers and offer suitable policy implications.

HYPOTHESES

Based on the well defined objectives the following verifiable hypotheses have been formulated.

1. There is no significant difference in the income earnings from sheep rearing and goat rearing on the basis of the group size.

2. The annual expenditure on fodder and medical expenses per animal is the same in sheep and goat rearing irrespective of group size.

3. There is no significant difference in the constraints faced by sheep and goat rearers.

CHAPTER DESIGN

CHAPTER I:

First chapter presents the introduction which includes scope of the study, Statement of the Problem, Motivation of the study, Objectives, Hypotheses, and Chapter Design.
CHAPTER II:

Second chapter deals with review of literature and theoretical framework.

CHAPTER III:

Third chapter allotted for the Profile of the study area Methods and Materials includes data collection, period of study, statistical tools used, limitations of the study and definitions and concepts classifications.

CHAPTER IV:

Fourth chapter concentrates on analysis of the developmental perspective of Sheep and Goat rearing.

CHAPTER V:

Fifth chapter deals with the analysis of socio-economic conditions, cost returns, employment potential and constraints experienced by rearers.

CHAPTER VI:

Sixth chapter presents summary of the findings, suggestions, scope for the future studies and conclusion.