



Problems Faced By Pig Farmers in Dima Hasao District of Assam

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ABSTRACT

The pig farming in the hilly districts of North Eastern Region including Dima Hasao district of Assam is a household traditional activity. It is also a dividend paying secondary source of income. The study was conducted in the district among 100 pig farmers in two different blocks namely Jatinga Valley Development Block and Diyungbra ITDP Block based on distance from the headquarters and higher pig population. A pre-tested reliable and valid interview schedule was used to get the responses. The study revealed that majority i.e. 78, 68 and 80 per cent of the respondents in Block I, Block II and pooled sample were in medium category of perception of problems relating to rearing of pigs. When specifically studied, it was revealed that high cost of computed feed at 88, 98 and 93 per cent and expensive nature of medicines and vaccines at 80, 98 and 89 per cent in Block I, Block II and pooled sample were the major hindrance in pig rearing. The present status demands scientific intervention from technical personnel of extension agencies like KVKs.

Key Words: Pig farming, Problems, Socialtaboo, Training facility

INTRODUCTION

Piggery is the sector in the states of the North Eastern (NE) India that directly indicates the existence of deprivation among different strata of population in the society and influences the socio-economic status of the rural poor, more particularly the tribal population of the country including the downtrodden and socially weaker sections of the society.

Although NE region provides ample scope for piggery development because of the terrains characterized by unevenness, turbulence in the weather conditions and traditional involvement of rural population in pig rearing. Their food habits and absence of taboo against consumption of pork and pork products also act as promoting factors. Pigs serve as the primary source of meat in most of the hilly areas but still farmers are facing many difficulties.

The hilly terrain of Dima Hasao (erstwhile N.C. Hills) district of Assam, India has difficult agricultural practices in various areas due to

shortage of arable land with most of the people living below the poverty line. Most of them possess very limited cultivable agriculture land to meet their requirements. Hence, the rearing of animals is the major source of income for their livelihood in addition to providing daily needed hard cash on hand. As on today animal husbandry in general and piggery in particular is an integral part of almost every household in the hilly areas. Of late, it was seen that those resorting to better connections and smart marketing were reaping more benefits than the actual rearers. Therefore, a study was conducted to find out whether the existing problems in pig rearing among the pig farmers had to do anything with that disparity in reaping benefits, which the rearers deserve.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was undertaken in two selected blocks of Dima Hasao (the erstwhile North Cachar) district of Assam during the month of January to March, 2013. The blocks were purposively selected in such a manner that both

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had higher number of pigs, one block was nearest to the district headquarters namely Jatinga Valley Development Block and second block which was located far off from the district headquarters namely Diyungbra ITDP Block. From each selected block, two villages were selected on the basis of maximum number of pig rearers. Again from each village a total of 25 pig farmers were randomly selected for the present study making the sample size 100. A structured interview schedule was prepared in consultation with the experts, professionals and experienced pig farmers. Pre-testing was done to see the reliability and validity of the interview schedule. The worked out reliability coefficient was 0.93 and content validation was ensured by consulting the experts, experienced farmers and faculties serving in the field, profession and the University respectively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Problem normally means the extraneous forces causing difficulty or completely hindering the action and performances. For the present study any difficulty that faced by the pig rearers in rearing and marketing of pigs was considered as “problem”. Table 1 showed that majority i.e. 78 , 68 and 80 per cent of the respondents in Block I, Block II and pooled sample were in medium category of perception of problems relating to rearing of pigs. By and large, this realization was a serious matter. Although the pig farmers in the area of the study were traditionally maintaining the herds, they were definitely not very happy at times. Rearing pigs traditionally and still perceiving problems moderately definitely indicated that there were some difficulties, which need some intervention, negotiation or solutions.

Similar kind of finding was reported by Zadeng (2012) in the state of Mizoram and Hussain (2012) in Indo-Bangladesh Borders of Assam. Table 1 further showed that there was significant difference in mean values between the respondents of the two block (t=2.98, P<0.01) with

regard to problems. The mean score of Block I was more in comparison to Block II. This might be due to situational advantage of better realization as they were more exposed to relatively more open market and more cosmopolite societies, which might have acted as eye opener. Against it, although Block II was located near to the district headquarters, it was in a relatively closed society under land lock conditions. This finding was similar to the expression made by Peak (2004) and this certainly warranted that there should be some statutory intervention for the betterment of pig farmers.

Problems related to pig rearing

The above finding was not enough to indicate the specific areas where actually the problems existed. Therefore, in further analysis, Table 2 revealed that rearing of pig itself was the main problem where 96 , 100 and 98 per cent agreed in degree to mostly degree in Block I, Block II and pooled sample. This must have been because of the fact that during the recent years, pig rearing in the states of the North Eastern India had become intensive activity due to the massive introduction of crossbred or purebred pigs to the farms.

Actually before the introduction of such breeds, although much profitable today, the pig farmers were used to zero input – zero investment method of rearing of local non descript pigs. So, the farmers were yet to adopt or get adjusted to the upcoming system of rearing pigs in their farms. The similar kind of problem was also realized by Shyam (2011) and Sarmah (2012).

Problems related to feed management for pig rearing

High cost of computed feed was perceived as problem most of time at 88 , 98 and 93 per cent in the Block I, Block II and the pooled sample, respectively. This was understandable if one looked into the socio economic conditions of the pig farmers in such localities and their food habits.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents on the basis of problem.

Variable	Block	Mean	SD	Range	Low	Medium	High	‘t’ value
Problem	Block I	35.64	4.53	28-48	4 (8)	39 (78)	7 (14)	2.98**
	Block II	33.22	3.57	25-40	6 (12)	34 (68)	10 (20)	
	Pooled	34.43	4.24	25-48	12 (12)	80 (80)	8 (8)	

Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentage.

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Table 2. Frequency distribution of respondents on the basis of their problems related to pig rearing.

Sr. No.	Problem	Block	Perception of problem		
			Mostly	Sometimes	Occasionally
1.	Rearing of pig	Block I	48 (96)	2 (4)	0 (0)
		Block II	50 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)
		Pooled	98 (98)	2 (2)	0 (0)
2.	Non-availability of high quality piglets	Block I	30(60)	12 (24)	8 (16)
		Block II	49 (98)	1 (2)	0 (0)
		Pooled	79 (79)	13 (13)	8 (8)
3.	Problem of arranging water on site	Block I	10 (20)	24 (48)	16 (32)
		Block II	34 (68)	7 (14)	9(18)
		Pooled	44 (44)	31 (31)	25 (25)
4.	Non-availability of land for expansion	Block I	18 (36)	0 (0)	15 (30)
		Block II	29 (58)	7 (14)	0 (0)
		Pooled	47 (47)	7 (7)	15 (15)
5.	Lack of good training facility	Block I	15 (30)	11 (22)	5 (10)
		Block II	0 (0)	8 (16)	1 (2)
		Pooled	15 (15)	19 (19)	6 (6)

Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentage.

The farmers were in the habit of somehow making the two ends meet. As such purchasing feed for pigs was a big problem; as they were not in a position event to meet their daily requirements. The same kind of expressions were also made by several workers including Jakhmola and Mishra (2000), Mishra and Pal (2003) and Zadeng (2012).

Problems related to marketing

Although marketing of pigs was not major problem but lack of proper market was perceived as occasional problem by 38 per cent of the respondents in Block I and 19 per cent in pooled sample. Same response was obtained when

respondents were asked about lack of organized market. Transportation for marketing was problem for 30 per cent of the respondents in Block I while in Block II transportation was not perceived as problem. Nexus among vendors was perceived as problem sometimes by about fifty per cent (48%) of the respondents. Huge market commission, false weighing and dogged payments were also major problems.

Problems related to disease control for pig rearing

Expensive nature of medicines and vaccines was also realized as major problem by the respondents at 80, 98 and 89 per cent in Block I,

Table 3. Frequency distribution of respondents on the basis of problems related to feed management for pig.

Sr. No.	Problem	Block	Perception of problem		
			Mostly	Sometimes	Occasionally
1.	Non availability of good feed at low cost	Block I	41 (82)	6 (12)	3 (6)
		Block II	37 (74)	8 (16)	5 (10)
		Pooled	78 (78)	14 (14)	8 (8)
2.	Local ingredients do not make balance feed	Block I	32 (64)	14 (28)	4 (8)
		Block II	49 (98)	8 (16)	0 (0)
		Pooled	81 (81)	22 (22)	4 (4)
3.	Lack of nearby sources of feed	Block I	32 (64)	4 (8)	12 (24)
		Block II	42 (84)	1 (2)	0 (0)
		Pooled	74 (74)	5 (5)	12 (12)
4.	High cost of computed feed	Block I	44 (88)	2 (4)	4 (8)
		Block II	49 (98)	0 (0)	0 (0)
		Pooled	93 (93)	2 (2)	4 (4)

Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentage

Table 4. Frequency distribution of respondents on the basis of problems related to marketing.

Sr. No	Problem	Block	Perception about problem		
			Mostly	Sometimes	Occasionally
1.	Problem in marketing	Block I	0 (0)	0 (0)	20 (40)
		Block II	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
		Pooled	0 (0)	0 (0)	20 (20)
2.	Lack of proper market place	Block I	0 (0)	0 (0)	19 (38)
		Block II	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
		Pooled	0 (0)	0 (0)	19 (19)
3.	Lack of organized market	Block I	0 (0)	0 (0)	19 (38)
		Block II	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
		Pooled	0 (0)	0 (0)	19 (19)
4.	Transportation problem	Block I	4 (8)	1 (2)	15 (30)
		Block II	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
		Pooled	4 (4)	1 (1)	15 (15)
5.	Market operators demand huge commissions	Block I	5 (10)	12 (24)	20 (40)
		Block II	2 (4)	13 (26)	1 (2)
		Pooled	7 (7)	25 (25)	21 (21)
6.	Marketing of pigs and pork is in the whims of regular marketers only	Block I	0 (0)	28 (56)	10 (20)
		Block II	0 (0)	35 (70)	8 (16)
		Pooled	0 (0)	63 (63)	18 (18)
7.	Payments are mostly dogged by the marketers	Block I	5 (10)	38 (76)	3 (6)
		Block II	0 (0)	23 (46)	5 (10)
		Pooled	5 (5)	61 (61)	8 (8)
8.	There is problem of false weighing by vendors	Block I	0 (0)	4 (8)	14 (28)
		Block II	0 (0)	10 (10)	0 (0)
		Pooled	0 (0)	14 (14)	14(14)
9.	Vendors have a nexus of network to exploit producers	Block I	0 (0)	37 (74)	2 (4)
		Block II	0 (0)	11 (22)	0 (0)
		Pooled	0 (0)	48 (48)	2 (2)

Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentage

Table 5. Frequency distribution of respondents on the basis of problems related to disease control in pig .

Sr. No	Problem	Block	Perception of problem		
			Mostly	Sometimes	Occasionally
1.	Lack of easy approach to veterinarians	Block I	7 (14)	12 (24)	9 (18)
		Block II	2 (4)	17 (34)	0 (0)
		Pooled	9 (9)	29 (29)	9 (9)
2.	Medicines and vaccines are costly	Block I	40 (80)	0 (0)	10 (20)
		Block II	49 (98)	1 (2)	0 (0)
		Pooled	89 (89)	1 (1)	10 (10)
3.	Technical (veterinary) services are not available at the time of urgency	Block I	7 (14)	13(26)	0 (0)
		Block II	0 (0)	11 (22)	11 (22)
		Pooled	7 (7)	24 (24)	11 (11)

Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentage

Block II and pooled sample (Table 4). The finding might have been the result of same condition and same perception of the farmers. Their low economic status somehow did not allow them to spend generously for the treatment and vaccination of the animals, although they somehow did it.

Social problems in pig rearing

Apart from already discussed problems social unrest and social taboo on pig rearing are also the hindrance in the success of pig rearing. Nearly seventy percent (67%) respondents of pooled sample had the perception that social unrest was mostly the problem in pig rearing.

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Table 6. Frequency distribution of respondents on the basis of social problems in pig rearing.

Sr. No	Problem	Block	Perception of problem		
			Mostly	Sometimes	Occasionally
1	Social taboo	Block I	0 (0)	1 (2)	16 (32)
		Block II	0 (0)	1 (2)	0 (0)
		Pooled	0 (0)	2 (2)	16 (16)
2	Social unrest	Block I	18 (36)	16 (32)	15 (30)
		Block II	49 (98)	0 (0)	0 (0)
		Pooled	67 (67)	16 (16)	15 (15)

Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentage

These results of the study were in line with those found by Midau *et al.* (2011) who reported that the growth of smallholder pig production was adversely affected by high cost of feed, medicines, religious believe and inadequate capital.

CONCLUSION

The pig rearers in the hilly terrains of the North Eastern Region in India in general and Dima Hasao district of Assam in particular is a traditional are facing many problems. The difference in realization of problems on one hand and the location specific problems on the other hand warranted some support, intervention and guidance from development organizations like KVKs. There is a need to address the technical as well as managerial problems related to pig farming.

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