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Socio economic condition of Rohilkhandi goat rearers in their native region

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Abstract

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the socio-personal and socioeconomic landscape of 120 Rohilkhandi goat rearears across Bareilly, Budaun, and Shahjahanpur districts of Rohilkhand region in Uttar Pradesh from Jan 2025 to July 2025 the research followed an ex-post facto research design and assesses the demographic profiles, educational attainment, family dynamics, income pattern, marketing facilities and goat rearing practices. The findings reveal that majority (50.83%) farmers were middle aged belonging 42-56 years, male (71.66%), following Muslim faith (55.83%) and were from Other Backward classes (46.66%). Educational attainment was low, with 47.36% educated up to the primary level, while 50.83% lived in nuclear families. Male members dominated household decision-making (50.83%), and agriculture was the principal occupation for 40.00% of the respondents. Goat-rearing experience was limited, as 54.16% had only 1–5 years of experience. Landholding patterns showed that 51.67% were marginal farmers owning less than one hectare, and most belonged to the low-income group (₹36,000–₹2,24,000 annually). Market access was moderate, with an average distance of 4.2 km and 16–30 minutes travel time. The findings highlight the need for focused interventions in education, infrastructure, and institutional support to improve livelihood sustainability among Rohilkhandi goat rearers.

Keywords: Rohilkhandi goat, socio-economic profile, goat rearers, marginal farmers, Uttar Pradesh

1. Introduction

1.3 billion people worldwide depend on livestock for their livelihoods, accounting for almost 40% of agricultural output in developed nations and 20% in developing ones (SEBI Livestock, 2023) [5] Native or indigenous breeds, often referred to as autochthonous breeds have originated, adapted, and evolved within a particular geographical region over centuries (FAO, 2012). They represent a genetic heritage that has been naturally fine-tuned to thrive under traditional production systems and specific local environments. Yet, despite their resilience and cultural significance, indigenous breeds have been vanishing at an alarming rate worldwide (FAO, 2010). Modernization of agriculture, rapid economic development, and the introduction of genetically engineered breeds have accelerated this decline. The situation has been exacerbated by government policies as well as farmer decisions, particularly by encouraging intensive livestock production. (Tisdell, 2003) [6]. Most of the indigenous breeds live in remote rural areas in developing countries (Narloch *et al*., 2011) [4]. In India, one such indigenous gem is the Rohilkhandi goat, locally known as the Bareilly goat, native to the Rohilkhand region of Uttar Pradesh, officially recognized as a breed in 2018 by ICAR–NBAGR carries both aesthetic and economic value. Farmers cherish its high prolificacy, with twins and even triplets being common as well as adaptability, resilience to climatic extremes in addition to its ability to thrive on low-quality feed. Adult males weigh 25–36 kilograms and females 21–31 kilograms, making them a practical choice for smallholder families who often operate under resource constraints (Upadhyay *et al*. 2013) [7]. Despite these advantages, there is limited systematic knowledge about the farmers who rear Rohilkhandi goats, the practices they follow, and the broader benefits derived from this breed. A holistic understanding of their economic viability, social impact, environmental contribution, and institutional context is essential to promote sustainable rearing of the breed. Recognizing this, the present study was undertaken to comprehensively explore the multiple dimensions of Rohilkhandi goat farming. This study addresses this critical research gap by conducting a focused assessment of the Rohilkhandi goat rearers. The objectives are to: (i) Delineate the demographic and educational profile; (ii) Analyze their family structures and economic dependence. The findings aim to provide baseline data to guide policymakers, development agencies, and harbour authorities in designing targeted interventions for the sustainable development of the Rohilkhandi goat rearing community.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Study area

The Rohilkhand region comprises seven districts, out of which Budaun, Bareilly, and Shahjahanpur were selected due to their highest indigenous goat populations of 1,76,402, 1,30,533, and 1,13,702 respectively. The Rohilkhandi goat, being an indigenous breed well adapted to the local agro-climatic conditions, plays a crucial role in the livelihood and

nutritional security of rural households in this region. These districts are characterized by mixed crop-livestock farming systems where goat rearing serves as a vital source of supplementary income, especially for small and marginal farmers. The high concentration of Rohilkhandi goats in these areas provided a suitable locale for assessing their contribution towards ecological balance, economic sustainability, and socio- cultural importance.

2.2 sampling plan

From each of the selected districts (Budaun, Bareilly, and Shahjahanpur), two blocks were randomly. Thereafter, from each block, one village cluster (comprising 2–3 adjacent villages) was identified through random sampling to serve as the unit of study. From each village cluster, 20 goat-rearing households were randomly selected. Thus, a total of 120 respondents (20 households × 6 village clusters) formed the final sample size of the study. The collected data were compiled, tabulated, and analysed using an appropriate statistical approach in line with the study's objectives.

2.3 Data collection tools

To fulfil the requirement of the study, data was collected through the use of semi-structured interview schedule, observation, google forms and telephonic investigations as per the necessity of the study. Based on the available literature, consultation with experts and as per the suitability of the specific objectives of the study, following variables were selected and included in the interview schedule developed for the study

S. No.	Variables	Unit of measurement
1.	Age	Chronological age in years
2.	Gender	Gender Male/ Female
3.	Religion	Hinduism/Islam/chri
4.	Caste	Caste Gen/ OBC/ SC/ ST
5.	Education	Formal Education
6.	Family type	Joint/ Nuclear
7.	Decision maker of the family	Male/ Female/ Both
8.	Occupation	Primary and Subsidiary occupation
9.	Goat rearing experience	In years
10.	Landholding	In hectare
11.	Annual family income	In INR
12.	Marketing facilities	Availability, Distance, Medium of transport

2.4 Challenges

Open-ended questions on perceived difficulties related to infrastructure, market access, finance, and government support.

2.5 Statistical Analysis

The collected data was tabulated and analysed taking note of the study's objective using appropriate statistical methods such as frequency, mean, percentage, standard deviation, chi square, correlation etc.

3. Results and Discussion

1. Age

The respondents of the study were aged between 28 to 71 years with a mean age of 40 ± 0.73 years with majority (50.83%) being middle aged belonging to the age group of 42 to 56 years, followed by 30.83% belonging to the young age (26 to 41 years) category and 18.33% belonging to the old age (57 to 71 years) category. To analyse differences in mean values between various flock size categories, a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted.

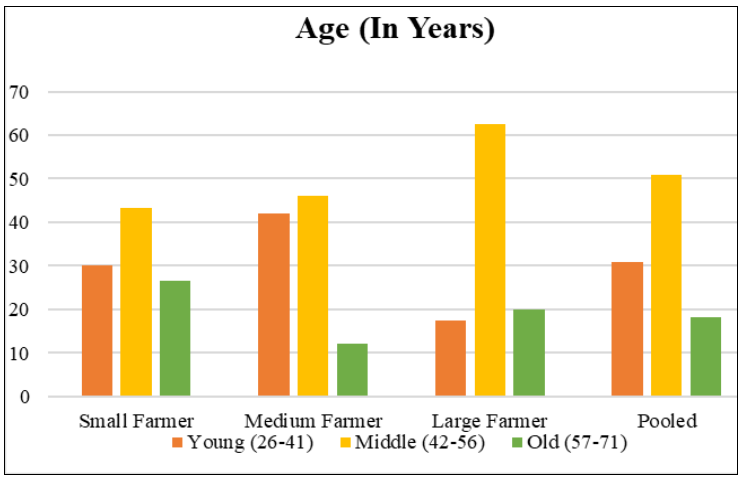

Fig 1: Distribution of respondents according to their age

2. Gender

Majority of respondents were male (71.66%) whereas only 28.33 percent respondents were females. It has been found that most of the farmers in small, medium and large category flock size were males with 56.66 percent, 70 percent and 85 percent respectively. Analysis of Chi-square test revealed that there is a significant difference between the gender of respondents of small, medium and large category flock size of Rohilkhandi goat rearers.

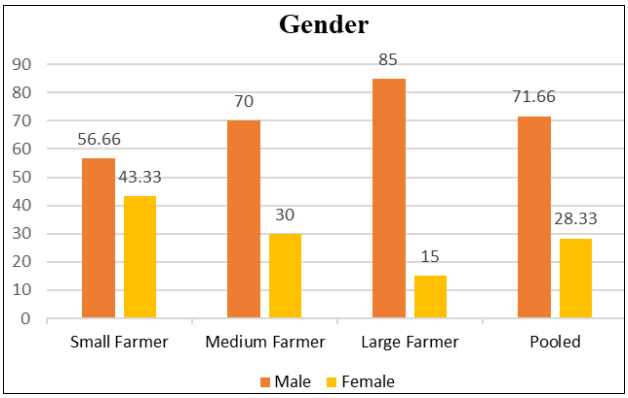

Fig 2: Distribution of respondents according to their gender

3. Religion

It was found that most of the respondents were followers of Islam (55.83%) and rest were following Hinduism (44.16%). This difference in distribution might be attributed to the socio-cultural pattern of goat farming in the study area.

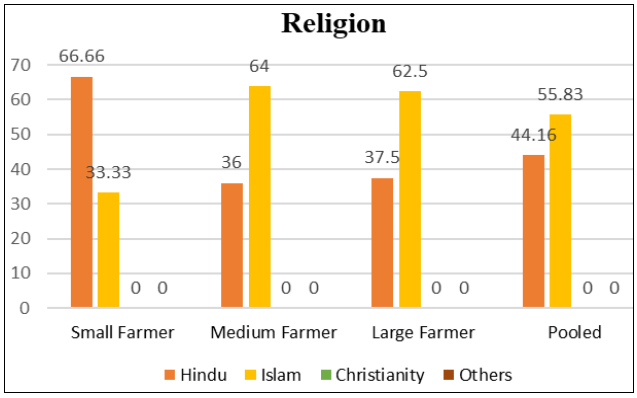

Fig 3: Distribution of respondents according to their religion

4. Caste

The castes are divided into four broad groups: General, OBC, SC, and ST with majority of the respondents (46.66%) belong to the OBC category followed by schedule caste (33.33%), and general category (20%).

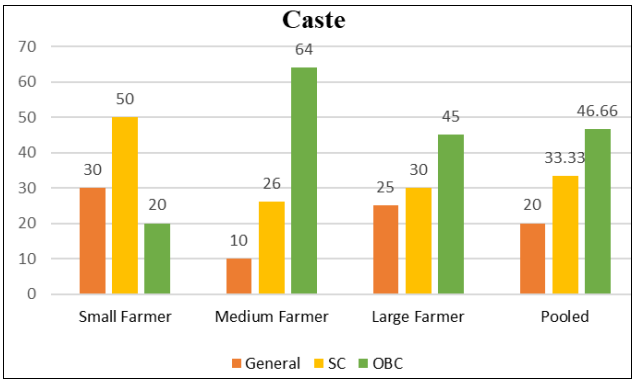

Fig 4: Distribution of respondents according to their caste

5. Education

The distribution of education among farmers indicated that illiteracy was comparatively higher among medium (22%) and large (25%) flock size respondents, while small farmers had a lower share of illiterates (13.33%). Primary education emerged as the dominant level in both medium (40%) and large (42.5%) farmer groups, showing their concentration at the basic level of schooling.

6. Family type

In the context of Indian society, family systems are broadly divided into joint and nuclear setups, which often shape livelihood and resource-sharing patterns. The present findings revealed that nuclear families were slightly more common (50.83%) than joint families (49.16%).

7. Decision Maker of the family

The study reveals that in the majority of households, decision-making was done by male members (50.83%), followed by joint decision-making by both male and female (30.00%) and female alone (19.16%). Similar findings were reported by Byaruhanga (2015) that majority of goat owners were men (84.86%) but a few cases (average 15.14%) of women that owned goats independently.

8. Occupation

The majority (40.00%) of the respondents were engaged in agriculture as their primary occupation, followed by animal husbandry (21.67%), business (20.00%), private service (11.67%), and government service (6.67%).

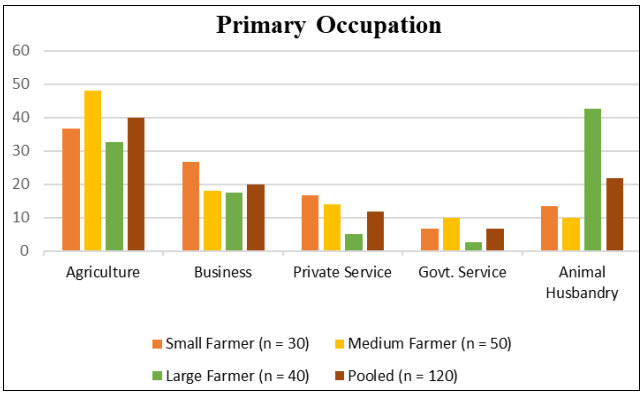

Fig 5: Distribution of respondents according to their occupation

9. Goat rearing experience

A majority of the respondents (54.16%) had 1–5 years of experience, followed by 30.83 percent with 6–10 years, while only 15.00 percent had 11–15 years of experience in goat rearing. These findings indicate that small farmers are relatively new entrants into goat farming, while large farmers possess comparatively higher years of experience, suggesting that goat rearing is gradually being adopted by smaller flock sizes as an emerging livelihood option.

10. Land holding

The data reveal that a majority of respondents (51.67%) were marginal farmers possessing less than one hectare of land, followed by small flock size with 1–2 hectares of land (35.83%). Only 12.50 per cent of respondents were found to be landless.

11. Annual family Income

The mean annual income of respondents from goat farming was Rs. 2,18,166.67 ± 13,906.28. The majority of the

respondents (50.83%) belonged to the low-income group (Rs. 36,000–2,24,000), followed by 40% in the medium income group (Rs. 2,24,001–4,12,000) and 9.16% in the high-income group (Rs. 4,12,001–6,00,000).

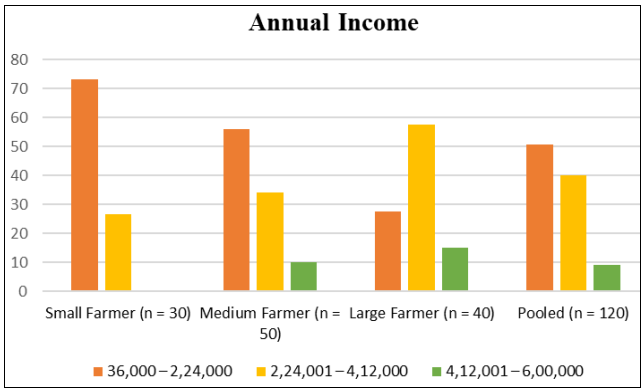

Fig 6: Distribution of respondents according to their annual income

12. Marketing facility

a. Availability

All the respondents (100%) reported the availability of market facilities for the sale of Rohilkhandi goats. This uniform response clearly indicated that access to markets was not a limiting factor in the study area. Goat rearers predominantly utilized well-known local and regional marketplaces such as Rithora Bazar, Sohra Bazar, and Devchara Market in Bareilly district; Dunpur Market and Karanpur Market in Budaun district; and Katra Bazar in Shahjahanpur district. The accessibility and periodic nature (weekly haats) of markets provided farmers with convenient avenues for the timely sale of their animals and a reliable source of income generation.

b. Medium of Transport

Transportation plays a crucial role in accessing markets and affects the efficiency of goat rearing. Majority of the respondents (40%) relied on walking as the primary mode of transport, followed by E-rickshaw (22.5%) and auto (18.33%). About 10.83 per cent of respondents reported using bus services, while only 8.33 per cent of farmers, used personal vehicles for marketing and transportation purposes.

c. Distance to Markets

The analysis of distance to market revealed that a majority of Rohilkhandi goat farmers were located within close proximity to the nearest market. About 50.83% respondents reported market distances of 1–4 km further 39.16 percent of farmers fell within the 5–8 km.

Conclusion and Strategic Implications for Rohilkhandi Goat Rearing

1. Educational and Skill Enhancement

The study reveals low to moderate educational attainment among Rohilkhandi goat rearers, with primary education being predominant, which restricts awareness and adoption of scientific goat management practices. A large proportion of rearers are new entrants with 1–5 years of experience, indicating strong potential gains from structured skill-development programmes. Need-based training on improved breeding, feeding, health management, housing, and record keeping is essential to enhance productivity and reduce mortality. Strengthening extension services through village-level demonstrations, farmer field schools, and use of digital advisory platforms can bridge existing knowledge gaps.

2. Infrastructure Modernization

Although market facilities are available to all respondents, limited transport infrastructure and reliance on walking for marketing significantly affect operational efficiency and profitability. Improvement in rural transport facilities, access to affordable vehicles, and development of nearby collection centers can reduce physical drudgery and transaction costs. Strengthening veterinary infrastructure, including mobile veterinary units, timely vaccination, and disease surveillance, is crucial for sustaining herd health and productivity. Development of basic housing and feeding infrastructure using locally available resources should be promoted through technical guidance.

3. Policy and Financial Support

The predominance of marginal and small landholders with low annual income highlights the need for targeted policy interventions to support livelihood sustainability. Access to institutional credit, livestock insurance, and subsidy-linked schemes for indigenous breeds should be enhanced and simplified. Breed-specific development programmes for Rohilkhandi goats, including selective breeding and conservation incentives, are necessary to protect and promote this valuable genetic resource. Inclusion of goat rearers in government welfare and livelihood schemes can strengthen socio-economic resilience.

4. Market Linkage and Diversification

Proximity to local markets is a major strength; however, marketing remains largely unorganized and price realization is often suboptimal. Formation of self-help groups, farmer producer organizations, or cooperatives can improve collective bargaining power and stabilize income. Diversification into value-added products such as chevon processing, manure utilization, and breeding stock sales can enhance income streams. Strengthening linkages with organized markets, institutional buyers, and emerging urban demand can further improve profitability.

Rohilkhandi goat rearing represents a viable and sustainable livelihood option for marginal and small farmers in the Rohilkhand region. However, its full socio-economic potential can only be realized through integrated interventions focusing on education and skill enhancement, infrastructure modernization, robust policy and financial support, and strengthened market linkages with diversification. Such a holistic approach will not only improve the livelihoods of goat rearers but also contribute significantly to the conservation and sustainable utilization of the Rohilkhandi indigenous goat breed.

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