

International Journal of Advanced Biochemistry Research



ISSN Print: 2617-4693
ISSN Online: 2617-4707
NAAS Rating (2025): 5.29
IJABR 2025; 9(10): 317-320
www.biochemjournal.com
Received: 08-07-2025
Accepted: 11-08-2025

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Socio-economic profile of the piggery farmers in peri urban regions of Bengaluru

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DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.33545/26174693.2025.v9.i10e.6018>

Abstract

Farmers near metro cities are shifting from their main occupation to various other activities, more so with agricultural and animal husbandry activities. Particularly farmers engaged in pig farming need to be assessed in terms of their social status and other related activities. Therefore, the present study was conducted to assess the socio-economic profile of piggery farmers in the peri-urban regions of Bengaluru, Karnataka. Data was collected through personal interviews using a structured schedule. Results revealed that small farms were primarily managed by marginal farmers with lower education and income levels, while large farms were associated with higher education, diversified landholdings, and greater income. Pig farming served as both a livelihood for resource-poor households and a commercial venture for better-off farmers. The findings highlight the sector's growing acceptance and its potential to enhance rural livelihoods and economic development. Piggery farmers.

Keywords: Socio-economic profile, income, education, age, pig farmers

Introduction

In recent years, pig farming in Karnataka especially in Bengaluru has undergone significant transformation. Once regarded as an occupation linked to lower social status and mainly carried out by marginalized sections of society, the perception around pig farming has evolved considerably. Today, commercial pig farming is gaining broader acceptance and is no longer limited to economically disadvantaged groups, as its potential for generating substantial income is being widely recognized (PVCMB, 2023) ^[1].

Pig farming industry is drawing increased attention from both the central and state governments. Various initiatives and schemes, such as the National Livestock Mission and the Meghalaya Piggery Development Scheme (IPS, 2024) ^[2], have been launched to support and promote the development of this sector.

Review of Literature

At present, large-scale pork production units are mostly located near big cities, where the population is dense, to meet the growing demand from urban consumers. However, like pig farms in other countries, modern pig farms in India will face several challenges. These include issues related to housing, overcrowding, large herd sizes, poor air quality (such as odour and ammonia levels), climate conditions, higher disease risks, food safety concerns, environmental pollution, and difficulties in finding skilled labour (Thomas *et al.*, 2020) ^[3]. In nations undergoing development like India, animal husbandry especially pig and poultry cultivation plays a pivotal role in enhancing the economic well-being of impoverished and marginal farmers. Nonetheless, pig farming across various Indian regions remains largely disorganized. It is frequently conducted as a familial subsistence or backyard endeavour, marked by minimal investments in nutrition and antimicrobial applications, and is predominantly influenced by market demand (Vinodh Kumar *et al.*, 2019) ^[4].

Socio-economic status and husbandry practices is crucial to understand the diversity of pig production systems, their impact on the livelihoods of pig raisers, and to monitor and prevent diseases and zoonotic threats for the enhancement of animal health and welfare (Sahu *et al.*, 2024) ^[5].

The majority of pig farmers belongs to urban areas of Telangana state fell into the middle-aged category (56.25%), followed by older individuals (26.39%) and younger ones (17.36%) (Majunder *et al.*, 2020) ^[6].

Pig farming in west Bengal was most commonly practiced urban areas by landless farmers (66.92%), followed by small landholders (26.15%), while only a small portion (6.92%) of marginal farmers were engaged in piggery rearing. In terms of social groups, pig farming was predominantly undertaken by members of the Scheduled Tribes (59.23%), followed by Scheduled Castes (31.53%), with limited participation from the General category (3.84%) and Other Backward Classes (5.38%). Regarding economic status, most pig farmers (71.53%) had an annual income below ₹15,000, while 16.15% earned between ₹15,000 and ₹25,000, and only 12.30% had an annual income exceeding ₹25,000 (Tudu *et al.*, 2015) ^[7]. Higher educational attainment is associated with larger-scale pig farming, possibly due to better access to resources and awareness of scientific management practices (Deka *et al.*, 2021) ^[12].

Pig rearing is a livelihood option for resource-poor households but is also increasingly adopted by farmers with larger landholdings as a commercial enterprise. Pig farming is widely practiced by marginal farmers, though commercial farms are emerging among better landholding groups (Choudhary *et al.*, 2020) ^[9]. Larger piggery units contribute significantly to household income and have greater potential for commercial viability and that income from pig farming increases with herd size and adoption of improved management practices (Bora *et al.*, 2014) ^[10]. Smaller families tend to manage small and medium farms, whereas larger families may support labour needs in large-scale pig farming and family size influences labour availability and management efficiency in pig rearing systems (Chandra *et al.*, 2017) ^[11].

Materials and Methods

Location of the study

Bengaluru Rural district lies in the southeastern part of the state, covering a geographical area of 229,519 hectares, which accounts for 1.2% of the state's total area. Located at 13°18'56.5" N latitude and 77°30'53.1" E longitude, the district is part of Bengaluru's peri-urban zone.

Parameters

Socio-economic profile: Age, Education status, Occupation, Land holding, Income per year, Herd size and Caste.

Development of Interview Schedule: An Interview Schedule was developed in consultation with experts to examine the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents.

Pre-testing: The questionnaire was pre-tested with a group of pig-rearing farmers after explaining the study's objective. Based on their feedback and the pre-test experience, questions and statements were revised into the final version.

Data collection: The researcher personally visited the respondents' villages and conducted individual interviews. Prior to data collection, the study's objectives were clearly explained, and efforts were made to establish rapport with the respondents. Questions were presented in simple and

clear language to ensure accurate understanding and to prevent any variation in interpretation. Responses were recorded immediately along with relevant personal observations.

Tabulation and analysis: After collecting responses from the participants, the interview schedules were carefully reviewed, verified, and numbered. The data were then coded, compiled, and tabulated according to standard procedures consistent with the study's objectives. Percentages were calculated.

Results and Discussion

Age: The age group of piggery farmers with small farms were 40% within 30 years, 20% farmers were 30-50years, and 40% farmers more than 50years of age. Whereas all the farmers having medium farms were between 30-50years of age. The age group of farmers with large piggery farms were 20% below 30 years, 40% between 30-40 years and 40 % above 50years of age. This suggests that pig farming is practiced as both a livelihood option for youth and a sustainable enterprise for older households. Similar trends were reported by Chiduwa *et al.*, (2021), who observed that pig farming attracts a wide age range of farmers, reflecting its socio-economic importance.

Education status: The Education status of piggery farmers with small farms were 80% with primary school education and 20% farmers were Diploma education. Whereas the farmers having medium farms were 60% primary school, 20% Diploma and 20% graduates. The Education status of farmers with large piggery farms were 20% illiterates, 40% primary school and 40% graduates. This indicates that higher educational attainment is associated with larger-scale pig farming, possibly due to better access to resources and awareness of scientific management practices. Similar findings were reported by Deka *et al.*, (2021) ^[12], who highlighted that education plays a crucial role in the adoption of improved pig production technologies.

Occupation: The Occupation of piggery farmers with small farms were 40% Animal husbandry, 60% farmers were doing both Animal husbandry and Agriculture. Whereas the 70% of the medium pig farmers involved in Animal husbandry, 30% farmers involved in both Animal husbandry and Agriculture. The Occupation of farmers with large piggery farms was 20% Animal husbandry, 80% both Animal husbandry and Agriculture. This suggests that piggery is often integrated with crop farming as a complementary livelihood strategy. Similar trends were reported by Nath *et al.*, (2013) ^[8], who found that pig farming is commonly practiced alongside agriculture among smallholders to diversify income and enhance household food security.

Land holding: The Land holding of piggery farmers with small farms were 80% marginal farmers and 20% small farmers. Whereas the farmers having medium farms 10% landless farmers, 80% marginal farmers and 10% small farmers. The Land holding of farmers with large piggery farms were 40% marginal farmers, 20% small farmers and 40% large farmers. This highlights that pig rearing is a livelihood option for resource-poor households but is also increasingly adopted by farmers with larger landholdings as

a commercial enterprise. Similar findings were reported by Choudhary *et al.*, (2020) ^[9], who observed that pig farming is widely practiced by marginal farmers, though commercial farms are emerging among better landholding groups.

Income (in lakhs): The Income of piggery farmers with small farms 40% were earning 1-2lakhs, 20% were earning 2-5 lakhs and 40% were earning 5-10 lakhs. Whereas the farmers having medium farms 50% were earning 2-5lakhs and 50% were earning 5-10lakhs. The Income of farmers with large piggery farms 20% were earning 2-5 lakhs and 80% were earning 5-10lakhs. This suggests that larger piggery units contribute significantly to household income and have greater potential for commercial viability. Similar findings were reported by Bora *et al.*, (2014) ^[10], who observed that income from pig farming increases with herd size and adoption of improved management practices.

Herd size (numbers): The Herd size of piggery farmers with small farms 25 % (5 farms) were having less than 100 animals. Whereas the farmers having medium farms 50% (10 farms) were having 100-200 animals. The Herd size of farmers with large piggery farms 25% (5 farms) were having more than 200 animals. This clearly reflects the scale of operation and investment capacity, where herd size increases with farm category, indicating intensification and commercialization among larger farms. Similar findings were reported by Deka *et al.*, (2010) ^[14], who highlighted that herd size is a major indicator of the production system,

with larger herds associated with more organized and market-oriented pig farming.

Caste: The total pig farmers belong to small pig farms includes 20% Scheduled Castes (SC), 20% to Scheduled Tribes (ST), and 60% “Others” category. In medium farms, 10% of farmers were from SC while the remaining 90% belonged to the “Others” category. For large farms, 40% of farmers were from SC, 20% from ST, and 40% from the “Others” category. This suggests that pig farming continues to serve as an important livelihood source for marginalized communities, a trend also reported in earlier studies highlighting the role of piggery in supporting socio-economically weaker sections (Nath *et al.*, 2013) ^[8].

Family size (numbers): The Family size of piggery farmers with small farms 60% was having less than 5-members, 40% was having 6-9 members. Whereas the farmers with medium farms, 90% having less than 5 members and 10% having 6-9 members. The Family size of farmers with large piggery farms 40% having less than 5 members, 20% having 6-9 members and 40% having more than 9 members. This indicates that smaller families tend to manage small and medium farms, whereas larger families may support labour needs in large-scale pig farming. Similar findings were reported by Chandra *et al.*, (2017) ^[11], who noted that family size influences labour availability and management efficiency in pig rearing systems.



(a)



(b)

Plate 1: Collection of information pertaining to socio-economic profiles of the piggery farmers in and around peri-urban regions of Bengaluru.

Table 1: Socio-economic profile of the piggery farmers in peri urban region of Bengaluru.

Parameter	Small farms (%)	Medium farms (%)	Large farms (%)
Age (Years)			
<30	40	-	20
30-50	20	100	40
>50	40	-	40
Education status			
Illiterate	-	-	20
Primary school	80	60	40
Diploma	-	20	-
Graduate	20	20	40
Occupation			
Animal husbandry	40	70	20
Animal husbandry +Agriculture	60	30	80
Land holding			
Landless farmer	-	10	-
Marginal farmer (up to 2.5 acre)	80	80	40
Small farmer (2-5 acre)	20	10	20
large farmer (>10 acre)	-	-	40
Income (lakhs)			
1-2 lakhs	40	-	-
2-5 lakhs	20	50	20
5-10lakhs	40	50	80
Herd size (Numbers)			
<100	25 (5)	-	-
100-200	-	50 (10)	-
>200	-	-	25 (5)
Caste			
SC	20	10	40
ST	20	-	20
Others	60	90	40
Family size (no's)			
Small (<5 member)	60	90	40
Medium (6-9 members)	40	10	20
large (>9 members)	-	-	40

Conclusion

Small farms were mostly run by marginal farmers with lower income and education level. Large farms were linked with higher incomes, diversified landholdings, and more graduate representation.

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