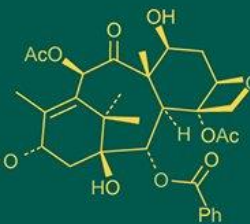
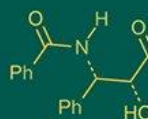
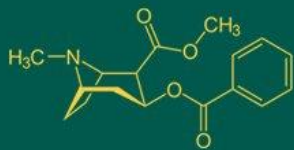


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Constraints perceived by sheep and goat farmers under intensive rearing system in Telangana state

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Abstract

The study was conducted in six districts of Telangana representing different agro-climatic zones to assess constraints faced by sheep and goat farmers practicing intensive rearing systems. A total of 24 mandals were covered, and from each mandal, two intensive farmers—one sheep farmer and one goat farmer—were randomly selected. Thus, 48 intensive farmers comprising 24 sheep and 24 goat farmers were surveyed. The major constraints identified by intensive sheep and goat keepers were lack of insurance protection (66.66%), lack of government subsidy (62.50%), non-availability of credit (47.91%), non-availability of feed (39.58%), labour scarcity (37.50%), and inadequate veterinary services (33.33%), which emerged as the top six constraints. Other constraints reported included high cost of lambs/kids, disease incidence, inadequate shelter space, involvement of middlemen, price fluctuations, wild animal menace, transportation problems, lack of market information, and water scarcity. The findings indicate that intensive sheep and goat farmers in Telangana face predominantly institutional, financial, and input-related constraints, highlighting the need for strengthened policy support and targeted interventions to enhance the sustainability of intensive small ruminant farming in the state.

Keywords: Constraints, sheep and goat farmers, intensive rearing system, Telangana

Introduction

Telangana is one of the prominent states in sheep and goat farming, contributing significantly to the rural economy and livestock sector. With increasing pressure on grazing resources, changing land-use patterns, and rising demand for meat, intensive sheep and goat farming is emerging as an important production system in the state. Intensive rearing involves controlled management, improved feeding, and better health care practices, offering potential for higher productivity and profitability. However, there is limited region-specific information on management practices, feeding strategies, disease control measures, and production constraints under intensive systems across different agro-climatic zones of Telangana. Therefore, a focused study on intensive sheep and goat farming is essential to identify key challenges and opportunities, support informed policy-making, and promote sustainable and economically viable small ruminant production in the region.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted across six districts of Telangana representing the northern, central, and southern agro-climatic zones. From each district, four mandals were selected, resulting in a total of 24 mandals. From each mandal, two intensive farmers—one sheep farmer and one goat farmer—were randomly selected. Thus, a total of 48 intensive farmers comprising 24 sheep farmers and 24 goat farmers participated in the study. Primary data were collected using a pre-tested and structured questionnaire. The selection of districts, mandals, and respondents was facilitated by the Telangana State Animal Husbandry Department. The collected data were systematically tabulated and analysed using appropriate statistical tools to draw valid conclusions.

Results and Discussion

Constraints Perceived by Sheep and Goat Farmers under Intensive Rearing System

The data presented in Table 1 reveal the major and minor constraints perceived by sheep and goat farmers practicing intensive rearing systems. Based on the severity and ranking of constraints, they are discussed under the following categories:

1. Institutional and Financial Constraints

Among all constraints, lack of insurance protection (66.66%) emerged as the most severe and was ranked first by the respondents. This indicates the high vulnerability of intensive sheep and goat farmers to unforeseen risks such as disease outbreaks, mortality, and climatic uncertainties, which can result in substantial economic losses. The absence of livestock insurance leaves farmers without financial security or recovery mechanisms.

The lack of government subsidy (62.50%) ranked second, highlighting the need for policy support to offset high production costs associated with intensive systems. Subsidies play a crucial role in sustaining farm operations, particularly for small and marginal farmers. Further, non-availability of institutional credit (47.91%), ranked third, restricts farmers' ability to invest in quality feed, housing, breeding stock, and health care, thereby limiting productivity and expansion.

Similar constraints related to inadequate subsidy and institutional support were also reported by Das *et al.* (2024) [2], who identified lack of government support, poor access to quality breeding stock, limited exposure to successful farms, and marketing difficulties as major constraints among tribal goat farmers in Odisha.

2. Feed and Input Constraints

The non-availability of feed (39.58%) was ranked fourth among the major constraints. In intensive rearing systems, where animals depend entirely on stall feeding, uninterrupted access to balanced and nutritious feed is essential for optimal growth and productivity. Any disruption in feed supply directly affects animal performance and farm profitability.

Interestingly, lack of grazing land (0%) was ranked last, indicating that grazing scarcity is not perceived as a constraint under intensive systems, as farmers rely primarily on controlled feeding and indoor management practices.

3. Labour Constraints

Labour scarcity (37.50%), ranked fifth, was identified as a significant operational constraint. Intensive systems require regular labour for feeding, cleaning, health monitoring, and overall management. Shortage of skilled and affordable labour affects efficiency and increases operational costs, ultimately reducing profitability.

4. Animal Health and Veterinary Constraints

Inadequate veterinary services (33.33%) ranked sixth among major constraints, underscoring gaps in timely access to veterinary care, disease diagnosis, and preventive health services. Additionally, incidence of disease (27.08%) ranked eighth, further emphasizing health-related challenges in intensive systems where disease spread can be rapid due to higher stocking density.

These findings are in conformity with earlier studies by Rauniyar *et al.* (2000) [7], Kuldeep *et al.* (2006) [4], Misra *et al.* (2007) [5], and Tanwar (2011) [8], who also reported health care and veterinary service limitations as major constraints in small ruminant production.

5. Infrastructure and Housing Constraints

The higher cost of lambs/kids (31.25%), ranked seventh, affects the initial investment required to establish or expand intensive farms. Further, inadequate space for shelter (18.75%), ranked ninth, impacts animal welfare, hygiene, and productivity, particularly in confined production systems.

6. Marketing and Economic Constraints

Marketing-related issues such as involvement of a large number of middlemen (16.66%) and high price fluctuations (14.58%), ranked tenth and eleventh respectively, reduce farmers' profit margins and income stability. Limited direct market access forces farmers to depend on intermediaries, often resulting in distress sales.

Supporting evidence for these findings was reported by Tilahun *et al.* (2006) [9], Virojirao *et al.* (2008) [10], Jana *et al.* (2014) [3], Poornima *et al.* (2015) [6], and Abdallah (2024) [1], who highlighted marketing inefficiencies and price instability as key challenges in small ruminant farming.

7. Miscellaneous Constraints

Other constraints perceived as moderate to minor included wild animal menace (12.50%), lack of transportation facilities (10.41%), lack of market information (8.33%), and lack of water availability (6.25%). Although ranked lower, these factors still influence the overall efficiency and sustainability of intensive sheep and goat farming operations.

Table 1: Constraints perceived by sheep and goat farmers under intensive rearing system

S. No	Constraints	Respondent (N = 48)		Rank
		Number	Percentage	
1	Lack of grazing land	00	00	XVI
2	Incidence of disease	13	27.08	VIII
3	Involvement of large no. of middlemen	08	16.66	X
4	Lack of water availability	03	6.25	XV
5	In-adequate space for shelter	09	18.75	IX
6	Lack of insurance protection	32	66.66	I
7	Inadequate veterinary services	16	33.33	VI
8	Lack of market information	04	8.33	XIV
9	Non-availability of feed	19	39.58	IV
10	Plagued by wild animals	06	12.50	XII
11	Government subsidy	30	62.50	II
12	Lack of transportation facility	05	10.41	XIII
13	Non-availability of credit	23	47.91	III
14	High Price fluctuation	07	14.58	XI
15	Labour scarcity	18	37.50	V
16	Higher cost of lamb/kid	15	31.25	VII

Conclusion

The findings of the study indicate that sheep and goat farmers practicing intensive rearing systems in Telangana face several critical constraints, with lack of insurance protection, inadequate government subsidy, and limited access to institutional credit being the most severe. Feed non-availability, labour scarcity, and inadequate veterinary

services further affect efficient farm management and animal productivity. Although marketing and infrastructure-related problems were perceived as moderate to minor, they continue to influence farm profitability. Strengthening institutional support, improving access to inputs and veterinary services, and implementing supportive policy interventions are essential for ensuring the sustainability and economic viability of intensive sheep and goat farming in the state.

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