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AN ANALYSIS OF SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILE OF TRADITIONAL ANIMAL HUSBANDRY PRACTICES ADOPTING FARMERS OF TAMIL NADU

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Abstract: The study was conducted in Tirunelveli, Namakkal, Vellore and Thiruppur districts of Tamil Nadu during 2015 to investigate socioeconomic profiles of traditional animal husbandry practicing farmers. Primary data was collected through structured interview schedule using a sample size of 240 allocating to eight *tehsils* selected purposively, each comprising two villages selected on the basis of proportionate sampling technique. More than one-half of the respondents belonged to old age at the time of enquiry. Majority (77.50 per cent) of the traditional animal husbandry farmers were males. Nearly one-half of the farmers had primary level of education and more than one-half of the respondents belonged to medium income group and maintained joint family (69.60 per cent).The respondents maintained moderate number of livestock units (51.30 per cent) and had medium level of experience in livestock farming (48.30 per cent). Majority of the ITK farmers were associated with agricultural sector and medium farmer category.
Keywords: Socioeconomic Profile, Traditional animal husbandry practices, family size, extension agency contact, ethno veterinary practices, social participation.

Introduction

Ethnoveterinary medicine (EVM) considers those traditional practices of veterinary medicine are legitimate and seeks to validate them. Many non-Western traditions of veterinary medicine exist, such as acupuncture and herbal medicine in China, Tibetan veterinary medicine, Ayurveda in India, etc. These traditions have written records that dates back to thousands of years, for example the Jewish sources in the Old Testament and Talmud and the Sri Lankan 400-year-old palm-leaf frond records of veterinary treatments. Since colonial times, scientists had always taken note of indigenous knowledge of animal health and diagnostic skills before implementing their Western-technology projects.

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The use of ethno-veterinary medicines for animal health care practices is as old as the domestication of various livestock species. The use of indigenous veterinary medicine is a cost effective treatment option for livestock, especially in primary health care (Punniamurthy, 2010) in remote areas.

Materials and Method

Tamil Nadu consists of seven agro-climatic zones viz., Cauvery Delta, North-Eastern, North Western, Southern, Western, High rainfall, High altitude (or) Hilly zone. Of these seven agro-climatic zones, top four zones namely North Western Zone, Western Zone, Southern Zone, North-Eastern Zone were selected based on the highest livestock population. From each selected zone, a district with highest livestock population based on 19th Livestock census of department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary services, Tamilnadu was selected for the study. The selected districts were Tirunelveli, Namakkal, Vellore and Thiruppur. The blocks were selected based on the suggestions made by Veterinary Assistant Surgeon. Villages were selected based on the lottery method of random sampling. From each block, two villages were selected and thus a total of 16 villages were selected from eight blocks.

For the analysis, the primary data was used. A sample of 240 farmers was used. Primary data was personally collected from the respondents through structured interview schedule. The interview schedule was based on both closed and open form questions. The data was usually collected in the farmer's fields, homes or in community centers. Simple averages, classification and tabulation were used for the analysis of the data.

Results and Discussion

The study provided the following information regarding the socioeconomic profiles of farmers those who are adopting Traditional Animal Husbandry Practices of Tamil Nadu State:

Age

It could be noted from Figure 4.1 that more than one-half of the respondents belonged to old age at the time of enquiry, followed by more than one-third in middle age and 10 per cent in young age categories. This is in agreement with findings of Moabiemang *et al.,* (2013) and Khanam and Azad (2014) who stated that most of the respondents belonged to old age group. Since the younger generation being educated preferred industrial job than agriculture and allied activities.

Gender

In this ethnographic study, it was observed from Figure 4.2 that 77.5 per cent of male farmers were practicing traditional technologies, followed by 22.5 per cent of female farmers. The reason for this might be due to the reason that males were involved more in agriculture than the females.

Education

From the Figure 4.3, it could be revealed that majority (48.8 per cent) of the farmers had primary level of education followed by 27.5 per cent can read only, 12.1 per cent can read and write, one-tenth (8.3 per cent) were studied up to middle school level and meagre 3.3 per cent of the farmers were illiterate. This low level of education among the ITK farmers might be due to the reason that the majority of the respondents were above 45 years old, where the number of schools near the villages at that time might be very low as well as family circumstances might have forced them to discontinue the education at their young age.

Family size

It could be observed from Figure 4.4 that nearly two-thirds (69.6 per cent) of the farmers maintained joint family and the rest (30.4 per cent) nuclear family. This finding is in line with the findings of Ekong (2003) and Nnadi *et al.,* (2012) who reported that the 58 per cent and 62.5 per cent of the respondents had joint family.

Annual income

From the Figure 4.5 it is evident that more than one-half (51.30 per cent) of the traditional livestock farmers had medium level of annual income followed by high level (24.60 per cent) and 24.20 per cent with low income. The reason might be that most of the respondents hailed from agricultural animal husbandry background with limited resources and moderate land holdings naturally earn moderate income than their landless counterparts. This finding is in accordance with Pachaiyappan (2007) who found that majority of the respondents had medium level of annual income.

Livestock Possession

Figure 4.6 revealed that one-half (51.30 per cent) of the traditional farmers possessed medium number of livestock units followed by high (25.40 per cent) and low (23.30 per cent) livestock units. The reason may be due to the limited land holdings and lack of grazing facilities, lower productivity, high input cost and poor returns in livestock farming. This is in accordance with the findings of Pachaiyappan (2007) who reported that 89.00 per cent of farmers possessed medium number of livestock units.

Experience in livestock farming

A glance at the Figure 4.7 indicated that 48.30 per cent of respondents had medium experience in livestock Farming followed by high (33.80 per cent) and low (17.90 per cent) level of experience. Since majority of respondents were in old to medium age categories, they hold medium to high farming experience. This finding was in accordance with Josephine (2012) and Anbiah (2015).

Occupation

In this study, it was observed from Figure 4.8 that a majority of farmers (94.17 per cent) reared livestock for their secondary income and for remaining (5.85 per cent) livestock rearing was main occupation. The finding is similar to the usual trend, indicating livestock rearing is commonly followed in rural areas to provide additional income to the family. This clearly indicated essentiality of animal husbandry as an allied enterprise in Indian farming. This findings are in line with the findings of Pachaiyappan (2007).

Land holding

Figure 4.9 depicting the fact that more than one-half (59.60 per cent) of the respondents formed medium farmer category followed by high (27.50 per cent) and low (12.90 per cent) farmer categories. The reason attributed for majority of farmers belonging to medium to high category may be due to non-fragmentation of land maintained by the traditional joint family. This is in line with the findings of Singh and Misri *(*2004).

CONCLUSIONS

More than one-half of the respondents belonged to old age at the time of enquiry. Majority (77.5 per cent) of the traditional animal husbandry farmers were males. Nearly one-half of the farmers had primary level of education. More than one-half of the respondents belonged to medium income group and maintained joint family (69.60 per cent).The respondents maintained moderate number of livestock units (51.30 per cent) and had medium level of experience in livestock farming (48.30 per cent).Majority of the farmers (94.17 per cent) reared livestock as their secondary income only. The information on the use of medicinal plants is rarely written down. So study on recording of ITKs through PRA may be taken for effective documentation of unexplored ethno veterinary practices.

Acknowledgement

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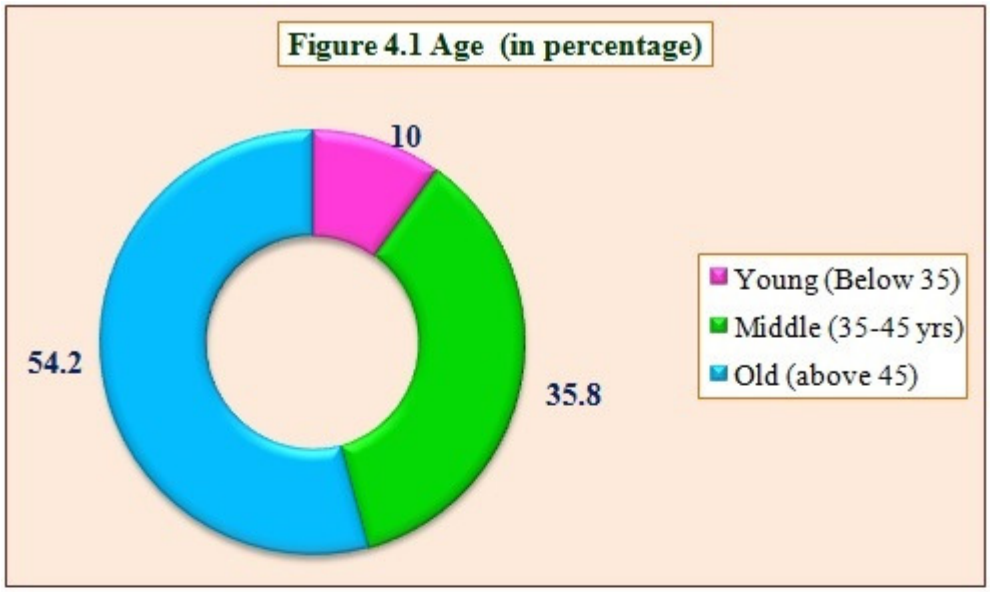
Figure 4.1 Age (in percentage)
10
54.2
35.8
Young (Below 35)
Middle (35-45 yrs)
Old (above 45)

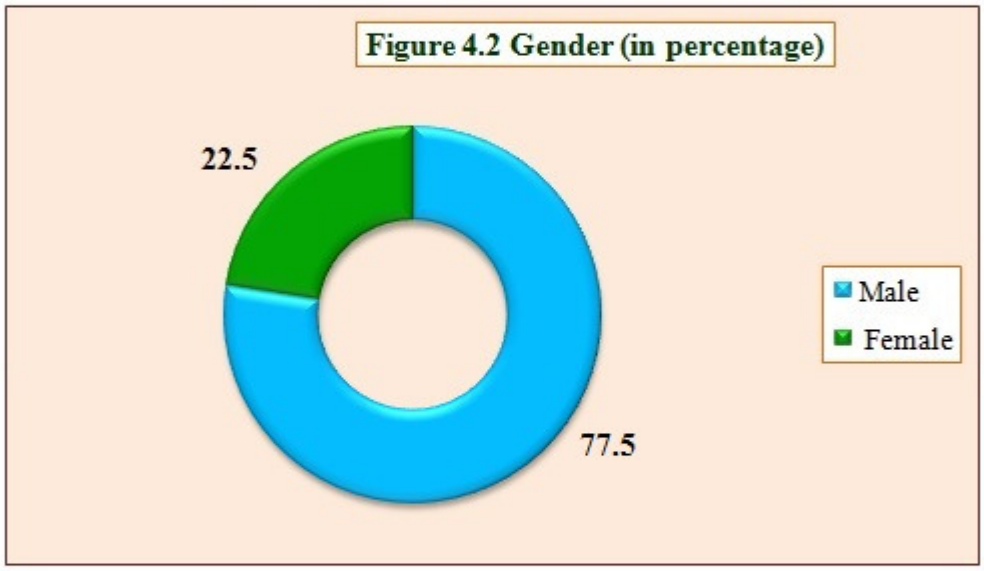
Figure 4.2 Gender (in percentage)
22.5
77.5
Male
Female

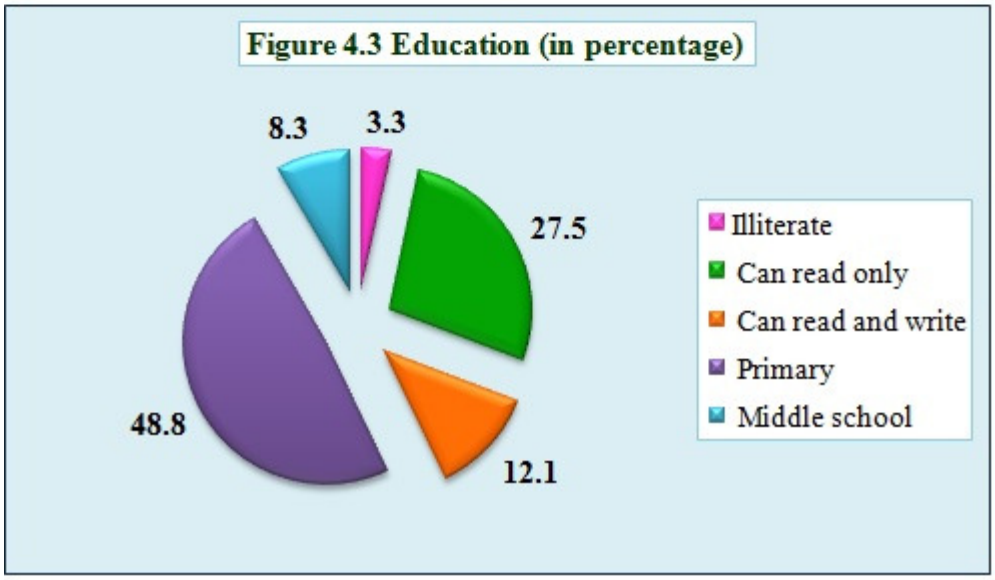
Figure 4.3 Education (in percentage)
8.3
3.3
27.5
48.8
12.1
Illiterate
Can read only
Can read and write
Primary
Middle school

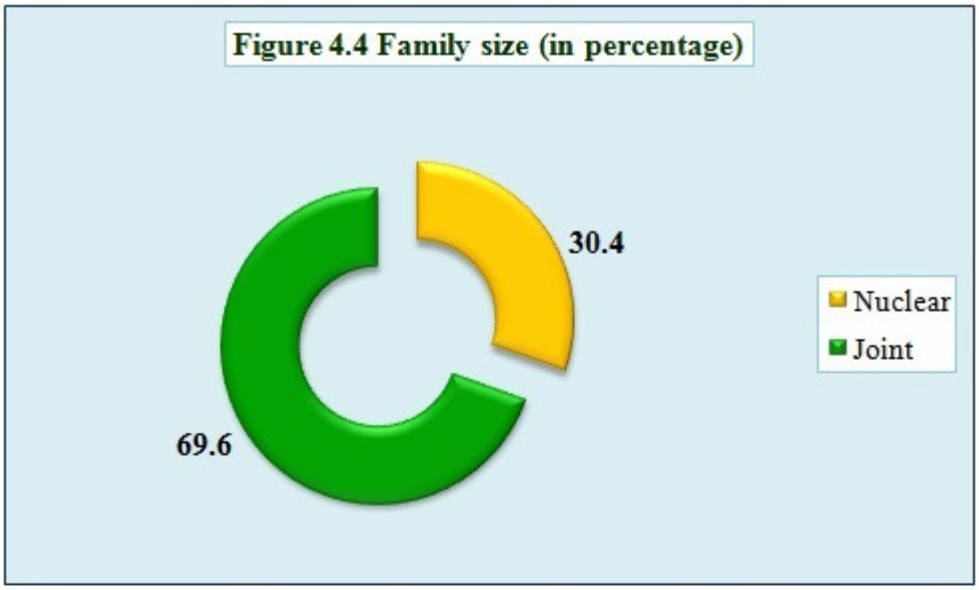
Figure 4.4 Family size (in percentage)
30.4
69.6
Nuclear
Joint

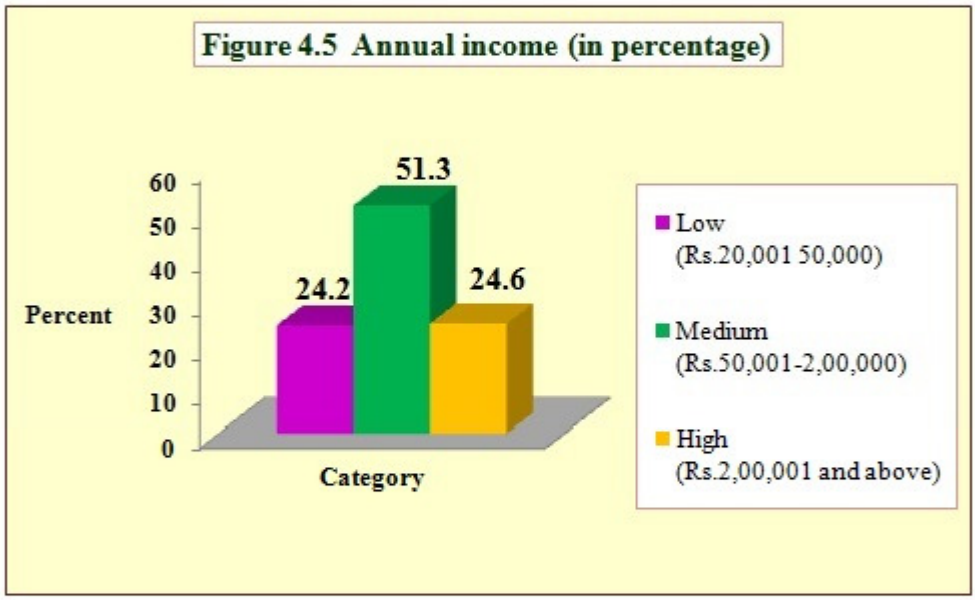
Figure 4.5 Annual income (in percentage)
Percent
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
24.2
51.3
24.6
Category
Low (Rs.20,001 50,000)
Medium (Rs.50,001-2,00,000)
High (Rs.2,00,001 and above)

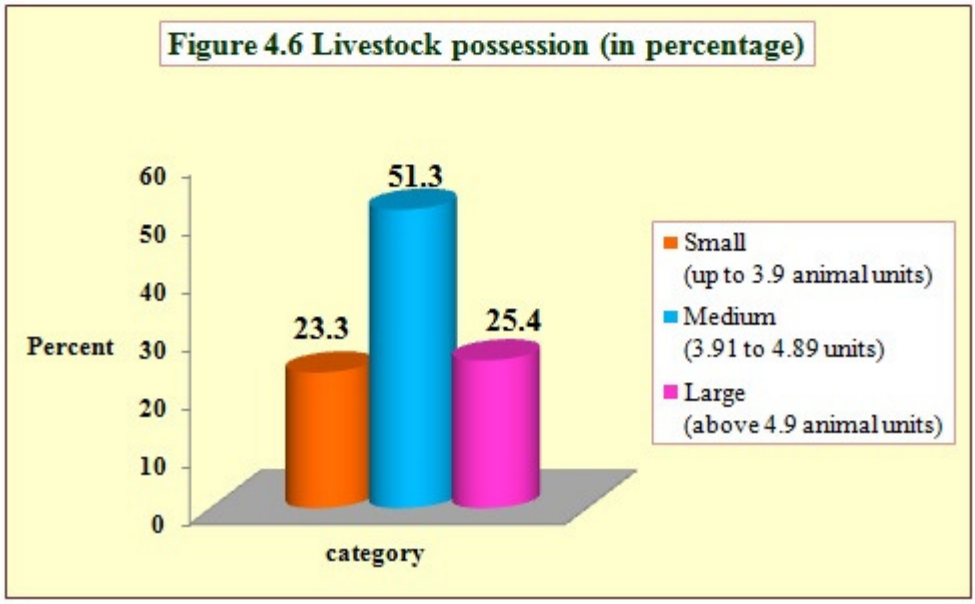
Figure 4.6 Livestock possession (in percentage)
Percent
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
23.3
51.3
25.4
category
Small (up to 3.9 animal units)
Medium (3.91 to 4.89 units)
Large (above 4.9 animal units)

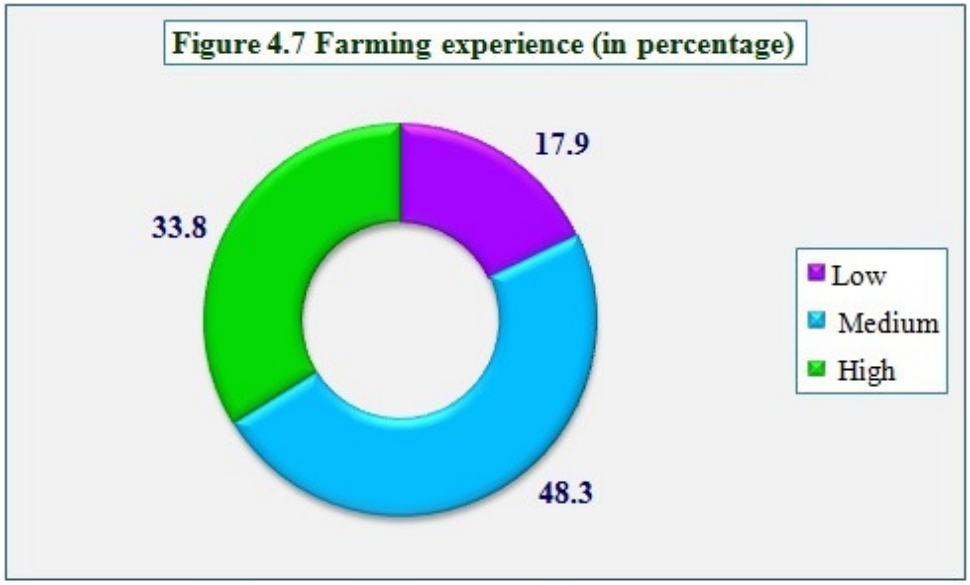
Figure 4.7 Farming experience (in percentage)
17.9
33.8
48.3
Low
Medium
High

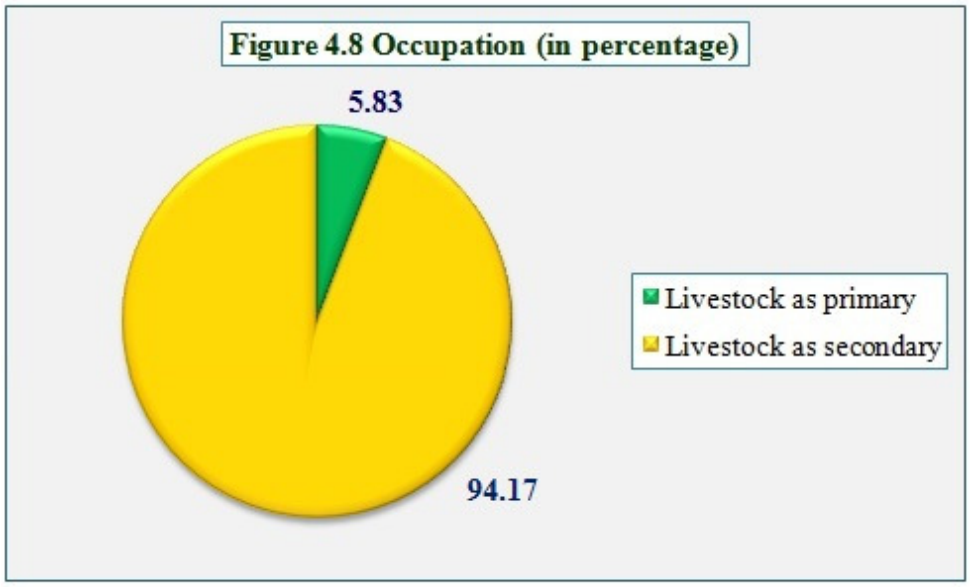
Figure 4.8 Occupation (in percentage)
5.83
94.17
Livestock as primary
Livestock as secondary

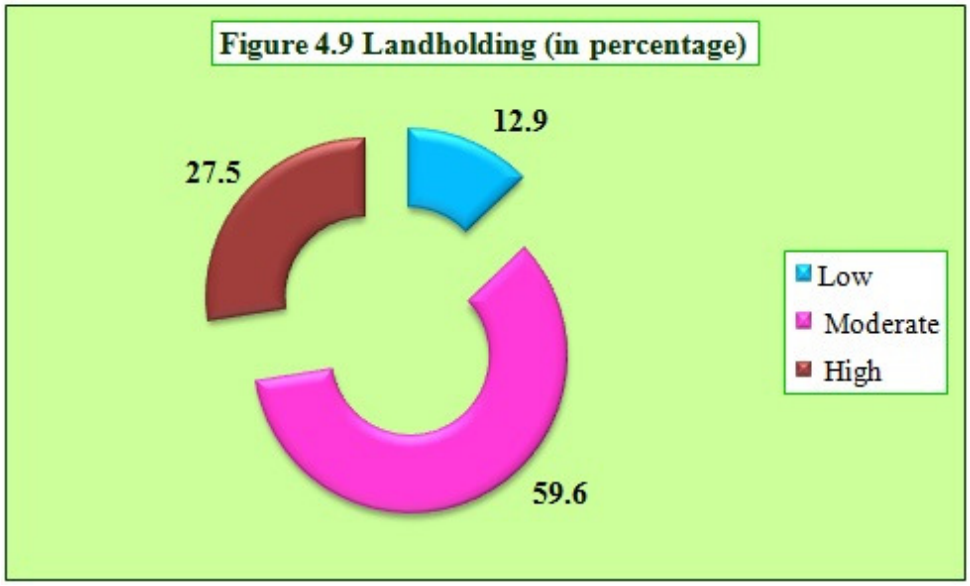
Figure 4.9 Landholding (in percentage)
12.9
27.5
59.6
Low
Moderate
High