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Economic Contribution of Cart Donkeys to the Livelihoods of Donkey Cart Families in the Rural and Peri-urban Areas of Punjab, Pakistan

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Abstract

Among livestock, donkeys are one of the major draught/carriage animals, source of transportation, livelihood means and security for the family crisis in Pakistan. Donkeys support at great extent to integrated agriculture in rural-areas and are efficiently used to pull wooden carts carrying variety of goods e.g fruits, vegetables, cereals, wood, bricks etc. and earn livelihood for many poor families in peri-urban areas. A baseline survey was conducted using semi-structured pre-tested questionnaire, 60 each from districts Faisalabad (Metropolitan) and Toba Tek Singh (Rural) donkey-cart owners (n=120) during January-February 2019, using snow-ball sampling to explore different transportation services by donkeys and economic contribution cart-donkeys and its impact on livelihoods of donkey-cart families in peri-urban and rural-areas of Punjab, Pakistan.

Results showed that interviewed cart-donkey owners had age averaged 38.5 ± 11.90 years and mostly were uneducated (n=66, 55 %) and 33 % had 5 years education. Most (78 %) were married and supporting family, averaged size of 6.0 ± 2.08 HH members. The donkey-carts keeping experience averaged 12.9 ± 4.78 years. Overall, donkey-cart price averaged 29816.7 ± 5768.58 PKR (177.3 Euro), was mostly made from Dalbergia sissoo wood (97 %). Donkeys age averaged 2–4 years (36 %), 4–7 (59 %) and 8–10 years 5 %. All donkeys were exclusively males and adult-donkey price averaged 35229.2 ± 19051.45 PKR (209.69 Euro) and Lassi breed price was significantly ($p < 0.001$) higher than Spurki and non-descript. Daily working hours averaged 9.0 ± 2.50 hours/day. Normally, most donkey-carts (97.5 %) were used around the year with averaged use 6.1 ± 1.11 days/week. All donkey-carts (98 %) were used exclusively for earning livelihoods with a few for household activities. Daily income averaged 853.8 ± 361.96 PKR/day (5.08 Euro/day) and was significantly ($p < 0.05$) different among two cities. Daily feeding expenditures averaged 185.9 ± 56.89 PKR/day (1.11 Euro/day). All the interviewed owners were keeping donkey-carts as their prime source of livelihood and earning exclusively being used to fulfil daily household needs (98.5 %) plus donkey-keeping expenses. In general, it is concluded that, donkey ownership and participation of donkey-carts in transportation of goods both in peri-urban and rural-areas has a positive impact livelihoods by increasing their income and livestock ownership. But despite of valuable contribution in providing livelihoods to the poor families, still it is extremely neglected species in terms of facilitation, conservation and resource allocation in Pakistan.

Keywords: Donkey, Draught Power, Pakistan, Poverty, Punjab, Subsistence, Wooden Carts

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