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RESEARCH ARTICLE

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF DOG OWNERS IN CORPORATION OF CHENNAI, TAMILNADU

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ABSTRACT

A survey was carried out to study socio-economic status of 60 dog owners in Corporation of Chennai, Tamil Nadu. Multistage random sampling procedure was adopted and relevant data were collected through personal interview with the help of pre-tested interview schedule. The result revealed that the Graduates (46.60 per cent) are more interested in dog rearing followed by Post graduates (16.60 per cent), Professionals (15.00 per cent), persons with Secondary level (13.30 per cent) and primary (8.30 per cent) level of education. The private employees are more interested in dog keeping followed by Students, Businessmen, Others (Retired persons, Job seekers etc.) and Government employees and the percentage among them is 45.00, 21.67, 16.67, 10.00 and 6.67 respectively. It is also found that 68.33 per cent of the dog owners have own individual house followed by rented apartment residents with 16.67 per cent, rented individual at 13.33 per cent and others 1.67 per cent.

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INTRODUCTION

Now a day's there is increased interest for pets among Indian population. From time immemorial, dogs had been associated with man and he used dogs for hunting food animals, and also guarding his belongings mainly livestock (Shibu and George, 2012), dogs are among the most popular pets in the western world (Hart 1995) and are present in almost every human society worldwide (Serpell, 2003). Selby et al. (1981) stated that the dog is a primary companion animal. Nowadays, dogs are kept as companion animals and have become an integral part of family (Vijayakumar et al., 2006). Sawaimul et al. (2009) stated that dog keeping is a status symbol of the dog owners and they also reported that the breeding and management of dogs rearing was dependent upon the socioeconomic status of dog owner. Shibu and George (2012) were found that 59 per cent of the owners had favourable attitude, 40 per cent neutral and one per cent unfavourable attitude towards rearing of dogs. Urban population were more interested in dog keeping as compared to rural population (Vijay Kumar et al., 2004). Vijay Kumar et al. (2004) and Cole et al. (2004) described the importance of selection and genetic diversity in dog rearing. Hence, present study has been carried out to assess the socio-economic status of dog owners in Corporation of Chennai, Tamilnadu.

Design of the study

Study was carried out in Corporation of Chennai, which was having highest dog population among the state of Tamil Nadu. The Madras Veterinary College Hospital and Private Pet clinics in a city were selected randomly with the help of veterinarian and from these total of 60 dog-owning household were identified randomly and surveyed by multistage random sampling. The data were collected through personal interview method with the help of pre-structured questionnaires. The data collected was subjected to percentage analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The gender specification of the dog owners is described in the Table 1. Out of 60 dog owners, 70 per cent were males and 30 per cent were females. The gender percentage revealed males were more interested in dog rearing compared to the females. Study on the age group of the respondent's shows that the highest percentage of respondents (70 per cent) belonged to the middle age group (19 years to 35 years), followed by old age (more than 35 years) and young age (up to age 18 years) groups with 23.33 per cent and 6.67 per cent, respectively. This clearly revealed that younger age group were less involved in dog rearing activity, compared to other age groups, which might be because of the lack of free time and education related activities. In addition, youngsters seldom receive support of their parents, as pet dog keeping involves costs and live species.

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Table 1. Socio-Economic Profile of dog owners (n=60)

Factor	Levels	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	42	70.00
	Female	18	30.00
Age	Upto 18 years	04	6.67
	19 to 35 years	42	70.00
	More than 35 years	14	23.33
Marital status	Married	24	40.00
	Unmarried	36	60.00
Education	Primary	05	8.30
	Secondary	08	13.30
	Graduation	28	46.60
	Post graduation	10	16.60
Occupation	Professional	09	15.00
	Students	13	21.67
	Private	27	45.00
	Own business	10	16.67
	Government	04	6.67
Residential Accommodation	Others (Retired, jobseeker etc.)	06	10.00
	Owned Apartments	01	1.67
Income (in lakh Rs.)	Owned Individual	41	68.33
	Rented Apartments	10	16.67
	Rented Individual	08	13.33
Income (in lakh Rs.)	Low (<3.00 lakhs)	39	65.00
	Middle (3.00 to 6.00 lakhs)	13	21.67
	High (>6.00 lakhs)	08	13.33

The observation on marital status of the respondents showed that 60 per cent were unmarried and 40 per cent were married (Table 1). Of the unmarried owners, most of them were students. The more proportion of married population preferring pet dogs could be attributed to the availability of more family members to care and maintain the dogs, besides pet dog keeping for protection and companion as a relief against psycho-somatic disorders. The results of educational status of the dog owners showed that, of the total respondents studied, most of them (46.60 per cent) had collegiate education, followed by post graduation (16.60 per cent), professional (15.00 per cent), secondary (13.30 per cent) and primary (8.30 per cent) education. On comparing the overall educational status of different categories of pet dog owners, it was found that majority of owners were literates with college level and/or higher education. This showed that the pet dog owners with a good educational status had higher preferences for pet dogs, which could be attributed to their knowledge gained on pet dog management through comprehension.

The occupational status of pet dog owners showed that the highest percentage (45.00) of owners were employees of private firms, followed by students (21.67 per cent), those owning business (16.67 per cent), others (10.00 per cent) who were retired, job seekers and housewives, etc. and Government employees (6.67 per cent). On comparing the different categories pet dog owners, it was found that the 68.33 per cent of the pet owners were residing in their own premises. The reason for this could be their higher purchasing power to own dogs and freedom to maintain them at their owned houses unlike the pet owners who were residing in rented houses.

Further, owners of houses need not worry about anticipated risks involved in transport of pet dogs during shifting of their residence as in the case of residents of rented houses. Of the total sample respondents, 65.00 per cent were belonged to low income group with annual earnings less than Rs. 3.00 lakh, followed by respondents of middle income group with earnings in the range of Rs. 3.00 – 6.00 lakh (21.67 per cent) and high income group with earnings above Rs. 6.00 lakh (13.33 per cent).

Conclusion

Present study revealed that males were commonly rearing the pet dogs compared to the females. Most of the respondents belonged to middle age group (19 years to 35 years), followed by old age and young age (up to age 18 years) groups. On comparing the overall educational status of different categories of dog owners, most of them had collegiate education, followed by post graduation, professional, secondary and primary education. Among the respondents, employees of private firms preferred pet dog keeping, followed by students, those owning business, others who were retired, job seekers and housewives, etc. and Government employees. Of the total dog owners, most of them belonging to low income group, followed by middle and high income group respectively.

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