

Research Article:**ASSESSMENT ON THE STATUS AND PROSPECTS OF GOAT FARMING IN KHAJURA RURAL MUNICIPALITY****Rahul Pandey^{*}** , **Suraj Gautam**  and **Tripti Panta** 

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ABSTRACT

Goat farming is a key livelihood source in Nepal's rural areas, yet systematic evidence on its status and constraints at the local municipality level remains limited. This study assessed the current status and future prospects of goat farming in Khajura Rural Municipality, Banke district, conducted from March to June 2025. Using simple random sampling, 95 goat-rearing households were surveyed through semi-structured interview schedules. The study found that semi-intensive farming (88.40%) and crossbred goats (26.34%) were dominant. The three most critical production constraints were inadequate nutrition management (index = 0.83), unavailability of quality breeds (0.80), and market instability (0.78). Economic analysis revealed a benefit-cost ratio of 1.22 and a net profit of NRs. 28,014 per farm, confirming financial viability. Despite limited access to government subsidies (3.15%) and formal training (13.70%), 92.60% of farmers expressed willingness to expand, indicating strong commercialization potential. Targeted policy support, capacity-building interventions, and market stabilization mechanisms are recommended to unlock this potential.

Keywords: Benefit-cost ratio, goat breeds, market instability, nutrition management, rural livelihoods

INTRODUCTION**Background**

Nepal's agricultural sector engages approximately 67% of the population, with livestock contributing around 27% of the Agricultural Gross Domestic Product (AGDP) and approximately 13% of the total country Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development [MoALD], 2022). Goat farming plays a particularly significant role, as goat meat ranks second in consumption in Nepal, accounting for 20.69% of national meat output, following buffalo meat at 52.80% (MoALD, 2020). Goats are primarily reared for meat, hide, fibre and manure, with milking remaining a less common practice (Shah et al., 2023).

Goat farming is a promising agricultural activity due to the region's favorable climate, good market access and availability of local resources. The subtropical climate of Nepal supports a diverse range of breeds, including local hardy types like Khari, which is well-suited for smallholder and beginner farmers due to its adaptability and disease resistance, as well as more commercially productive breeds such as Jamunapari, Boer and Sirohi (Mishra et al., 2024). A well-structured goat farming operation requires clean, raised and well-ventilated housing, along with a balanced diet of green fodder, dry fodder and concentrated feed, resources that are generally accessible or can be cultivated locally (Japan International Cooperation Agency [JICA], 2020). With a herd of 20–25 goats, a farmer can expect approximately 40 kids annually,

and strategic selling during high-demand festive seasons such as Dashain, Tihar and Eid, particularly following a fattening period, can yield significant economic returns (Dhakal et al., 2021).

Despite these opportunities, goat farming in Khajura Rural Municipality continues to face systemic constraints, including low productivity, limited access to improved breeds, inadequate veterinary services, high feed costs, and market instability, which collectively hinder the sector's growth and sustainability (MoALD, 2020; Shah et al., 2023). Given these realities, the present study was conducted with the general objective of assessing the current status and future prospects of goat farming in Khajura Rural Municipality. Specifically, the study aimed to examine the status of improved goat breeds, identify the key production challenges faced by farmers, and estimate the profitability of goat farming in the study area.

RESEARCH METHODS

Selection of the study area

The research was carried out in Khajura Rural Municipality, selected due to its higher number of goat-farming beneficiary households registered under government livestock development programs. A map illustrating the Banke district is provided in Fig. 1 below.

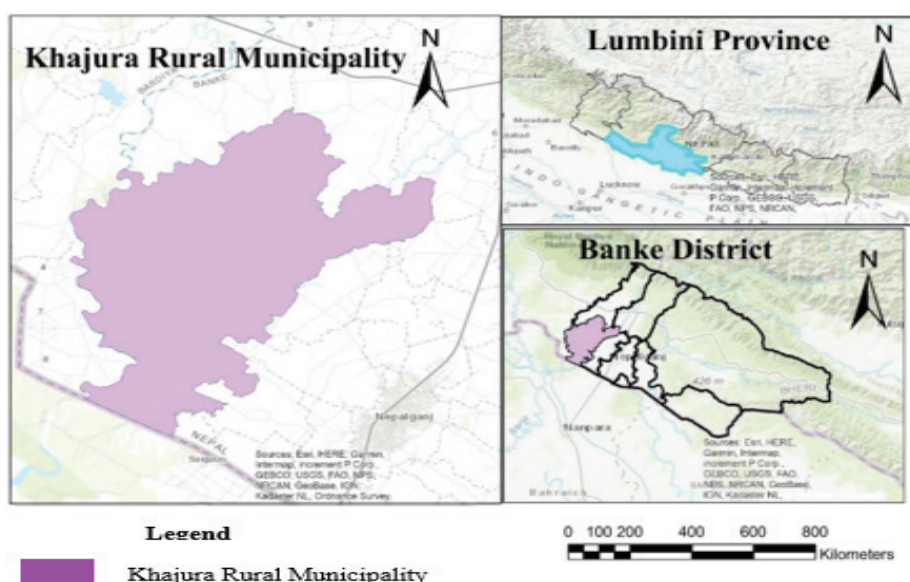


Fig. 1. Map showing the study area. The scale bar is for the map of Nepal. The map is adapted from Environmental System Research Institute (2019)

Sample and sampling techniques

The total number of households having agriculture and livestock in Khajura Rural Municipality was 6937 (Khajura Rural Municipality, 2024). The farmers' households were selected using simple random sampling.

Using the finite population formula, adapted from Mebratie et al. (2022) with:

$$n = \frac{N \times Z^2 \times p \times (1-p)}{(N-1) \times E^2 + Z^2 \times p \times (1-p)}$$

Where $N = 6937$ (population size), $Z = 1.96$ (95% confidence level), $p = 0.5$ (maximum variability) and $E = 0.10$ (10% margin of error), $n =$ giving the sample size of approximately 95 respondents.

Data collection

Primary data were collected through semi-structured household surveys (March–June 2025), pre-tested on five households. Key informant interviews (KII) validated survey findings. Secondary data were obtained from published journals, research articles, GDF annual reports and MoALD records.

Data analysis

Primary data collected from field survey and secondary data from different sources were coded, tabulated and analyzed through Microsoft Excel 2013 and Statistical Packages of Social Sciences (IBM SPSS Version 25). To analyze socio-demographic and related characteristics like age, ethnicity, gender, education, religion, etc., descriptive statistics such as percentage and frequency were used.

Problem ranking and challenges

These were ranked by using an indexing technique. To assess the relative seriousness of the primary production and marketing issues, a nine-point scaling method was implemented with 1.00 being the most serious, 0.88 being very serious, 0.77 being serious, 0.66 being moderate, 0.55 being mild to moderate, 0.44 being slightly less serious, 0.33 being minor, 0.22 being very minor and 0.11 being negligible (Paudel et al., 2021).

$$I_{\text{imp/prob}} = \text{Index value for intensity/probability} = \Sigma(S_i F_i) / N$$

Where, $I_{\text{imp/prob}}$ = Index value for intensity, Σ = Summation, S_i = Scale value of i^{th} intensity, F_i = Frequency of i^{th} response and N = Total number of respondents.

Economic analysis

Total cost of production (TC)

Total cost of production is the sum of the total variable cost and total fixed cost (Paudel et al., 2021).

$$\text{Cost of production} = \text{Total fixed cost (TFC)} + \text{Total Variable cost (TVC)}$$

Where,

$$\text{Fixed cost (FC)} = \text{Shed construction} + \text{Equipment \& infrastructure} + \text{Cost of breeding stock}$$

$$\text{Variable cost (VC)} = \text{Feed costs} + \text{Labor cost} + \text{Miscellaneous costs}$$

$$(\text{transportation, marketing, minor repairs})$$

Profitability analysis

Gross revenue is the product of the total production of live goats and average price of the goat (Paudel et al., 2021).

$$\text{Gross Revenue} = \text{Total production of live goat} \times \text{Average price of live goat}$$

$$\text{Net benefit} = \text{Gross revenue} - \text{Total cost}$$

$$\text{Gross margin} = \text{Gross revenue} - \text{Variable cost}$$

[Note: Manure revenue was not included as farmers in the study area did not report regular commercial sale of manure; it was primarily used on-farm for subsistence purposes]

c. Benefit-cost ratio

The benefit-cost ratio is obtained by dividing gross revenue (total benefit) by total production cost (Paudel et al., 2021).

$$\text{Benefit-cost ratio} = \text{Total benefit} / \text{Total cost}$$

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-demographic characteristics of the farm households

The farm households were distributed by socio-demographic attributes that include sex of the respondents, age, religion, education level, and major occupation of the respondents in the study site (Table 1). Understanding these demographic attributes is essential as they shape farmers' decision-making, resource access and technology adoption in goat farming systems.

Table 1. Socio-demographic attributes of the participants

Description	Category	Frequency (n = 95)	Percent (%)
Sex of the respondents	Female	56	58.90
	Male	39	41.10
Age (Years)	Upto 40(Youths)	52	54.70
	41-50(middle aged)	33	34.70
	Upto 59(Senior citizen)	10	10.60
Religion	Hindu	85	88.40
	Muslim	10	11.60
Education level	Illiterate	21	22.10
	Primary (Grade 1-8)	17	17.90
	Secondary (Grade 9-12)	44	46.30
Major occupation	Graduate	13	13.70
	Farming	63	66.30
	Government job	3	3.20
	Job in the private sector	26	27.40
	Foreign employment	1	1.10
	Business	2	2.00

Gender involvement in goat farming

Gender-wise distribution of decision-making roles in goat farming revealed that females played a more dominant role compared to males. In household-level decision-making, 49.50% of respondents reported female-led decisions, 30.50% were male-dominated and 20.00% indicated joint decision-making. A similar pattern was observed in marketing (49.50% female, 25.30% male, 25.20% joint) and feeding practices (50.50% female, 44.20% joint, 5.30% male). This data aligns with Sapkota et al. (2017), in households headed by women, particularly in subsistence goat farming, the main objective of goat sales is to meet household expenses and emergencies. Men herd the other animals, while women oversee the watering and feeding of tiny ruminants and other livestock close to their homesteads.

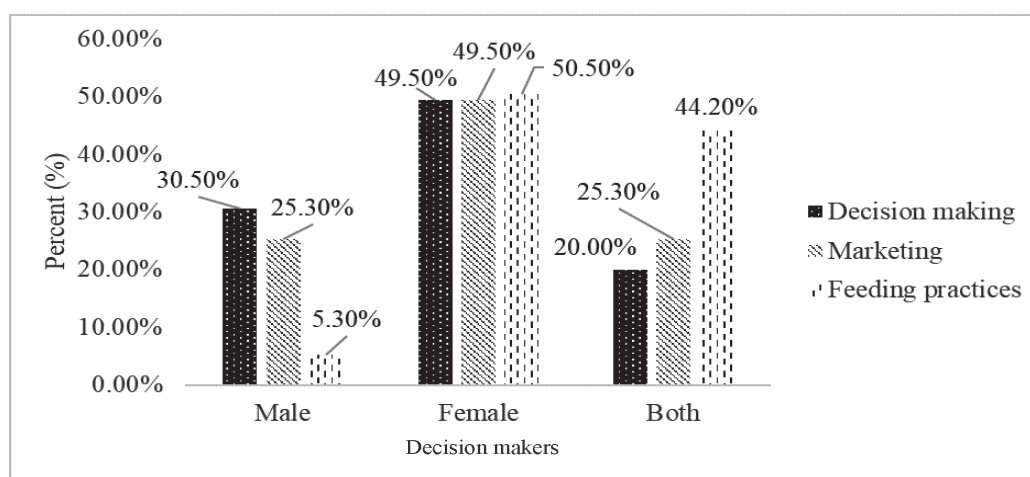


Fig. 2. Gender involvement in goat farming

Farm and institutional characteristics

Average land holding for crop was 17.89 kattha and for livestock 3.65 kattha (including shed and fodder area). The majority of respondents (63.15%) had 0-8 years of goat farming experience. Access to extension services was severely limited; 61.10% had never received any support, while only 2.10% received it regularly. Among extension topics, livestock management was the most prioritized (index = 0.81), followed by goat health and disease prevention (0.77), feeding and nutrition (0.73), and climate adaptation (0.15). Overall, 95.70% considered extension services to be less effective.

Table 2. Extension services received by the farmers

Extension services received	Frequency (n = 37)							Index	Rank
	1.00	0.85	0.71	0.56	0.42	0.28	0.14		
Livestock management	8	15	11	3	0	0	0	0.81	I
Goat health and disease prevention	11	8	7	9	2	0	0	0.77	II
Feeding and nutrition	7	7	14	5	3	1	0	0.73	III
Market access and marketing strategies	8	2	2	7	15	2	1	0.60	IV
Breeding techniques	2	4	2	13	12	4	0	0.55	V
Financial management	1	1	1	0	5	26	3	0.33	VI
Climate adaptation strategies	0	0	0	0	0	4	33	0.15	VII

Government subsidies remained virtually inaccessible, with only 3.15% of respondents having received them. Key barriers included delayed approval processes (29.34%), lack of awareness (20.65%) and complex application procedures (19.56%). Formal training was similarly scarce (13.70%), predominantly provided by government organizations (76.93%). Access to veterinary service was comparatively better (94.70%), but access to credit remained low (14.70%), with barriers including inadequate collateral (27.40%), complex procedures (26.30%) and limited credit availability (25.30%).

An overwhelming majority (92.60%) expressed willingness to expand goat farming conditions upon government and policy support (46.30%), improved marketing facilities (24.20%) and financial support (15.80%). Similarly, 94.70% expressed willingness to join cooperatives, motivated by the access to training and resources (44.44%). These findings suggest strong collective action potential, consistent with evidence from other smallholder goat farming contexts in Nepal (Neupane et al., 2018). The majority of respondents 96.80% were aware of livestock insurance.

Table 3. Institutional characteristics of the goat farmers

Description	Category	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Subsidies (n=95)	Received	3	3.15
	Not received	92	96.85
Issues faced on subsidies	Dearth of awareness	19	20.65
	Complicated application process	18	19.56
	Eligibility issues	11	11.95
	Delayed or uncertain approval	27	29.34
	Insufficiency of assistance	12	13.06
	Limited trust in government support	5	5.44
	Government	10	76.93
Training (n=95)	Received	13	13.70
	Not received	82	86.30
Formal training source	NGOs	1	7.69
	Private sector	1	7.69
	Local farmers or farmers group	1	7.69
Veterinary services (n=95)	Accessed	90	94.70
	Non-accessed	5	5.30
Access to credit (n=95)	Yes	14	14.70
	No	81	85.30
Sources of credit	Bank	8	57.10
	Microfinance	6	42.90
Challenges in credit access	High interest rates	18	18.90
	Inadequate amount of collateral	26	27.40
	Limited availability of credits	24	25.30
	Complex application process	25	26.30
	No access to financial institutions	2	2.10
Willingness to expand (n=95)	Yes	88	92.60
	No	7	7.40
Support needed	Financial support	15	15.80
	Technical and training support	9	9.50
	Marketing	23	24.20
	Government and policy support	44	46.30
Willingness to join cooperatives (n=95)	Research and innovation	4	4.20
	Yes	90	94.70
Reasons to join cooperatives	No	5	5.30
	Better market access	21	23.33
	Bulk purchasing benefits	21	23.33
	Access to training and resources	40	44.44
Livestock insurance awareness (n=95)	Easier loan and subsidy access	7	7.77
	Risk sharing and support	1	1.11
	Aware farmers	92	96.80

Production

Meat production was the primary purpose of goat rearing (95.80%), while only 4.20% raised goats for breeding purposes. The semi-intensive farming system was dominant (88.40%), with only 8.40% practicing extensive systems and 3.20% using intensive methods. Crossbred goats were the most commonly reared breed (26.34%), followed by Terai (23.05%), Jamunapari (20.58%), Khari (14.81%), Barbari (9.88%), Black Bengal (4.12%) and Saanen (1.22%) in Fig. 3. The predominance of crossbred goat contrasts with Siddiky's (2017) finding that Terai dominates the southern plain. Likely reflecting a shift toward higher-yielding crosses, consistent with Devkota (2025), who reported that crossbred adoption can raise meat and milk yields and enhance profitability.

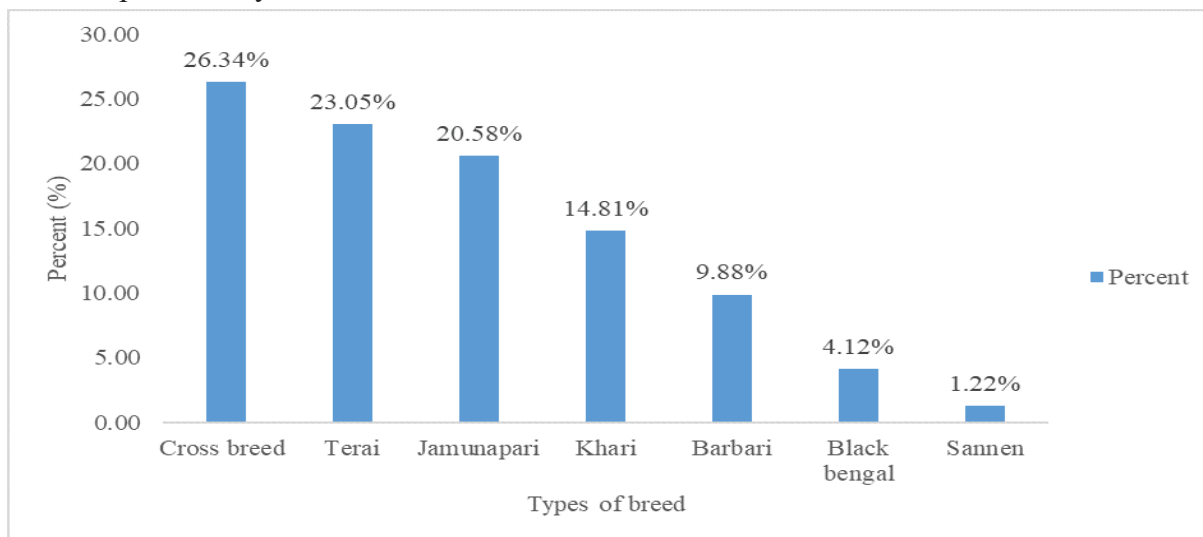


Fig. 3. Types of goat breeds raised

Goat biological status in Khajura Rural Municipality

The data indicated that does were the most reared goat category, with mean of 3.77, due to their importance for breeding and milk production. Kids followed with a mean of 3.18, reflecting ongoing herd renewal practices. Castrated bucks had a moderate presence (mean = 2.20), indicating their role in meat production. Bucks were the least reared, with a mean of only 0.81, showing that farmers generally keep few breeding males.

Table 4. Goat biological status in Khajura Rural Municipality

Goat biological status	Mean	Standard Deviation
Bucks	0.81	1.37
Does	3.77	5.14
Kids	3.18	2.36
Castrated bucks	2.20	2.59

Major sources of goat feed

Among respondents, 33.94% fed goats with farm-cultivated fodder, 31.02% relied on natural grazing, 27.01% purchased feed and 8.03% used kitchen waste (Fig. 4).

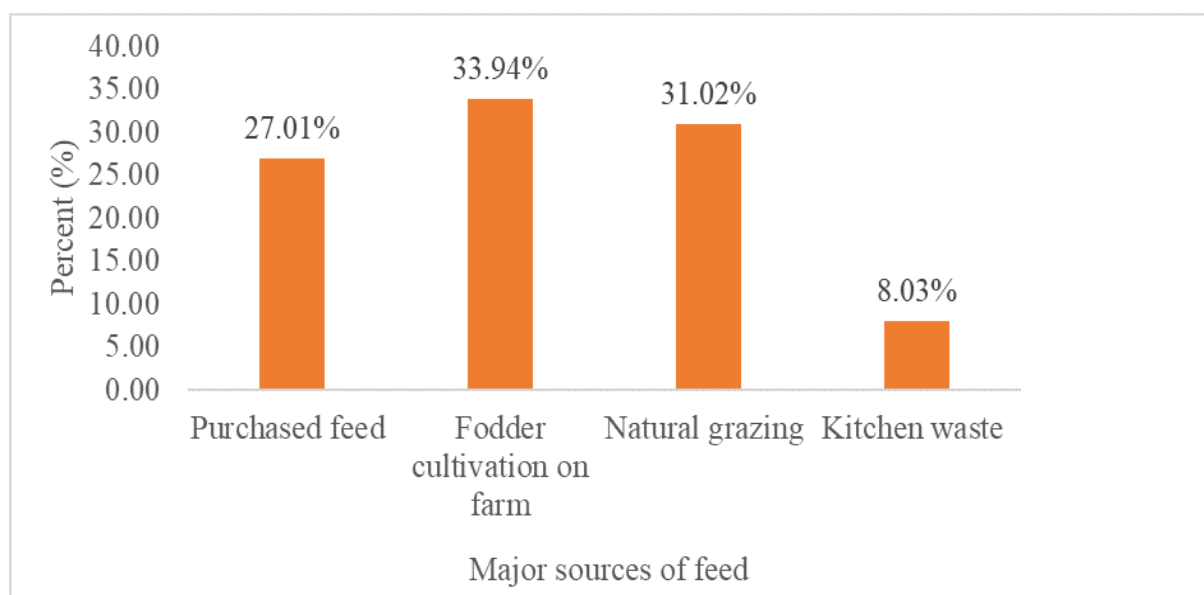


Fig. 4. Major sources of goat feed

Annual income of the farm households from goat farming

Annual income from goat farming is shown in Table 5. Most respondents (73.68%) earned less than NRs. 50,000, followed by 21.05% earning NRs. 50,000–100,000, and only 3.16% exceeding NRs. 150,000.

Table 5. Annual income of the farm households from goat farming

Amount in NRs. '000	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
<50	70	73.68
50-100	20	21.05
100-150	2	2.11
150-200	2	2.11
>200	1	1.05
Total	95	100.00

Deworming of goats

Deworming was widely practiced (95.80%), most commonly at six-month (34.60%) and three-month (32.96%) intervals (Table 6).

Table 6. Deworming of goats

Description	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Deworming (n = 95)	Practiced	91
	Not practiced	4
Intervals (n = 91)	1 month	8
	2 months	12
	3 months	30
	4 months	10
	6 months	31

Production problems in goat farming

Goat farming in Khajura Rural Municipality is constrained by multiple interrelated factors. Inadequate nutrition management (index = 0.83) remains the most critical issue, reflecting dependence on low-quality grazing and seasonal fodder shortages. Similar findings were reported by Shah et al. (2023) and Devkota (2025), who emphasized that poor feed quality directly reduces growth rate and productivity. In addition, unavailability of improved breeds (index = 0.80) limits genetic potential, consistent with Mishra et al. (2024), who highlighted low adoption of high-yielding breeds in Terai regions. Market instability (index = 0.78) further discourages commercialization, as also reported by Neupane et al. (2018), where price fluctuation reduced farmer confidence. Selection and culling (0.59) and unavailability of technical knowledge (0.57) were of moderate importance. Mating issues (0.51) and disease and parasite infestation (0.46) were less severe but still relevant. The least critical problems were infertility (0.25) and dystocia (0.16) (Table 7).

Table 7. Problems in goat farming given by respondents

Problems	Frequency (n = 95)										Index	Rank
	1.00	0.88	0.77	0.66	0.55	0.44	0.33	0.22	0.11			
Inadequate nutrition management	35	27	14	7	2	5	4	1	0	0.83	I	
Unavailability of quality breeds	20	31	18	12	12	0	1	0	1	0.80	II	
Market instability	25	23	22	8	4	5	4	3	1	0.78	III	
Selection and culling	2	2	16	25	29	10	10	1	0	0.59	IV	
Unavailability of technical knowledge	7	5	12	23	11	13	15	2	7	0.57	V	
Mating: outbreeding and crossbreeding	1	2	9	12	17	36	14	4	0	0.51	VI	
Disease & Parasites	5	1	1	8	19	19	35	4	3	0.46	VII	
Infertility	0	3	2	0	1	4	8	61	16	0.25	VIII	
Dystocia	0	1	1	0	0	3	4	19	67	0.16	IX	

Compared to Dhakal et al. (2021), where disease was a major constraint, this study shows relatively lower disease impact due to better veterinary access (94.70%). However, technical knowledge gaps and weak extension services still restrict adoption of improved practices, indicating the need for integrated support systems. Goat mortality was experienced by 48.40% of respondents. Stress was the leading cause (index = 0.83), attributed to environmental conditions and handling, followed by disease incidence (0.79) and poor nutrition (0.78). Deworming was a near-universal management practice (95.80%).

Economic analysis

The annual cost of production and profitability analysis for a standard 10-goat semi-intensive farm is summarized in Table 8. All values are calculated on an annual basis (12 months) and presented per standard farm unit (10 breeding does + 1 buck), representing the average household herd size derived from the survey (mean total goats = ~10 animals). Fixed costs are expressed as annual depreciation (shed: NRs.60,000 over 10 years; equipment: NRs.15,000 over 5 years; breeding stock: 9 animals × NRs.8,000 over 5 productive years). Feed costs cover purchased concentrate and dry-season fodder only; own-cultivated green fodder is not monetized, consistent with prevailing smallholder practice. Routine daily care is performed by family members and is not monetized; only casual hired labor (30 person-days/year) is included. Manure revenue was excluded as it was used on-farm. Annual revenue assumes 8

goats sold per year (10 does \times ~85% kidding rate \times 1.5 kids/doe = ~10 kids; 8 sold, 2 retained as replacements) at the survey-reported average price of NRs.19,500/goat, yielding a gross revenue of NRs.1,56,000. Total fixed cost was NRs.25,700 and total variable cost was NRs.1,02,286, yielding a total cost of NRs.1,27,986. The operation generated a net profit of NRs.28,014, a gross margin of NRs.53,714, a profit margin of 17.96%, a benefit-cost ratio of 1.22, and a return on investment of 21.89%.

Table 8. Annual cost of production and profitability analysis for a standard 10-goat farm (per farm, per year)

Costs	Unit	Quantity	Rate	Total cost (NRs.)
Fixed cost				
Shed Construction (Annual Depreciation)	-	1	6,000	6,000
Equipment & Infrastructure (Annual Depreciation)	Set of equipment	15	3,000 (NRs.15,000 \div 5yr)	3,000
Breeding Stock (Annual Depreciation)	NRs.	9 animals	1,600	14,400
Livestock Insurance (optional)	Per goat	10	230	2,300
Total fixed cost	NRs.			25,700
Variable cost				
Feed Costs (purchased concentrate + dry-season fodder; own green fodder not monetized)	Annual (purchased)	—	—	53,286
Veterinary & Health Care	Per month	1	12,000	6,000
Labor Costs (casual hired; 30 person-days/yr; routine care by family, not monetized)	Person-days/year	30	800	24,000
Breeding & Reproduction Costs (AI + misc., annual)	Per the breeding process	1	—	2,000
Water & Electricity (NRs.500/month \times 12)	Per month		6,000	6,000
Miscellaneous Costs (transport, marketing, minor repairs)	NRs.			5,000
Total variable cost	NRs.			1,02,286
Total cost	NRs.			1,27,986
Gross revenue (8 goats @ NRs.19,500/goat)	NRs.	8	19,500	1,56,000
Gross Margin (Revenue – TVC)	NRs.			53,714
Net profit	NRs.			28,014
Profit margin (%)	NRs.			17.96
Benefit-cost ratio	NRs.			1.22
Return on investment (%)	NRs.			21.89

Note: All values are annual (12 months) for a standard 10-goat semi-intensive farm (8 breeding does + 1 buck + 1 replacement doe retained), representing the average survey household herd size (~10 animals). Fixed costs = annual depreciation (shed: NRs.60,000 \div 10yr; equipment: NRs.15,000 \div 5yr; breeding stock: 9 animals \times NRs.8,000 \div 5yr productive life). Feed cost covers purchased concentrate and dry-season fodder only; own cultivated green fodder is not monetized. Family labour for routine daily care is not monetized; only 30 person-days of casual hired labour (NRs.800/day) is included. Revenue assumes 8 goats sold per year (10 does \times 85% kidding rate \times ~1.5 kids/doe \approx 10 kids; 8 sold, 2 retained as replacements) at the survey mean price of NRs.19,500/goat. Manure revenue excluded (used on-farm). Gross Margin = Gross Revenue – TVC; Net Profit = Gross Revenue – TC (TFC + TVC).

The benefit-cost ratio (B:C) of 1.22 observed in this study confirms profitability but is lower than the 1.70 reported by Panth et al. (2021) in Gulmi district. This difference can be explained by several factors. First, farmers of Khajura operate mostly at a semi-intensive level with higher feed costs and lower economies of scale. Secondly, farmers of Gulmi benefit from better hill-based fodder systems and lower input costs, which improves profitability. Additionally, market access and price advantages in Gulmi contribute to higher returns. The similarity between B:C ratios (1.2 and 1.70) should not be interpreted as equal profitability, but rather both indicate positive returns (>1), meaning the enterprise is financially viable in both locations. However, the higher ratio in Gulmi reflects more efficient resource utilization and better management conditions. In contrast, the relatively lower ratio in Khajura is influenced by higher production costs, market instability, and limited institutional support. These findings align with Devkota (2025), who emphasized that profitability in goat farming varies significantly based on location, management practices, and market integration. Therefore, improving feed management, strengthening market systems, and enhancing extension services could help increase the B:C ratio in Khajura to levels comparable with more developed goat farming regions.

Market analysis

Local markets were the most accessible marketing outlet, followed by direct sales to customers, while regional or national market access remained minimal. The majority of farmers sold to butchers (54.70%), followed by local markets (35.80%), consistent with Neupane et al. (2018), who reported that local butchers and vendors are the primary buyers for goat farmers across Nepal. Seasonal market fluctuations were experienced by 89.50% of respondents and only 3.10% perceived the market as stable. Price fluctuation was the dominant competitive concern (80.00% of those facing competition). The findings highlight the need for cooperative-based value chain development and improved market information systems to stabilize income for smallholder goat farmers.

CONCLUSION

The predominance of Crossbreed and Terai goats, followed by Jamunapari and Khari breeds, reflected farmers' strategic balance between improved productivity through crossbreeding and preservation of indigenous genetic resources adapted to local conditions. Interconnected constraints of poor nutrition, limited breed access and market instability created barriers preventing productivity improvement. The highly favorable financial indicators demonstrated strong economic viability and profitability of goat farming, making it a financially sustainable and attractive enterprise for farmers in the study area. Extension service gaps hindered technology adoption, while underdeveloped market integration exposed farmers to price fluctuations. Women's primary control over goat operations necessitated gender-responsive services. High farmer interest in cooperatives for training and resources presented opportunities for collective action addressing market constraints and enhancing income stability.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

RP: Conceptualization, Methodology, Software, Validation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Data curation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing, Visualization; **SG:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Validation, Data curation, Writing – review & editing, Visualization; **TP:** Data curation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing, Visualization.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest regarding this publication.

ETHICAL APPROVAL AND PERMITS

Ethical considerations were addressed through verbal informed consent, with respondents assured of anonymity and voluntary participation.

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