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Study of Socio – Economic Profile of Farmers in Mahabubnagar District of Andhra Pradesh

B. NEETHI	PG Student, Department of Agricultural Extension, College of Agriculture, Acharya N.g Ranga Agriculture University, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad.
A. SAILAJA	Associate Professor, Department of agricultural extension, college of agriculture, Acharya N.G Ranga Agriculture University, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad.

ABSTRACT

The Acharya N.G Ranga Agricultural University (ANGRAU) has been bestowed with the responsibility of teaching, research and extension education. Agricultural extension involves the whole gamut of complex interaction between farmers, extension workers and researchers in transfer of technology, eventually resulting in enhancing productivity and profitability to the farmers. Ex- post facto research design was followed for carrying out the study. The State of Andhra Pradesh was selected purposively for the study as the investigator hails from the state. Out of 23 districts of Andhra Pradesh, Mahabubnagar district was selected purposively for the study. From each selected village, 30 respondents were selected randomly thus making a sample of 120 respondents for the study. The majority of the respondents belonged to middle age (40.00%), illiterate (38.33%), had small farm size (26.67%), medium farming experience (48.34%), medium annual income (40.83%), labour (in own land, hired) + agriculture as main and subsidiary occupation (49.17%), medium innovativeness (56.67%), medium economic orientation (48.33%), medium market orientation (45.84%), medium change proneness (49.17%), medium achievement motivation (51.67%), medium information seeking behaviour (56.67%), with no membership in any social organization (44.17%) and medium participation in DAATTC activities (50.83%) respectively. Hence above variables should be taken into consideration for selection of master trainers and innovative farmers so that these farmers can effectively communicate to fellow farmers resulting in effective service utilisation.

KEYWORDS :

Introduction

The Acharya N.G Ranga Agricultural University (ANGRAU) has been bestowed with the responsibility of teaching, research and extension education. Agricultural extension involves the whole gamut of complex interaction between farmers, extension workers and researchers in transfer of technology, eventually resulting in enhancing productivity and profitability to the farmers.

Technological innovation has been a key element in the growth of agriculture throughout the world. But the professionals in agricultural development are gradually realizing that modern agricultural science and technology has a certain bias which causes a different impact on development in different regions and areas. Due to the growth of the population and the low price for agricultural produce, there is an urgent need to develop a holistic/ integrated approach to combat the problems of agricultural production and productivity and find out viable solutions to satisfy the various needs of the people of the developing countries. Transfer of agricultural technology through Research – Extension – Farmers systems contributed tremendously in increasing agricultural production in India and also its transfer mechanism has been very purposeful and result-oriented. Extension as an essential pillar for research and development however, unfortunately, a somewhat unhealthy perception of extension prevails in many countries, caused by a weak extension lobby, faulty initial organizational set-up, an inherent lack of trust in extension by most of the research organizations and traditionally poor career development conditions in profession of extension. Agricultural research agendas remain largely academic unless extension workers provide input in terms of the identified and as – yet unsolved field problems of the farmers. Research focusses on the technical aspects for generating useful technologies, while extension focuses on the acceptance, utilisation and finally adoption of technologies by users. Agricultural extension involves the whole gamut of complex interaction between farmers, extension workers and researchers in transfer of technology, eventually resulting in enhancing productivity and profitability to the farmers. Agricultural extension at present is focused on commodity oriented macro – level technologies, the focus of agricultural extension at present needs to be on micro farming situation based on location specific problem oriented intervention. It is this context that the farmer – scientist interaction brings in high degree of confidence among farmers. In order to reinforce and strengthen this mode of working, the university has reorganized its extension wing by locating the scientists at the district head quarters and operate in close collaboration with all the line departments through establishment of District Agricultural Advisory and Transfer of Technology Centres (DAATTCs). Farming situation based extension has been initiated as per the data-base developed. It is an Innovative Institutional Farm Information Delivery Model popularly known as 'Eruvaka centre'. The utilisation of district agricultural advisory and transfer of technology centre services play important role to get profitable yields.

Methodology

Ex post facto research design was followed for carrying out the study. The State of Andhra Pradesh was selected purposively for the study as the investigator hails from the state. four mandals namely Mahabubnagar, Hanuwada, Jadcherla, and Mirjil were selected randomly for study. One village from each of the selected mandals namely Machinpally from Mahabubnagar mandal; Ibrahimbad from Hanuwada mandal; Gangapuram from Jadcherla mandal; and Manannur from Mirjil mandal were selected randomly for study. From each selected village, 30 respondents were selected randomly thus making a sample of 120 respondents for the study. The profile characteristics were studied using standard procedures and appropriately categorized.

Results and discussion

Table 1. Distribution of respondents based on profile characteristics n=120

S. No.	Category		Respondents	
1	Age		Frequency	Percentage (%)
		Young age (Up to 35 years)	32	26.67
		Middle age (35 - 55 years)	48	40.00
		Old age (more than 55 years)	40	33.33
2	Education			
		Illiterate/ No schooling (1)	46	38.33
		Functionally literate (2)	16	13.33

S. No.		Category	Respondents	
		Primary school -up to 5th class (3)	18	15.00
		Middle school -6th to 7th class (4)	17	14.17
		High school - 8,9& 10th class (5)	12	10.00
		Intermediate (6)	6	5.00
		Under graduation (7)	3	2.50
		Post graduation and above (8)	2	1.67
3	Farm size			
		Marginal (< ha)	14	11.67
		Small (1-2 ha)	32	26.67
		Semi-medium (2-4ha)	31	25.83
		Medium (4-10ha)	24	20.00
		Large (>10ha)	19	15.83
4	Farming experience			
		Low (10-24 years)	28	23.33
		Medium (24-38 years)	58	48.33
		High (38-52 years)	34	28.33
5	Annual income			
		Very low (Below 20,000 Rs)	20	16.67
		Low (20,000 – 40,000 Rs)	21	17.50
		Medium (40,000 – 60,000 Rs)	49	40.83
		High (60,000 – 80,000 Rs)	18	15.00
		Very high (Above 80,000 Rs)	12	10.00
6	Occupation			
		Labour & agriculture (1)	59	49.17
		Agriculture & caste occupation (2)	27	22.50
		Agriculture & business (3)	14	11.67
		Agriculture &service (4)	20	16.67
7	Innovativeness			
		Low (12-18)	30	25.00
		Medium (18-24)	68	56.67
		High (24-30)	22	18.33
8	Economic orientation			
		Low (6-9)	50	41.67
		Medium (9-12)	58	48.33
		High (12-15)	12	10.00
9	Market orientation			
		Low (9-14)	28	23.33
		Medium (14-19)	55	45.83
		High (19-24)	37	30.83
10	Change proneness			
		Low (9-14)	32	26.67
		Medium (14-19)	59	49.17
		High (19-24)	29	24.17
11	Achievement motivation			
		Low (15-21)	37	30.83
		Medium (21-27)	62	51.67
		High (27-33)	21	17.50
12	Information seeking behavior			
		Low (30-38)	21	17.50
		Medium (38-46)	68	56.67

S. No.		Category	Respondents	
		High (46-54)	31	25.83
13	Social participation			
		No membership in any organization (1)	53	44.17
		Membership in one organization (2)	39	32.50
		Membership in more than one organization (3)	16	13.33
		Office bearer (4)	5	4.17
		Public leader (5)	7	5.83
14	Participation in DAATTC activities			
		Low (19-43)	41	34.17
		Medium (43-67)	61	50.83
		High (67-91)	18	15.00

It is clear from Table 1 that majority of the respondents belonged to middle age (40.00%), illiterate (38.33%), had small farm size (26.67%), medium farming experience (48.34%), medium annual income (40.83%), labour (in own land, hired) + agriculture as main and subsidiary occupation (49.17%), medium innovativeness (56.67%), medium economic orientation (48.33%), medium market orientation (45.84%), medium change proneness (49.17%), medium achievement motivation (51.67%), medium information seeking behaviour (56.67%), with no membership in any social organization (44.17%) and medium participation in DAATTC activities (50.83%) respectively.

The middle age respondents dominated the sample with their occupation being labour and agriculture as main and subsidiary occupation. The reason for the above trend was due to the migration of young people to towns and cities for higher education and business, which was also supported in the study as that more than half of respondents pursued agriculture and other subsidiary occupation like business, services and caste based occupation. Hence, Government and Department of Agriculture should ensure more profitability in agriculture, so as to make agriculture more remunerative to youth in villages so that they adopt farming as their profession. This is in conformity with the results by Sudhakar (2002), Savitha (2001), Sunil et al. (2009) and Meena (2010).

Medium annual income, lack of awareness among the farmers about the importance and need of education and also dire necessity in the family to help their parents were the reasons for poor formal schooling among the respondents. As a result they did not send their children for pursuing higher education. As most of the higher educational facilities were available far away from the villages, school dropout is still the problem especially after the middle school level. The results were in conformity with that of Prasad (1997), Veerendranath (2000), Aghazia (2008) and Kharumnuid (2011).

Majority of farmers had small followed by semi-medium farm size. This was due to the fact that the fragmentation of land holding from generation to generation which led most of large holding farmers turning to small and medium holding farmers. Moreover they opted for labour and agriculture as their occupations as seen from Table 4.6 These findings were in line with the findings of Rajarathnam (2000), Rahul (2003), Sagar and Vijay (2004), Gopinath (2005), Archana (2012).

As majority of respondents were of middle age so was their farm experience also. Definitely the farming experience is an important factor which influences the farmers to accept, evaluate and experiment the innovative technologies in their farm. To enable them to effectively utilise their farm experience, the scientists and extension agencies have to conduct extension activities like trainings, result demonstrations, method demonstrations, meetings, exposure visits and group discussions so as to provide wide exposure to farmers and facilitate them to act further. This is in conformity with the results of Rajaratnam (2000), Gopinath (2005) and Kharumnuid (2011), Archana (2012).

As majority of the respondents had medium annual income. It was due to small farm size, medium innovativeness, medium economic orientation, medium market orientation, medium change proneness,

medium achievement motivation and medium information seeking behaviour as indicated in the study. The same result was generated by Kumar (2001), Kumar (2004), Nagabhushana (2007), Thoke and Gunjal (2009).

It could be inferred that majority of the respondents belonged to labour + agriculture group. It was due to the reason that most of farmers being in middle age group and with small farm size and medium income did entire cropping operations on their own. The same result was generated by Babu (1992).

Medium innovativeness was due to medium level of information seeking behaviour, participation in DAATTC activities, social participation and extent of adoption of respondents. The same result was generated by Kumar (2002) and Gopinath (2005), Archana (2012).

Medium economic orientation was also supported through the finding as revealed that the respondents ranked fourth in utilisation of technologies disseminated through DAATTC in terms of costs and profits. Hence, they did not have much orientation towards profit maximization in farming. It was also evident that "A farmer should work towards more yields and greater profits" was first followed by "A farmer should utilise different technologies to increase profits in comparison to single technology for his betterment" due to their medium economic orientation. The statement on "A farmer should try traditional technology in farming which may not earn him money" was least preferred by respondent farmers. Hence, it could be said that farmers have exhibited readiness towards modern technologies and need to be convinced to act further. The same result was generated by Ramu (2005) and Madhushekar (2009).

Medium market orientation was clearly evident from medium level of economic orientation, medium annual income, information seeking behaviour and participation in DAATTC activities of respondents. The respondents exhibited low utilisation of market intelligence by DAATTC services. It was also evident that "better market facilities can help me to get better prices for his produce" followed by " one shall produce items which has more market demands" were highly preferred by respondent farmers due to their medium market orientation. The findings were in accordance with that of Atchutaraju (1998) and Gangadhar (2009).

Medium change proneness due to medium innovativeness, medium extent of adoption and medium participation of respondents in DAATTC activities in the study. Moreover, it was also revealed that majority of respondents disagreed on "traditional ways of farming are best" which implies that they have faith in modern practices and also they disagreed on the statement like "often new technologies are not successful, however if they are promising, farmers would surely utilise them" which indicated that the farmers were ready to adopt any new farm practice if proved successful. They also agreed to be "cautious about trying the new technologies" all these indicated that they wanted to practice only the proven technologies. Hence, respondents were prone to change to meet the challenging demands and needs of clientele in this fast changing society. The same result was generated by Vasantha (1996).

The majority of respondents had medium level of achievement motivation due to medium innovativeness and medium information seeking behaviour. They also ranked second in utilisation of field days . Moreover, field days are used to motivate the farmers to group psychology and adopt the practice by showing its performance by better profits. The same result was generated by Reddy (1994) and Sunil *et al.* (2009).

Medium information seeking behavior was due to the fact that majority of respondents were illiterates which led to high dependence on informal sources followed by formal and mass media. This can also be related to poor educational levels, which inhibited them to contact other information sources. The same result was generated by Gangadhar (2009).

An examination from results revealed that larger portion of the respondents had no membership in any organization. This was because of inactive social organizations in the villages which were also evident in the study through their less dependance on local leaders and sar-

panch for obtaining farm information as evident from **Appendix C-IV** These findings were in line with the results of Veerendranath (2000).

Majority of respondents had medium participation in training programmes and exhibitions as DAATTC takes up these activities keeping the whole district in view and hence the respondents responded well to these activities.

Conclusion

It observed from the study that majority of the respondents had middle age. In order to attract youth into the farming success stories had to be created at village level. Majority of the respondents of the study were illiterates. Hence, steps are to be taken to improve their literacy level by utilising the literate respondents of village (beneficiaries of sarva siksha abhiyan). Organizing adult literacy campaigns or linking them with agricultural programmes helps in better utilisation of agricultural technologies. As majority of respondents had small farm size with medium income with labour and agriculture as main and subsidiary source of income, DAATTC scientists need to focus on promotion of farming system approach for betterment of their livelihood. Majority of respondents had medium innovativeness, medium market orientation, medium change proneness, medium achievement motivation, medium information seeking behaviour, and medium participation in DAATTC activities. Hence, there is a need to improve these characteristics from present level of medium to high level by intensifying the efforts through various ways of technology transfer like diagnostic visits, demonstrations and group meetings which recorded higher participation of respondents. Majority of respondents were not members in any organization so extension agencies should encourage the farmers social participation by strengthening community organization programmes to form youth clubs, welfare associations, farmers discussion groups etc. so that they will get more exposure and empowered and effectively utilise the services. Hence above variables should be taken into consideration for selection of master trainers and innovative farmers so that these farmers can effectively communicate to fellow farmers resulting in effective service utilisation.

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