



PROFILE CHARACTERISTICS OF GROUNDNUT FARMERS IN ANANTHAPURAMU DISTRICT OF ANDHRAPRADESH

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Date of Receipt: 14.5.2018

ABSTRACT

Date of Acceptance: 28.5.2018

The present investigation was carried out to study the profile characteristics of groundnut farmers in Anantapuramu district of Andhra Pradesh. *Ex-post facto* research design was followed for the study and a sample of 120 respondents were drawn. The results of the study revealed that most of the respondents were middle aged (44.16%), middle to high school educated (55.83%), had less than 2.5 acres of area under groundnut cultivation (55.83%), had medium experience in groundnut cultivation (65.00%), medium annual income (60.00%), medium material possession (81.66%), medium extension contact (66.66%), medium trainings received (45.00%), medium agricultural inputs acquisition pattern (75.00%) and medium social participation (52.50%).

KEYWORDS: Profile characteristics, groundnut farmers, extension contact

INTRODUCTION

Groundnut is a major oilseed crop that has achieved tremendous popularity in the country. It is called as the king of oilseeds. It is one of the most important food and cash crop of our country. While being a valuable source of all the nutrients, it is a low priced commodity. India is the world's leading producer of groundnut with 25.00 per cent share in the production. In Andhra Pradesh, the area covered under oilseeds was 12.29 lakh hectares covering 16.57% of the total cropped area, while the groundnut crop alone covered an area of 82.39% of the total area under oil seeds. Anantapuramu is the predominant groundnut cultivated district in the state with an extent of 624000 hectares with the production of 164000 tons. The groundnut farmers are at a disadvantage particularly in the marketing of groundnut as they lose their bargaining strength and got exploited. Monthly data on minimum prices of groundnut in Anantapuramu regulated market yard show a highly erratic behaviour. Such kind of fluctuations in the prices of groundnut reflects on the poor withholding capacity of the marginal and small farmers while marketing their final produce. The present research paper focuses on the profile characteristics of groundnut farmers actually studied in the main research study. which would help in improvement of marketing behaviour of groundnut farmers and strategies for better marketing.

The main study on the marketing behaviour of the groundnut farmers would provide better insight into the suggestions made by them which would help in improvement of marketing behaviour of groundnut farmers and strategies for better marketing.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Ex-post-facto research design was used in the present investigation. Anantapuramu district of Andhra Pradesh was purposively selected as groundnut was being extensively cultivated in the district. Out of 63 mandals of Anantapuramu district, three mandals were purposively selected based on the highest area under groundnut cultivation. Four villages from each mandal were selected based on highest area under groundnut cultivation, thus making a total of twelve villages for the study. From each of the twelve selected villages, 10 respondents were selected by following simple random sampling procedure, thus making a total of 120 respondents. The data were collected by personal interview method through structured interview schedule and analyzed by employing suitable statistical tools like arithmetic mean, standard deviation, frequencies and percentages were used.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The profile characteristics studied in the study were age, education, area under groundnut cultivation, experience in groundnut cultivation, annual income, material possession, extension contact, trainings received, agricultural inputs acquisition pattern and social participation.

1. AGE

It is clear from the Table 1 that about 44.16 per cent of the farmers belonged to middle age, followed by old (41.166%) and young (14.16%) age categories.

The probable reason for the above result might be due to the fact that, young people might have been engaged in activities other than agriculture or prefer to go to towns and cities for higher education or employment or business and were not interested in land based activities. The old age farmers preferred to stay at their homes and being less energetic looked after supporting activities of agriculture like taking care of household works and cattle rearing. The above two reasons accounts for low percentage of young and old age group farmers in the farming activities. This finding was in line with the findings of Begum (2008) and Kalyan (2011).

2. EDUCATION

It is evident from the Table 1 that 32.50 per cent of the farmers were educated up to middle school followed by 23.33 per cent up to high school. While 16.66 per cent of the farmers were illiterate, equal percentage (8.33%) of the farmers were functionally literate and studied intermediate, 5.83 per cent have attended primary school and 5.00 per cent of the farmers completed graduation. This trend might be due to poor financial conditions, non-availability of good educational facilities and ignorance about the educational programs provided by the government. Lack of awareness among the farmers about

need and importance of education and there might be unavoidable need to help their parents in farming instead of continuing their education. School dropouts are more after the middle school and many could not go for higher education due to non-availability of higher educational facilities in their villages. This finding was in line with the findings of Kikon (2010) and Kalyan (2011).

3. AREA UNDER GROUNDNUT CULTIVATION

It is clear from the Table 1 that more than half (55.83%) of the respondents had possessed less than 2.5 acres of the area under groundnut cultivation followed by 35.83 per cent having 2.5 to 5.0 acres, 5.00 per cent having 5 to 7.5 acres, 1.66 per cent having 7.5 to 10 acres and 1.66 per cent having more than 10 acres. This might be due to the fact that, the landholdings were small in the case of groundnut farmers and they also cultivate other crops such as bengal gram, red gram etc. apart from groundnut which is also a cost intensive crop. As it may not be possible to increase the area under cultivation, the farmers need to adopt new technologies which increase the productivity per unit area. This finding was in agreement with the findings of Begum (2008), Kalyan (2012) and Saiva (2012).

4. EXPERIENCE IN GROUNDNUT CULTIVATION

It is transparent from the Table 1 that majority of the farmers (65.00%) had medium level of experience followed by high (20.00%) and low experience (15.00%) in groundnut cultivation. The above trend might be due to the fact that majority of the respondents were middle aged with middle school education having moderate experience in farming. Definitely the experience is an important factor which influences the farmers to accept, evaluate and experiment the innovative technologies in their farm. As most of the groundnut farmers were middle aged they had medium level of experience in groundnut cultivation. This finding was in agreement with the findings of Begum (2008), Kalyan (2012) and Saiva (2012)

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5. ANNUAL INCOME

It is evident from the Table 1 that majority (60.00%) of the farmers grouped under the category of medium annual income followed by high (28.33%) and low (11.66%) annual income categories. The probable reason for the above trend might be due to the fact that most of the farmers had less than 2.5 acres of land holding. The farmers who were financially sound would not find it difficult to invest on purchasing inputs, labour *etc.* They were also able to get more information on technologies, subsidies provided by the government, good credit facilities because of their large land holdings and their contacts with extension officials with regard to farm advisory services helped them to get good returns. But this is not same in the case of the groundnut farmers with small land holdings. Hence, majority fall under medium annual income category. This finding was in line with the findings of Chavda (2007) and Saiva (2012).

6. MATERIAL POSSESSION

It is revealed from the Table 1 that majority (81.66%) of the groundnut farmers had medium level of material possession, followed by equal (9.16%) percent of the farmers having low and high level of material possessions.

The possible reason for the above trend might be due to the fact that the farmers with small land holdings, middle school level of education, and middle level of annual income will naturally possess medium level of material possession for their farm and home activities. Further, farmers were also habituated to hiring of machinery from their fellow farmers if necessary which is also one of the reason for their medium level of material possession. This findings were in line with the results of Pradipth Acharya

7. EXTENSION CONTACT

It is observed from the Table 1 that majority of the respondents (66.66%) had medium level of extension contact, followed by high (20.83%) and low (12.50%) levels of extension contacts. The probable reason for above trend might be that, lack of sufficient numbers of field level extension functionaries, especially Agricultural Extension Officers, who are working at grass root level for transfer of technologies. The farmers with more inclination towards latest production technologies might have been approaching the agricultural officers and other higher cadre extension officers for getting latest technical knowhow. Majority of the respondents had middle school education hence would not go out regularly to meet the officials of agriculture department, scientists *etc.*, and also hesitate to communicate freely with the officials. So, it is desirable to improve the level of extension contact of the farmers through regular visits by the extension personnel by conducting demonstrations, exposure visits, meetings and training programs *etc.*, in the villages. It was in conformity with Begum (2008) and Kalyan (2011).

8. TRAININGS RECEIVED

The findings presented in the Table 1 indicate that 45.00 per cent of the respondents had received medium level of training followed by low (29.16%) and high (25.83%) levels of trainings. This trend might be due to the reason that most of the groundnut farmers were traditional and did not get an opportunity to receive training from the experts due to various reasons like lack of awareness, engaged busily in farming activities *etc.*

Further, majority of the farmers were middle aged and had medium level of education which led to less contact with extension personnel hence they might have not been involved in trainings. This finding was in tune with the results of Naidu (2012) and Saiva (2012).

9. AGRICULTURAL INPUTS ACQUISITION PATTERN

It is found from the Table 1 that majority (75.00%) of the respondents had medium level of agricultural inputs acquisition pattern, followed by high (17.50%) and low (7.50%) levels of agricultural inputs acquisition pattern. This trend might be due to the reason that majority of the groundnut farmers had medium level of extension contact and medium level of annual income. Most of the farmers in the study area were small farmers and in order to meet the cost of cultivation they get money from moneylenders. In order to repay the money borrowed, most of them would market their produce to those moneylenders and intermediaries at the price, which is not remunerative. Hence, this trend was noticed. This finding was in tune with the results of Gangadhar (2009).

10. SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

It is revealed from the Table 1 that a little more than half (52.50%) of the respondents had medium level of social participation, followed by low (28.33%) and high (19.16%) levels of medium social participation. The probable reason for the above trend might be due to their membership in limited number of social organizations, and medium exposure to different sources of information. The other reason for the medium level of social participation could be due to the presence of cooperatives in the villages. Hence, there is a need to enhance the social participation of farmers by educating and encouraging them to become members in various social organizations and local village institutions for better interaction. This finding was in line with the results of Khodifad (2010) and Saiva (2012)

CONCLUSION

The findings revealed that majority of the farmers were middle aged, educated up to middle to high school, had less than 2.5 acres of area under groundnut cultivation, had medium experience in groundnut cultivation, medium annual income, medium material possession, material extension contact, medium trainings received, medium agricultural inputs acquisition pattern and medium social participation. Hence, it is imperative to focus on the personal and socio-psychological attributes of groundnut farmers while designing appropriate strategies with training programs and demonstrations to strengthen the various

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TABLE 1:

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO THEIR PROFILE CHARACTERISTICS (N=120)

S. No	Variables	Category	Respondents	
			Frequency	Percentage
1	Age	Low	17	14.16
		Medium	53	44.16
		High	50	41.16
2	Education	Illiterate	20	16.66
		Functionally literate	10	8.33
		Primary school	7	5.83
		Middle school	39	32.50
		High school	28	23.33
		Intermediate	10	8.33
		Graduation and above	6	5.00
3	Area under groundnut cultivation	<2.5 acres	67	55.83
		2.5 to 5.0 acres	43	35.83
		5.0 to 7.50 acres	6	5.00
		7.50 to 10 acres	2	1.66
		> 10 acres	2	1.66
4	Experience in groundnut cultivation	Low	18	15.00
		Medium	78	65.00
		High	24	20.00
5	Annual income	Low	14	11.66
		Medium	72	60.00
		High	34	28.33
6	Material possession	Low	11	9.16
		Medium	98	81.66
		High	11	9.16
7	Extension contact	Low	15	12.50
		Medium	80	66.66
		High	25	20.83
8	Trainings received	Low	35	29.166
		Medium	54	45.00
		High	31	25.83
9	Agricultural inputs acquisition pattern	Low	9	7.50
		Medium	90	75.00
		High	21	17.50
10	Social participation	Low	34	28.33
		Medium	63	52.50
		High	23	19.16