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An Analysis of the Profile Characteristics of the Farmers Using ICTs

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ABSTRACT

Detailed analysis of profile characteristics of farmers indicated that majority of the respondents were middle aged with primary schooling education and were having small land holdings with medium farming experience. Majority of the respondents had medium information seeking behaviour, socio-politico participation, extension contact, medium in economic status, scientific orientation and achievement motivation.

Key words : Farmers, ICTs, Profile characteristics.

Rural India still continues to be traditional in many aspects in spite of many changes in its economic and political organizations. . Farmers' needs are much more diversified and the knowledge required to address them is beyond the capacity of the grass root level extension functionaries. In this context, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) plays an important role in reaching the unreached, supplement and reinforce the extension efforts.

ICTs can be broadly interpreted as technologies that facilitate communication, processing and transmission of information by electronic means. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are the basket of technologies which assist in storage, processing and dissemination of the information. ICT includes any communication device or application encompassing radio, television, mobiles, internet, kiosks, call centres, satellite systems etc;

Hence the present study was undertaken with an objective to study the profile characteristics of farmers using ICTs in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research was conducted during the year 2011 in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. The selected crops include paddy, cotton and chilli as these are dominant crops in the district. Ex-post facto research study was followed. Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh was selected purposively. One mandal for each crop with highest area of cultivation was selected for the study. Thus a total of three mandals viz., Bapatla for paddy, Amaravathi for cotton and Veldurthy for chillies were selected for the study. Four villages from each mandal were selected randomly with a total twelve villages. For each crop forty farmers were selected by following proportionate random sampling constituting the total sample size to 120. Data was collected through Interview schedule, which was subjected for statistical analysis and interpretation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An analysis of the respondents' profile characteristics was carried out and the summary of the result is contained in Table 1. A perusal of Table 1 revealed that nearly half of the respondents belonged to middle age (49.17%) category, followed by old age (45.83%) and young age (5.00%) categories. This might be due to the fact that the migration of the young age group to the nearby cities for education and employment leaving behind the old age and middle age people in the villages as they were dependent on agriculture. The result was in accordance with Wims (2007).

It was observed from Table 1 that a little more than half of the respondents were illiterates (51.67%), while a little less than one fourth of the respondents had education up to primary education (23.33%), followed by high school education (15.83%), intermediate (6.67%), graduation (2.50%) and none of them were post graduates. The probable reasons might be the lack of awareness on the importance of education, poor socio-economic conditions, financial problems, non-availability of education facilities in the village. It is therefore,

Table 1. Profile characteristics of the respondents.

S.No	Variable	Category	F	%
1.	Age	Young age (<35 years)	6	5.00
		Middle age(35-50years)	59	49.17
		Old age (>50years)	55	45.83
2.	Education	Illiterate	62	51.67
		Primary school	28	23.33
		High school	19	15.83
		Intermediate	8	6.67
		Graduation	3	2.50
		Post Graduation	-	-
3.	Farming Experience	Low	21	17.50
	(Mean = 1.33SD =0.61)	Medium	70	58.34
		High	29	24.16
4.	Land Holding	Marginal land holding	20	16.66
	(Mean = 1.05SD =0.25)	Small land holding	75	62.50
		Big land holding	25	20.84
5.	Information seeking behaviour	Low	22	18.34
	(Mean = 6.32SD =1.81)	Medium	75	62.50
		High	23	19.16
6.	Socio-politico participation	Low	27	22.50
	(Mean = 3.37SD =3.26)	Medium	78	65.00
		High	15	12.50
7.	Extension Contact	Low	28	23.33
	(Mean = 5.775SD =2.335)	Medium	80	66.67
		High	12	10.00
8.	Economic status	Low	16	13.33
	(Mean = 6.29SD =1.45)	Medium	84	70.00
		High	20	16.67
9.	Achievement motivation	Low	16	13.34
	(Mean = 25.64SD =1.58)	Medium	86	71.67
		High	18	15.00
10.	Scientific orientation	Low	20	16.66
	(Mean = 18.39SD =1.32)	Medium	89	74.17
		High	11	9.17
11	Innovativeness	Low	18	15.00
	(Mean = 21.65SD =1.63)	Medium	81	67.50
		High	21	17.50

necessary to establish education centres in villages, promotion of adult education and functional literacy programmes to improve their literacy level. This finding was supported by Pallavi (2006) and Chidananda (2008).

It is evident from Table 1 that a little less than three fifth of the respondents belonged to medium (58.34%) farming experience, followed by high (24.16%) and low (17.50%) categories. The probable reason could be the involvement of farmers in agriculture occupation since ages as it was their main occupation and source of livelihood. Agriculture being the backbone of the country's economy and most agriculturists living in rural India, it is quite

natural that most of the respondents would either belong to farming families or dependent on farm labour for their livelihood. Another reason for majority of respondents belonged to medium experience category might be that by birth farmers are being dependent on agriculture profession and also inherited culture of farmers from generation to generation to follow the traditional agricultural experience. The result was in conformity with Obaiah (2004).

A cursory look at the Table 1 inferred that majority (62.50%) of the respondents had small land holding, followed by big (20.84%) and marginal (16.66%) land holdings. The probable reason might be due to the prevailing trend of converting the agricultural lands into real estates, industries and ever increasing population and also due to increase in family members, the fragmentation of ancestors land from generation to generation might have led to marginal and small land holdings. The finding draws support with the studies of Manoj (2008) and Ambedkar (2010).

A glance at Table 1 inferred that majority (62.50%) of the respondents had medium level of information seeking behaviour followed by high (19.16%) and low (18.34%) levels of information seeking behaviour. The probable reason might be that, the farmers rely more on neighbours, friends, relatives, progressive farmers, adarsha rythu and input dealers for information rather than formal sources. The result was in accordance with Sajithkumar (2004).

A bird's eye view at Table 1 brings to notice that majority (65.00%) of the respondents had medium level of socio-politico participation, followed by low (22.50%) and high (12.50%) levels of socio-politico participation. The probable reasons might be the low levels of education, lack of time, lack of interest, non-attractiveness of the activities undertaken by the organizations and lack of perceived benefits. The socio-politico participation of the respondents can be improved through education and by encouraging them to participate in village organizations and become members of the organizations. The findings were in concordance with Gowda (2009) and Ambedkar (2010).

A perusal of the Table 1 indicated that two third of the respondents belonged to medium (66.67%) level of extension contact, followed by low (23.33%) and high (10.00%) levels of extension contact. Farmers are of the opinion that the information provided by the extension agencies are of low credibility, further the reason could be the non-availability or less availability of extension staff to the farmers and also the ratio of farmers to extension personnel is low. Apart from this majority of the respondents were small and marginal farmers and they were dependent on the informal sources for information related to agriculture. The finding was in agreement with Aneeja and Shenoy (2004); and Ganeshkumar (2008).

It is evident from Table 1 that a little more than two third of the respondents belonged to medium (70.00%) level of economic status, followed by high (16.67%) and low (13.33%) levels of economic status. The possible reason could be their land holding levels and scientific orientation towards farming. This might be due to their desire to stabilize and improve economically with clear cut understanding of the innovations in farming. Though most of the respondents own lands, they may not be getting consistent income because of failure or excess of rainfall. So the income was neither consistent nor assured. Further, the cost of cultivation is increasing year after year and resulting in less profit and hence the above trend was observed. Hence, the findings show medium level of income. The result was in conformity with Obaiah (2004) and Argade (2010).

A bird's eye view at Table 1 brings to notice that a little less than three fourth of the respondents belonged to medium (71.66%) level of achievement motivation, followed by high (15.00%) and low (13.34%) levels of achievement motivation. It could be inferred from the results that a great proportion of the respondents had a zeal to know about new technologies, to face new challenges in the modern society and to improve themselves in all aspects. This might be due to continuous guidance to the farmers from the informal sources on farm and non-farm related aspects leading to development of goal seeking behaviour. This result was in agreement with the result of Obaiah (2004) and Manoj (2008).

A glance at Table 1 inferred that nearly three fourth of the respondents belonged to medium (74.17%) level of scientific orientation, followed by low (16.66%) and high (9.17%) levels of scientific orientation. This might be due to their application of new ideas in a systematic manner with high achievement motivation and farmers interest in using new farm technologies for increasing the productivity. The finding was in accordance with Gowda (2009) and Manoj (2008).

An analytical look at the Table 1 made it clear that a little more than two third of the respondents belonged to medium (67.50%) category of innovativeness, followed by high (17.50%) and low (15.00%) categories of innovativeness. The above result could be attributed that majority of the

respondents are quite earlier in adopting the innovations than other farmers in a social system. This might be due to their high scientific orientation coupled with high achievement motivation leading them to adoption of innovations and also trustworthiness of farmers on innovations. On the other hand 15.00 per cent of respondents belonged to low innovativeness category due to the fact that they might be having less education, less land holding and less income and fluctuation of market prices and lack of remunerative prices to the produce.. This finding was in concordance with the reports of Prasanthkumar (2007) and Nayak (2010).

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