



Profile Characteristics of Rice Farmers in Nellore District of Andhra Pradesh

Key words : Rice farmers, Profile characters.

Rice is life for most people living in Asia. Rice has shaped the cultures, diets and economies of thousands of millions of people. Almost one fifth of the world's population, depend on rice cultivation for their livelihoods. India occupies first position in the area (44.60m ha) which is the highest area occupied by a single crop in the million-hectare plus countries in world and second position in the production of the rice (148mt) during 2008 (USDA report). It contributes 21.50 per cent of global rice production and a share of 15 per cent in global rice export. In Andhra Pradesh area under rice mostly depends on the monsoon pattern and availability of water in reservoirs. Area under rice was high during 2008-09 (43.87 l.ha) and lowest is in 2002-03 (28.22 l.ha). There is no scope for increasing area under rice and rice area is replaced by some profitable dry crops due to insufficient water. The study area, Nellore is famous for its [paddy fields](#), thereby deriving its name from "Nell". Nell + Oru (Nel in Tamil indicates Paddy and ooru is town in both Telugu and Tamil languages).

In view of the above scenario, the present study was conducted with the main objective of studying the profile characteristics of rice farmers.

Ex-post-facto research design was used in the present investigation. The study was conducted in Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh which occupies 8th place in cultivating rice in the state. Out of the 46 mandals in Nellore district, 4 rice growing mandals have been purposively selected and 2 rice growing villages were selected from each mandal at random, thus making a total of 8 villages for the study. Among the rice farmers 15 farmers from each village were selected thus making a total of 120 farmers for the study. An interview schedule was developed for the study and pretested in non sample area. The data was

collected using standardized interview schedule by personal interview method. The data was organized, tabulated and classified using manifold, qualitative and quantitative classification and subjected to statistical tests. The statistical tools that were used for analyzing data include frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation.

The profile characteristics of rice farmers were presented as below.

Age

It is clear from the results that majority (60.00%) of the rice farmers belonged to middle age category followed by old (24.17%) and young age (15.83%) categories. The possible reasons might be that middle age and old age farmers were motivated to cultivate paddy by adopting latest production technologies and to obtain good returns. Most of the youth move out in search of white collar jobs, engaged in Government jobs, various business activities and other profitable occupations in pursuit of greater secured life than farming. This finding is in line with the findings of Santhi (2006) and Ashok (2012).

Education

It is revealed from the results that majority (29.17%) of the rice farmers had education level of high school followed by primary school (20.00%), middle school (17.50%), college level (16.67%), higher secondary (7.50%), functionally literate (5.83%) and illiterate (3.33%) categories. The probable reason for the above distribution might be that, as education was gaining importance for the past three decades and brought out awareness among the farming community about the functional literacy. This result is in line with findings of Sajith Kumar (2004) and Arathy Balakrishnan (2011).

Farming experience

From results, it is evident that majority (69.17%) of the rice farmers had medium levels of experience followed by high (15.83%) and low experience (15.00%) in farming. This might be due to the fact that most of the respondents belonged to old age category. Among the respondents younger generation was not interested in agriculture and were seeking other income generating activities and white collar jobs. Hence most of the respondents were falling under medium level of farming experience. This finding is in agreement with Sajith kumar (2004) and Arathy Balakrishnan (2011).

Farm size

It is evident from the results that majority (40.83%) of the rice farmers were medium farmers followed by small (28.34%), marginal (15.83%) and big (15.00%) farmers. The possible reason for this might be that in the recent times the families are of nuclear system and joint family system is fading away which resulted in the fragmentation of land. Another reason might be that as the capital investment in farming was rising, more and more farmers started retreating from farming resulting in the conversion of paddy lands to commercial ventures in some areas. This result is in agreement with Senthil Kumar (2001).

Training undergone

It could be seen from the results that majority (47.50%) of the rice farmers had received medium training followed by low (35.00%) and high (17.50%) levels of training undergone. The possible reason for this might be that majority of the respondents being middle aged were unable to participate in training programmes because of lack of awareness on the importance of training programmes. Farmers also expressed that less efforts are made by State Department of Agriculture to conduct effective training programmes at local level, which can attract even old aged farmer. Hence most of the respondents were falling from medium to low training undergone categories. This result is in agreement with Arathy Balakrishnan (2011) and Ramlakshmi Devi (2012).

Credit orientation

It is evident from the results that majority (45.83%) of the rice farmers had medium credit orientation followed by high (29.17%) and low (25.00%) levels of credit orientation. This credit orientation status might be due to the reasons like presence of maximum number of banks and co-operative societies in the proximity, high literacy levels of farmers make it easier for the bank extension officials to work among the farmers. This result is in agreement with Arathy Balakrishnan (2011).

Social participation

From results it could be seen that majority (44.17%) of the rice farmers had medium social participation followed by low (35.00%) and high (20.83%) levels of social participation. It was observed that majority of the farmers were having medium levels of social participation because of their membership in at least one of the social organization. The respondents were also attending social meetings to some extent. Hence most of the respondents had medium to low social participation. Another possible reason for this might be that number of farmers involved in full time farming activities were decreasing year by year in the area and majority had more involvement in other income earning activities like business, government services.

Mass media exposure

It is evident from the results that majority (55.83%) of the rice farmers had medium levels of mass media exposure followed by high (27.50%) and low (16.67 %) levels of mass media exposure. This trend might be due to the fact that majority of the respondents were medium farmers with medium level of education. Though almost every household possessed television, they were not keen on watching television. This is the reason why they did not pay much attention to print media despite the availability at lower rate. Hence they showed meager interest towards print media, educational films, and agricultural programmes in television etc. This result is in agreement with Arathy Balakrishnan (2011).

Extension contact

From results it could be seen that majority (70.00%) of the rice farmers had medium extension contact followed by low (17.50%) and high (12.50%) levels of extension contact. The possible reason for this might be that majority of the respondents being middle and old aged were unable to contact extension personnels frequently because of lack of interest, lack of time and some times due to their health problems. Hence they were unable to move to the extension agencies which are far away from their villages. It was observed that the agricultural officer was the main extension personnel to whom farmers had frequent extension contact. In some places contact farmers were the main source of information to the fellow folk. This result is in agreement with Naik (2006) and Arathy Balakrishnan (2011).

Economic motivation

It is evident from the results that majority (49.17%) of the rice farmers had medium economic motivation followed by high (34.17%) and low (16.66%) levels of economic motivation. The possible reason for this might be that most of the respondents being middle to old aged category they were less oriented towards profit maximization. Besides most of the farmers were viewing the rice cultivation as traditional occupation rather than as an enterprise. This result is in agreement with Ramu (2005) and Arathy Balakrishnan (2011).

Scientific orientation

It is evident from the results that majority (43.33%) of the rice farmers had medium scientific orientation followed by high (36.67%) and low (20.00%) levels of scientific orientation. It might be due to the reason that majority of the farmers being middle to old age were continuing the farming practices followed by their forefathers. It was observed that they were forced to follow scientific methods of farming in order to attain higher yields and also use plant protection chemicals including weedicides due to unavailability of labour in time. Another reason might be medium extension contact of farmers in the study area. This result is in agreement with Ramu (2005), Naik (2006), and Arathy Balakrishnan (2011).

Management orientation

It is evident from the results that majority (47.50%) of the rice farmers had medium management orientation followed by high (33.33%) and low (19.17%) levels of management orientation. Management orientation is the ability of the farmer in scientific farm management in planning, production and marketing. Majority of the farmers being middle to old aged were having higher levels of farming experience. From the vast experience of farming they were good in planning and production aspects of farm management, but it was observed that majority had a low management orientation about marketing and record keeping aspects of farm management. This result is in agreement with Sajith kumar (2004), Ramu (2005) and Arathy Balakrishnan (2011).

Innovativeness

Findings from results showed that majority (54.17%) of the rice farmers had medium innovativeness followed by high (28.33%) and low (17.50%) levels of innovativeness. The possible reasons might be that majority of the farmers involved in farming were of middle to old age category and innovativeness is generally associated with younger age. Besides majority of the farmers were having other occupations in addition to farming. Hence, many of the marginal farmers were having less time and low economic status to initiate any kind of innovation than big farmers. This result is in agreement with Ramu (2005), Naik (2006) and Arathy Balakrishnan (2011).

Risk orientation

It is evident from the results that majority (58.33%) of the rice farmers had high risk orientation followed by medium (24.17%) and low (17.5%) levels of risk orientation. The possible reason for this might be that majority of the farmers were having medium holdings and were able to take more risk. Extension agencies should take necessary steps to encourage more youngsters and middle aged people towards farming activities so that they could able to take more risks to achieve more economic returns.

Majority of the rice farmers were middle aged with high school education, had medium farm size, farming experience, training undergone, credit orientation, social participation, mass media exposure and extension contact. This shows there is a greater need to increase the literacy levels by providing functional literacy programmes along with developing awareness among the farmers on importance of extension personnel and mass media in transfer of technology. Further, the areas that also should be concentrated are economic motivation, scientific orientation, management orientation, innovativeness and risk orientation which shows their impact on the overall development of farming community.

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