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An analytical study on the selected profile characteristics of tenant farmers in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted during 2024–25 using an ex-post facto research design in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh, with a purposive sample of 120 tenant farmers. The study aimed to analyze the profile characteristics of tenant farmers, including age, education, family type and size, leased landholding, farming experience, training received, tenancy duration, occupation, access to credit and financial services, annual income, extension contact, mass media exposure, social participation, scientific orientation, and risk orientation. The results revealed that majority of tenant farmers (56.67%) were middle-aged, while less than one-third (27.50%) had complete high school education. Most of the respondents (76.67%) belonged to nuclear families and cultivated small-size leased landholdings (50.00%). Nearly half of the farmers (46.67%) had medium farming experience and 61.67% had received 1–3 trainings. A significant proportion (62.50%) engaged in annual tenancy agreements. Agriculture was the primary occupation (50.00%) of the respondents. Moneylenders constituted the major source of credit (33.33%). The majority of tenant farmers had medium levels of annual income (67.50%), extension contact (54.16%), mass media exposure (55.84%), social participation (58.33%), scientific orientation (58.33%) risk orientation (45.84%).

Keywords: *Agricultural credit, Leased landholding, Tenant farmer and Tenancy duration*

Tenant farming plays a vital role in Indian agriculture, especially in supporting rural livelihoods. It involves the cultivation of land by individuals who lease rather than own it, operating under diverse contractual arrangements. Despite its historical significance and widespread prevalence, tenant farming remains largely overlooked in government policies. In state like Andhra Pradesh, where landlessness and fragmentation are pressing concerns, tenant farming has become a dominant land use pattern. Factors such as economic liberalization, rural-to-urban migration and absentee landlordism have led many landowners to lease their land to marginal or landless farmers. However, tenant farmers often face legal invisibility, economic insecurity and social marginalization due to their lack of formal recognition. from welfare schemes like crop insurance, MSP and direct benefit transfers, they are forced to depend on informal credit and market systems, which exploit their vulnerability. Social stigma and lack of representation further isolate them from farmer organizations and local governance structures. This marginal status not only limits their access to resources and information but also hinders their ability to negotiate equitable terms or improve their livelihoods. Despite their critical contribution to food security and the rural economy, tenant farmers remain at the periphery of agrarian reforms. In Andhra Pradesh alone, an estimated 1,348,035 tenant farmers exist, with East Godavari, West Godavari, and Guntur districts having the highest numbers (Revathi, 2014).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted during 2024-25 using ex-post facto research design. Three mandals viz., Ponnur, Chebrolu Kakumanu were selected from the Guntur district, using purposive random sampling procedure as the above mandals have highest number of tenant . From each of the selected mandal, villages were selected using simple random sampling procedure viz., Brahmanakodur, Chintalapudi, Dandamudi, Doppalapudi villages from Ponnuru

mandal; Narakodur, Vejendla, Selapadu, Vadlamudi from Chebrolu mandal, Returu, Kakumanu, Garikapadu and Chinalingayapalem from Kakumanu mandal were selected for the study.. Thus, a total of twelve (12) villages were selected for the study. From each of the selected village, 10 respondents each of tenant farmers were selected using simple random sampling procedure, thus accounting to a total of 120 tenant farmers. The profile characteristics of tenant farmers namely age, education, family type and size, leased landholding, farming experience, training received, tenancy duration, occupation, access to credit and financial services, annual income, extension contact, mass media exposure, social participation, scientific orientation, and risk orientation were studied .The data was collected by administering the pretested interview schedule. It was made sure that the questions were correctly understood by the respondents. To convert the data into meaningful findings the statistical tools namely mean, standard deviation, frequency and percentage were used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

More than half of the tenant farmers belonged to middle age (56.67%), followed by young age (27.50%) and old age (15.83%) categories. Farmers from all age groups, with a larger proportion of middle-aged farmers compared to younger and older individuals. This trend is likely because middle aged individuals tend to be more actively engaged in their profession. Additionally, tenancy was more common among middle-aged and younger farmers than among older ones, possibly due to greater family responsibilities and financial needs. Less than one-third of the tenant farmers had high school education (27.50%) followed by intermediate (24.17%), primary school (21.67%), graduation & above (14.17%), illiterate (12.50%). It can be inferred that the education levels of tenant farmers ranged from illiterate to graduation and above with a larger proportion falling into the high school and intermediate education categories. Improving access to education and providing targeted training could enhance productivity and economic stability among tenant farmers..

More than three-fourth of the tenant farmers belonged to nuclear families (76.67%) and the remaining in joint families (23.33%). Greater proportion of tenant farmers belonged to nuclear families. This trend may be attributed to factors such as personal interest, the desire for independence, ease of family adjustments and a sense of empowerment commonly associated with smaller family units.

Half of the tenant farmers had a medium family size of 5–8 members (50.00%), followed by those with a small family size of 1–4 members (33.33%) and a large family size of more than 8 members (16.66%). It can be inferred that a significant proportion of tenant farmers belonged to families with 5 to 8 members, indicating a preference for medium sized family units. Approximately one-fourth of the respondents were part of nuclear families, while joint families with $\geq$8 members were relatively uncommon. These findings reflect a broader trend toward smaller and more nuclear family structures, likely influenced by economic, social and lifestyle factors.

More than half of the tenant farmers leased small (50.00%) land holdings, followed by semi medium (20.83%) land holdings, medium (16.67%), marginal (8.33%) and large (3.33%) leased land holdings. The data indicates that a majority of tenant farmers leased small land holdings suggesting that smaller plots are more commonly accessed by tenants. This distribution highlights a preference or necessity for smaller and semi- medium plots among tenant farmers, possibly due to financial constraints or limited access to larger lands. The low percentage of large and marginal holdings emphasizes the challenges in securing diverse land sizes for farming activities.

Less than half of tenant farmers had medium (46.67%) farming experience, followed by low (31.67%) and high (21.66%). It could be inferred that, most tenant farmers possessed medium farming experience, indicating a moderate level of familiarity with agricultural practices. A significant portion has low experience, suggesting potential challenges in productivity. Only a small percentage have high experience, potentially benefiting from advanced skills and knowledge to improve farming efficiency and implement innovative practices.

Less than two-third of the tenant farmers received 1-3 trainings (61.67%), followed by no trainings (23.33%) and >3 trainings (15.00%). These findings emphasize the importance of implementing more inclusive and extensive training programs, ensuring that all tenant farmers have the chance to enhance their agricultural practices. More than half of the tenant farmers received 1-3 trainings, indicating moderate

exposure to agricultural education. Significant portion received no trainings, limiting their access to new techniques.

Tenant farmers (62.50%) were engaged in annual tenancy agreements, while the remaining in seasonal tenancy pattern (37.50%). This pattern suggests that many tenant farmers were in annual tenancy despite its inherent uncertainty, as it does not guarantee land access beyond a single year. In contrast, seasonal tenancy, though shorter, might offer more flexibility, especially for those with constrained resources or short-term agricultural plans. Half of the tenant farmers occupation was Agriculture (50.00%) followed by Agriculture+Dairy (25%), Agriculture + Farm labour (12.50%), Agriculture+ Business (10.83%) and Agriculture + Job (1.67%). It could be inferred that half of the tenant farmers rely solely on agriculture, reflecting a primary dependence on farming. Others diversified with agriculture and dairy, farm labour and business to enhance their income. A very few combined agriculture with jobs, indicating limited access to formal employment opportunities within this community. Major source of credit for tenant farmers was money lenders (33.33%), followed by mortgaging land/house documents with money lenders (20.83%), mortgaging gold with money lenders (16.67%), friends and relatives (11.67%), cooperatives (8.33%), crop loans in nationalized banks (2.50%). While an equal proportion of the respondents of 1.67 per cent each expressed that they accessed personal loans in private banks ; gold loans in nationalized banks; gold loans in private banks and gold loans in private firms. The data indicates that money lenders are the primary source of finance for tenant farmers, followed by friends and relatives, cooperatives and loans (both crop and gold) from nationalized banks. The reliance on mortgaging land or house documents is notably low. This highlights the challenges tenant farmers face in accessing formal financial services and their dependence on informal credit sources, which could have implications for their financial stability and overall well-being. More than two-third of the tenant farmers had medium (67.50%) annual income, followed by high (19.16%) and low (13.34%) annual income. It could be inferred that most tenant farmers have a medium annual income, indicating relative financial stability. A smaller portion enjoys a high income, suggesting success in optimizing resources or diversifying activities. Meanwhile, the low-income group faces economic challenges, potentially limiting access to better farming tools and technologies and affecting overall livelihood sustainability. Further the tenant farmers need to pay land lease rent from the profits they get thus impacting annual income.

Tenant farmers 54.16 per cent had medium extension contact, followed by high (25.84%) and low (20.00%) extension contact.Greater proportion of the tenant farmers were observed in medium extension contact which could be accounted as the area cultivated by tenant farmers was more and they might have contacted extension personnel for agro advisories. Tenant farmers 55.84 per cent had medium mass media exposure, followed by high (31.66%) and low (12.50%) mass media exposure. It could be inferred from the above results that, a majority had a moderate level of media access, which likely facilitated information dissemination, while a significant portion had high exposure, potentially enhancing their access to agricultural innovations. More than half of the tenant farmers had medium (58.33%) social participation, followed by high (22.34%) and low (18.33%) social participation.Most farmers were moderately engaged in social activities, which could influence their community connections and access to resources, while fewer had high or low levels of involvement. Social participation depends on the extent of extrovert and introvert behaviour. None of the tenant farmers had low social participation. It further depends on the respondent's free time, interest, etc. More than half of the tenant farmers had medium (58.33%) scientific orientation, followed by high (27.50%) and low (14.17%) scientific orientation. most farmers were moderately focused on scientific approaches, with a substantial portion demonstrating high interest in scientific methods, while a smaller group had limited scientific engagement. Greater proportion of the tenants were observed in medium category of scientific orientation accounting their participation in training programmes and extension contact.

Less than half of the tenant farmers had medium (45.84%) risk orientation followed by high (39.16%) and low (15.00%) risk orientation. It could be inferred from the above results that, greater proportion of the tenant farmers were observed in medium and high risk orientation category, which could be accounted for their entrepreneurial behaviour in leasing-in the land. A significant portion of farmers were open to taking risks, which could impact their

Table 1. Distribution of tenant farmers according to their selected profile characteristics

S. No.	Independent Variable	Category	Tenant	
			F	%
1	Age	Young (up to 35 years)	33	27.50
		Middle (35-58 years)	68	56.67
		Old (Above 58 years)	19	15.83
2	Education	Illiterate	15	12.50
		Primary School	26	21.67
		High School	33	27.50
		Intermediate	29	24.17
		Graduation &Above	17	14.16
3	Family Type	Nuclear family	92	76.67
		Joint family	28	23.33
4	Family Size	Small (1-4)	40	33.33
		Medium(5-8)	60	50.67
		Large(>8)	20	16.00
5	Leased land holding	Marginal (< 1 Ha)	10	8.33
		Small (1 – 2 Ha)	60	50.00
		Semi medium (3– 4 Ha)	25	20.83
		Medium (5– 10 Ha)	20	16.67
		Large (> 10 Ha)	4	4.17
6	Farming Experience	Low (< 15 yrs.)	38	31.67
		Medium (16-30 yrs.)	56	46.67
		High (>30 yrs.)	26	21.66
7	Training Received	Untrained	28	23.33
		1-3 training	74	61.67
		>3 trainings	18	15.00
8	Tenancy duration	Annual	75	62.50
		Seasonal	45	37.50
9	Occupation	Agriculture	60	50.00
		Agriculture + Dairy	30	25.00
		Agriculture + Daily wages	15	12.50
		Agriculture + Business	13	10.83
		Agriculture + Job	2	1.67
10	Access to credit and Financial services	Crop loans in nationalized banks	3	2.50
		Personal loans in private banks	2	1.67
		Gold loan in nationalized banks	2	1.67
		Gold loan private banks	2	1.67
		Gold loan in private firms	2	1.67
		Cooperatives	10	8.33
		Money lenders	40	33.33
		Mortgaging land/house documents with money lenders	25	20.83
		Mortgaging gold with money lenders	20	16.67
		Friends & Relatives	14	11.67

11	Annual Income	Low (Less than ₹48399.08)	16	13.34
		Medium (₹48399.08 - ₹114902.66)	81	67.50
		High (Greater than ₹114902.66)	23	19.16
12	Extension Contact	Low (<18.26)	24	20.00
		Medium (18.26-25.84)	65	54.16
		High (>25.84)	31	25.84
13	Mass Media Exposure	Low (<6.35)	15	12.50
		Medium (6.35-9.91)	67	55.84
		High (>9.91)	38	31.66
14	Social Participation	Low (<42.13)	22	18.33
		Medium (42.13-51.50)	70	58.33
		High (>51.50)	28	22.34
15	Scientific Orientation	Low (<9.48)	17	14.17
		Medium (9.484-13.96)	70	58.33
		High (>13.96)	33	27.50
16	Risk Orientation	Low (<9.89)	18	15.00
		Medium (9.89-15.98)	55	45.84
		High (>15.98)	47	39.16

decision-making and innovation adoption, while a smaller group had lower risk tolerance.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that most tenant farmers were middle-aged, moderately educated, with medium landholdings, income, and experience. They relied on informal credit and had moderate access to training, extension, and media. Enhancing formal support systems, secure tenancy, and capacity-building initiatives is crucial to improve their livelihood and farming efficiency.

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