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SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PADDY GROWERS IN NAGAPATTINAM DISTRICT OF TAMIL NADU

R. Muthukumar, R. Sindhuja* and R. Jayasankar

Department of Agricultural Extension, Faculty of Agriculture, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar- 608 002 (Tamil Nadu) India .

Abstract

The present study was designed to measure the socio economic and psychological characteristics of the paddy growers in the Nagapattinam District. The study was carried out in selected villages of Sirkali taluk in Nagapattinam District of Tamil Nadu. The samples consisted of 120 respondents who were selected by using proportionate random sampling method. The respondents were interviewed personally by a well structured and pre-tested interview schedule. An attempt was made in the study to understand the socio economic characteristics of the respondents such as age, educational status, occupational status, family type, area of land holding, annual income, experience on paddy cultivation, social participation, extension agency contact, mass media exposure, decision making ability, information sharing behaviour, risk orientation and innovativeness were considered for the present study. Percentage analysis and cumulative frequency method were used for analyzing and interpreting the data.

Key words: Paddy growers, socio economic status

Introduction

Nagapattinam is the coastal District of Tamil Nadu, on the eastern coast, Bay of Bengal, 326 K.M, south of the State Capital, Chennai, 145 K.M from Trichy, A middle Town. Nagapattinam is a unique District with all its historical and cultural significance. Agriculture continues to be the most predominant sector of the Nagapattinam District economy, as some percent of the population is engaged in agriculture and allied activities for their livelihood. Government policy and objectives have been to ensure stability in agricultural production and to increase the agricultural production in a sustainable manner to meet the food requirement of growing population and also to meet the raw material needs of agro based industries, thereby providing employment opportunities to the rural population. Keeping this in view, the present study has been made to know the socio economic conditions of paddy growers.

Materials and Methods

A total number of 120 respondents were identified from the selected six villages by using the proportionate random sampling technique. An attempt was made in the study to understand the socio economic characteristics of the respondents such as age, educational status, occupational status, family type, area of land holding, annual income, experience on paddy cultivation, social participation, extension agency contact, mass media exposure, decision making ability, information sharing behaviour, risk orientation and innovativeness were considered for the present study. Percentage analysis and cumulative frequency method were used for analyzing and interpreting the data.

Results and Discussion

In any social science, it is essential to analyse the characteristics of farmers, which would give a basic and clear understanding about the background of the farmers. This would help in interpreting the data gathered in an effective way. In this study, totally fourteen characteristics of the respondents were selected for analysis and were classified into convenient categories for meaningful interpretation of data. The classification

***Author for correspondence :** E-mail : sindhujothi1996@gmail.com

of variables based on cumulative frequency method. The findings are presented and discussed here under.

Age

Age was considered as a factor, since it may reveal the mental maturity of an individual to take decisions for achieving his needs. Therefore, it has been considered as this study. Data collected on the age of the respondents have been presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to their age (n=120).

Sl. No.	Category	Number of respondents	Percent
1.	Young	17	14.17
2.	Middle	39	32.50
3.	Old	64	53.33
	Total	120	100.00

The data in Table 1 reveals that little more than half of the respondents (53.33 per cent) were old aged, followed by middle aged (32.50 per cent) and young aged (14.17 per cent) categories. More number of farmers in old age group might be due to the nature of sample of respondents selected for study. This finding is supported by the findings of Hanglem (2017).

Educational status

Formal education of an individual influences his attitude and enhances the comprehensive ability and skill. This leads to the increasing problem solving ability of an individual. With this consideration the education of the respondents was studied. The distribution of respondents according to their educational status is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to their educational status (n=120).

Sl. No.	Category	Number of respondents	Percent
1.	Illiterate	29	24.17
2.	Primary school education	25	20.83
3.	Middle school education	20	16.67
4.	High school education	18	15.00
5.	Higher secondary school education	21	17.50
6.	Collegiate education	7	05.83
	Total	120	100.00

It could be revealed from Table 2, that nearly one-fourth of the respondents (24.17 per cent) belonged to illiterate category, followed by primary school education (20.83 percent), higher secondary school education (17.50 percent), middle school education (16.67 percent), secondary school education (15.00 per cent) and collegiate education (5.83 percent). This might be due to the fact that majority of the respondents belonged to old age category. This finding is similar to the findings of Narasimhan (2014).

Occupational status

Occupational status could be conceptualized with any activities in which a person may be regularly engaged to achieve a standard utilitarian award. Hence, the respondents were enquired about their occupational status and the results are presented in a Table 3

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to their occupational status (n=120).

Sl. No.	Category	Number of respondents	Percent
1.	Agriculture as primary occupation	105	87.50
2.	Agriculture as secondary occupation	15	12.50
	Total	120	100.00

It could be reported from Table 3, that most of the respondents (87.50 percent) were found to have agriculture as their primary occupation. Respondents with agriculture as secondary occupation constituted only a limited proportion (12.50 percent). Thus might be due to the fact that they had practised agriculture as a traditional occupation for several years and further they had only limited opportunities and expertised to practice some other occupation. This finding is in accordance with the findings of Chigasil sangma (2017).

Family type

The type of family in which a person lives and with socialized with immense importance in deciding their values, beliefs and behaviors pattern which were likely to affect the respondents attitude towards a particular problem. Hence the family type plays crucial role to the respondent in the adoption and results are presented in a Table 4.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents according to the family type (n=120).

Sl. No.	Category	Number	Percent
1.	Nuclear family	83	69.17
2.	Joint family	37	30.83
	Total	120	100.00

It could be observed from the Table 4 that most of the respondents (69.17 percent) were found to live in nuclear family system followed by 30.83 percent of the respondents who were reported to live in joint family system. Modernization and disintegration of joint family system show the positive way for emergence of more number of nuclear families. This finding is identical with

the findings of Nazir *et al.,* (2012) who also reported that majority of the respondents live in nuclear family system.

Area of land holding

Farm size is also one of the deciding factors in the adoption of improved technologies. The respondents on the basis of their actual farm size were classified into three groups as per Table 5.

Table 5: Distribution of respondents according to the area of land holding (n=120).

Sl. No.	Category	Number of respondents	Percent
1	Marginal farmer	24	20.00
2	Small farmer	72	60.00
3	Big farmer	24	20.00
	Total	120	100

A cursory look at the Table 5 reveals that a large number of proportion of the respondents (60.00 percent) were small farmers followed by big and marginal farmers (20.00 percent). The division of land from one generation to another generation as per social custom might be the possible explanation of the findings. This result is in line with the findings of Sathishkumar (2016).

Annual income

The results on distribution of respondents according to their annual income are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Distribution of respondents according to their annual income (n=120).

Sl. No.	Category	Number of respondents	Percent
1.	Low	34	28.33
2.	Medium	61	50.83
3.	High	25	20.83
	Total	120	99.99

It could be observed from Table 6, that more than two-fourth of the respondents possessed (50.83 per cent) medium level of annual income, followed by 20.83 per cent of the respondents with high level of annual income and 28.33 per cent of the respondents had low level of annual income. Thus the reasons for medium level of annual income was due to the fact that majority of the respondents were engaged in farming alone. This finding also accordance with the findings of Kathiresan (2013).

Experience on paddy cultivation

"Experience is one of the best teachers", said by the poverb. Farming experience acquired over a period of time paves way for the success in farming. Farming experience would help them in making rational decisions in farm activities and it plays a crucial role in the adoption (or) rejection behavior of an individual. The distribution of respondents according to their farming experience was worked out and grouped into three categories and presented in Table.7.

Table 7: Distribution of respondents according to their experience on paddy cultivation (n=120).

Sl. No.	Category	Number of respondents	Percent
1.	Low	6	5.00
2.	Medium	41	34.17
3.	High	73	60.83
	Total	120	100.00

It could be found from Table 7, that more than half of the respondents (60.83 percent) had high level of farming experience, followed by 34.17 percent of the respondents with medium level of experience and 5.00 percent with low level of farming experience. The reasons showed that the majority of farmers possessed a higher level of experience in paddy. This might be due to the reason that majority of the farmers were in old age category. This finding is in congruence with the findings by Gopalswamypoyyamoli (2011).

Social participation

Social participation brings an individual in close contact with other members of social organizations. This provides many opportunities to exchange their new ideas, information which would help them in gathering much more information in farm innovation. The distribution of respondents according to their social participation is presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Distribution of respondents according to their social participation (n=120).

Sl. No.	Category	Number of respondents	Percent
1.	Low	39	32.50
2.	Medium	53	44.17
3.	High	28	23.33
	Total	120	100.00

It could be observed from Table 8 that the majority of the respondents (69.00 percent) had medium level of social participation, followed by low (28.33 percent) and high (14.17 percent) levels of social participation. More than one-fourth of the respondents had participated in social activities. The main reason might be the existence of village cooperative society and milk cooperative society at village level. Most of the respondents were members of the cooperative society to avail the benefits provided by them. This finding is in accordance with the findings reported by Rane (2016).

Extension agency contact

Extension agency contact refers to the contact of the respondents with the extension functionaries. Extension workers helped the farmers to create awareness of the relevant new technologies and also helped them to gain adequate knowledge about the

Table 9: Distribution of respondents according to their extension agency contact (n=120).

Sl. No.	Category	Number of respondents	Percent
1.	Low	45	37.50
2.	Medium	49	40.83
3.	High	26	21.67
	Total	120	100.00

technologies. These data regarding to extension agency contact are presented in Table 9.

It could be noted from Table 9 that most of the respondents (40.83 percent) had medium level of contact with extension agency, 37.50 percent of the respondents fall in low level while the remaining 21.67 percent of the respondents were in high level. Lack of awareness about the extension agency and rare contacts might be the main reason for the medium level of contact by the respondents. This finding is in contradiction to the findings of Sharma (2015).

Mass media exposure

Rapid and considerable changes were found in the level of knowledge regarding plant protection in rice crop, due to mass media exposure *i.e.* TV, radio, exhibition etc. The change in knowledge level leads them to change in the attitude regarding the post harvest technology. So,

Table 10: Distribution of respondents according to their mass media exposure (n=120).

Sl. No.	Category	Number of respondents	Percent
1.	Low	41	34.16
2.	Medium	51	42.50
3.	High	28	23.33
	Total	120	100.00

the data regarding mass media exposure were collected and categorized into three categories, which is summarized in Table 10.

It could be observed from Table 10 that majority of the respondents (42.50 percent) had medium level of mass media exposure, followed by low (34.16 percent) and high (23.33 percent) levels. The probable reason for this might be old age and illiterate level of education. This finding is in line with the findings of Ramsundar (2016).

Table 11: Distribution of respondents according to their information sharing behaviour (n=120).

Sl. No.	Category	Number of respondents	Percent
1.	Low	46	38.33
2.	Medium	63	52.50
3.	High	11	09.17
	Total	120	100.00

Information sharing behavior

The results on distribution of respondents according to their information sharing behaviour are presented in Table 11.

It could be reported from Table 11, that more than half of the respondents (56.66 percent) belonged to the medium level of information sharing behaviour followed by 38.33 percent of the respondents with low level of information sharing behaviour and 09.17 percent of the respondents had high level of information sharing behaviour. The information gained can be shared only if the person has the ability to understand and express it. Hence, the knowledge and ability to share the information may be the probable reasons for such a medium to low level of information sharing behaviour. This finding is in line with the findings of Vasanthakumar (2014).

Decision making ability

Decision is the selection of a course of a action. It is a choice from among the set of alternatives. Farm decision

Table 12: Distribution of respondents according to their decision making ability (n=120).

Sl. No.	Category	Number of respondents	Percent
1.	Individual decisions	34	28.30
2.	Joint decision with family members	60	50.00
3.	Joint decision with other than family members	26	21.70
	Total	120	100.00

making is an important component because much of the success of farming depends how well the farmers are good in making decisions. The distribution of respondents according to their decision making ability is presented in Table 12.

It could be observed from Table 12, that exactly half of the respondents (50.00 percent) made joint decisions by having consultation with their family members followed by 28.30 percent of respondents who made individual decisions. A smaller proportion (21.70 percent) made joint

decisions with members of other than their family members. This findings derives support from the findings of Ramsundar (2016).

Table 13: Distribution of respondents according to their risk orientation (n=120).

Sl. No.	Category	Number of respondents	Percent
1.	Low	40	33.33
2.	Medium	65	54.17
3.	High	15	12.50
	Total	120	100.00

Risk orientation

Risk orientation reflects one's readiness or willingness to use recommended technologies. The results on distribution of respondents according to their level of risk orientation are presented in Table 13.

A glance at Table 13 reveals that most of the respondents (54.17 percent) had medium level of risk orientation, 33.33 percent of the respondents fell in low level while the remaining 12.50 percent of the respondents were in high level. The probable reason for this might be the medium level of extension agency contact and higher number of small farmers. This finding is in contradiction to the findings of Archana (2018).

Innovativeness

Innovativeness is the degree of an individual's interest and desire to seek changes in farming techniques and to introduce such changes into his operations as and when found practicable and feasible. Innovativeness is a socio-psychological orientation of farmers who are closely associated with change, adopting innovative ideas and technologies. The data regarding the degree of innovativeness of the respondents are presented in Table 14.

Table 14: Distribution of respondents according to their innovativeness (n=120).

Sl. No.	Category	Number of respondents	Percent
1.	Low	28	23.33
2.	Medium	63	52.50
3.	High	29	24.17
	Total	120	100.00

The results in Table 14 reveals that a little more than half of the respondents (52.50 percent) respondents had medium level of innovativeness followed by (24.17 percent) low and high (23.33 percent) levels. This finding is in line with the findings of Ramsundar (2016).

Conclusion

The result concludes that more than 50 percent of the respondents (53.33 percent) were in old age category about nearly one-fourth of the respondents (24.17 percent) belonged to illiterates. Majority of the respondents (87.50 percent) were found to have agriculture as their primary occupation. Majority of the respondents (69.17 percent) were found to be live in nuclear family, more than half of the respondents (60 percent) were small farmers about two-fourth of the respondents possessed (50.83 percent) medium level of annual income. More than half of the respondents (60.83 percent) had high level of farming experience, majority of the respondents (69.00 percent) had medium level of social participation and more than 40 % of the respondents (40.83 percent) had medium level of contact with extension agency contact and majority of the respondents (42.50 percent) had medium level of mass media exposure and more than half of the respondents (56.66 percent) belonged to the medium level of information sharing behaviour and exactly half of the respondents (50.00 percent) made joint decisions by having consultation with their family members and more than 50% of the respondents (54.17 percent) had medium level of risk orientation and more than half of the respondents (52.50 percent) respondents had medium level of innovativeness.

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