

RESEARCH ARTICLE :

Impact of uzhavar sandhai on livelihood empowerment of farmers

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ARTICLE CHRONICLE :

Received :
20.08.2016;
Revised :
21.09.2016;
Accepted :
07.10.2016

SUMMARY : The study was conducted to assess the impact and decision alternatives of farmers towards uzhavar sandhai. Totally 7 uzhavarsandhais present in Vellore district, out of that 4 uzhavarsandhais were selected based on convenience sampling technique. The uzhavar sandhais were selected from four blocks of Vellore, Arcot, Ranipet and Katpadi. Totally 90 respondents were composed through random sampling method. A survey was conducted and interview schedule was used to collect the data. Based on the collected data, the variables were analysed by using SPSS software and the results are predicted. The results show that the majority of the farmers belong to middle age category. Majority (52.20%) of the respondents were marginal farmers who were holding the land size upto 2.5 acres. Half of the farmers were attending the market from the year 2000 onwards. Three fourth 75.00 per cent of the respondent's primary occupation was farming. Three fifth (73.00 %) of the respondents were having moderate accessibility with the uzhavar sandhai. Two fifth (68.9%) of the respondents were medium level decision alternatives followed by low level (18.90 %).

KEY WORDS :

Uzhavar, Sandhai,
Livelihood,
Empowerment,
Impact analysis,
Decision alternatives,
Marketing

How to cite this article : Indumathy, K., Rajasekaran, R. and Suganthi, N. (2016). Impact of uzhavar sandhai on livelihood empowerment of farmers. *Agric. Update*, 11(4): 374-379; DOI : 10.15740/HAS/AU/11.4/374-379.

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Agriculture is the backbone of the Indian economy. Nearly 70 per cent of the population depends on agriculture for their daily livelihood directly or indirectly. In that, 20 per cent of the villagers now depend solely upon agricultural income for their livelihood directly. The agricultural produce sector has been one of the most important components of the Indian economy. Considerable progress has to be achieved in scaling new heights in the production of food grains, commercial crops like cotton, sugarcane, tea, fruits, vegetables

and milk. The increasing trend of agricultural production has brought new challenges in terms of finding market for the marketed surplus. There is also a need to respond to the challenges and opportunities, that the global markets offer in the liberalized trade regime. To benefit the farming community from the new global market access opportunities, the internal agricultural marketing system in the country needs to be integrated and strengthened. Government of India is striving to prepare the Indian agricultural markets and marketing environment to provide maximum benefit to the producers and in turn compete

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with the global markets. Farmers market had its birth in the concept of Kalghoj in Russia. The former union agriculture secretary MS Gill on his visit to this country was impressed by the concept of farmers market and he replicated this concept by initiating Apnamandis in Punjab and Haryana in early 1987. The different models of market that have been fairly successful are detailed below.

- Rythu Bazar (Farmers market in Andhra Pradesh)
- ApniMandi (Farmers market in Punjab)
- Shetkari Bazar (Farmers market in Maharashtra)

Government in Tamil Nadu subsequently replicated this concept in 1999 in the form of uzhavar sandhais. Marketing of fruits and vegetables is more complex in nature in comparison with the other field crop because of special traits like highly perishable nature, seasonality and bulkiness, which needs special care and immediate disposal. The uzhavar sandhai has assured more relevance and significance in respect of marketing of fruits and vegetables. The uzhavar sandhai is mainly organized to enhance the farmer's income by preventing intermediaries and distress selling. As the sale at the uzhavar sandhai is only for cash, the farmers are getting money immediately. This is absent when they sell their produce to the middlemen because most of the traders make delayed payment. The uzhavar sandhai revolves around the farmer and raises the position of farmer – to farmer seller. The farmer is motivated to bring his produces to the uzhavar sandhai as he can directly market it to the consumers.

Kulkarni (2003) revealed that nearly two third of families of beneficiary women (64.17%) had agriculture as their main occupation, 15.88 per cent had service, while relatively small portion of the families of beneficiary women were labour (6.47%), dairy (5.30%) and business and others (5.88%) as their main occupations, respectively. Anitha (2004) reported that 3.33 per cent of farm women were practicing farming and subsidiary enterprises in addition to other sources of income. Bhuvanewari (2005) revealed that agriculture was the main occupation for 20.00 per cent tribal women, followed by 16.67 per cent belonging to agriculture + coolie category and 3.33 per cent belonging to agriculture + dairy category. Sailaja (2002) reported that 52.00 per cent of the farm women had high level of decision making behaviour followed by 35.00 and 13.00 per cent who had low and medium levels of decision making behaviour, respectively. Salim *et al.* (2008) revealed that most of the farmer sellers are taking decision regarding marketing

their produce after having consultation with their family members accompany and assist the farmer sellers in marketing their products in farmers market and thus, marketing the agricultural produce becomes a family venture. Ravindra and Veerabhadraiah (1991) concluded that 47.00 per cent of the sample beneficiaries had crossed the poverty line as a result of their participation in development programme. Giriappa (1992) reported that about 15.00 per cent of the beneficiaries had crossed the poverty line due to participation in development programmes.

Objectives :

- To study the socio personal characteristics of the farmers
- To study the decision alternatives of the farmers
- To study the impact of farmers towards uzhavar sandhai.

RESOURCES AND METHODS

The present study was conducted in Vellore district of Tamil Nadu. Totally 7 uzhavar sandhais are working in Vellore district, out of that 4 uzhavar sandhais were selected based on convenience sampling method. The uzhavar sandhais were selected from four blocks of Vellore, Arcot, Ranipet and Katpadi. From the selected blocks, sample of 20 respondents from Arcot, Ranipet, Katpadi and 30 respondents from Vellore uzhavar sandhai was selected. Thus, a total of 90 respondents was selected based on available number of population from four sandhais through simple random sampling technique. Expost facto research design was applied to conduct this experiment. The study was conducted during the year of 2014-2015.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Socio-economic characters of the farmers towards uzhavar santhai were collected and presented in Tables.

Age :

Age has been operationalized as the number of completed years of the respondent at the time of enquiry and the chronological age was taken as the measure.

The Table 1 shows the age wise and sex wise distribution, 55.00 per cent of the respondents were female and the remaining 45.00 per cent were male. 65.50 per cent of the respondents were in the age group of 31

– 50 which is the main working force of the village. It is interesting to note that 7.70 per cent of the respondents in the age group of 61.00 and above were still doing the manual work due to their poor economic conditions and that 3.30 per cent of the interviewed respondents were women in the age group of 61 and above.

Family size :

The Table 2 shows the family size of the respondents and majority 70.00 per cent of the respondents belonged to the family size of above 5 members.

Land holdings :

Table 3 reveals that majority (52.20%) of the respondents were marginal farmers (0-2.5 acres)

followed by 31.10 per cent of the farmers were small farmers and remaining 16.70 per cent were holding more than 5 acres.

Years of attending the market :

The Table 4 shows the details about the farmers those who are attending the market. 50.00 per cent of the farmers were attending the market from 2000 onwards and 50.00 per cent came to the market very late by 1 to 8 years

Educational status of the respondents :

The Table 5 shows that each 28.90 per cent of respondents were in the category of Illiterate, primary, middle category and followed by 13.30 per cent were

Table 1: Age wise and sex wise distribution of farmers

Sr. No.	Gender	0-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	>61	Total	%
1.	Male	1	9	13	13	4	40	45.00
2.	Female	4	14	23	6	3	50	55.00
	Total	5	23	36	19	7	90	100.00

Table 2 : Distribution of respondents based on family size

Type	0-3	4-5	5+	%
Respondents	27	25	38	90.00
percentage	30.00	28.00	42.00	100.00

Table 3 : Distribution of respondents based on land holding

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Marginal	47	52.20
Small	28	31.10
Big	15	16.70
Total	90	100.00

Table 4 : Distribution of respondents based on years of attending the market

Type	1-4 years	5-8 years	9 and above	Total
Respondents	38	7	45	90.00
Percentage	42.00	8.00	50.00	100.00

Table 5 : Distribution of respondents based on educational status

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	26	28.90
Primary	26	28.90
Middle	26	28.90
Secondary	12	13.30
Total	90	100

secondary education category. This study is inline with Bhale Rao *et al.* (1981).

Perception :

The Table 6 shows that 73.00 per cent of the

respondents were having moderate accessibility with the uzhar sandhai and only 27 per cent of the respondents have earlier accessibility. It is interesting to note that there was no one has less accessibility of uzhar sandhai.

Table 6 : Distribution of respondents based on perception towards uzhar sandhai

Accessibility	Frequency	Percentage
Early	24	27.00
Moderately	66	73.00
Less accessibility	0	0
Total	90	100.00

Table 7 : Distribution of respondents based on decision alternatives

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Low	17	18.90
Medium	62	68.90
High	11	12.20
Total	90	100.00

Table 8 : Distribution of respondents based on impact towards purchasing power

Category	Yes		No		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Purchase TV	8	8.90	82	91.10	90	100
Farm implements	27	30.00	63	70.00	90	100
Farm animals	32	35.50	58	64.50	90	100
Bought vehicle	5	5.50	85	94.50	90	100
No purchasing	24	26.00	66	74.00	90	100

Table 9 : Distribution of respondents based on investment

Category	Yes		No		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Bought land	0	0	90	90.00	90	100
Construct house	38	43.00	52	57.00	90	100
Constructed irrigation sources	0	0	90	100	90	100
Started new enterprises	0	0	90	100	90	100
Insurance	2	2.20	88	97.80	90	100
Opened savings account	15	16.70	75	83.30	90	100

Table 10 : Distribution of respondents based on facilities

Infrastructure	Yes		No		Total	
	frequency	%	frequency	%	frequency	%
Proper bathroom facilities	54	60	36	40	90	100
Adequate space	78	86.7	12	13.3	90	100
Refreshment stall	5	5.6	85	94.4	90	100
Proper drainage facilities	26	28.9	64	71.1	90	100
Banking facilities	1	1.1	89	98.9	90	100
Storage	50	55.6	40	44.4	90	100

Decision alternatives :

The Table 7 shows that the majority of the respondents (68.9%) were medium level decision alternatives followed by 18.90 per cent were of low level and 12.2 per cent were of high level decision alternatives. Most of respondents were discuss with the family members for decision making in agriculture like selection of seeds, harvesting, marketing etc. This findings is inline with Murali and Sakthi, 2007.

Livelihood impact of farmers towards uzhavar sandhai :*Increasing purchasing power :*

The Table 8 reveals the impact of farmers after joining uzhavar sandhai, majority 74.00 per cent of the respondent's purchasing power was increased. One fourth 35.50 per cent of the respondents mainly bought farm animals like dairy and goat then they purchased farm machineries and implements like sprayers, conoweeders, because of these implements are available with subsidy in agricultural offices. One fifth 26.00 per cent of the respondents revealed that their purchasing power was not increased after joining uzhavar sandhai because of the earnings are only sufficient for their medical expenses and their children's educational needs. The total number of respondents who purchased TV is very low (8.90%) and they were using the free TV provided by the government.

Increased investment :

This Table 9 shows about the increasing investment of respondents. Majority of the respondents invested their money by constructing / reconstructing their houses. Farmers were availing subsidies to build houses from state government. Only two respondents said that they have insurance policy after joining Uzhavar sandhai and followed by 16.70 per cent of the respondents were opened savings account in banks.

Facilities in uzhavar santhai :

Majority 60.00 per cent (Table 10) of the respondents revealed that they were provided with proper bathroom facilities in uzhavar santhai followed by 86.70 per cent said that they have adequate space available in uzhavar sandhai. 55.60 per cent of the respondents were accessing storage facilities available in sandhai. But only 5.60 per cent were provided with refreshment stalls and

28.90 per cent them having proper drainage facilities available and only 1.1 per cent (1 respondent) said that their banking facilities were also easily accessed nearby the sandhai. This findings is in accordance with Boraian (2003) and Krishnan (2011).

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