Socio-economic profile of onion growers in north Karnataka

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ABSTRACT

Socio-economic status is an economic and sociological combined measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others. The study was conducted in Vijayapur district of Karnataka, collecting data from 150 onion growers during 2017-18. Nearly half (52.67%) of the respondents belonged to middle age category, More number (25.33%) of the respondents were educated upto primary school. Majority (63.34%) of the respondents had an annual income of more than Rs. 51,000, nearly half (54.67%) of the respondents belonged to nuclear family type category. About 28.67 per cent of the respondents belonged to medium land holding category, majority (61.34 %) of the respondents had farming experience of more than 17 years, 43.33 per cent of the respondents belonged to low extension contact category. Nearly half (47.33%) of respondents had medium extension participation, 44.00 per cent of the respondents belonged to medium mass media exposure category. More than half of the respondents had medium social participation (52.67%), medium decision making ability (68.00%), medium innovativeness (59.33%) and 42.67 per cent of the respondents belonged to medium cosmopoliteness category.

INTRODUCTION

Socio-economic status is an economic and sociological combined measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education and occupation. Socio-economic status indicates one's access to collectively desired resources, be they material goods, money, power, friendship networks, healthcare, leisure time or educational opportunities. And it is access to such resources that enable individuals and/or groups to prosper in the social

world. Onion (*Allium cepa* L.) is one of the most important vegetable crops grown in India. It is used either in raw or dehydrated form to add flavor and taste to Indian cuisine. India is the second largest onion growing country in the world. In India, the area under onion covers about six per cent of gross cropped area. Both cultivation and consumption of onion holds a great demand worldwide. The present study area has tremendous potential of onion cultivation due to availability of ample irrigated farmlands compared to other areas. However, onion crop poses a number of constraints in like low adoption of improved technology, distress sale due to fluctuating

demand and prices of onion in market, poor marketing facilities, storage and transportation etc. With this notion and problem the present study with following objective was conducted.

– To study the socio-economic profile of onion growers.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

In the present investigation, *Ex-post-facto* research design was used. The study was conducted in the Vijayapur district of Northern Karnataka in the year 2017-18. Among five taluks of Vijayapur district, Vijayapur and Basavana Bagewadi taluks were selected and five villages from each taluk namely Jainapur, Bellubbi, Mamadapur, Uppaladinni and Kanabur from Vijayapur taluk and the other five namely Telgi, Kaulgi, Cheeraldinni, Ronihal and Sulakhod from Basavana Bagewadi taluk were selected for the study based on the criteria of highest area under onion cultivation. From each of the selected villages, a list of farmers cultivating onion was obtained from the Department of Horticulture and among them, 15 respondents from each village were selected by random sampling procedure. This constituted a total of 75 farmers from each taluk making total sample size of 150 respondents. The selected farmers were interviewed and desired information was collected with the help of predesigned and pre-tested schedule. The data collected were scored, tabulated and analyzed by using statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Some characteristics like age, education, family type, size of land holding, farming experience, annual income, extension contact, extension participation, mass media exposure, social participation, innovativeness, decision making ability and cosmopoliteness were studied and presented in Table 1.

It was seen that majority (52.67%) of the respondents belonged to middle age category, whereas, 20.66 per cent and 26.67 per cent of them belonged to young age and old age categories, respectively. Generally, farmers belonging to young and middle age groups are more active and have high work efficiency. Moreover, the middle aged people have higher sense of responsibility and sensibility towards family and young

aged people are more enthusiastic. Thus, they work with more dedication and involvement. These may serve as the probable reasons for most of the respondents to belong to middle-aged group followed by young and old age. This reported finding was in line with the findings of Shanthamani (2007) and Prasad *et al.* (2017).

The study revealed that 25.33 per cent of the respondents were educated upto primary school, 22.67 per cent of the respondents were educated upto middle school, 19.33 per cent of respondents belonged to illiterate category, 17.33 per cent of respondents were educated upto high school, while, very less respondents were educated upto PUC (8.67%) and graduation (6.67%). The results could be attributed to the lack of awareness about importance of education in today's world; other reasons like lack of access to good educational institutions, lack of affordability to higher education also contribute to low levels of education. Many of the farmers quit studies after primary and middle school levels for family farming purposes. However, some of them are educated above high school level and still chose farming as profession for their living. The reported finding of the study is in line with findings of Patel (2015).

As high as 63.33 per cent of respondents belonged to high annual income category, whereas, 24.67 per cent of the respondents belonged to medium annual income, 6.67 per cent had semi-medium and 5.33 per cent of the respondents belonged to low annual income categories. The reasons for this might be that more number of respondents had medium land holdings with good irrigation facilities and they cultivated crops in both *Kharif* and *Rabi* seasons. High farming experience also acts as an added advantage for higher and efficient production practices. Thus, majority of the respondents earned annual income more than Rs. 51,000 upto Rs. 25 lakhs in case of big land holdings. Similar trends were reported by Satyanarayana (2014) and Ashok (2015).

More than half (54.67%) of the respondents belonged to nuclear family type category, whereas, 45.33 per cent belonged to joint family type category. The probable reasons behind more number of nuclear family might be the migration of younger generations to other places in search of their livelihood. Similar trend was observed by Yashodhara (2011) and Prasad *et al*. (2017).

Very less (28.67%) respondents belonged to medium land holding category, followed by (26.67%) semi-

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Sr. No.	Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Table 1 : Distribution of respondents according to socio-economic profile			**(n=150)**	
1.	Age	Young (Less than 35)	31	20.66
		Middle (Between 36 to 50)	79	52.67
		Old (above 50)	40	26.67
2.	Education	Illiterate	29	19.33
		Primary school	38	25.33
		Middle school	34	22.67
		High School	26	17.33
		Pre-university	13	8.67
		Graduate	10	6.67
		Post- graduate	-	-
3.	Annual income	Low (Upto Rs. 17,000)	8	5.33
		Semi-medium (Rs. 17,000 – 34,000)	10	6.67
		Medium (Rs. 34,000 – 51,000)	37	24.67
		High (Above Rs. 51,000)	95	63.33
4.	Family type	Nuclear family	82	54.67
		Joint family	68	45.33
5.	Size of the land holding (acres)	Marginal farmers (Upto 2.50 acre)	8	5.33
		Small farmers (2.51 to 5.00 acre)	34	22.67
		Semi-medium farmers (5.01 to 10.00 acre)	40	26.67
		Medium farmers (10.01 to 25.00acre)	43	28.67
		Big farmers (Above 25.00 acre)	25	16.66
6.	Farming experience	Low (less than 8)	23	15.33
		Medium (between 9 to 16)	35	23.33
		High (above 17)	92	61.34
7.	Extension contact	Low (<3.18)	58	38.67
		Medium (3.18-4.45)	67	44.67
		High (>4.45)	25	16.66
		Mean=3.82 S.D=1.50		
8.	Extension participation	Low (<3.07)	48	32.00
		Medium (3.07-4.62)	71	47.33
		High (>4.62)	31	20.67
		Mean=3.85 S.D=1.82		
9.	Mass media exposure	Low (<7.51)	49	32.67
		Medium (7.51-10.68)	66	44.00
		High (>10.68)	35	23.33
		Mean= 9.09 SD=3.72		
10.	Social participation	Low (<7.45)	49	32.67
		Medium (7.45-9.14)	79	52.67
		High (>9.14)	22	14.66
		Mean= 0.59 SD=0.82		
11.	Decision making ability	Low (<7.45)	25	16.67
		Medium (7.45-9.14)	102	68.00
		High (>9.14)	23	15.33
		Mean= 8.3 SD= 2.00		
12.	Innovativeness	Low (<3.92)	20	13.34
		Medium (3.92-5.55)	89	59.33
		High (>5.55)	41	27.33
		Mean=4.74 SD= 1.92		
13.	Cosmopoliteness	Low (<4.23)	47	31.33
		Medium (4.23-6.41)	64	42.67
		High (>6.41)	39	26.00
		Mean=5.32 SD= 2.57		

medium land holding category, small land holding category (22.67%), 16.66 per cent big land holding and 5.33 per cent marginal land holding categories, respectively. The possible reasons for medium land holdings may be due to fragmentation of land that occurs during the transfer of ancestral property to successive generations. Also, farmers might have perceived that effective management of crops could be possible in medium land holding compared to big land holding. The finding of the study is in line with the findings of Thiranjan (2005) and Neha (2014).

Majority (61.34%) of respondents belonged to high farming experience category, whereas, 23.33 per cent had medium farming experience and 15.33 per cent had low farming experience. The apparent reason for this may be because the majority of the farmers belonged to middle aged and considerable number of them belonged to old aged groups thus having more years of farming experience. Further it was seen that more number of respondents were educated only upto primary and middle school level, thus they might have started engaging in farming activities at an early age. Thus, all these factors contribute to high farming experience among the respondents. Similar trend was reported by Vijayakumar (2012) and Satyanarayana (2014).

It was evident that 44.67 per cent of the respondents belonged to medium extension contact category, whereas, 38.67 per cent and 16.66 per cent of respondents belonged to low and high extension contact categories, respectively. The possible reasons for medium extension contact by the respondents might be due to the fact that farmers are more interested in obtaining solutions to their farm related issues like incidence of pests and disease, labour problems, etc. Further, partial awareness about extension services, low access to extension services and also reluctant nature of framers with regard to making extension contact hinders them from making high extension contact. The results are in line with the findings of Ghuge (2015).

The data revealed that 47.33 per cent of the respondents had medium level of extension participation, 32.00 per cent of them had low participation and only 20.67 per cent had high extension participation. Extension activities conducted by the government agencies are less popular among farmers and lack of initiation or interest on part of the farmers could be the possible reasons for the present finding. The result of

the study is in line with the findings of Angadi (1999) and Vijaykumar (2012).

The study depicted that 44.00 per cent of the respondents belonged to medium mass media exposure category, whereas, only 32.67 per cent and 23.33 per cent of respondents belonged to low and high mass media exposure categories, respectively. This might be due to the reason that most of the farmers belonged to medium and young aged group which makes them more aware of utilization and usefulness of mass media tools in today's generation. Mass media provides information on experiences of successful onion growers through various channels which reinforces confidence in other onion growers to take up similar activities or try out new innovations. The findings are in line with the findings of Neha (2014) and Shani (2016).

It could be seen that 52.67 per cent of the respondents had medium social participation, followed by low (32.67%) and high (14.66%) level of social participation. Social participation encourages onion growers to establish contact with the support system, which can promote adoption through reinforcing behaviour. The probable reasons for medium social participation might be that it helps farmers to gain new experiences and improve their technical skills. While low social participation is due to lack of interest and time, non-attractiveness of the activities undertaken by the organizations, lack of perceived benefits and local politics hinder them to participate actively in social activities. The findings are in line with the findings of Chavhan (2015) and Ghuge (2015).

Majority (68.00%) of the onion growers belonged to medium decision making ability category, 16.67 per cent belonged to low and 15.33 per cent belonged to high decision making ability categories, respectively. Indian agriculture is gambling with monsoon; uncertain rainfall, temperature and other climatic conditions hinders the decision making ability of the farmers because of the risk factor involved in every decision. Farmers are very cautious about the usage of their limited resources and this influences the decision of farmers to a great extent. These might be the probable reasons for the above results. The findings are in line with the findings of Ashok (2011); Krishn (2013); Neha (2014) and Rupan *et al.* (2017).

It was observed that 59.33 per cent of the respondents belonged to medium innovativeness category, followed by only 13.34 and 27.33 per cent of

them belonged to low and high innovativeness categories, respectively. The possible reasons might be that majority of the respondents belonged to high farming experience, medium land holding and high annual income categories; thus risking some part of their resources in order to try a new technology is affordable by them. Further, medium extension contact and medium level of decision making ability also contributes to innovativeness of the farmers. Similar trend was seen in the findings of Ashok (2012); Vijayakumar (2012) and Laxmi (2017).

It was found that, 42.67 per cent of the onion growers belonged to medium cosmopoliteness category, followed by low (31.33%) and high (26.00%) cosmopoliteness. The reasons might be that farmers frequently travel to nearby towns and cities for the purchase of necessary inputs for crop production and for marketing their produce where they obtain information about new agricultural practices. Similar trend was seen in the findings of Yashodhara (2011); Vijayakumar (2012) and Ramesh (2017).

Conclusion :

From the above discussion it could be concluded majority of farmers belonged to middle age group with high farming experience, they were educated upto primary school level and belonged to nuclear family category. Further, considerable number of respondents had medium land holdings with high annual income. It was seen that respondents belonged to medium level of extension contact, extension participation, mass media exposure, social participation, decision making ability, innovativeness and cosmopoliteness. Socio-economic indicators are an important ingredient to research outcomes. Research designs that better reflect the important role of socio-economic data will come closer to understanding how people think which ultimately leads to more targeted, effective decision making. Socio-economic status of the farmers can be used to reinforce the desired changes in behaviour farmers by way of providing diverse range of information and knowledge to support their farm enterprises. Hence, convergence of extension activities is necessary to provide knowledge and create interest about the various sources and organizations providing agriculture related information and services, thereby influencing decision of farmers about adoption of new technologies.

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