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PROFILE CHARACTERISTICS OF COTTON FARMERS IN KURNOOL DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

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Abstract:-The present study was taken up to study the profile characteristics of Cotton farmers in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh. The data was collected from a sample of 120 Cotton farmers by following ex-post-facto research design. The study revealed that majority of the farmers belonged to the age group of 36-55 years, had high school education, had small land holding, had medium farming experience, extension contact, social participation. Majority of the respondents had medium levels of economic motivation, innovativeness, mass media exposure, risk orientation and scientific orientation.

Keywords: Profile Characteristics and Cotton farmers.

INTRODUCTION

Cotton is one of the oldest and the most important commercial crop of the world and forms the most important fibre crop. Cotton is referred to as “King of Fibres” and also known as “White Gold”. It is cultivated in tropical and subtropical regions of more than eighty countries of world occupying nearly 35.20 million hectares with an annual production of 26 million tones of bales. The area of cotton in India has increased from 5.88 million hectares in 1950-51 to 11.99 million hectares in 2011-12 and production from 3.04 million bales in 1950-51 to 36.10 million bales in 2011-12 (<http://www.agricoop.nic.in>). Andhra Pradesh ranks third place in cultivation of cotton with an area of 20.54 lakh hectares during 2011-12. It also occupies third place in production contributing 13.43 per cent of the production in the country. Cotton represents an important cash crop for farmers and an economically viable part of the total economy. In view of the above scenario, the present study was conducted with the main objective of studying the profile characteristics of cotton farmers.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh which occupies third place in cultivating cotton in the state. Out of the 53 mandals in Kurnool district, 3 cotton growing mandals have been purposively selected and 2 cotton growing villages were selected from each mandal at random, thus making a total of 6 villages for the study. 20 cotton growing 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 areas. 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. Ex-post-facto research design was used for the present investigation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The profile characteristics of cotton farmers were presented in Table-1.

Age

It is revealed from Table 1 that majority of the cotton farmers were in 35-55 years age category (53.33%) followed by less than 35 years (40.00%) and more than 55 years (6.67%). Usually, farmers of middle aged are enthusiastic having more responsibility and are more efficient than the younger and older ones. Further, respondents between 35 to 55 years of age group have more physical vigour and also more responsibility towards family than the younger ones. This might be the important

reason to find that majority of the respondents in the age group of 35 to 55 years are active in performing agricultural practices. This finding is in conformity with the findings of Latha (2002) and Sangeetha (2004).

Education

It is clear from the Table 1 that majority of the cotton farmers belonged to high school category (40.83%) followed by 21.67 per cent were illiterates, 17.50 per cent belonged to primary school, 16.67 per cent belonged to middle school, 15.00 per cent belonged to higher secondary/PUC, 3.33 per cent belonged to college level and none (0.00%) of them were functionally literate. The probable reason could be the rural social environment might not have encouraged their parents to provide education to their children. As the rural people were still traditional based they generally do not prefer to send their children to assist in farm and household activities. The distance of higher study centres from the villages and need for more investment also might have prevented the parents from providing higher education to their children. This result is in agreement with the results of Latha (2002) and Vani (2002).

Farm size

It is clear from the Table 1 that majority of the cotton farmers were small (78.34%) followed by medium (19.16%) and large farmers (2.50%). This might be due to the reason that the most of the respondents had low income and fragmentation of land was occurring from generation to generation and with increase in the population small holdings became more prevalent. This finding is in line with the findings of Latha (2002) and Sangeetha (2004).

Farming experience

From the Table 1 it is revealed that majority of the cotton farmers (81.66%) had medium farming experience followed by high (16.67%) farming experience and low (1.67%) farming experience. The probable reason might be that as majority of the farmers belong to middle age group and also there was less awareness among the farming community about the education which made them to enter into farming after completing their education. This result was in accordance with the results of Rajaratnam (2000) and Sangeetha (2004).

Extension contact

It is evident from Table 1 that majority of the cotton farmers (58.33%) had medium level of extension contact followed by high (26.67%) and low (15.00%) levels of extension contact respectively. The probable reason for the above trend might be that, majority of cotton farmers were educated with small and marginal land holding, hence would not go out to meet the officials of agricultural department and also the extension workers might have concentrated their contacts on big farmers rather than small and marginal farmers. This finding is in accordance with the findings of Latha (2002) and Sangeetha (2004).

Social participation

It is evident from Table 1 that majority of the cotton farmers (69.16%) were having medium social participation followed by low (20.00%) and high (10.84%) levels of social participation. The probable reason for the above trend might be that, being a member of society everybody needs to work together cooperatively to achieve higher returns. As cotton is one of the major commercial crops involve more usage of pesticides. The need of being a member or office bearer in such societies which directly involve in farming operations of cotton is essential for taking up appropriate and timely operations in farm production to reduce the health hazards of pesticide usage. This finding is in line with the findings of Latha (2002) Sivanarayana et al. (2008).

Economic motivation

It is evident from Table 1 that 65.83 per cent of the cotton farmers had medium level of economic motivation followed by high (17.50%) and low (16.67%) levels of economic motivation. The reason might be economic motivation is an indication that the individuals is oriented towards achievement of maximum economic returns like maximization of farm profits. However, this variable found to influence the farmers to acquire more information on plant protection measures. This finding is in accordance with the findings of Latha (2002) and Gopinath (2005).

Innovativeness

It is evident from Table 1 that majority of the cotton farmers (45.83%) had medium innovativeness followed by high (27.50%) and low (26.67%) levels of innovativeness respectively. The possible reason for this trend might be that the farmers with higher education, medium extension contact and mass media exposure were able to update their knowledge and skills time to time and ready to accept the new technologies in their farming. On the other side the illiterates, resource poor farmers might be lacking the awareness, knowledge and risk taking ability to adopt such technologies. This result is in accordance with the findings of Sangeetha (2004) and Gopinath (2005).

Mass media exposure

It is evident from Table 1 that 68.34 per cent of cotton farmers had medium mass media exposure, 20.00 per cent had high exposure while 11.66 per cent had low mass media exposure. The probable reason for this trend might be due to the fact that, as majority of cotton farmers are young and middle aged and majority of the farmers were better educated and had inclination towards better utilization of different mass media such as radio, Television, news papers. The farmers with illiteracy and higher

age might not be utilizing the mass media because of their personal and psychological limitations. This finding is in accordance with the findings of Latha (2002) and Sangeetha (2004).

Risk orientation

It is observed from Table 1 that 51.66 per cent of cotton farmers had medium risk orientation, 30.84 per cent had high and 17.50 per cent had low levels of risk orientation respectively. The possible reason for this situation might be that majority of the farmers because of their small and medium land holding, medium extension contact, scientific orientation could not take risk. However, majority of the respondents agreed to take risk when they knew their efforts are worthy enough for good returns. This finding is in conformity with the findings of Latha (2002) and Gopinath (2005).

Scientific orientation

Perusal of the Table 1 revealed that majority of the cotton farmers (70.83%) had medium scientific orientation followed by 22.50 per cent with high and a meager 6.67 per cent with low scientific orientation. The possible reason for this might be high education level, medium extension contact and mass media exposure which directly contributes for the scientific orientation among the cotton farmers. Low scientific orientation for fewer farmers might be due to complexity of the technologies and illiteracy of the farming community. This finding is in accordance with the findings of Latha (2002) and Vani (2002).

CONCLUSION

Majority of the cotton farmers were middle aged with high school education, had small farm size, had medium farming experience, extension contact, social participation and mass media exposure. 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, innovativeness, risk orientation and scientific orientation which shows their impact on human being.

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**Table 1: Profile characteristics of Cotton farmers
(n=120)**

S.No	Category	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	S.D
1. Age					
1	< 35 years	48	40.00	-	-
2	35 – 55 years	64	53.33		
3	> 55 years	8	6.67		
2. Education					
1	Illiterate	26	21.67	-	-
2	Functionally literate	0	0.00		
3	Primary school	21	17.50		
4	Middle school	2	16.67		
5	High school	49	40.83		
6	Intermediate	18	15.00		
7	College level	4	3.33		
3. Farm size					
1	Small	94	78.34	-	-
2	Medium	23	19.16		
3	Large	3	2.50		
4. Farming Experience					
1	Low	2	1.67	10.67	7.99
2	Medium	98	81.66		
3	High	20	16.67		
5. Extension Contact					
1	Low	18	15.00	4.60	1.09
2	Medium	70	58.33		
3	High	32	26.67		
6. Social Participation					
1	Low	24	20.00	20.28	1.98
2	Medium	83	69.16		
3	High	13	10.84		
7. Economic Motivation					
1	Low	20	16.67	22.57	1.30
2	Medium	79	65.83		
3	High	21	17.50		
8. Innovativeness					
1	Low	32	26.67	6.45	1.31
2	Medium	55	45.83		
3	High	33	27.50		
9. Mass Media Exposure					
1	Low	14	11.66	7.19	1.49
2	Medium	82	68.34		

10.Risk Orientation					
1	Low	21	17.50	6.72	1.21
2	Medium	62	51.66		
3	High	37	30.84		
11.Scientific Orientation					
1	Low	8	6.67	23.11	1.41
2	Medium	85	70.83		
3	High	27	22.50		

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