A STUDY ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS IN THE UTILIZATION OF ECO-FRIENDLY AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES IN ERODE DISTRICT

[1]Darling B Suji, [2]M.Tamilselvan [3]C. Praveen Sampath Kumar

[1]Assistant Professor, [2]PG Scholar, [3]Assistant Professor

[1]Department of Agricultural Extension and [3]Department of Genetics and Plant Breeding, Faculty of Agriculture, Annamalai University, Annmalainagar 608 002.

Abstract

An eco-friendly technology may be defined as the use of knowledge and resources in a systematic way to produce desired output without harming the environment. The term "eco-agriculture" was coined by Charles Walters, economist, author, editor, publisher and founder of Acres Magazine in 1970 to unify under one umbrella the concepts of 'ecological' and 'economical' in the belief that unless agriculture was ecological it could not be economical. This belief becomes the motto of the magazine: "To be economical agriculture must be ecological."Eco-agriculture is both a conservation strategy and a rural development strategy. A study was conducted in Erode district to study the utilization of eco-friendly agricultural practices. The findings shows that half of the respondents (50.00 per cent) had medium level of risk orientation followed by 36.67 per cent of the respondents with low and 13.33 per cent with high level of risk orientation. As most of the respondents were marginal farmers with medium land holdings and medium annual income, resulted in lesser risk orientation. This might be the reason for medium level of risk orientation.

Introduction

An eco-friendly technology may be defined as the use of knowledge and resources in a systematic way to produce desired output without harming the environment. The term "eco-agriculture" was coined by Charles Walters, economist, author, editor, publisher and founder of Acres Magazine in 1970 to unify under one umbrella the concepts of 'ecological' and 'economical' in the belief that unless agriculture was ecological it could not be economical. This belief becomes the motto of the magazine: "To be economical agriculture must be ecological." Eco-agriculture is both a conservation strategy and a rural development strategy. Eco-agriculture recognizes agricultural producers and communities as key stewards of ecosystems and biodiversity and enables them to play those roles effectively. Eco-agriculture applies an integrated ecosystem approach to agricultural landscape to address all the three pillars – conserving biodiversity, enhancing agricultural production and improving livelihood – driving the divers' elements of production and conservation management systems. The core of this ecological-based farming is ensuring that business or agricultural activity is consistent with the natural functions of ecosystems, where for instance, the cycle of soil nutrients and biodiversity structure are maintained so as to create a system of agriculture that is resistant to pests and has self-maintained natural soil nutrients. Thus, farmers will no longer depend on costly chemicals and artificial pest control.

Methodology

A sample size of 120 respondents were fixed for the study considering the limitations of time and other resources. A total number of 120 respondents were identified from the selected 10 villages by using proportionate random sampling method.

Findings

In this section, results on socio-economic and psychological characteristics of the respondents' *viz.,* age, educational status, occupational status, farm size, farming experience, annual income, social participation, extension agency contact, mass media exposure, risk orientation, scientific orientation, economic motivation and innovativeness are discussed below.

1. Age

The results on distribution of respondents according to their age are presented in Table-1.

It could be seen from Table-1 reveals that nearly three-fourth (72.00 per cent)of the respondents were old aged followed by middle age (18.00 per cent) and young age(10.00 per cent). This may be due to the nature of the sample selected for the study. This finding is in line with the findings of Suji (2003).

Table-1. Distribution of respondents according to their age

(n=120)

S.No.	Category	Respondents	
		Number	Per cent
1.	Young	12	10.00
2.	Middle	22	18.00
3.	Old	86	72.00
Total		**120**	**100.00**

2. Educational status

The results on distribution of the respondents according to their educational status are presented in Table-2.

Table-2.Distribution of respondents according to their educational status

(n=120)

S.No.	Category	Respondents	
		Number	Per cent
1.	Illiterates	14	11.67
2.	Primary education	36	30.00
3.	Middle school education	28	23.34
4.	High school education	10	8.33
5.	Higher secondary education	22	18.33
6.	Collegiate education	10	8.33
Total		**120**	**100.00**

It could be observed from the Table-2 reveals that 30.00 per cent of the respondents had attained primary education followed by middle school education (23.34 per cent), higher secondary education (18.33 per cent), illiterates (11.67 per cent), high school education (8.33 per cent), , and college education (8.33 per cent). This may be due to their unawareness about the importance of education. This finding is in line with the findings of Suji (2012).

3. Occupational status

The results on distribution of respondents according to their occupational status are presented in Table-3.

Table-3.Distribution of respondents according to their occupational status

(n=120)

S.No.	Category	Respondents	
		Number	Per cent
1.	Agriculture as primary occupation	76	63.40
2.	Agriculture as secondary occupation	44	36.60
Total		**120**	**100.00**

It could be observed from the Table-3 that majority of the respondents (63.40 per cent) were found to have agriculture as their primary occupation. Respondents with agriculture as their secondary occupation constituted only a limited proportion (36.60 per cent). It could be concluded that majority of the farmers depend only on agriculture for their family income. There is no industries in the study area and most of the villages are hamlets without any basic infrastructure facilities. Hence, there was no option for them to get any other job.

4. Farm size

The results on distribution of respondents according to their farm size are presented in Table-4.

It may be seen from the Table-4, that nearly half (45.00 per cent) of the respondents were marginal farmers followed by big farmers(38.33 per cent) and only 16.67 per cent of the respondents were small farmers. This may be due to the fact that the land has been fragmented too much resulting in more marginal farmers.

Table-4. Distribution of respondents according to their farm size

(n=120)

S.No.	Category	Respondents	
		Number	Per

			cent
1.	Marginal farmers (below 2.5 acres)	54	45.00
2.	Small farmers (2.5-5 acres)	20	16.67
3.	Big farmers (above 5 acres)	46	38.33
	Total	**120**	**100.00**

5. Farming experience

The results on distribution of the respondents according to their farming experience are presented in Table-5.

Table-5. Distribution of respondents according to their farming experience

(n=120)

S.No	Category	Respondents	
		Number	**Per cent**
1.	Low	8	6.00
2.	Medium	38	32.00
3.	High	74	62.00
	Total	**120**	**100.00**

The data in Table-5, shows that more than half of the respondents (62.00 per cent) had high level of farming experience followed by medium (32.00 per cent) and low (6.00 per cent) level of farming experience respectively. Majority of the farmers had high level of experience in paddy cultivation may be due the reason that majority of the farmer were old aged farmers.

6. Annual income

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

Table-6. Distribution of respondents according to their annual income

(n=120)

S.No	Category	Respondents	
		Number	**Per cent**
1.	Low	36	30.00
2.	Medium	64	53.33
3.	High	20	16.67
	Total	**120**	**100.00**

It could be seen from the Table-6, that more than half of the respondents (53.33 per cent) had medium annual income followed by low (30.00 per cent) and only 16.67 per cent of the respondents had high annual income. This might be due to the fact that majority of the respondents were engaged only in farming traditionally which resulted in lesser income from agriculture. This finding is in line with the findings of Supriya (2018).

7. Social participation

The results on distribution of respondents according to their social participation are presented in Table-7

Table-7.Distribution of respondents according to their social participation

(n=120)

S.No	Category	Respondents	
		Number	**Per cent**
1.	Low	30	63.33
2.	Medium	14	11.67
3.	High	76	25.00
	Total	**120**	**100.00**

It could be noticed from the Table-7, that majority of the respondents (63.33 per cent) had low level of social participation, followed by 25.00 per cent of the respondents with high level of social participation. Only 11.67 per cent of the respondents belonged to medium social participation. This might be due to the lack of awareness about the social organisations and lack of time for the farmers in the study area.

8.   Extension agency contact

The results on distribution of respondents according to their extension agency contact are given in Table-8.

Table-8. Distribution of respondents according to their extension agency contact

(n=120)

S.No	Category	Respondents	
		Number	Per cent
1.	Low	46	38.33
2.	Medium	48	40.00
3.	High	26	21.67
	Total	120	100.00

It could be observed from Table-8, that around two-fifth of the respondents (40.00 per cent) had medium level of extension agency contact followed by 38.33 per cent and 21.67 per cent of the respondents with low and high level of extension agency contact respectively. Lack of awareness about the extension agency and rare contacts with them might be the reasons for their poor extension agency contact. This finding is in line with the findings of Supriya (2018).

9.   Mass media exposure

The results on distribution of respondents according to their mass media exposure are presented in Table-9.

Table-9. Distribution of respondents according to their mass media exposure

(n=120)

S.No	Category	Respondents	
		Number	Per cent
1.	Low	36	30.00
2.	Medium	66	55.00
3.	High	18	15.00
	Total	120	100.00

Table-9 shows that more than half of the respondents (55.00 per cent) had medium level of mass media exposure, followed by 30.00 per cent of the respondents with low level of mass media exposure and 15.00 per cent of the respondents with high level of exposure towards mass media. This may be due to their less education.

10.   Risk orientation

The results on distribution of respondents according to their risk orientation are presented in Table-10.

Table-10. Distribution of respondents according to their risk orientation

(n=120)

S.No	Category	Respondents	
		Number	Per cent
1.	Low	44	36.67
2.	Medium	60	50.00
3.	High	16	13.33
	Total	120	100.00

Table-10 shows that half of the respondents (50.00 per cent) had medium level of risk orientation followed by 36.67 per cent of the respondents with low and 13.33 per cent with high level of risk orientation. As most of the respondents were marginal farmers with medium land holdings and medium annual income, resulted in lesser risk orientation. This might be the reason for medium level of risk orientation.

Conclusion

This study clearly shows that half of the respondents (50.00 per cent) had medium level of risk orientation followed by 36.67 per cent of the respondents with low and 13.33 per cent with high level of risk orientation. As most of the respondents were marginal farmers with medium land holdings and medium annual income, resulted in lesser risk orientation. This might be the reason for medium level of risk orientation.

Reference

Suji, 2003.Adoption of botanical pesticides in Kanyakumari District, **Unpublished M.sc. Thesis,**Annamalai University, AnnamalaiNagar

Suji, 2012. Efficiency of Water Use in Irrigated and Rainfed Farming in Kanyakumari District- A Micro Level Analysis, **Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis,** Annamalai University, AnnamalaiNagar.

Supriya, M. 2018. A Study on Organic Farming Practices among Farmers in Krishnagiri District, **Unpublished M.Sc., (Ag.), Thesis,**AnnamalaiUniversity, Annamalai Nagar.

Sureshkumar, K. 2015. A Study on Knowledge and Adoption of Recommended Technologies in Paddy-Analysis the Farmers in Thiruvannamalai District, **Unpublished M.Sc., (Ag.), Thesis,**Annamalai University, AnnamalaiNagar.

Swatantrakumar. 2016. A study on Indigenous Technical Knowledge Prevalent in Saidpur Block Of Ghazipur District Uttar Pradesh. **Unpublished M.sc., (Ag), Thesis,** Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi.

Syed H Mazhar. 2016. Analyzing the Practices and Importance of Organic Farming. **International Journal of Engineering Science and Computing,** Volume 6 Issue No.6.

Thillaivijay, K. S. 2015. A Study on Awareness, Knowledge and Adoption Behaviour of Farmers in Rice Based Cropping System in Cuddalore District, **Unpublished　　　　M.Sc., (Ag.), Thesis,** Annamalai University, AnnamalaiNagar.

Vengatesan, D. 2005. Technological Needs of Small Farm Women in Varied Farming Systems of Tamilnadu, **Unpublished　　　M.Sc., (Ag.), Thesis,** Annamalai University, AnnamalaiNagar.

Vijayalan, R. 2001. A Study on Awraness, Knowledge, Adoption of Eco-Friendly Agriculture Practices in Rice.**Unpublished M.Sc., (Ag.), Thesis**, Tamilnadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore.