GAU Res. J. 2000. 25 (2) : 39-45

Personal and Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Coconut Growers in Valsad District (South Gujarat)

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ABSTRACT

To study the personal and socio-economic characteristics of the coconut growers in Valsad district (South Gujarat) a diagnostic survey study was carried out from N. M. College of Agriculture, Gujarat Agricultural University, Navsari Campus, Navsari during the year 1996-97. In all, 50 farmers were selected from 36 villages of six talukas in Valsad district.

Sixty per cent of the respondents were from middle age group and sixty two per cent respondents were from literate upto secondary levels of education, while eighty two per cent had farming as main occupation. Fifty eight per cent of the respondents possessed land below 5 hectares, which includes small and medium size groups. Seventy two per cent respondents belonged to joint family and fifty eight per cent was found as medium size of family. Eighty per cent of the respondents possessed coconut garden holding below 2 hectares.

(Received on 1st Aug., 2000)

INTRODUCTION

Coconut *(Cocos nucifera* L.*)* is an important commercial plantation crop of the tropical region. It is being cultivated since time immemorial, as references are available in various literatures including Ramayana. The coconut palm eulogised as 'Kalpavriksha' and 'Tree of Heaven'. It provides not only edible products but also fuel, shelter, medicine and employment to the millions of people in the tropics. More than 10 million families directly and indirectly depends upon it for their livelihood (Nampoothiri *et al.* 1998).

Personal and socio-economic characters of farmers viz., age, education, occupation, size of land holding, type and size of family and size of coconut garden holding are important factors, which influence the adoption of improved agricultural technology. Considering this, it was decided to study the socio-ecocomic characteristics of the respondents.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The field study survey was conducted during the 1996-97 by using random sampling technique. From the eight talukas in the Valsad district of South Gujarat, six talukas were selected for this survey study. In all, 50 coconut growers (Respondents) were randomly selected from 36 villages of six talukas. The randomization was done with the help of computer. The coconut growers were contacted individually on their farm and the data were collected by using a pre-tested interview schedule for socio-

economic characteristics of respondents such as age, education, occupation, size of land holding, type of family, size of family and size of coconut garden holding. According to the personal and socio-economic characteristics, the respondents were grouped into different categories.

RESUSTS AND DISCUSSION

The data regarding personal and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents were analyzed and presented in Table 1 to7 and graphically depicted in Fig.

Age

The data regarding age group are presented in Table 1 and graphically represented in Fig. 1. Sixty per cent of the respondents belonged to middle age group followed by 34 and 6 per cent of the respondents who belonged to old and young group, respectively. The farmers of middle age group might have good experience and seem able to do coconut farming whereas the old age and young age groups of family were dominated by middle age farmers and both the extreme groups might not be able to shoulde the responsibility of doing farming. These findings are in accordance whith those reported by Tarpara (1981), Naik (1982), Chawkedar (1984), Prajapati (1987), Roy (1991) Talati (1991), Swaminathan *et al.* (1991), Patel (1993), Jondhale *et al.* (1993) and Desai (1994) who have worked on different crops like mango, chiku, tea and agro-forestry. Contrary to this, Shanmukappa (1978) found non-significant association between age and adoption behaviour of arecanut growers.

Education

TABLE 1

Distribution of the respondents according to their age.

Sr. No.	*Age group*	*Respondents (No. 50)*	
		Number	*Per cent*
1.	Young age group (up to 30 years)	03	06
2.	Middle age group (31 to 50 years)	30	60
3.	Old age group (above 50 years)	17	34
	Total	50	100

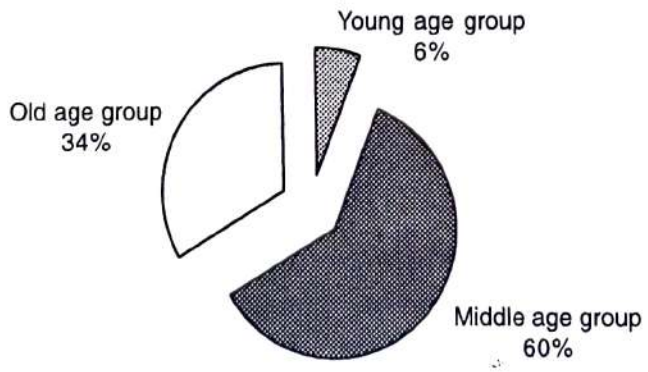


Fig. 1 : Distribution of the respondents in percentage according to their age.

It is believed that the level of education of the farmers plays a vital role in grasping new innovation and advanced agriculture technology. The data presented in Table 2 and graphically shown in Fig. 2 revealed that 90 per cent of the respondents were literate, while only 10 per cent were found illiterate. These findings are in conformity with those of Tarpara (1981), Patel (1982), Naik (1982), Chawkedar (1984), Prajapati (1987), Roy (1991), Talati (1991), Patel (1993) and Desai (1994) who have worked on different crops.

TABLE 2

Distribution of the respondents according to their education level.

Sr. No.	Category	Respondents (No. 50)	
		Number	Per cent
1.	Illiterate	05	10
2.	Primary education	09	18
3.	Secondary education	31	62
4.	College level education	05	10
	Total	50	100

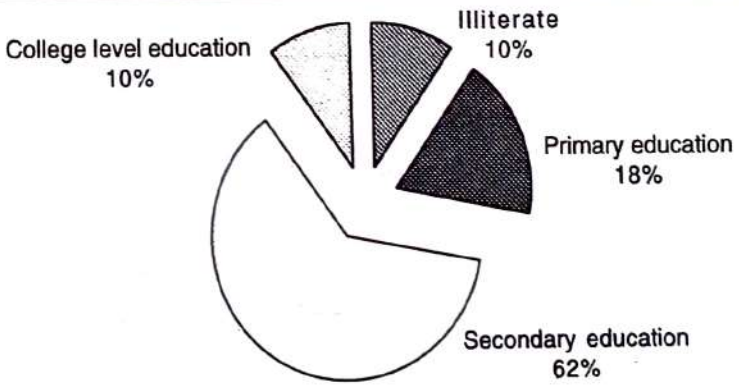


Fig. 2 : Distribution of the respondents in percentage according to their educational level.

Occupation

The data presented in Table 3 revealed that 82 per cent respondents were completely depenedent on farming followed by 16 per cent who were engaged in farming + business, while 2 per cent respondents had farming + labour work and it was zero per cent in case of respondents having farming + service. The trend of the results seems to be correct because more than 75 per cent people are engaged in farming only in our country. These findings are in accordance with those of Bhatol (1987), Patel (1991) and Talati (1991) working on paddy, cotton and banana, respectively. Contradictory report is therefrom Shanmukappa (1978) who had found non-significant association between education and adoption behaviour of coconut growers.

TABLE 3

Distribution of the respondents according to thier occupation.

Sr. No.	Occupation	Respondents (No. 50)	
		Number	Per cent
1.	Farming only	41	82
2.	Farming + business	08	16
3.	Farming + labour work	01	02
4.	Farming + service	–	–
	Total	50	100

Size of land holding

The data are presented in Table 4 and graphically depicted in Fig. 3 . It revealed that 46 per cent of the respondents had medium size of land holding followed by 42 per cent of the respondents having large size of land holding, while only 12 per cent of the respondents had small size of land holding. These findings regarding small holding in coconut tallied with those of Markose and Poduval (1993) and Satyabalan (1994) working on coconut.

Type of family

Type of family is an important social factor.The data presented in Table 5 indicated that majority of the respondents i.e. 72 per cent were from joint family, while 28 per cent were from nuclear family. These present findings regarding joint family and nuclear family are in confirmation with those of Tarpara (1981), Chawkedar (1984), Prajapati (1987), Kulkarni *et al.* (1990) and Desai (1994) who worked on various crops.

TABLE 4

Distribution of the respondents according to their size of land holding.

Sr. No.	Size of land holding	Respondents (No. 50)	
		Number	Per cent
1.	Small holding (up to 2.00 hectares)	06	12
2.	Medium holding (2.1 to 5.00 hectares)	23	46
3.	Large holding (above 5.00 hectares)	21	42
	Total	50	100

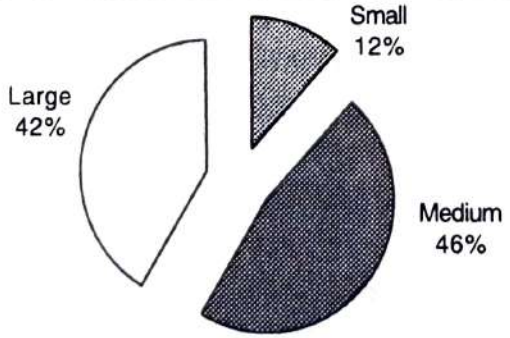


Fig. 3 : Distribution of the respondents in percentage according to their size of land holding.

TABLE 5

Distribution of the respondents according to thier type of family.

Sr. No.	Type of family	Respondents (No. 50)	
		Number	Per cent
1.	Nuclear family	14	28
2.	Joint family	36	72
	Total	50	100

Size of family

It is clear from the data presented in Table 6 that 38 and 58 per cent respondents belonged to small and medium size of families, respecitvely ; while only 4 per cent respondents belonged to large size of family. These findings are in accordance with those reported by Tarpara (1981), Chawkedar (1984), Prajapati (1987), Anonymous (1990), Patel (1993) and Desai (1994) working on various crops.

Size of coconut garden holding

The data presented in Table 7 and graphically shown in Fig. 4 revealed that 46 per cent respondents had small size of coconut garden holding and 14 per cent of the respondents belonged to marginal size of coconut garden holding, while 20 per cent respondents were observed equally for medium as well as large size of coconut holdings. These findings are in agreement

TABLE 6

Distribution of the respondents according to their size of family.

Sr. No.	Size of family	Respondents (No. 50)	
		Number	Per cent
1.	Small (up to 5 members)	19	38
2.	Medium (6 to 10 members)	29	58
3.	Large (above 10 members)	02	04
	Total	50	100

TABLE 7

Distribution of the respondents according to their size of coconut garden holding.

Sr. No.	Size of coconut garden	Respondents (No. 50)	
		Number	Per cent
1.	Marginal coconut garden holding (up to 0.2 hectare)	07	14
2.	Small coconut garden holding (0.21 to 1.0 hectare)	23	46
3.	Medium coconut garden holding (1.1 to 2.0 hectares)	10	20
4.	Marginal coconut garden holding (above 2.0 hectares)	10	20
	Total	50	100

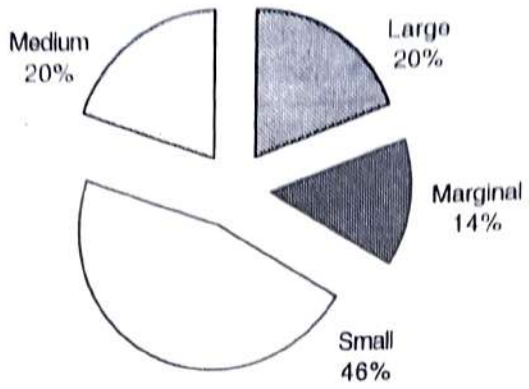


Fig. 4 : Distribution of the respondents in percentage according to their size of coconut garden holding.

with those reported by Thampan (1976 and 1988).

It can be summarized from the findings of this study that socio-economic characters of the farmers have definite role in adoption of improved agricultural technology in coconut cultivation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research paper forms a part of the Ph. D. (Horti.) thesis of the senior author submitted to the Gujarat Agricultural University, Sardar Krushinagar (1999).

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