

Farmers Health and Economy

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND

Farmers' health is an issue now a days. India is an agriculture-based country. 50 % of population is dependent on agriculture. Farmers have their day-to-day maintenance (food, travel, cloths and shelter) on agricultural income. If the farmers are in trouble due to any reason it will have its effect on the source of food to general population. Which puts them onto a subject of scientific research.

METHODS

This study involved farmers living in villages of general population. In July 2018, data was collected from a sample of 45 (forty-five) farmers after random selection. This data was collected by using a specially designed interview schedule and observation technique through a house-to-house survey. Verbal consent was obtained. This information was analysed, tabulated and finally presented in the form of numbers and percentages.

RESULTS

Our present study shows that out of the total 45 respondents, 33.3 % belonged to 30 to 35 years of age group, 47 % from 36 to 50 years of age group and remaining 19.7 % were 51 years and above. All of them were males and married. They liked peaceful and calm life³ of village and agriculture. But they were always worried about rain and irrigation. Their educational standard was poor. None of them were graduates and lacked the awareness of technology in agriculture. They failed to grow more crop from the land they owned.

CONCLUSIONS

It could be concluded from our present study that the general feeling of the common population that farmers are happy land lords and they do not have to worry of poverty is wrong. Because of illiteracy they do not know the proper techniques of farming. Guidance to them is required from agricultural institutes.

KEY WORDS

Farmers, Agriculture Crops, Rains, Soil, Technique.

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BACKGROUND

Farmers are the back bone of the society. They provide nutrition to the people.^[1] Every activity in society moves around farming.^[2] If they grow more food, society will be happy but the labour which they put into the production of food is not considered appropriately by the society.^[3] Economic-status of farmers is fluctuating which depends on rains. At one season of the year they are happy due to good rains but in next year they are in economic crisis due to no rains. Farming is considered as illiterate person’s job. People who are poor in education they turn towards farming.^[4] Village is a place of work for farmers and urban people have poor look towards villagers.

Poor transport facilities,^[5] road conditions, lack of schools, lack of health facilities puts villagers into backwardness in literacy,^[6] knowledge and economy. But even in such poor situations farmers work and grow food for themselves and for society. ^[7,8]

Farmers should be encouraged to give higher education to their children who will in ^[9] turn adopt scientific knowledge for farming.^[10] Agriculture department should take regular classes for farmers to educate them about newer technology. Irrigation department should ensure proper water supply to farming.

Objectives

1. To compare the educational status of famers (literacy) and their knowledge about modern farming.
2. To study the dependence on rains and arrangement of irrigation.
3. To study their knowledge of ill effects of habits and addiction.
4. Willingness to educate the children.

METHODS

The study was conducted in a village, Tikota of Bijapur district, Karnataka state, in the month of July 2018. Mostly the farmers were residents of village Tikota, a sample of 45 farmers were taken, and only their houses were surveyed.

The data was collected after a random selection and this data was collected using a specially ^[11] designed interview schedule and questionnaire. Due verbal consent was taken before starting interview. Observation technique was used through a house-to-house survey.

Most of the individuals included in our present study were between 30 to 65 years of age and were actually working in the farms.

The interview schedule was divided into four sections. The first section included questions regarding general information of the respondent. The second section included question regarding how much land they owned, is it irrigated or dry and what type of crop they grow in farms. The third section included help they take from different agriculture schemes and scientific guidance.^[12]

The fourth section included questions regarding bank loan, personal habits and family structure and other source of

income. All the information thus obtained was analysed according to objectives of this study, coded and tabulated.

Statistical Analysis

The results have been presented in the form of numbers and percentages.

RESULTS

Age	No	%	Sex		%	
			Male	Female	Male	Female
30 to 35 years	15	30%	15	0	100%	0%
36 to 50 years	21	50%	21	0	100%	0%
51 and above	9	20%	9	0	100%	0%

Table 1. Age and Sex, General Information

Table 1 reveals that out of total 45 respondents 30 % belonged to the age group of 30 to 35 years, 50 % from 36 to 50 years of age group and 9 % were 51 years and above. Percentage of female farmers is zero. Family size of 5 members was common and parents of the famers were dependents. Children were taking education. All the burden of expenditure of maintenance of family is on farmers.

Technical Advice Taken	Number	Age	
Yes	2	30-35 years	4%
No	40	36-50 years	80%
No	3	51 years and above	6%

Table 2. Advice from Technical Experts from Govt. or NGO'S (Agriculture Authorities)

Age in Years	Can Read and Write	Illiterate	Literate	Percentage
30-35	No	15	0%	
36-50	No	21	0%	
51 and above	No	9	0%	
Total	No	45	0%	

Table 3. Literacy and Age

Age in Years	Any Family Planning Method Adopted		No. of Children			% Of Family Planning Method Adopted
	Yes	No	2 to 3	4 to 5	5 & above	
30-35	0	15	15	-	-	0%
36-50	0	21		21		0%
51 & above	0	9			9	0%

Table 4. Age and Family Planning Adopted and Number of Children

Average land they possessed is 7 acres. All of them had dry lands dependent on rain water,^[13] some of them had wells as a water source in their farms. When there is a draught they depend on well water. Average rain fall in their area is 20 % as compared to other regions. Commonly they grow crop of jowar, bajara and maka in their fields and that crop gives some cash benefit. They plan for expenditure before seeding. For preparing land and manure (chemicals and organic) they do not plan this expenditure with expectation of benefit and as a routine work every year they do the expenditure. They take care of the crop by protecting it from wild animals and birds.

Some of them take help of automatic machinery like electric motor (for fencing water from well) and tractor for preparing land. All of them had animals of agricultural use e.g., bulls, horses and bullock carts. They sell their crop in weekly village market and get appropriate value of the crop. But they

do not get benefits which will manage their family and domestic needs. If no rains, it damages the crop and in this critical situation they use well water if they have ^[14] well of their own. But the level of water in well also goes down in summer season. There is no any better stock of economy if crop fails. Average family size is 5 members (five). Usually, parents stay with them and children go to school.

Common major expenditure for their family maintenance is on food, cloths and shelter. Some farmers have additional source of income through milk production from cattle and goat farm. Where they adapt goat, but all of them are not satisfied with their present agricultural job. They do not calculate expenditure on farming and benefitting from it. Mathematically it is not feasible to have definite crop after expenditure on seedling. Majority of them are illiterate.

They all have habit of tobacco chewing, alcohol and cigarette smoking which damages their health. All of them take bank loan and at present they are having load of loan on them. Nobody has any family dispute, only they have emotional tension of bank loan.

DISCUSSION

Agriculture land is a sign of prosperity but to grow the crop and have benefit is very difficult. In the hope of getting better crop farmers use manure and other chemicals which damages the crop. Labourers are not available in time and therefore work cannot be done in time. Farmer's children having agriculture land do not complete their education and hardly learn up to 12th standard. The land is divided among brothers in future. Hardly 4% farmers take technical ^[15] advice of agriculture department and any voluntary organization. This facility of technical advice should be provided door step. Water harvesting should be adopted. Artificial lake should be dug in the farm area. Agriculture equipment's should be purchased commonly by farmers society so they can use it in turns and scarcity of labours will be managed. Technical use of farming equipment's will be reducing time and manpower.

Additional income from milk production and goat farming will help the farmers economically. If children are sent to urban areas for education they will acquire more knowledge of scientific agriculture. Habit of tobacco chewing and smoking can be controlled by giving them health education and motivation. Paintings of slogans related to health can be done on the walls of ^[16] houses in the villages. Alcoholism should be strictly avoided by having some classes of alcoholic anonymous and some spiritual talks. Health facility should be provided to old age persons to avoid expenditure on health. Agriculture exhibition and information library (Agriculture Books) should be arranged in village panchayat and note that young students will attend it (Higher secondary school)

Agricultural scientists from Taluka panchayat should visit villages and scientific, technical knowledge should be imparted person to person at farm site. Demonstration of specific procedures related to grow more crop should be arranged in main squares (chowk) of the village where farmers assemble in their leisure (empty) time. Soil health card should be distributed after examination of soil in laboratory and accordingly farmers are advised to use any chemical which is in less percentage in their soil.

Group farming should be adopted so that the agricultural equipment's can be used turn by turn with reasonable rate decided by the farmers society.

Bore wells should be dug at places where possible and drinking water problem is solved. Sanitary latrine should be advocated in each and every house in village and the manure thus created should be distributed to farmers. Biogas on the sanitary latrine will provide gas for cooking. Every year at the beginning of primary schools a donor like N.G.O should be identified who will donate books and other stationary freely to the children of the famers. If solar panel is implanted in barren land it will produce solar electricity which the farmer will sell and earn money. As in this research no female farmers came forward for interview. Female farming from mahilamandal should be adopted. Like this there will be direct linking of domestic requirement of raw food and the female farmers. Bankers should take care before sanctioning loan to farmers, i.e., whether he will repay the instalments.^[17]

Hostels for farmers children who are educating in urban area should be arranged (if possible free) so that expenditure on transport is minimized and students are brought up in better atmosphere.^[18]

Water supply is main requirement of farmers therefore artificial lake in his own farm should be advocated, because water wasted in rainy season will be collected in that lake and farmer will use it in the coming year.

Road construction (good quality) should be done alongside the farms so that vehicle will directly go to the site of production of crop and transportation of the crop will be easy.

Tree plantation (social forestry) if done on the hills and barren land will increase the rain fall and will control the soil waste flow during heavy rains.

Farmers are in critical situation due to unguaranteed rain fall. Well water level of their own well's will go down in summer, scarcity of water do not allow them have good crop. Animals do not get sufficient food (i.e., dry grass for eating). Cattle sheds are provided by ^[19] government in such situation where animals are kept. Veterinary health service is also provided by government with help of mobile health van. Loan of the bank over farmers is excused by some of the state government. There is a new scheme of government to deposit money around Rs. 6000/ per year in bank accounts of farmers. New methods of watering crop are initiated by method of drip irrigation. Farmers are encouraged to start new side business related to agriculture e.g., goat farm, milk production from animals, poultry farm etc.

Agriculture product marketing committees are purchasing crop from farmers with reasonable rates and state government is also establishing centres for purchase of crop with decided rates. So that no harvested crop will remain in the farms. Some government schemes on health are providing free medical treatment to poor farmers and their families (e.g., Ayushman Bharat).^[20] Arogyamitra is visiting houses in villages to search any needy person for help of health and also, they are preparing list of eligible families who can take benefit of free health services from government. School going children of farmers are getting school uniform, books, notebooks, stationary materials free from donors like N.G.O's.

In the scarcity area tanker water supply is provided. The Manarega scheme to give daily wages to the farmers for some days in a year is going on and wages are transferred directly into the accounts of farmers. Agriculture products like onion,

sugar cane is getting appropriate rates on purchase from government. Newly a grant is released by Government to help the sugar cane factories and to pay the bills of framers which are pending. New L. P. G gas connection with cylinder and shegadi is provided to ladies to protect their health from smoke chulha. Students get scholarship and hostel facilities after crossing their 12th standard, where lodging and boarding are free. Book are also donated by NGO's for their further education.^[21]

Children of farmers are availing facilities of integrated child development scheme (I.C.D.S) from age of 0 to 5 years, also pregnant ladies and lactating mothers are getting supplementary nutrition and health services.

All these schemes are to help the farmers to avoid their frustration and to encourage them to come forward and have a healthy and happy life.

Slowly with determination, their poverty will be eliminated which is the main cause of frustration.

If the frustration is removed automatically a tendency towards suicide will be eliminated.

Education is a good method to have a better life, therefore children of the farmers should be encouraged to have education up to graduation.

CONCLUSIONS

A major group of society is farmers. They grow food for all society members and if they are unhealthy they will stop farming. Society will not have adequate supply of food. We all should have sympathetic look towards farmers status in society. Irrigation is required. Addiction should be removed. Facilities should be given to farmers by which they will educate children and adopt modern farming. Their labour should be evaluated. Their sweat in the soil should be paid back. Adult education is required to remove illiteracy.

Recommendation

1. Give education to the children of farmers. So that later they will know the accurate and appropriate technology of farming. If they can read and write they will have the² knowledge of various agriculture schemes.
2. Bankers giving loan to farmers should actually monitor how the money given to them is utilized-there is a course of agricultural banking which will help farmers and bankers also.
3. Use of equipment required for agriculture should be on co-operative basis. This will be possible if they form a society and do group farming which will also reduce the worry of availability of labours.
4. Agriculture officers working in government and private sectors should visit the site of farms and observe the situation and advice accordingly. Soil health card is new method to judge the fertility of land. It will also avoid undue use of manure which is a burden of expenditure on farmers. Only the required manure will be used.
5. Whether forecasting will give some signals to farmers about probable rainfalls, wind and floods. This can be monitored by meteorology department and messages can be given on radio or³television.

6. Building of strong roads alongside the farms will help the farmers to transport harvested crop, vegetables and milk to the nearest agriculture centre. Driver's working in transportation field should be encouraged to give priority on transport of agriculture products. If the roads are in very good condition they will definitely co-operate.
7. Adequate rate and value should be given to farmers for their agriculture product e.g., sugar cane, soyabean, dal etc.
8. Drip irrigation should be advocated to save unnecessary use of water. Pumps fitted on the well water should have solar panel- electric supply. Two crops should be grown side by side e.g., sugar cane and some vegetables to use the water for double purpose. Storage lakes should be constructed in the farm for harvesting of water in rainy season. Small size dams should be constructed alongside the crossing of small water flows (notbundung) which will preserve the water flowing unused in rainy season. On the slopes of hills and mountains small obstruction⁴ construction will help to save water and percolate it into the land in rainy season. Houses constructed in the farms should have sloping roofs so that water will be collected in rainy season on ground level pit with pipe connections.
9. Electric Supply: Solar panel system should be installed which will give them electricity for pumping of water from well. Biogas system should be installed in the stable of animals. This biogas system will supply gas for cooking and electricity.
10. Schools should be at walking distance from their houses. Teachers should be in sufficient number and qualified.

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