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Socio-Economic status and impact of mass media exposure on banana farmers: A case study

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Abstract

The main objective of the agricultural communication is to find out an effective transmission from one source to another and managing messages with meaningful communication purposes. The socio economic status of the clientele decides the exposure and utilization of mass media. Hence a study was conducted to assess the demographic characters of the banana growers and uses of mass media and their satisfaction level in Trichy district of Tamil Nadu. About 750 questionnaires were distributed in five selected blocks (each block 150 questionnaires) such as Thottiyam, Lalgudi, Andanallur, Mannachanallur and Tiruverambur in Tiruchirapalli District. The socio-economic background of the respondents through the distribution of profile observed that most of the respondents belong to male (96.27%) followed by female (3.73%) were highly satisfied with the use of the different media which publish / telecast / broadcast farm related programmes by newspaper/ TV / radio/ new media. The findings state that the farmers are using media to watch agricultural programmes for cultivation of banana. Among the respondent's divisions of age groups, middle age group category of 36 -55 years are highly (65.22%) involved in following the media information on banana cultivation. secondary/ higher secondary school (24.84 %) levels of educated respondents were involved more in banana cultivation. Hence designing programmes in mass media especially Radio, the socio economic profile of the listeners should be analyzed as pilot study.

Keywords: Mass media communication, Demographic characters of farmers, Banana growers, Socio-economic status of Banana farmers

Introduction

The concept of communication includes the process of transmission and collection of information, ideas and opinions from one individual to another and from a social group to another. The process of communication is the transmission of information, ideas, emotions, skills, knowledge by using symbols, words, motion and visuals. The goal of the communication is to find out an effective transmission from one source to another and managing messages with meaningful communication purposes). Agricultural communication can therefore be defined as a communication transaction in which agriculture related information is transmitted and interpreted with a view to sharing the meaning thereof The feedback from the receiver determines the payoff, this usually evaluated in terms of the change effected in the stages leading to the adoption of an idea by the receiver in stages involving awareness, knowledge, attitude (leading to evaluation), motivation (leading to trial) and final adoption.

Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to assess the demographic characters of the banana growers and uses of mass media and their satisfaction level. Addressing the issues may increase the level of awareness among banana growers which in turn may lead to the effective production of banana in the country.

Methodology

The Quantitative - Survey method was employed to collect the relevant primary data from the sample respondents with the help of a questionnaire. The data collected from the primary sources of information were arranged systematically and sequentially relevant to the analysis. About 750 questionnaires were distributed in five selected blocks (each block 150 questionnaires) such as Thottiyam, Lalgudi, Andanallur, Mannachanallur and Tiruverambur in Tiruchirapalli District of Tamil Nadu. The survey was administered in a single stage by trained research assistants. Finally, 644 duly filled in questionnaires were collected from the respondents for the analysis. A simple statistical parameter like percentage was used for the

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interpretation of data and frequency test were conducted. The Uses and Gratifications theory was adopted in this study.

Result and Discussion

Description of demographic variables

Table 1. shows the frequency distribution of profile of the respondents observed over the factors of Sex, Age, Educational qualification, annual income, Area of banana cultivation in block wise, Land holders of own land and contract land besides, their Experiences in banana cultivation.

Table 1: Frequency distribution and Percentage of demographic variables

Demographic Variables	Frequency	Percentage	
Sex	Male	620	96.27
	Female	24	3.73
Age (in years)	15 - 25	17	2.64
	26 - 35	74	11.49
	36 - 45	222	34.47
	46 - 55	198	30.75
	56 - 65	96	14.91
	66 - 75	37	5.75
Educational Qualifications	Illiterate	15	2.33
	Primary	67	10.40
	Middle	244	37.89
	HSS	160	24.84
	UG	117	18.17
Annual income (Rs)	PG	41	6.37
	50 thousand	118	18.32
	51 thousand - 1 lakh	171	26.55
	1 - 3 lakh	224	34.78
	3 - 5 lakh	58	9.01
	5 - 10 lakh	41	6.37
Area under banana cultivation (in ac.)	10 - 25 lakh	32	4.97
	Below 1 acre	131	20.34
	2 - 5 acres	353	54.81
	6 - 10 acres	117	18.17
	11 - 15 acres	22	3.42
Land	16 - 20 acres	21	3.26
	Own land	339	52.64
	Contract land	127	19.72
Experience in banana cultivation (in years)	Both	178	27.64
	0 - 5	71	11.02
	6 - 10	130	20.19
	11 - 15	133	20.65
	16 - 20	118	18.32
	21 - 25	62	9.63
Total	26 - 35	88	13.66
	Above 35 years	42	6.52
Total		644	100

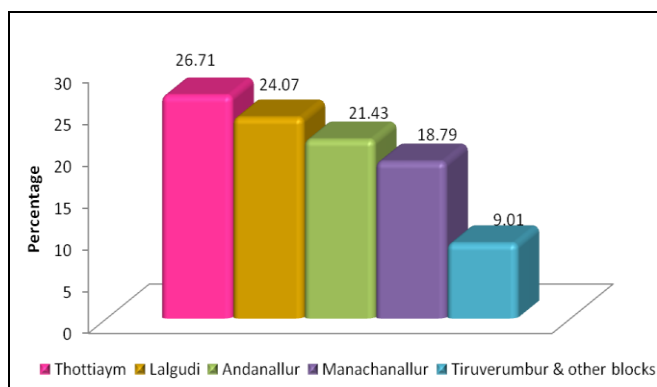


Fig 1: Block wise classification of respondents

1. Gender

It is understood from table 1. and fig.1.that maximum respondents were involved in banana cultivation belong to male category (96.27 %) followed by 3.73 % female respondents.

The present results are in agreement with G2C e-Governance model by the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation report in 2000-01, in which they indicated that the male operational holdings constituted about 89.0 percent while female operational holdings were 10.8%, with clear gender bias. (<http://agcensus.nic.in/document/introagcen.htm>). The corresponding percentages in 1995-96 were 90.3% male and 9.5% female. The percentage of female operational holdings in 2000-01 was consistently more in each type of holdings (marginal, small, semi-medium, medium and large) as compared to 1995-96. Studies carried out by Ango *et al.*, (2013) indicated that the majority of the farmers involved in cultivation practices were male (90%) followed by female farmers (2.2%).

Thus, the gender distribution level clearly supports the present study wherein the males are involved more than the females in agricultural sector in terms of banana cultivation. There are significant gender differences noticed in banana cultivation with regard to the different parameters of agricultural holdings.

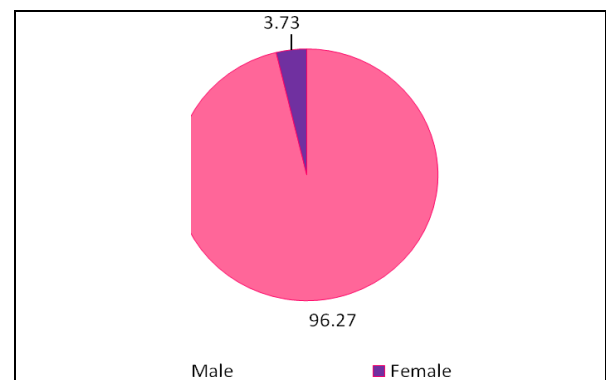


Fig 2: Gender wise classification of respondents

2. Age

The samples were distributed among the six divisions of age groups categories from 15 to 75 years with 10 years of gap. It is seen from table 1. and fig. 2 that maximum respondents involved in banana cultivation belong to the middle age group of 36-45 years (34.47 %), followed by 46-55 years (30.75 %), and 56-65 years (14.91%). whereas minimum respondents were involved belong to the young age group of 15-25 years(2.64 %), 26-35 years (11.49 %) and 66-75 years (5.75%).

Thus, besides their age distribution pertaining to their background information in banana, the data were merged together and reduced as three categories viz., 15-35 (young), 36-55 (middle) and 56 -75 (old). Finally three different age groups 15-35 (14.13%), 36-55 (65.22%) and 56 -75(20.66%) with equal years of gap were used for the analysis.

The middle age group has a large potential and productive workforce. Among the working age group of 15-64 years, the median age of the country is recorded as 24 years. (<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com>). It is clear from the data in table 1 that the middle age group was involved maximum in agricultural cultivation compared to young and old age groups, as the middle age group may have better awareness and analytical capabilities of adopting new technologies in

banana cultivation. Thus, the result shows that significant association is noticed between farming experience and respondents' use of sustainable agricultural practices. The present study also indicates that the more experienced farmers could effectively use sustainable agricultural practices.

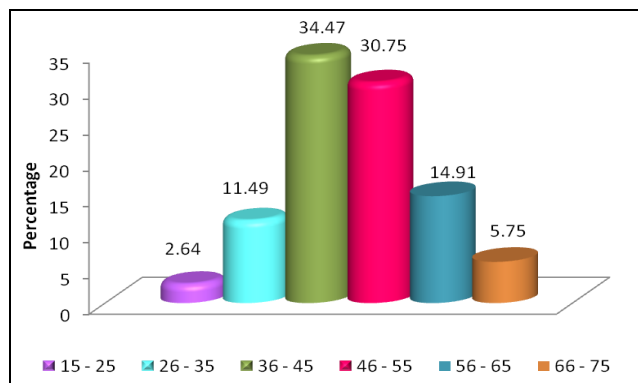


Fig 3: Age (in years) wise classification of respondents

3. Educational qualification

The frequency distribution of different educational backgrounds of the respondents listed in table.1 and fig.4 shows that maximum respondents involved in banana cultivation belong to middle school level educational qualification (37.89%) followed by HSS education (24.84%) and under graduation education (18.17%), Whereas minimum respondents involved in banana cultivation belong to the higher educational qualification of post graduate (6.37%) followed by illiterate persons (2.33%) and medium level of respondents involved in banana cultivation belong to primary school education (10.40%). Educational/literacy background is one of the most important influencing characteristics, about which information is obtained from every individual in the national census. The educational qualification / literacy can be acquired through both formal and non-formal educational systems. For the purpose of census, a person aged seven years and above, who can both read and write with understanding in any language, is treated as a literate person. Children at the age group 0-6 are treated as illiterates.

More than one third of total respondents had middle school level (37.89%) followed by secondary/higher secondary school (24.84%) and (18.17%) level education and 2.3% of respondents were illiterates. In general, higher qualified (high school, graduate and post graduate) respondents were involved in banana cultivation than those from illiterates. Thus, it can be interpreted that the highest percentage of educational qualification is middle level education. It is inferred that significant percentage of the farmers possessed middle level of education.

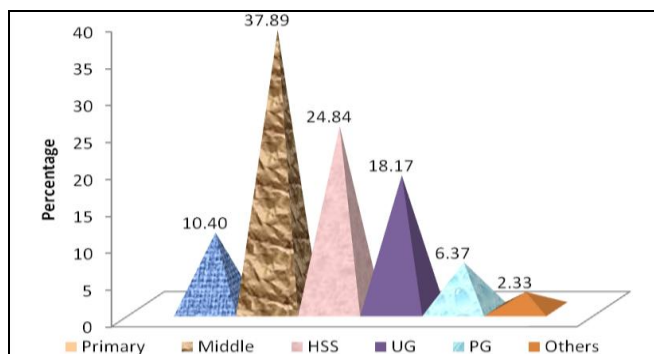


Fig 4: Educational qualification wise classification of respondents

4. Income

Table 1. and fig.5 shows that 18.32% of respondents' annual income is up to 50 thousand, 26.55% from 51 thousand – 1 lakh, 34.78% from 1-3 lakhs, 9.01% from 3-5 lakhs and 6.37% from 5-10 lakhs. Thus, it can be interpreted that the highest percentage of annual income (Rs.) is 1-3 lakhs.

It is seen from the overall income status that 61.33% of respondents belong to the category of 5- thousand to three lakh income group. This is clear evidence that the farmers are earning considerable income through cultivation of banana than any other crops. Further, the present data reveal that banana cultivating farmers are strengthening the country's economy.

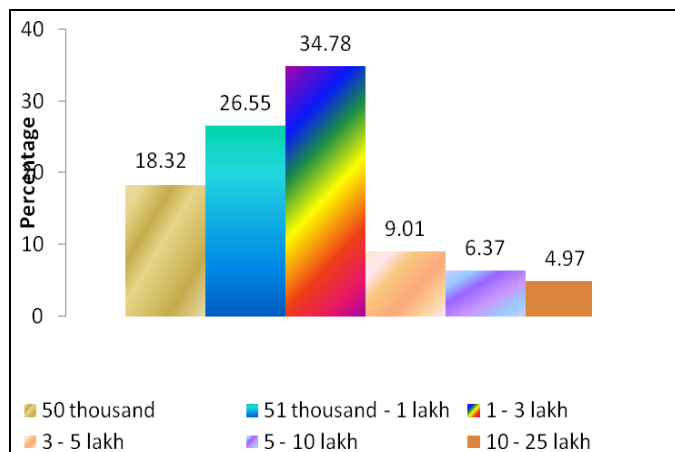


Fig 5: Annual income wise classification of respondents

5. Farm size

Regarding the area under banana cultivation, the distribution shows that the area of 20.34% of the respondents has below 1 acre, 54.81% of the respondents 2-5 acres, 18.17% of the respondents 6-10 acres, 3.42% of the respondents 11-15 acres and 3.26% of the respondents 16-20 acres. Thus, it can be interpreted that the highest percentage of group in area under banana cultivation (in ac) is 2-5 acres (medium farmer).

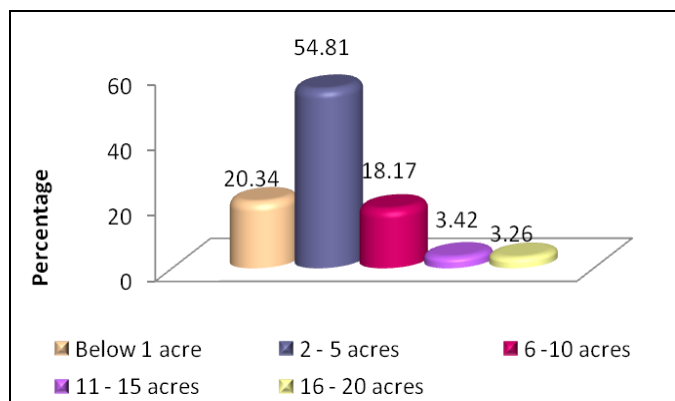


Fig 6: Area under banana cultivation wise classification of respondents

6. Land holding

The level of land distribution shows that 52.64% of the respondents are cultivating in their own land and 19.72% of the respondents in contracting land, 27.64% of the both lands. Thus, it can be interpreted that the highest percentage of respondents are cultivating in their own land.

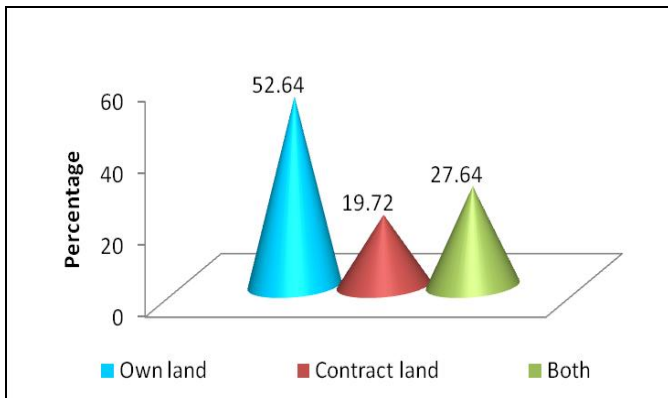


Fig 7: Land wise classification of respondents

7. Farm experience

The frequency distribution shows that 11.02% of the respondents have 0-5 years experience in banana cultivation, (20.19%)6-10 years, (20.65%) 11-15 years, (18.32%)16-20 years, (9.63%)21-25 years, (13.66%)26-35 years and (6.52%)above 35 years have experience in banana cultivation. Thus, it can be interpreted that respondents who have 0-15 years of farming experience are highly involved in cultivating the banana crop.

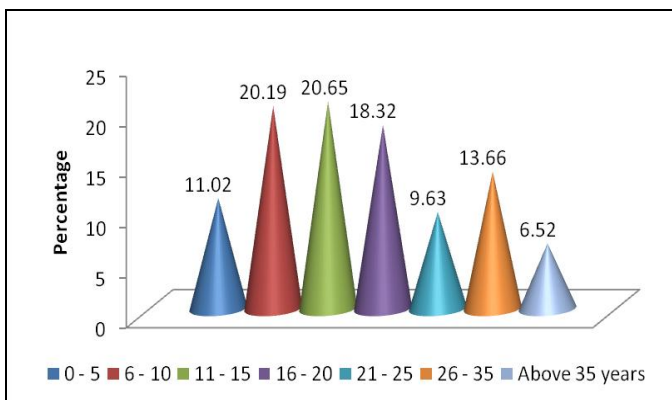


Fig 8: Experience in banana cultivation wise classification of respondents

Conclusion

- The socio-economic background of the respondents through the distribution of profile observed that most of the respondents belong to male (96.27%) followed by female (3.73%) were highly satisfied with the use of the different media which publish / telecast / broadcast farm related programmes by newspaper/ TV / radio/ new media. The findings state that the farmers are using media to watch agricultural programmes for cultivation of banana.
- Among the respondent's divisions of age groups, middle age group category of 36 -55 years are highly (65.22%) involved in following the media information on banana cultivation.
- Among the educational backgrounds, literates were involved more in banana cultivation than the illiterates. It is found that middle school (37.89%), secondary/ higher secondary school (24.84 %) levels of educated respondents were involved more in banana cultivation.
- As for the factors of annual income, farmers from middle-income group (Rs.1-3 lakhs) were involved with highest percentage (34.78) in banana cultivation. Thus, the finding shows that the farmers whose annual income is between Rs.5-10 lakhs are involved in lowest percentage.

According to Pendse and Rajguru (2009) the farmers of middle income group are earning considerable income through cultivation.

- More than half of the total respondents (54.81%) were small farmers owning of land about 2-5 acres whereas, very few respondents (3.26%) cultivate banana crop with maximum area of 16-20 acres. A small group of respondents (19.72%) are cultivating banana in contracting land.
- The finding also state that own-land farmers, were using maximum percentage (52.64) mass media communication for adopting the various technological developments on banana cultivation and its practices.
- The farmers having moderate experience (1-15 years) were adopting maximum usage of mass media and central/ state agricultural institutes' information on banana cultivation than the highly experienced (16 – 35 years) farmers.

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