

Profile Analysis of Small and Marginal Farmers

P. VIJAYARAGHAVAN¹ and D. SOMASUNDARAM²

An attempt has been made to evaluate the socio personal, socio-psychological characteristics and communicate variables of small and marginal farmers. The study revealed that the (i) farm size was the basis for classification, small farmers scored more farm size score than marginal farmers, (ii) Small farmers were high in the socio-economic status than marginal farmers, (iii) small farmers had more contact with Extension Agency than marginal farmers, (iv) small farmers had better market perception than marginal farmers, (v) small farmers were high in economic motivation than marginal and (vi) small farmers had better credibility for Personal cosmopolite channels and Personal localite channels than marginal farmers.

According to the 1970-71 agricultural census 70 per cent of the farmers is either small or marginal farmers. New agricultural technology has largely been availed of by the big farmers tended to add to the disparity between the more privileged and less privileged in the rural sector. The adoption of agricultural practices have been reported to be related with several characteristic variables. So, for any programme development, the knowledge of the profile of farmers is necessary. Hence, it was felt necessary to analyse some of the important characteristics of small and marginal farmers on the (i) socio-personal characteristics, (ii) socio-psychological characteristics and (iii) communication characteristics of small and marginal farmers.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Based on the predominance of both small and marginal farmers, this study

was conducted in six villages of Avinashi block of Coimbatore district. By proportionate random sampling 120 respondents were selected comprising of 55 small farmers and 65 marginal farmers. Eight socio-personal, seven socio psychological and four communication variables were selected in consultation with Extension staff of the Department of Agriculture and teachers in the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University. The communication variables were studied separately under three categories, namely, Personal-cosmopolite, Personal-localite and impersonal - cosmopolite channels as given in Table I. The empirical measures developed for the 27 variables are shown in Table II. The statistical techniques used for data analysis include independent 't' test and the level of probability considered at 0.05 level of probability.

1. Deputy Agricultural Officer (Extension), Coimbatore District.
2. Assistant Professor of Agricultural Extension, Agricultural College and Research Institute, Coimbatore - 641003.

TABLE I. Names of the communication channels and their classification

Name of the Channel	Group
Office call	Personal-cosmopolite
Farm & Home visit	"
Result Demonstration	"
Method Demonstration	"
Tour/Field Trip	"
Group Meeting/Discussion	"
Campaign	"
Training	"
Karuthukatchi	"
Field day	"
Panchayat	Personal-localite
Co-operatives	"
Farmers organisation	"
Progressive Farmers	"
Friends	"
Neighbours	"
Input Merchants	"
Farm leaders	"
Relatives	"
Tom-Tom	"
Radio	Impersonal-cosmopolite
Posters	"
Film	"
Printed Materials	"
Folders Booklets etc.	"
News paper article	"
Farm journal	"
Hoardings	"
Wall paintings	"
Tea-shop board	"
Field board	"
Banner	"
Milestone slogan	"
Sticker on match box	"
Tin boards on cycle and carts	"

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Profiles of the Farmers:
The comparative study of small and marginal farmers with respect to 27 factors concerning the socio-personal, socio-psychological and communication characteristics has indicated very significant differences between the profile

TABLE II. Variables and their Empirical Measurement

Variables	Empirical Measures
A. Socio-personnel Variables	
Age	Developed for the study
Education	"
Occupation	"
Farmsize	Somasundaram (1976)
Social participation	Triveoi (1965)
Socio-economic status	" + with slight modification
Urban contact	Developed for the study
Contact with Extension Agency	Developed for the study
B. Soci-psychological variables	
Market perception	Somasundaram (1967)
Cosmopolite-localite	Singh (1967)
Economic motivation	Supa (1969)
Risk preference	"
Knowledge about H. Y. V. of paddy	Somasundaram (1976)
Attitude towards H. Y. V.	Nair (1969)
Scientific orientation	Supa (1969)
C. Communication variables	
Use of channel	Developed for the study
Frequent use of channels	"
Extent of information received through channels	"
Credibility of channel	"

of small farmers as against that of marginal farmers. The data with respect to socio-personal and socio-psychological variables selected for this study is given in Table III.

It reveals that the mean scores for all the eight socio-personal characteristics of small farmers except age and occupation were more than that of marginal farmers. But the difference

TABLE III. Differential Socio-personal and Socio-psychological Characteristics of small and marginal farmers and 't' values for difference of Mean scores.

Variables	Mean score		't' value for difference of mean score Small-Marginal farmers
	Small farmers	Marginal farmers	
A. Socio-personal variables			
Age	45.00	45.98	0.426
Education	7.10	1.80	1.063
Occupation	1.34	1.83	5.730**
Farm size	6.54	4.18	6.020**
Social participation	0.78	0.73	0.531
Social-Economic status	23.81	18.83	5.608**
Urban Contact	11.38	11.20	0.445
Contact with extension agency	52.10	21.61	6.572**
B. Socio-psychological variables			
Market perception	3.92	2.10	2.263**
Localite-cosmopolite value orientation	15.10	14.56	0.923
Scientific orientation	26.18	25.21	0.056
Risk orientation	19.38	18.35	1.008
Attitude towards H.Y.V Programme	35.80	34.60	1.118
Knowledge about H.Y.V.	12.50	11.00	1.307
Economic motivation	35.38	34.30	2.061**

** Significant at 0.01 level of probability

between the mean scores of the small and marginal farmers was statistically significant only with reference to occupation, farmsize, socio-economic status and contact with extension agency. Significance was recorded at 0.01 level of probability in all the above four socio-personal characteristics of small and marginal farmers. From the same table, it may be seen that the mean score for all the seven socio-psychological characteristics of small farmers was more than that of marginal farmers. The difference between the means of small and marginal farmers with respect to market perception and economic motivation was significant at 0.01 level of probability, while the rest of the differences

were not significant. So, it may be stated that the small and marginal farmers differed significantly with reference to occupation, farmsize, socio-economic status, contact with extension agency, market perception and economic motivation while they were not different with reference to age, education, social participation, urban-contact, localite-cosmopolite value orientation, risk preference, attitude, knowledge and scientific orientation.

The significant difference between small and marginal farmers in their farm size needs no explanation since they were classified mainly on their farmsize. The significant difference in occupation

of small and marginal farmers may be due to the fact that marginal farmers because of their smallness of holding and low income nature, might have been forced to have more number of subsidiary occupations than their counterparts, so as to make both ends meet. This was clearly indicated by the higher mean score in occupation of marginal farmers.

Socio-economic status was another factor by which the small and marginal farmers differed significantly. Comparatively higher farm size of small farmers than marginal farmers might have enabled them to raise their income and other living condition which resulting in the significant difference in the socio-economic status of small farmers and

marginal farmers. Marginal farmers differed from the small farmers in their contact with extension agency. Because of their main occupation being agriculture small farmer would have felt a need to contact extension agency to improve their profession.

The reported significant difference in market perception of small and marginal farmers may be because of the necessity to market the surplus produce obtained from small farmers holdings which is relatively larger than the marginal farmers. Further, to fetch more income by marketing, the small farmers would have contacted resourceful persons as extension agency which would have increased their perception about

TABLE IV. Differential communication characteristics of small and marginal farmers and 't' values for differences of Mean Scores

	Mean score		't' values for difference of mean score
	Small farmers	Marginal farmers	
Use of Channels			
Use of P.C. Channel	18.34	14.72	1.780
Use of P.L. Channel	26.29	24.22	1.417
Use of I.C. Channel	25.24	19.17	1.399
Frequency of use of Channels			
Frequency of use of P.C. Channel	4.25	3.17	1.365
Frequency of use of P.L. Channel	14.82	14.88	0.008
Frequency of use of I.C. Channel	7.16	5.43	1.552
Extent of information received through channels			
Extent of information received through P.C. Channel	6.38	5.86	0.580
" " " " P.L. Channel	10.05	10.23	0.123
" " " " I.C. Channel	6.35	6.34	0.008
Credibility of the Channels			
Credibility of the P.C. Channel	25.11	22.91	2.095**
Credibility of the P.L. Channel	24.07	21.86	3.507**
Credibility of the I.C. Channel	29.13	29.46	0.286

P.C. = Personal-cosmopolite;
I.C. = Impersonal-cosmopolite.

P.C. = Personal-localite;

** Significant at 0.01 level of probability

the prevailing market. On the corollary, in the case of marginal farmers, the smallness of the farm would not have enabled them to develop their perception about the market. Perhaps, the produce obtained from the holdings of marginal farmers might have been utilized for own consumption. The higher mean score obtained by small farmers with reference to education, social participation, urban contact and contact with extension agency also proved these above statements. In the same line the significant difference of small farmers in their economic motivation may be explained.

From the Table IV it can be seen that the mean scores of small farmers with reference to all the communication characteristics except that of frequency of use of Personal-localite channels, extent of information received through Personal-localite channels and credibility

of impersonal - cosmopolite channels were more than that of marginal farmers. However, the difference between the mean scores of small and marginal farmers was significant only in the cases of credibility of Personal-cosmopolite and Personal-localite channel characteristics.

The significant contact of small farmers with extension agency would have created more confidence upon them. Because of their higher-socio-economic status, the small farmers would have interacted locally with progressive farmers, farm leaders etc., whereas the marginal farmers would have depended on their friends and neighbours. Because of resourceful nature of progressive farmers, small farmers would have developed more credibility to those Personal-localite channels.