

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE, KNOWLEDGE GAIN AND PROBLEM FACED BY THE COCONUT GROWERS OF CHIKMAGALUR DISTRICT OF KARNATAKA STATE

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ABSTRACT

Coconut is one of the most important crops of developing countries. In India, it is being grown in more than fourteen states as commercial plantation crop. The coconut is popularly known as the tree of life. The coconut is considered such because of the many uses it can provide, starting from its roots up to its main fruit and still up to its very leaves. Majority of the coconut growers in the district are facing the problems of labor scarcity and shortage of skilled labor during the time of harvesting. The traditional method of harvesting the nuts using knife with bamboo sticks for dwarf trees and physically climbing the tall trees is quite risky and accident prone. Twenty farmers were selected for each training programme randomly from the coconut growing taluks of Chikmagalur district viz katur, tarikere and Chikmagalur taluk. The selection was made in joint collaboration with department of Horticulture, CGS, NGO's, SHG's, Gram panchayat/Krishi Bhavans through media coverage likely by print and electronic medias. Thus forming, total of eighty participants for four training programmes. The duration of training programmes was for six days. Apart from the skill demonstration of coconut climbing machine various aspects on coconut crop management.

KEYWORDS: Coconut Climbers, Horticultural Activities, Coconut Growers

INTRODUCTION

Coconut is one of the most important crops of developing countries. In India, it is being grown in more than fourteen states as commercial plantation crop. The coconut is popularly known as the tree of life. The coconut is considered such because of the many uses it can provide, starting from its roots up to its main fruit and still up to its very leaves. It is one of the major livelihood crops in traditional growing districts like Tumkur, Hassan and Chikmagalur of Karnataka. Dry region of the Chikmagalur district namely katur and part of tarikere is covered fully by coconut crop. The total area covered under coconut crop is 34100 ha and the production is 2435 tonnes (District horticulture department). Majority of the coconut growers in the district are facing the problems of labor scarcity and shortage of skilled labor during the time of harvesting. The traditional method of harvesting the nuts using knife with bamboo sticks for dwarf trees and physically climbing the tall trees is quite risky and accident prone. To overcome these constraints of labour problem for nut picking and to impart knowledge on integrated crop management on coconut, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Chikmagalur initiated training programmes to unemployed rural farm youth who are already involved in coconut cultivation

OBJECTIVES

- To know the socio-economic profile of the coconut growing farmers.

- To impart coconut crop management knowledge on group of unemployed youths and technical skills for harvesting of coconuts.
- To study the problem faced by coconut climbers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Training is one of the important extension activities where we can impart the knowledge to the Participants. Has coconut is one of the major and important livelihood crop of the district, trainings were conducted on integrated crop management in coconut and use of coconut climbers in climbing the coconut tree from Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Chikmagalur during the year 2013-14 at KVK Chikmagalur. These coconut climbing machine training programmes were sponsored mainly by two institutions namely Coconut Development Board, Cochin and Karnataka State Rural Livelihood Promotion Society, Bangalore. By keeping the selection criteria of trainees has age limit should be 18-40 years, preferably unemployed and healthy individuals, free from physical and mental disability and having minimum education. Twenty farmers were selected for each training programme randomly from the coconut growing taluks of Chikmagalur district viz kadur, tarikere and Chikmagalur taluk. The selection was made in joint collaboration with department of Horticulture, CGS, NGO's, SHG's, Gram panchayat/Krishi Bhavans through media coverage likely by print and electronic medias. Thus forming, total of eighty participants for four training programmes. The duration of training programmes was for six days. Apart from the skill demonstration of coconut climbing machine various aspects on coconut crop management contents were covered in the training programme mainly that topics includes

- Coconut climbing skills/ practices
- Coconut harvesting operations and crown cleaning
- Identification of tender nuts, mature Coconuts and seed nuts
- Water requirement
- Varieties and Hybrids of Coconut
- Improved cultivation of Coconut
- Integrated Nutrient Management in Coconut
- Integrated Pest and Diseases Management in Coconut
- Value addition in Coconut
- Developing leadership quality and risk taking abilities
- Entrepreneurship development skills
- Thrift/savings habits
- Banking facilities

The Training Methods used during the training of participants of coconut machine climbing were:

- Lecturette,

- Discussion,
- Group exercise,
- Presentations
- Demonstration and
- Field visit.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Age

In the present study the age of the respondents ranged between 18-40 years. The distribution of the respondents according to their age is given in Table 1. It could be observed that majority of the respondents belonged to 25-35 years of age group followed by 18-25 and 35-40 years. In order to make any headway in the extension programmes the developmental agencies/trainers need to identify potential clientele. In this study, it is observed that older people, are more likely to be involved in horticultural activities. The reason for this could be that the younger generations are not interested to spend their time in horticulture activities. They are not willing to stay in villages and are migrating to nearby town/city in search of jobs. Only the old age people who have been practicing horticulture traditionally spend more time and are involved in horticulture.

Education

Education of individuals determines their knowledge level and the mental status. Results pertaining to the education have been indicated in Table 1. Majority of the respondents (51.00) belonged to medium level of education, followed by 16.00 having high and 13.00 participants of low level of education. It is indicated from the present study that the majority of the respondents had medium level of education, as well as, family educational status. The main reason for this could be that school education has been made compulsory by the government. However, rural mind set of people in general is to take up some occupation after Secondary School Leaving Certificate or Pre-University College. As the rural people are still traditional they generally do not prefer to send their children to college and expect them to assist in farm and household activities. The distant location of higher study centers from the villages and lack of capital might also be contributing factor for the respondents' medium education level.

Family Educational Status

Table 1 shows that majority of respondents (49.00) belonged to medium family educational status category, followed by 17.00 having high and 14.00 participants having low level of family educational status. Same as the overall percentage. The family educational status is one of the important factors which influences economic performance and flow of communication within and outside the family. Higher the educational status more the progressive attitude of the family members is expected. Therefore, in order to popularize innovation or change in attitude of the respondents there is a need for making more efforts to motivate the respondents to adopt newer technologies.

Farming Experience

The distribution of the respondents according to farming experience is shown in Table 1. Majority of respondents

(47.00) had a medium level of farming experience followed by 24.00 having high and 09.00 of respondents having low level of farming experience. Majority of respondents had a medium to high level of farming experience. Since, majority of the respondents belonged to old age group they obviously had a high experience. They therefore, know the problems and facts related to farming from their past experience.

Land Holding

The data in Table 2 clearly showed that majority of the respondents (39.00 and 38.00) belonged to the small and marginal category of land holding, respectively, a mere 03 participants had more than five acres of land and belonged to the large land holding category. This may be due to Fragmentation of land has by and large left individual farmers owning small land holdings.

Annual Income

Income from all the sources was considered as annual income of the family which in turn determines the social status and economic well being of the family. The results pertaining to annual income of respondents indicated in Table 2 showed that more than half of the respondents (46.00) belonged to medium level of annual income followed by 21.00 with high and 13.00 with low level of annual income. In light of this fact, horticulture is being promoted to meet the need of the country's people, as well as, a source of diversification. This has led to a rise in the income of the farmers has horticulture crops are high fetching crops.

Social Participation

An observation of Table 2 revealed that majority of the respondents belonged to the medium and low category of social participation i.e. 38.00 and 34.00 participants respectively. A mere 08.00 respondent had a high level of social participation. Social participation of the rural community is an important factor which needs to be looked into, to understand the dynamics of rural society to implement the technologies.

Extension Contact

With respect to extension contact it can be observed that most of the respondents had medium level of extension contact i.e. 42.00 followed by 22.00 having high and 16.00 having low level of extension contact (Table 2). Different sources of information influence the knowledge, attitude and perception of the individual towards any farming system. The present research findings amply show the role of various sources in the everyday life of the respondents. This is apparent from the fact that most of the respondents had a medium level of extension contact. Extension contact results in purposeful action which is largely contingent upon an individual's belief in his ability to perform that action correctly and/or effectively and thus, he frequently contacts various departmental officials to seek more information and to clarify the doubts pertaining to the current cropping system. The other reason for this could be the fact that respondents, have interest in collecting new information through extension personnel.

Mass Media Exposure

It can be observed from Table 2 that 41.00 respondents had a high level of mass media exposure, followed by 28.00 having medium and 11.00 having low level of mass media exposure. The main reasons for this might be due to the fact that the satellite era has resulted in more exposure to all types of mass media such as Cable TV, DTH, DISH TV, radio and print media. Since they are literate, they can read print media like daily newspapers, magazines etc.

Knowledge on Coconut Crop Management and Skill Development on Coconut Climbing Machine

Results from the table 3 revealed that participants of the training programme had less level of knowledge on all the components of crop management in coconut before the training. Whereas, after the training the percentage of knowledge on all the components of coconut cultivation was increased by the participants. In case of skill in using the coconut climbing machine there was 98.00 per cent knowledge and skill gain from the participants. The increase in knowledge is mainly due to six days training programme which make them technical more sound as earlier they were not exposed to this type of crop specific training programme this made them to gain more knowledge.

Problems Faced by Coconut Growers of Chikmagalur District

Table 4 indicates that majority of participants had a opinion that labour scarcity for nuts picking is major problem facing by coconut growers followed by Water scarcity, pest and disease problems, non availability of improved high yielding hybrids, poor marketing facilities and lack of knowledge on processing and value addition. The above prioritized problems of coconut growers can overcome by group approaches like forming coconut growers associations and by taking timely advice by institutions / Krishi Vigyan Kendras. In addition, the tasks for tackling such problems, trainings cum demonstrations are imparting the technical knowledge as well as skills particularly coconut climbers use. This surely helped them in solving the major problems and additionally climbers become tools for employment.

CONCLUSIONS

Technical information gained by the respondents during the training was useful as most of the respondents depend on coconut for their livelihood. Coconut tree climber equipment is a boon for the coconut growers, since it has reduced the drudgery in tree climbing and also it has given them an employment opportunity for sustainable livelihood for small and marginal coconut growers. The coconut growers of district are benefited by very much since there was a lack of skilled labor for harvesting nuts.

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APPENDICES

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents According to Their Personal Variables (n= 80)

Variable	Category	Male (n=80)
		No
Age	18-25 years	16
	25-35 years	49
	35-40 years	15
	Total	80
Education	Low	13
	Medium	51
	High	16
	Total	80

Table 1: Contd.,

Family Education Status	Low	14
	Medium	49
	High	17
	Total	80
Farming experience	Low	09
	Medium	47
	High	24
	Total	80

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents According to Their Economic and Social Variable

Variable	Category	Male (n=60)
		No.
Land holdings	Marginal	38
	Small	39
	Large	3
	Total	80
Annual income (Rs.)	Low <65000	13
	Medium 65000-137000	46
	High >137000	21
	Total	80
Social participation	Low	34
	Medium	38
	High	8
	Total	80
Extension contact	Low	16
	Medium	42
	High	22
	Total	80
Mass media exposure	Low	11
	Medium	28
	High	41
	Total	80

Table 3: Knowledge on Coconut Crop Management and Skill Development on Coconut Climbing Machine (n=80)

Sl. No	Particulars	Knowledge Gain (%)	
		Before Training	After Training
1	Nursery preparation in coconut	22.00	58.00
2	Improved Agronomic practices of Coconut	36.00	44.00
3	Integrated Nutrient Management in Coconut	29.00	51.00
4	Integrated Pest and Diseases Management in Coconut	35.00	68.00
5	Integrated water in Coconut	29.00	42.00
6	Integrated weed in Coconut	15.00	41.00
7	Processing and value addition in coconut	20.00	58.00
8	Identification of tender nuts, mature Coconuts and seed nuts	30.00	45.00
9	Varieties and Hybrids of Coconut	16.00	49.00
10	Banking facilities for horticulture	23.00	55.00
11	Skill in using coconut climbing machine	02.00	98.00

Table 4: Problems Faced by Coconut Growers of Chikmagalur District

Sl. No	Problems Faced by Coconut Growers	Rank
1	Labour scarcity for nuts picking	I
2	Water scarcity in coconut growing areas	II
3	Pest and disease problems in coconut	III
4	Non availability of improved high yielding hybrids	IV
5	Poor marketing facilities of coconut and its products	V
6	Lack of knowledge on processing and value addition	VI