



Relationship between the Profile Characteristics of Farmers with their Attitude towards Integrated Farming System in Kerala

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: 10.9734/AJAEES/2022/v40i111682

Open Peer Review History:

This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: <https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/91240>

Original Research Article

Received 06 July 2022
Accepted 07 September 2022
Published 26 September 2022

ABSTRACT

Farmers attitude towards any developmental activity is a priceless resource to policy makers for designing policies in order to reduce vulnerabilities of farmers. Farmers' attitudes toward Integrated Farming System have a significant impact on its upkeep. There are certain factors that influencing the attitude of a person. Therefore, by analyzing these factors, better strategy can be formulated for developing a positive attitude among the farmers. Here an attempt was made in order to identify the factors influencing the attitude of farmers in Kerala towards integrated farming systems during 2021-2022. In order to get a complete image of Kerala, three districts were randomly selected and from each district 60 IFS units were selected randomly from four panchayats to understand the relationship between the profile characteristics of farmers with their attitude towards integrated farming system. This will help the extension workers and policy makers to formulate new policies based on their profile characteristics. From the analysis conducted, it was found that among the selected independent variables farm size, experience in farming, mass media exposure, extension participation, economic motivation, training undergone were positively and significantly correlated to attitude towards IFS at 1 per cent level of significance. Whereas social participation was positively and significantly correlated to attitude at 5 per cent level of significance.

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Keywords: Integrated farming system; attitude; profile characteristics; correlation analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

Farmers attitude towards any developmental activity is a priceless resource to policy makers for designing policies in order to reduce vulnerabilities of farmers [1]. IFS have been shown to be an important way to improve the intake of safe and micro nutrient rich foods, particularly for households in Kerala. By realizing this fact, Government of Kerala has launched many programmes for promoting integrated farming systems throughout the state. Farmers' attitudes toward IFS units have a significant impact on its upkeep. The decision to establish an IFS unit as well as adoption of various components in the units directly depends on the attitude of farmers. There are certain factors that influencing the attitude of a person. Therefore, by analyzing these factors, better strategy can be formulated for developing a positive attitude among the farmers. The profile characteristics depict the socio- economic conditions of the respondents, which are thought to have an impact on one's attitude. Keeping this in mind, the present investigation was conducted with the specific objective to find out the relationship between the profile characteristics of farmers with their attitude towards integrated farming system. This will help the extension workers to formulate new policies based on their profile characteristics.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in randomly selected three districts of Kerala. Kollam district from Southern Kerala, Thrissur district from Central Kerala and Kannur district from Northern Kerala were the selected districts for conducting the study. From each district, 2 Agro Ecological Units (AEU) were randomly selected and from each Agro Ecological Unit two panchayat were also selected randomly. From each selected panchayat, 15 Integrated Farming System units were selected randomly, thus making the total sample size 180 IFS units. Exploratory research design was used for conducting the study. The data on the selected variables were gathered in order to understand the socio economic status of the farmers and for measuring attitude of farmers towards integrated farming system concept, an attitude scale was developed. The summated rating method was used to construct the scale [2]. The scale consisted of 22 statements, among that 9 were negative and 13 were positive. In

order to find out the relationship between attitude of farmers with their profile characteristics correlation analysis was conducted.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To find out the relationship between profile characteristics with attitude of farmers towards IFS correlation analysis was conducted separately and the result have been given below.

Table 1. Correlation of attitude of farmers towards IFS with their profile characteristics

Independent variables	Correlation coefficient
Age	0.011
Education	0.051
Family size	-0.069
Occupation	0.088
Farm size	0.218**
Experience in farming	0.239**
Mass media exposure	0.237**
Extension agency contact	0.134
Extension participation	0.228**
Market orientation	0.006
Irrigation potential	0.017
Economic motivation	0.223**
Innovativeness	0.003
Risk orientation	0.093
Social participation	0.186*
Training undergone	0.242**
Awareness towards IFS	0.059
Herd size	0.101

** Significant at 1 per cent level; *Significant at 5 percent level

A glance at the above table indicated that, attitude of the farmers towards IFS were positively and significantly correlated with profile characteristics such as farm size, experience in farming, mass media exposure, extension participation, economic motivation and training undergone at 1% level of significance and social participation with 5% level of significance.

The size of land holding is an important and essential factor for shaping the attitude of the farmers [3]. As farm size increases, the chances for expanding the IFS units by adding more components were also increasing. Thus possibility of experiencing various aspects of IFS

also increases, leading to a favourable attitude towards IFS. Since the number components increased might provide more income and diversified products to the farmers, can be lead to a favourable positive attitude. The experience in farming provides more exposure to farmers for familiarizing with various practices and leads to favourable attitude. Similar findings were also reported in a study conducted among IFS farmers of Kuttanad [4]. By participating into various extension activities, social programmes, trainings and through high exposure to mass media sources, farmers were exposed to various technologies related to different components and latest information regarding establishment and maintenance of an IFS units. This implies that, frequency of contact or visits of extension agent to farmer is very important to update the knowledge and skill of farmers on farm technologies, practices or activities [5]. Thus, the availability of extension participation in the rural areas is of a paramount importance to farmers. Moreover, extension participation improves the knowledge and increases concern of farmers about various components and its management in a unit. Through social participation farmers have more opportunities to interact in both formal and informal institutions or organisations, which increases their likelihood of being aware of the various facets of maintaining an IFS unit and fosters a positive outlook. This result is in line with the findings of Jemal [6]. This updation in their knowledge and skills help them to maintain the unit in a better way. Participation in extension and other social programmes enables farmers to identify their farm problems and to set sound solutions leads to a positive attitude. This might be the reason behind the relationship between attitude of farmers with exposure to mass media sources, extension and social participation and training undergone. The findings were in line with that of Sarjeet [7] who analyzed the attitude of farmers towards different farming systems in Rajasthan and the factors influencing their attitude. He found that among various socio economical profile characteristics of farmers, education, landholding, social participation, source of information and annual income were positively and significantly correlated with attitude of farmers towards different farming systems.

4. CONCLUSION

It can be summarized that attitude of farmers towards integrated farming system was positively and significantly correlated with profile

characteristics such as farm size, experience in farming, mass media exposure, extension participation, economic motivation and training undergone at 1% level of significance and social participation with 5% level of significance. More effort should be needed to promote integrated farming systems (IFS), which is one of the viable option for ensuring nutritional and livelihood security of farmers. Since the decision to establish and maintain an IFS unit is influenced by a number of factors, special attention should be paid to those factors in order to foster a favourable attitude toward the integrated farming system concept. The results show that a favourable attitude toward IFS can be created by organizing more training and extension programmes, as well as by boosting media exposure and social participation.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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Peer-review history:
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