

Attitude of Farmers towards Farming as an Occupation

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ABSTRACT

This study is conducted in south Gujarat region with 210 respondents to find out the attitude of farmers towards farming occupation as attitude is a strong indicator to predict whether they are going to remain in farming occupation or would opt out from it. The study revealed that vast majority (89.52 per cent) of the farmers had neutral attitude towards farming as an occupation, followed by 8.10 per cent of them had negative and 2.38 per cent of them were with positive attitude towards farming as an occupation, while none of them was with highly positive as well as highly negative attitude towards farming as an occupation.

Key words: Attitude, Farmers, Occupation, Farming, south Gujarat

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is the mainstay of Indian economy where in a tone of grave respect refers to the farmer as the annadata –the provider of grain. This is because in India, agriculture has been the life and the means of sustenance for the majority of the people. Even today, more than half of the country's population is directly and indirectly dependent on agriculture. An attitude can be defined as a positive or negative evaluation of people, objects, event, activities, ideas, or just about anything in your environment ¹. The study to bring to light attitude of farmers towards farming as an occupation was carried out as it indicates whether they may abandon agriculture or continue with considering farming as an occupation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this study, the attitude scale developed by the researcher using Scale Product Method which combines the Thurstone's ² technique of equal appearing interval scale for selection of the items and Likert's ³ technique of summated rating for ascertaining the response on the scale as proposed by Eysenck and Crown, 1949 ⁴ was used to scientifically measure the attitude of farmers towards farming as an occupation. The present study was conducted in south Gujarat region covering all seven districts viz., Surat, Navsari, Dang, Valsad, Tapi, Baruch and Narmada. Two talukas from each district and one village from each taluka were selected randomly.

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Fifteen farmers were selected randomly from each village. From the 14 villages of 14 talukas of 7 districts of south Gujarat, 210 respondents were obtained as sample size.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Attitude is defined as the degree of encouraging or depressing feeling of the farmers towards farming as an occupation. Attitude is a way of thinking, acting or feeling of a person towards a situation or cause. It is the accepted fact that an attitude of an individual plays an important role in determining ones behaviour. The data regarding attitude of the farmers towards farming as an occupation are presented in Table 1. There are total 26 statements in this scale. The statement wise responses were collected and presented in Table 1. It can be seen that 92.38 per cent of the farmers were either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that farming alone does not ensure a satisfactory standard of living for the family. It can be seen that (36.66 per cent) of farmers were either strongly agreed or agreed with farming is seen as a masculine occupation. The result indicates that 63.81 per cent of farmers

were either strongly agreed or agreed that discussion on critical practices of crop production enhances their happiness. It was experiential that majority (70.00 per cent) of farmers were either strongly agreed or agreed that farming always leads to hard life also (61.43 per cent) of farmers were either strongly agreed or agreed that farming is an unappealing career option.

It was observed that only 64.76 per cent of the farmers were either strongly agreed or agreed that being farmer, farming is my first preference also 52.38 per cent felt or strongly felt farming stands at lowest ladder as profession in the society. The result indicates that 63.81 per cent of the farmers agreed or strongly agreed with the view that commercialization neglects the sustainability of farming systems also 53.33 per cent of the farmers agreed or strongly agreed that farming provides freedom to manage work time by self. It was experiential that 65.24 per cent of the farmers felt or strongly felt that non-availability of production resources diverts farmers towards non-farm sector. Only 43.81 per cent felt or strongly felt that farming provides secure future.

Table 1: The respondents as per their attitude towards farming as an occupation

n=210

No	Statement	SA	A	UD	D	SDA
		No/ %	No/%	No/%	No/%	No/%
1	Farming alone does not ensure a satisfactory standard of living for the family. (-)	95 45.24	99 47.14	12 5.71	3 1.43	1 0.48
2	It is seen as a masculine occupation. (-)	20 9.52	57 27.14	69 32.86	53 25.24	11 5.24
3	Discussion on critical practices of crop production enhances my happiness. (+)	28 13.33	106 50.48	28 13.33	32 15.24	16 7.62
4	Farming always leads to hard life. (-)	26 12.38	121 57.62	30 14.29	31 14.76	2 0.95
5	Farming is an unappealing career option. (-)	14 6.67	115 54.76	29 13.81	49 23.33	3 1.43
6	Being farmer, farming is my first preference. (+)	57 27.14	79 37.62	15 7.14	52 24.76	7 3.33
7	Farming stands at lowest ladder as profession in the society. (-)	19 9.05	91 43.33	36 17.14	57 27.14	7 3.33
8	Commercialization neglects the sustainability of farming systems. (-)	18 8.57	116 55.24	35 16.67	40 19.05	1 0.48
9	Farming provides freedom to manage work time by self. (+)	2 0.95	110 52.38	47 22.38	30 14.29	2 0.95

10	Non-availability of production resources diverts farmers towards non-farm sector. (-)	35 16.67	102 48.57	58 27.62	14 6.67	1 0.48
11	Farming provides secure future. (+)	33 15.71	59 28.10	59 28.10	44 20.95	15 7.14
12	Promote agriculture discipline as a compulsory subject in schools. (+)	66 31.43	99 47.14	25 11.90	19 9.05	1 0.48
13	Farming makes a contribution in development of society. (+)	44 20.95	120 57.14	19 9.05	26 12.38	1 0.48
14	Farming has less privilege in the modern society. (-)	46 21.90	110 52.38	32 15.24	20 9.52	2 0.95
15	Farming leads to effective use of available natural resources. (+)	24 11.43	123 58.57	47 22.38	16 7.62	00 00.00
16	Contract farming is the best way of increasing the economic conditions of farmers. (+)	26 12.38	51 24.29	66 31.43	37 17.62	30 14.29
17	Farm mechanization has brought optimism toward farming by alleviating drudgery. (+)	23 10.95	91 43.33	37 17.62	44 20.94	15 7.14
18	Farming is not just an occupation; it is a way of life. (+)	24 11.43	45 21.43	50 23.81	90 42.86	1 0.48
19	Farming is the best way to use creativity. (+)	14 6.67	119 56.67	42 20.00	30 14.29	5 2.38
20	Increased cost of living attracts farmers towards alternate occupation. (-)	80 38.10	106 50.48	15 7.14	9 4.29	0 0.00
21	It takes much longer time to achieve success in the farming. (-)	97 46.19	60 28.57	26 12.38	26 12.38	1 0.48
22	Non-agricultural career aspirations create desire to leave farming. (-)	75 35.71	99 47.14	31 14.76	4 1.90	1 0.48
23	Adoption of micro irrigation system enhances crop production in water scarce farms. (+)	47 22.38	135 64.29	16 7.62	10 4.76	2 0.95
24	Farming occupation makes the person bankrupt. (-)	53 25.24	93 44.29	44 20.95	20 9.52	0 0.00
25	Integrated farming system reduces vulnerability of farmers in adverse conditions. (+)	29 13.81	129 61.43	27 12.86	23 10.95	2 0.95
26	Farmer organization is mandatory for defending farmers' interests in their negotiations with intermediaries. (+)	28 13.33	106 50.48	44 20.95	24 11.43	8 3.81

SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, UD = Undecided, D = Disagree, SDA = Strongly Disagree

The result of the table also indicates that 78.57 per cent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement to promote agriculture discipline as a compulsory subject in schools and 78.09 per cent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that farming makes a contribution in development of society. About (74.28 per cent) of farmers agreed or strongly agreed that farming has less privilege in the modern society also (70.00 per cent) felt or strongly felt that farming leads to effective use of available natural resources. Only 36.67 per cent felt or strongly felt that contract farming is the best way of increasing the economic conditions of farmers. The

outcome of study says that 54.28 per cent of the farmers believed or strongly believed that farm mechanization has brought optimism toward farming by alleviating drudgery. It can be seen that (43.34 per cent) of the farmers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that farming is not just an occupation; it is a way of life and also (63.34 per cent) of them agreed or strongly agreed that farming is the best way to use creativity. It was inferred that majority (88.58 per cent) of them agreed or strongly agreed that increased cost of living attracts farmers towards alternate occupation. It was studied that 74.76 per cent of the farmers believed or strongly believed that it

takes much longer time to achieve success in the farming. It is realized that 82.85 per cent of the farmers felt or strongly felt that non-agricultural career aspirations create desire to leave farming. It was encouraging to understand that 86.67 per cent of the farmers felt or strongly felt that adoption of micro irrigation system enhances crop production in water scarce farms. About 69.53 per cent of the farmers agreed or strongly agreed that

farming occupation makes the person bankrupt and also majority (75.24 per cent) of them felt or strongly felt that integrated farming system reduces vulnerability of farmers in adverse conditions. Finally 63.81 per cent of the farmers felt or strongly felt that farmer organization is mandatory for defending farmers' interests in their negotiations with intermediaries.

Table 2: The respondents as per their overall attitude towards farming as an occupation

n=210

No	Category	Frequency	Per cent
1	Highly negative (up to 47 score)	00	00.00
2	Negative (48 to 68 scores)	17	08.10
3	Neutral (69 to 89 scores)	188	89.52
4	Positive (90 to 110 score)	05	02.38
5	Highly positive (above 110 score)	00	00.00
Total		210	100.00

After studying detail responses of farmers about farming as an occupation, overall level of their attitude was also measured. The data given in Table 2 revealed that vast majority (89.52 per cent) of the farmers had neutral attitude towards farming as an occupation, followed by 8.10 per cent of them had negative and 2.38 per cent of them were with positive attitude towards farming as an occupation, while none of them was with highly positive as well as highly negative attitude towards farming as an occupation. The result of the above table indicates that great majority (97.62 per cent) of the farmers had negative to neutral attitude towards farming as an occupation. The probable reason might be that farmers are disenchanted with farming occupation as they are subjected to various constraints which lead farming unprofitable and risky; same time they are still in agriculture occupation because of being unable to find jobs in non-agricultural sectors. The result is in contrast to the study by Singh *et al.*, 2014.⁵

CONCLUSION

The result of the study indicated that great majority (97.62 per cent) of the farmers had negative to neutral attitude towards farming as

an occupation. The probable reason might be that farmers are disenchanted with farming occupation as they are subjected to various constraints which lead farming unprofitable and risky; same time they are still in agriculture occupation because of being unable to find jobs in non-agricultural sectors. In crux, it can be recommended to the policy makers that there urgent need to develop positive signs towards attitude of farmers towards farming as their occupation and effective policies related to farming to make them stay with farming so that it would result in effective contribution from them to the Indian economy in future.

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