

Measuring the Attitude of the Farmers towards Agriculture as a Profession

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in the village of Ghoragacha in Nadia District, West Bengal with 70 respondents to gauge the attitude of farmers towards agriculture as a profession. For a country like India, which is the greatest consumer of food, a scarcity of farmers might affect the food security of the country. This study will give an insight into the inner feelings of the farmers and whether the farmers are interested in continuing this farming profession in the future. The attitude score was grouped into three categories, low score, medium score and high according to mean and standard deviation. The study revealed that majority of the farmers obtained medium score followed by low and high score respectively.

Keywords: Agriculture, Attitude, Food security, Mean, Standard deviation.

INTRODUCTION

India is an over populated country and the land here endures a great population pressure, so with time, the land fragmentation has rendered agriculture a non-profitable profession. Moreover, with time, there is encroachment of land by the government for various industrial and developmental projects and this has led to decrease in land holding and has forced many farmers to leave agriculture and migrate towards the city in search of a better life. Another possible reason behind this is, with time, the cities have developed at a much faster pace than the villages. Some of the villages, even today, lack basic health and

medical amenities required for proper sustenance, so, the rural populace feel that working as a bounded labourer in a city will provide them a healthier living and a better standard of life as compared to the miseries of a country life.

The statistics of 2011 census paints a scary picture of Indian Agriculture and rings the alarm of an agrarian crisis. The number of farmers has decreased by over 8.6 million in the past decade. Thus, there is a possibility that either the farmers have fully left agriculture and engaged themselves in some other profession or they have upgraded from farmers to agripreneurs.

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The 2011 census report however points out the fact that there is a sharp increase in the number of agricultural laborers, more than 37 million people have taken to farm labor in past ten years but even if we might assume some of the reasons for this radical increase in number, there is an innate need of a detailed study into the factors responsible for this phenomena.

An attitude can be defined as a positive or negative evaluation of people, objects, event, activities, ideas, or just about anything in your environment (Zimbardo, 1999). The study aims at gauging the attitude of farmers towards agriculture as a profession.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was conducted at the village of Ghoragacha in Nadia district, West Bengal with 70 respondents where both the area and respondents were randomly selected. For measuring the attitude, the scale developed by Onima V.T. was employed that consisted of 26 statements, of which, 14 were positive and 12 negative. Corresponding attitude score with respect to the statements was calculated with the most negative response being 1 and the most positive response being 5 according to Likert's technique of summated rating.

After measuring the attitude, the attitude score was scientifically grouped into three categories based on the mean and standard deviation value of the data set. The three categories were Low attitude score (Mean - Standard Deviation and below), Medium attitude score (Mean - Standard Deviation to Mean + Standard Deviation) and High attitude score (Mean + Standard Deviation and above).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An attitude is an evaluative disposition towards some object or subject which has consequences for how a person will act vis-a-vis the attitude object. 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.

Discussion on critical practices of crop production enhanced happiness of 88.57 per cent of the respondents. A grand majority of 92.86 per cent of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that farming provides freedom to manage work time by self. All the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that farming makes a contribution in development of society and that farm mechanization has brought optimism toward farming by alleviating drudgery. Farming is not just an occupation but a way of life to 94.29 per cent of the respondents. None of the respondents disagreed that integrated farming system reduces vulnerability of farmers in adverse conditions.

According to 81.43 per cent respondents, farming alone does not ensure a satisfactory standard of living for the family. 87.14 per cent respondents agreed or strongly agreed that farming is a masculine occupation. 94.29 per cent respondents agreed or strongly agreed that farming always leads to a hard life, farming was an unappealing career option and that it takes much longer time to achieve success in the farming. 95.72 per cent of the respondents felt that farming stands at lowest ladder as profession in the society. All the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that non-availability of production resources diverts farmers towards non-farm sector and farming has less privilege in the modern society. To 94.28 per cent respondents, increased cost of living attracts farmers towards alternate occupation. A whopping 82.86 per cent of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that farming occupation makes the person bankrupt.

The data regarding attitude of farmers towards agriculture as a profession are presented in scientific form in Table 2. From Table 2, it can be inferred that majority of the respondent farmers (72.86 per cent) obtained a medium attitude score followed by low score (17.14 per cent) and high score (10.00 per cent) accordingly.

Table1. Distribution of Farmers according to their Response**N=70**

SR.NO.	STATEMENTS	SA	A	UD	D	SD
1.	Farming alone does not ensure a satisfactory standard of living for the family. (-)	28 (40%)	29 (41.43%)	-	9 (12.86%)	4 (5.71%)
2.	It is seen as a masculine occupation. (-)	32 (45.71%)	29 (41.43%)	-	9 (12.86%)	-
3.	Discussion on critical practices of crop production enhances my happiness. (+)	22 (31.43%)	40 (57.14%)	-	8 (11.43%)	-
4.	Farming always leads to hard life. (-)	42 (60.00%)	24 (34.29%)	-	4 (5.71%)	-
5.	Farming is an unappealing career option. (-)	25 (35.72%)	41 (58.57%)	-	4 (5.71%)	-
6.	Being farmer, farming is my first preference. (+)	22 (31.44%)	36 (51.43%)	3 (4.28%)	3 (4.28%)	6 (8.57%)
7.	Farming stands at lowest ladder as profession in the society. (-)	41 (58.57%)	26 (37.15%)	-	3 (4.28%)	-
8.	Commercialization neglects the sustainability of farming systems. (-)	24 (34.29%)	39 (55.71%)	7 (10.00%)	-	-
9.	Farming provides freedom to manage work time by self. (+)	23 (32.86%)	42 (60.00%)	-	5 (7.14%)	-
10.	Non-availability of production resources diverts farmers towards non-farm sector. (-)	27 (38.57%)	43 (61.43%)	-	-	-
11.	Farming provides secure future. (+)	5 (7.14%)	23 (32.86%)	-	24 (34.29%)	18 (25.71%)
12.	Promote agriculture discipline as a compulsory subject in schools. (+)	18 (25.72%)	44 (62.86%)	5 (7.14%)	3 (4.28%)	-
13.	Farming makes a contribution in development of society. (+)	41 (58.57%)	29 (41.43%)	-	-	-
14.	Farming has less privilege in the modern society. (-)	36 (51.43%)	34 (48.57%)	-	-	-
15.	Farming leads to effective use of available natural resources. (+)	11 (15.71%)	48 (68.58%)	6 (8.57%)	5 (7.14%)	-
16.	Contract farming is the best way of increasing the economic conditions of farmers. (+)	1 (1.43%)	30 (42.86%)	8 (11.43%)	27 (38.57%)	4 (5.71%)
17.	Farm mechanization has brought optimism toward farming by alleviating drudgery. (+)	34 (48.57%)	36 (51.43%)	-	-	-
18.	Farming is not just an occupation; it is a way of life. (+)	26 (37.15%)	40 (57.14%)	-	4 (5.71%)	-
19.	Farming is the best way to use creativity. (+)	9 (12.86%)	29 (41.43%)	10 (14.28%)	22 (31.43%)	-
20.	Increased cost of living attracts farmers towards alternate occupation. (-)	27 (38.57%)	39 (55.71%)	-	4 (5.71%)	-
21.	It takes much longer time to achieve success in the farming. (-)	26 (37.15%)	40 (57.14%)	-	4 (5.71%)	-
22.	Non-agricultural career aspirations create desire to leave farming. (-)	20 (28.57%)	45 (64.29%)	-	5 (7.14%)	-
23.	Adoption of micro irrigation system enhances crop production in water scarce farms. (+)	20 (28.57%)	31 (44.29%)	19 (27.14%)	-	-
24.	Farming occupation makes the person bankrupt. (-)	31 (44.29%)	27 (38.57%)	-	12 (17.14%)	-
25.	Integrated farming system reduces vulnerability of farmers in adverse conditions. (+)	30 (42.86%)	40 (57.14%)	-	-	-
26.	Farmer organization is mandatory for defending farmers' interests in their negotiations with intermediaries. (+)	17 (24.29%)	30 (42.86%)	-	16 (22.85%)	7 (10.00%)

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

Table 2: Distribution of Farmers according to their attitude score

(n=70)

Sr No.	Attitude Score	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low (59 and below)	12	17.14
2	Medium (60-83)	51	72.86
3	High (84 and above)	07	10.00

CONCLUSION

The result of the study indicated that a vast majority (90 per cent) of the farmers obtained either low or medium attitude score. This might be because of the various constraints that the farmers face including low prices, poor marketing, seasonal vagaries that makes this livelihood as well as their life difficult. To most of the farmers, agriculture is a profession because they are “not qualified enough to do something else”. Moreover, the youth is convinced that agriculture is not for the educated mass and thus they are ready to choose any profession but agriculture.

Thus, the government needs to take appropriate steps to liberate the farmers from the various constraints that they face so that their attitude score improves lest the greatest consumer of food does not have to undergo a food crisis.

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