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Study of socio-economic characteristics of pomegranate growing farmers in Solapur District of Maharashtra State

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Abstract

The study was conducted in Sangola, Pandharpur and Mohol tehsil of Solapur district of the western region in Maharashtra were selected randomly, because in these tehsils more number of pomegranate producers are linked for economic activity. The data were collected from 144 respondents were selected for the study. While studying profile i.e. social-economic characteristics of Pomegranate Growing Farmers. It was observed 70.13 per cent members belonged to medium age category. In case of education 33.33 per cent members had completed their secondary education. The caste wise distribution of the respondents shows that majority 65.27 per cent of the respondents belonged to the general category. It is evident that 60.42 per cent of the respondents were dependent only on agriculture. A majority 69.45 per cent were obtained medium level of annual income. It was observed that 43.75 per cent of the respondents had medium social participation and It was revealed that 65.28 per cent of the respondents were using medium sources of information.

Keywords: Socio-Economic, Characteristics, Pomegranate

Introduction

Pomegranate (*punica granatum*) is a multipurpose fruit. The importance of this fruit from dietic point of view can hardly be emphasized. Pomegranate fruit provides proteins, lipids, sugar and minerals, which are essential for the maintenance of the health. Pomegranate (*Punica granatum*) is grown in tropical and subtropical regions of the world. The centre of origin of this fruit crop is thought to be Iran where it was first cultivated in 2000 B.C. It is extensively cultivated in Spain, Morocco, Egypt, Iran, Afghanistan, China, Japan, USA, Russia, Pakistan, India and other Mediterranean countries. Pomegranate occupies 18th place based on production among the world's main fruit crops. Pomegranate is commercially grown for its sweet acidic taste. Fruits are mainly used for dessert purpose. This fruit also has wide consumer preference, for its attractive, juicy sweet, acidic and refreshing fruits. Fruits are used for both fresh consumption and processing. The fresh fruit is of exquisite quality, while its processed products such as bottled juice, syrups and jelly are highly appreciated and nourishing. The fruit is a good source of carbohydrates, minerals and vitamins. Pomegranate plant and fruit are prized over centuries for their medicinal properties. Chatterjee (1992) defined an entrepreneur as one who creates something new, undertakes risk, organizes production and handles the economic uncertainty. He termed entrepreneurship as the mission and entrepreneur as the missionary.

In India, fruit crops are cultivated in an area of 6982 thousand ha with a production of 81285 thousand Mt of fruits (Indian Horticulture Database 2013).

The total area under cultivation of pomegranate in India is 113.00 thousand ha and production is around 745.00 thousand tons. (NHB-2012-13). India is one of the leading country in pomegranate acreage and production worldwide. The area under cultivation of Pomegranate in India has grown by 10.73 per cent during last seven years from 96.9 thousand hectare to 113 thousand hectare. Maharashtra experienced a rapid growth in Pomegranate area during the last 20 years from 4.6 thousand ha to 82.0 thousand ha and accounts for 76.40 per cent of the total cultivated area under pomegranate in the country.

Other major pomegranate growing states are Karnataka (13.6 thousand ha), Andhra Pradesh (2.8 thousand ha) and Gujarat (5.8 thousand ha). In recent years, pomegranate cultivation has also been started in Rajasthan, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand and Madhya Pradesh. Although India is the largest producer of pomegranate in the world, its productivity (6.9 t/ha) is far below to Turkey (27.25 t/ha), Spain (20.00 t/ha), USA (16.7 t/ha), Israel (12.5 t/ha) and Iran (10.8 Mt/ha). During the year 2011-12. India exported 30,000 Mt of Pomegranate to the

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global market as compared to 86,000 Mt by Turkey and 60,000Mt by Iran. Therefore, India has a tremendous potentiality to bridge this huge yield and export gaps (NRCP Annual report, 2012-13).

Maharashtra is the leading producer of pomegranate followed by Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu. Ganesh, Bhagwa, Ruby, Arakta and Mridula are the different varieties of pomegranates produced in Maharashtra. In Maharashtra, pomegranate is commercially cultivated in Solapur, Sangli, Nasik, Ahmednagar, Pune, Dhule, Aurangabad, Satara, Osmanabad and Latur districts.

The development of any nation depends primarily on the important role played by entrepreneurs. Hence, the part played by entrepreneurs is of vital importance in a developing country like India. Thus in all economic development activities more attention is being given to entrepreneurship development. An entrepreneur is primarily concerned with changes in the formula of production over which he has full control. Further, it is commonly believed that an entrepreneur is basically an intelligent person and has a definite ability to create something new to prove its worthiness. The entrepreneurial behaviour is not necessarily doing new things but also doing things in a different way that already have been done. The entrepreneur is essentially an economic man, who strives to maximize his profits by adoption of innovations. However, entrepreneurs are not simply innovators, they are men with a will to act, to resume risk and to bring about changes through organization of human efforts (Dannof, 1949). Now, it is increasingly being felt that, the economic growth and development of the advanced countries is largely due to entrepreneurship quality among their community rather than to capital.

Material and Methods

The study was conducted in Sangola, Pandharpur and Mohol tehsil of Solapur district of the western region in Maharashtra. A list of farmers who produces pomegranate and have 3 yrs old pomegranate orchard from each selected village was prepared with the help of Gramsevak, Agril. Assistant and Sarpanch. Thus a total sample of 144 farmers, 12 from each selected villages was drawn. The data from 144 farmers were collected by contacting them personally with the help of structured interview schedule Expost-facto design of social research was made in the present investigation. The data was collected with the structured interview schedule from randomly selected 144 farmers. The data were tabulated and processed through the primary and secondary tables. Frequency, percentage, Mean and S.D. were employed for the analysis of data

Result and Discussion

Entrepreneurial behaviour of pomegranate growers

The age wise distribution of the respondents shows that near to two third 70.13 per cent of the respondents belonged to the middle age group followed by 16.68 per cent in old age group. Only 13.19 per cent respondents belonged to young age group. Thus, it is concluded that a majority of the pomegranate growers belonged to middle age group followed by young and old age groups. The middle age farmers comparatively have free hand in financial affairs and they can take up an independent decision to implement their ideas. Farmers of middle age are usually enthusiastic and have moderate experience in farming and more working efficiency than older and younger growers. They also possess more physical vigour and have more family responsibilities than

younger ones. This finding is in line with those of Vijaykumar (2001), Nagesh (2006) and Ashokkumar (2011).

Education is considered as one of the most important variable with the help of which social change can be achieved. Table 1 revealed that 29.86 per cent of the respondents had received secondary education, while, 20.84 per cent of them received primary education, 22.23 per cent of respondents received Higher secondary education and 13.88 per cent of them received college education, whereas 13.19 per cent were illiterate. Thus, it is concluded that a majority of the pomegranate growers had received secondary and higher secondary education followed by college and primary education. The probable reason for majority of farmers to be educated upto high school might be due to their medium annual family income (69.45%), lack of facilities for college education in nearby villages, which forces them to travel to tehsil headquarters if at all they want to pursue college education. Realization of importance of formal education both by farmers and offsprings, due to increased contact with educated people like extension personnel might have motivated few of them to pursue higher education. It was surprising to note that 13.19 per cent respondents belonged to illiterate category which might be due to ignorance and less contacts with other educated people in addition to their socio-economic status. These findings are in line with those of Arunkumar (2004) and Khin Mar Oo (2005).

Table 1: Profile Characteristics of elected pomegranate growers

Sr no.	Category	No. of Respondents (N=144)	Percentage
(A) Age			
1	Young (Up to 30)	19	13.19
2	Middle (31to 47)	101	70.13
3	Old (48 and above)	24	16.68
	Mean=38.89	S.D = 9.30	
(B) Education			
1	Illiterate	19	13.19
2	Primary	30	20.84
3	Secondary	43	29.86
4	Higher Secondary	32	22.23
5	College	20	13.88
(C) Cast			
1	General/Open	94	65.27
2	OBC	15	10.42
3	SC/ST	35	24.31
(D) Occupation			
1	Agriculture	87	60.42
2	Agriculture + subsidiary enterprises/ other enterprises	57	39.58
(E) Annual Income			
1	Low (Up to 1,73,000)	16	11.11
2	Medium(1,73,001 to 3,43,000)	100	69.45
3	High (Above 3,43,001)	28	19.44
	Mean=257645.8	S.D=84865.05	
(F) Social Participation			
1	Low (Upto 2)	50	34.72
2	Medium (3 to 5)	63	43.75
3	High (6 and above)	31	21.53
	Mean=3.50	S.D = 1.69	
(G) Sources of Information			
1	Low (Upto 11)	22	15.28
2	Medium (12 to 16)	94	65.28
3	High (17 and above)	28	19.44
	Mean = 13.97	S.D = 3.33	

Caste is considered as important personal characteristic of respondent. The caste wise distribution of the respondents shows that majority 65.27 per cent of the respondents belonged to the general category followed by 24.31 per cent in SC/ST category. Only 10.42 per cent respondents belonged to OBC category. Thus, it is concluded that a majority of the pomegranate growers belonged to General category followed by SC/ST and OBC category. These findings are in accordance with those of Shailesh Kumar *et al.* (2013).

Occupation is assumed as an important variable that influences entrepreneurial behaviour of the respondents. It is evident from the Table1 that 60.42 per cent of the respondents were dependent only on agriculture whereas the remaining 39.58 per cent of respondents were practicing agriculture and subsidiary enterprise (dairy) and other enterprises. It is concluded that majority of the respondents were dependent only on agriculture as their main occupation. The majority of farmers practicing agriculture alone might be due to the continuation of ancestral traditional occupation of agriculture. Other factor could also be the limited scope of employment in non-agricultural sector as their education level is not high to get employment and for having medium land holding the nature of farming should be intensive and remunerative. These findings are similar with those of Anitha (2004) and Ravi (2007).

Annual income provides for availability of capital for farming. According to the annual income from Table1 It is observed that majority of the respondents 69.45 per cent were in medium income group followed by high and low income groups with 19.44 and 11.11 per cent, respectively. The probable reason, which could be attributed for varied income categories of respondents is the size of the land holding, growing of remunerative crops like pomegranate, and practicing of subsidiary occupations by the respondents. The results are in confirmity with the findings of and Suresh (2004) and Chaudhari (2006).

It was hypothesized that the respondents who participated in more number of formal and informal organizations would tend to adopt the practices more. It was observed from Table1 that 43.75 per cent of the respondents had medium social participation followed by 34.72 per cent of them having low social participation. Only 21.53 per cent of the respondents had high social participation. This may be due to their moderate level of motivation and less interest in social activities. Thus, it is concluded that large majority of the respondents had medium social participation. The observations are in line with those of Nadre (2000) and Anitha (2004).

The information regarding the different sources of information used by the respondents were collected, tabulated and analyzed. It was observed from Table1 that 65.28 per cent of the respondents were using medium sources of information, whereas, 19.44 per cent had used high and 15.28 per cent had low sources of information, respectively. Thus, majority of the respondents had used medium source of information. The respondents getting reliable information could attribute the possible reason behind this finding due to possession of radio and television and availability of farm magazines. These observations are in confirmity with those of Kaushal Kumar (2008), Shailesh Kumar *et al.* (2013).

The study was conducted in Sangola, Pandharpur and Mohol tehsil of Solapur district in Maharashtra. It is concluded that the profile of the pomegranate growers. The farmers were young to middle aged, secondary to higher secondary educated, majority 65.27 per cent of the respondents belonged

to the general category, More than half of respondents were dependent only on agriculture, having annual income between Rs.1,73,000 to 3,43,000 and above, low to medium social participation in organization and Near about two third i.e. 65.28 per cent respondents were using medium sources of information, The study implies that intensive training programmes need to be conducted by government and nongovernment agencies to create awareness about entrepreneurial opportunities, decision making, innovativeness, participation in implementation of government schemes, time and financial management, which would enable the pomegranate growers for efficient utilization of their potential.

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