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## Social participation and extension agency contact of coconut growers in Tiruppur district of Tamil Nadu

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**Abstract**

The study was conducted in Tiruppur District of Tamil Nadu. A sample size of 120 was fixed for the study considering the limitation of time and other resources. From the list of farmers in each village, farmers cultivating Coconut crop were identified and selected from the selected six villages by using the proportionate random sampling. During the survey, the researcher could ascertain that most of the farmers were members in social organizations such as co-operative agricultural credit society, farmer discussion groups, milk society, etc, mainly to avail the benefits given by the organization extension agency contact respectively. Lack of awareness and interest of the respondent to know about improved coconut growers practice might be the reason for their poor to medium extension agency contact.

**Keywords:** social participation, extension agency contact, coconut growers.

**Introduction**

Coconut is grown in more than 86 countries worldwide, with a total production of 54 billion nuts per annum. The largest producers of coconut are Indonesia and the Philippines followed by India. India occupies the premier position in the world with an annual production of 15 billion nuts from an area of 1.94 million ha. The coconut tree (*Cocos nucifera*) is a member of the family *Arecaceae* (Palm family). It is the only accepted species in the genus *Cocos*. The term coconut can refer to the entire coconut palm, the seed, or the fruit which botanically, is a drupe, not a nut.

**Origin**

The origin of the plant is the subject of debate. O.F. Cook was one of the earliest modern researchers to draw conclusions about the location of origin of *Cocos nucifera* based on its current-day worldwide distribution. He hypothesized that the coconut originated in the Americas, Tamil Nadu (33.84%), Karnataka (25.15%), Kerala (23.96%) and Andhra Pradesh (7.16%). Other states, such as Goa, Maharashtra, Odisha, West Bengal, and those in the northeast (Tripura and Assam) account for the remaining productions. Though Kerala has the largest number of coconut trees, in terms of production per hectare, Tamil Nadu leads all other states, a Tamil Nadu, Coimbatore and Tiruppur regions top the production list. In Goa, the coconut tree has been reclassified by the government as a palm (like a grass), enabling farmers and real estate developers to clear land with fewer restrictions. Extensively grown in tropical countries, the coconut tree has multiple uses. Besides being an important oil seed crop, its raw nut and edible copra are important items of food. Coconut is an indispensable item offered in divine oblation as tender coconut water is a refreshing unadulterated cool health drink. The coconut shell and husk are main raw materials for the manufacture of handicraft articles. Coconut leaves are used for thatching roofs and the making brooms. Husk is used for producing coir. Coconut milk, the extract of the solid coconut endosperm, plays an important role in the cuisines of south Asia and in the food industries. It estimated that 25 per cent of the world's output of coconut is consumed as coconut milk. The trunk of the tree is used as building materials, fuel and for making utensils, furniture, etc. in short, every part of the coconut tree is of great utility and hence it is rightly called 'Kalpavriksha' or the 'tree of heaven'.

**Research methodology**

The study was conducted in Tiruppur District of Tamil Nadu. A sample size of 120 was fixed for the study considering the limitation of time and other resources. From the list of farmers in

each village, farmers cultivating coconut crop were identified and selected from the selected six villages by using the proportionate random sampling.

### Social participation

Social participation referred to the degree of involvement of an individual either as a member or as an office bearer in one or more organization. This variables was measured by the schedule developed by Jeyaseelan (2005) [1].with suitable modifications followed by Rajeswari (2011) [3]. The scoring procedure adopted has been presented below.

S.No	Nature of participation	Score
1	Member in the past	1
2	Member at present	2
3	Office bearer in the past	3
4	Office bearer at present	4

The scores obtained by a respondent indicate his membership score for one organization. Likewise all the membership score for the reported number of organizations in which the respondent had involvement were summed upto get his score on social participation.

### Extension agency contact

Somasundaram (1976) obtained that contact with extension agency may help the farmers to gain knowledge and motivation for adoption. Extension agency contact in this study was referred as the degree to which farmers used to

maintain contact with extension agencies. This variable was measured in terms of frequency and purpose of contact. The scoring procedure followed by Prathapsingh (2012) [2].was used in this study.

S.No	Nature of contact	Score
Frequency of contact		
1	Once in a year	1
2	Once in 6 month	2
3	Once in 3 month	3
4	Monthly once	4
5	Fortnightly once	5
6	Weekly once	6
7	More than once in a week	7
Purpose of contact		
1	Non Agriculture	1
2	Agriculture	2
3	Both	3

The frequency and purpose of contact for each extension agency was assessed. The sum of the scores of the individual constituted the total scores of extension agency contact of the respondent. The respondents were classified into low, medium and high using cumulative frequency method.

### Finding and Discussion

#### Social participation

The results on distribution of respondents according to their social participation are given in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Distribution of respondents according to their social participation (n=120)

S.No	Category	Number of respondents	Per cent
1.	Low	45	37.50
2.	Medium	65	54.17
3.	High	10	8.33
	Total	120	100.00

It might be observed from Table 1 that more than half of the respondents (54.17 per cent) had medium level of social participation followed by low (37.50 per cent) and high (8.33 per cent) level of social participation. During the survey, the researcher could as certain that most of the farmers were members in social organization such as co - operative agricultural credit society, farmer discussion groups and milk society, etc., mainly to avail the benefits given by the organisations. The coconut farmers shown more interest in

participating social organisations which in availing in the study area. This might be the probable reason for the medium level of social participation reported among the majority of the respondents. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Satheeshkumar (2007) [4].

#### Extension agency contact

The results on distribution of respondents according to their extension agency contact are given in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Distribution of respondents according to their extension agency contact (n=120)

S. No	Category	Number of respondents	Per cent
1.	Low	41	34.17
2.	Medium	70	58.33
3.	High	9	7.50
	Total	120	100.00

The table 2 shows that nearly sixty per cent of the respondents (58.33 per cent) had medium level of extension agency contact followed by low (34.17 per cent) and high level (7.50 per cent) of extension agency contact. Hence, it could be interpreted the coconut growers had medium level of extension agency contact. This might be due to the awareness, frequency and purpose of utilizing the various Service rendered through State Departments of Agriculture. This finding is in line with the findings of sumitha (2007) [5].

### Conclusion

It can be concluded from the findings of above study that most of the farmers were members in social organizations such as co-operative agricultural credit society, farmer discussion groups, milk society, etc, mainly to avail the benefits given by the organization extension agency contact respectively. Lack of awareness and interest of the respondent to know about improved coconut cultivation practice might be the reason for their poor to medium extension agency contact. This category requires more awareness and support for

enhancing farmers in social participation and extension agency contact.

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