

## A Study on the Involvement of Farmers in Agripreneurship in Kerala

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### ABSTRACT

*Agriculture and allied activities are considered as the back bone of the Indian economy. In Kerala, farmers are withdrawing from their occupation since they consider farming as non-profitable to earn a living. Thus, there is a need for revolutionary changes in agricultural sector, especially in the field of agribusiness. Hence, the study is to assess the involvement of farmers in agripreneurship. Both primary and secondary data were collected for the study. A well-structured interview schedule was prepared and administered to the selected respondents to collect primary data. Observation and discussion with the selected respondents facilitated the data collection. Fifty farmers, both men and women, from Venganoor, Kottukal and Kalliyoor Panchayats of Thiruvananthapuram were taken as the sample for the study. The study focused on the socio- economic profile, information on the crop varieties, land holdings, factors influencing the involvement of farmers in agripreneurship and future expectations of the respondents.*

**Keywords:** Agriculture, Agripreneurship, Involvement, Farmers, Economic, Growth; Kerala

Agriculture entrepreneurship or agripreneurship is the entrepreneurship in the field of agriculture. It establishes agribusiness in agriculture and allied sectors. Traditionally farmers used to cultivate food and cash crops or rear animals and directly sell the products to customers. Instead of sticking to traditional farming activities, farmers now engage in diverse farm related activities for better earning. New avenues are available for farmers to enhance their income from farming.

Technology, Government assistance and entrepreneurship development training programmes have considerably contributed to the increase of agripreneurship. Wide variety for farm related enterprises are establishing in

the country (Bairwa et al., 2014).

Areas of entrepreneurship in agriculture include the activities like dairying, sericulture, floriculture, apiculture, poultry, nursery farming, farm- tourism etc. Other emerging areas include integrated farming, organic farm products, service, supply and maintenance of farm machineries.

The present study was conducted to know the extent of involvement of farmers in agripreneurship in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala

### METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted

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among fifty farmers residing in Venganoor, Kottukal and Kalliyoor *panchayats* of Thiruvananthapuram. Both primary and secondary data were collected for the study. Survey method was adopted using a well-structured interview schedule to collect primary data. Using interview schedule, face to face interactions were made to collect the information. Farmers were selected using random sampling method. Secondary data were collected from books, journals, websites, etc. The collected data were pooled, tabulated, compared and analysed.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study had made an attempt to assess the involvement of farmers in agripreneurship in selected places of Thiruvananthapuram district in Kerala. The findings regarding the profile characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.**  
**Profile Characteristics of the Respondents**

Sl. No.	Particulars	Number (n=50)	Percentage (%)
1	Age		
	≤35 years	13	26
	36 - 50 years	27	54
	>50 years	10	20
2	Gender		
	Male	44	88
	Female	6	12
3	Marital status		
	Married	50	100
	Unmarried	-	-

Sl. No.	Particulars	Number (n=50)	Percentage (%)
4	Educational qualification		
	Illiterate	0	0
	Primary school	5	10
	High school	20	40
	Higher Secondary school	14	28
	Graduation	9	18
	Post - graduation and above	2	4
5	Type of family		
	Nuclear family	34	68
	Extended family	15	30
	Joint family	1	2
6	Monthly income (in Rs.)		
	Below Rs. 50000	8	12
	Rs. 50000 - Rs. 100000	16	32
	Above Rs. 100000- Rs. 200000	12	24
	Rs. 200000- Rs. 400000	10	20
	Above Rs. 400000	4	8
7	Type of land		
	Own	39	78
	Rent	11	22
8	Land holdings		
	≤25 cents	23	46
	26 - 50 cents	19	38
	>50 cents	8	16
9	Experience in farming		
	≤5 years	11	22
	6 - 10 years	13	26
	>10 years	26	52

Sl. No.	Particulars	Number (n=50)	Percentage (%)
10	Type of farming		
	Coconut	9	18
	Vegetables	8	16
	Tapioca	8	16
	Banana	8	16
	Dairying	6	12
	Poultry	5	10
	Rice	3	6
	Mushroom cultivation	2	4
Aquaculture	1	2	

It is observed from Table 1 that, regarding age, majority (54 per cent) of the respondents were in the age group of 36- 50 years. Thus, it was interesting to know that participation in agriculture and allied activities is more among the middle aged groups. Male farmers were more (88 per cent) in the study area and the educational status of the respondents reveal that they are qualified enough and are engaged in agriculture and allied activities. Forty per cent of the respondents have an educational qualification up to high school level and it was welcoming to know that no one was illiterate among the study sample. About 32 per cent of the selected farmers earn an income of Rs. 50000 to Rs. 100000 annually from agriculture and only 8 per cent of the respondents earn above Rs. 400000 per annum.

Majority (78 per cent) of the respondents make use of their own land for agriculture and agriprenurship activities.

Regarding the land holdings, it is less than 25 cents for forty six per cent of the respondents and 52 per cent of the respondents had more than ten years of experience in farming.

Regarding the type of agriprenurship activities among the selected respondents, 46 per cent of the respondents take part in agriprenurship activities. Coconut farmers constitute 18 per cent of the samples. They maintain coconut farm for more than ten years and sell coconut, tender coconut and copra. The by- products of coconut like coconut husk and shell are supplied to small scale industries, fertilizer units and handicraft units. A few farmers (5 out of 9) have their own oil mills to extract coconut oil and the residue is sold as cattle feed.

About 16 per cent of the respondents are engaged in vegetable, tapioca and banana cultivation. Only six per cent of the respondents are engaged in paddy cultivation. Even though the proportion of paddy cultivation in the study area is very low, it is relatively good.

Dairying is another agriprenurship activity engaged in by 12 per cent of the respondents. Cow, goat and buffalo are the major animals reared in the study area. Milk and milk products are supplied from here to nearby households, milk societies and petty shops.

It was observed that about 10 per cent of the respondents are engaged in poultry farming. Hen, duck, quail and emu are the birds in the farms of study area. They have their own hatchery units and apart from selling meat, they supply chicks and eggs to other farmers and customers.

Mushroom cultivation is taken up by only four per cent of the farmers. They supply oyster and milky mushrooms to nearby shops and super markets. They sell value added products like mushroom pickle, cutlet, samosa and dried mushroom. They also provide 1 to 5-day training programmes for those who are interested in mushroom cultivation and by- products preparation. Ornamental fish culture is another agripreneurship activity that constitute only two percent in the study area. Several species of ornamental fishes are cultured and marketed in small scale to nearby places.

Thus, from the data collected it can be concluded that except vegetable, paddy, banana and tapioca farmers, other 46 per cent of the respondents are engaged in various agripreneurial activities to supplement their income from farming.

#### **Factors Influencing the Involvement of Farmers in Agripreneurship**

Involvement of farmers in agribusiness or various agriculture related entrepreneurial activities are influenced by certain factors. These factors are presented in Table 2.

It could be seen from Table 2 that, majority (34 per cent) of the respondents are involved in agripreneurship in order to improve their financial status. About 22 per cent of the respondents opined that it is a means of self- employment opportunities for them. Other factors that made the respondents to engage in agripreneurship are taking up family business (18 per cent), interest towards agriculture (4 per cent), means of improving

**Table 2.**  
**Factors Influencing the Involvement of Farmers in Agripreneurship**

(n=50)

Sl. No.	Particulars	Number	Percentage (%)
1	To improve financial status	17	34
2	Means of self-employment	11	22
3	Family business	9	18
4	Interest in agriculture	2	4
5	Make use of leisure time	1	2
6	To improve standard of living	7	14
7	To avail government schemes and loan	3	6

standard of living (14 per cent) and to avail government schemes and loans (6 per cent). Only two per cent of the respondents felt that since agriculture is seasonal occupation, it makes use of leisure time by engaging in various agripreneurial activities.

#### **Future Expectations of the Respondents**

The study also focussed on revealing the future expectations of the selected respondents (Table 3. )

It was found that majority (30 per cent) of the selected respondents expects better marketing avenues and online and offline ideas on entrepreneurship. About 12 per cent

**Table 3.**  
**Future expectations of the Respondents**

Sl. No.	Particulars	Number (n=50)	Percentage (%)
1	Better marketing avenues	15	30
2	Online and offline ideas	15	30
3	Effective usage of farm services	12	24
4	Effective agriprenurship training programmes	8	16

of the respondents expect effective usage of farm services and 16 per cent of the samples looking for effective entrepreneurship training programmes. India provides a firm ground for

the development of entrepreneurial culture in agribusiness. A strategy must be designed to follow up with farmers to encourage agriprenurship among them. Through the study, the extent of involvement of selected farmers in various agriprenurship activities, factors influencing their involvement and future expectations were analysed in detail. Entrepreneurial potential of farmers have to be identified and measures must be taken to involve more farmers in agribusiness and related entrepreneurial activities.

## REFERENCES

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