

Agripreneurial Behaviour of Awardee Farmers of Kerala

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in Thiruvananthapuram and Pathanamthitta districts of Kerala to study the agripreneurial behaviour of awardee farmers. Altogether, 70 awardee farmers, 35 each from the two districts constituted the sample. The results showed that majority of the awardee farmers belonged to medium to high category of agripreneurial behaviour. Profile characteristics like decision making ability, dealing with failure, creativity and trainings acquired had a significant relationship with agripreneurial behaviour.

Keywords: Awardee farmers; Agripreneurial behaviour; Decision making ability; Training; Kerala

INTRODUCTION

Demand for agriculture is increasing rapidly with population growth and per capita income. A farmer who produced more was considered successful in earlier times. But now, a farmer who obtains higher productivity from his fields, who uses resources effectively and sustainably, markets his produce efficiently and can maintain quality in line with national and international standards, is considered as a successful farmer (Vimalraj, 2010).

Farmers are the most economically challenged group in the production sector, facing challenges. Amidst such situations, farmers who have been successful needs to

be applauded for their work and felicitating them with an award for the hard work put in pulls in attention of more farmers into adding efforts in agriculture. A recognition given by central and state government establishments, agricultural departments, Non-Governmental and other organizations to farmers through awards generates interest in them to practice new technologies and improve the quality of the produce. These awardee farmers vary from other farmers in certain ways such as the utilization of resources, marketing strategies, adoption of advanced technologies, etc. (Kale et al., 2018).

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Government of Kerala has introduced the awards viz. K Viswanathan (Mithranikethan) Memorial *Nelkathir* award, Karshakothama award, Karshakathilakam award, Kerakesari award etc. to inspire the progressive farmers from the state. In addition, the "awardee farmers" are the progressive farmers who not only adopt the recommended practices in their farm, but also introduce their own innovative ideas.

Hence the present study was taken up to study the agripreneurial behaviour of awardee farmers of Southern Kerala.

METHODOLOGY

Thiruvananthapuram and Pathanamthitta districts of Kerala were selected as the location for the study of awardee farmers. The study mainly focused on the awardee farmers cultivating major crops like coconut, rice, banana and vegetables in an integrated manner. As the number of these farmers were relatively more in Thiruvananthapuram and Pathanamthitta districts, these two districts were selected. Thirty five awardee farmers nominated for state awards from Thiruvananthapuram and Pathanamthitta, during the period 2014-18 were selected in consultation with Principal Agricultural Officers and other officials of Department of Agriculture Development and Farmers' Welfare, making the total sample size of respondents 70. *Ex-post- facto* research design was used for the study because there was no scope for manipulation of any

variables under study.

A well structured interview schedule was prepared after consultation with the experts in extension and other related fields. A pilot study was conducted in the non-sampling area and the final interview schedule was prepared with suitable modifications.

To study the agripreneurial behaviour of awardee farmers, 'Agripreneurial attributes self assessment' scale developed by Wankhade et al. (2013) was used. The scale comprises ten agripreneurial attributes, namely Risk taking, Hope of success, Persuasibility, Manageability, Self-confidence, Knowledgeability, Persistence, Feedback usage, Innovativeness, and Achievement motivation. The agripreneurial attributes self assessment scale has a total of 50 statements. It was measured on a five-point continuum such as 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'undecided', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' with weightage of 5,4,3,2 and 1.

Agripreneurial Behaviour Index was used to measure the agripreneurial behaviour of awardee farmers.

Agripreneurial Behaviour Index (ABI):

$$(ABI) = \frac{\text{Sum of obtained score on ten agripreneurial attribute-Minimum}}{\text{Maximum obtainable score on ten agripreneurial attribute-Minimum}} \times 100$$

On the basis of Agricultural Behaviour Index values obtained, awardee farmers were classified into three categories ranging from low to high by considering the mean and standard deviation values.

The profile characteristics of the awardee farmers such as age, farming experience, decision making ability, dealing with failure, creativity and trainings acquired were categorized and expressed in terms of frequency and percentage.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 reveals that majority of the awardee farmers (67.14%) were having medium level of agripreneurial behaviour followed by high (17.14%) and low (15.71%) agripreneurial behaviour levels. The awardee farmers follow many innovative technologies in addition to the traditional practices, which help them in establishing new farm enterprises.

Table 1. Distribution of Awardee Farmers Based on Agripreneurial Behaviour Index

Sl. No.	Category	Frequency (N=70)	Percentage
1.	Low (50-57)	12	15.71
2.	Medium (57-73)	47	67.14
3.	High (73-81)	11	17.14
	Total	70	100
Mean- 64.6		SD- 7.5	Range- 50-81

The results of the study revealed that majority of the awardee farmers (54.28%) belonged to the middle age category and this may be due to the enthusiasm and perseverance of middle aged persons for their work when compared to older persons. About 60 per cent of the awardee farmers had medium level of farming experience. Farming experience might have played an influential role in the acquirement of knowledge and skills of farmers.

Majority of the awardee farmers were in the medium category of decision making ability (67.14%) and dealing with failure (75.71%). Failure in agriculture might not pull them back as they have high risk taking

ability and they might be well aware of how to tackle the problems. Most of the awardee farmers (71.43%) had medium level of creativity. Medium and high levels of creativity shows their ability to do innovative things in a different way to achieve success in their farming and might have helped them to secure awards of State Government of Kerala. About 65.71 per cent of awardee farmers belonged to medium category of trainings acquired. Trainings might have helped to motivate the farmers and increase their competitive ability in receiving awards.

Furthermore, the correlation analysis (Table 2) showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between decision making ability and agripreneurial behaviour. A farmer with good decision making ability might have high chances of success through effective utilization of available resources and increase their income. Dealing with failure was positively and significantly correlated with agripreneurial behaviour. A successful person always learns lessons from the failure and it is obvious that the respondents, being the awardee farmers might have learned lessons from failures due to crop loss and managed to overcome

it. It was found that creativity was positively and significantly correlated with agripreneurial behaviour at one per cent level. Higher creativity might have helped the awardee farmers to adopt the innovative methods in all areas of farming like crop production, crop protection, post-harvest handling, value addition and marketing which finally enhanced their agripreneurial abilities. Pearson correlation coefficient value showed that training acquired was positively and significantly correlated with agripreneurial behaviour. Trainings might have increased the knowledge and skills of awardee farmers to perform in an efficient way.

Table 2. Correlation Between Agripreneurial Behaviour and Profile Characteristics of Awardee Farmers

Sl. No.	Items	Coefficient of Correlation 'r' Values
1.	Age	0.042 NS
2.	Farming experience	0.058 NS
3.	Decision making ability	0.907**
4.	Dealing with failure	0.873**
5.	Creativity	0.908**
6.	Trainings acquired	0.730**

*** Significant at 1% level, 'NS' Non-significant

CONCLUSION

From the study, it can be concluded that the awardee farmers had medium to high agripreneurial behaviour which increased their annual income and thereby, standard of living. These farmers practiced not only the traditional and recommended practices, but also innovative technologies in production, protection, value addition, storage and in marketing. It can be concluded that, if other farmers can also replicate the methods adopted by these awardee farmers , sustainable entrepreneurial development on agriculture could be ensured.

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