

Socio-cultural Attributes of Some Progressive Sugarcane Growers

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Although the farmers are the central point of sugarcane development but they can not able to perform their farming job due to certain socio-economic constraint. It is a primary duty of an extension agent to know their socio-economic and cultural profile before preparing of an extension programme. In spite of higher price of sugarcane many sugarcane farmers are becoming poorer day by day as they could not get the advantages of modern production technologies. On the other hand a number of cane farmers are performing many business due to their higher subsistence pressure, instead of intensive care on sugarcane farm. Land fragmentation, inadequate education facilities, unavailable irrigation system, lower scope of cosmopolitanism and others so many factors which influence per hectare production of sugarcane (Ali *et al.* 1986; Bashar *et al.* 1994). It is an established fact that socio-economic and socio-cultural profile of a farming community play a vital role in the adoption of new technology and production of per hectare yield. But no attempt has so far been taken to study the socio-economic or socio-cultural conditions of sugarcane farmers community. Therefore the present study was carried out to know the social, economical and cultural conditions of sugarcane farmers in Chuadanga area.

The study was conducted at Darsona area under Chuadanga district. Forty-two farm families were selected for this study. The farmers were selected by stratified random sampling from different sub-zones of Carew & Co. sugarmills area. Data were collected by specially developed questionnaire including the questions related to age, religion, level of education, occupation, source of income, size of farm, size of families, cosmopolitanism and other aspects. Data were collected and analyzed in January 1990, using simple statistical methods.

Age of the farmers: Average age of the farmer was 33, minimum 20, maximum 65 and standard deviation 10.53.

Table 1. Age group of farmers interviewed.

Age group	Number of farmers	%
Upto 30 years	22	52.4
31-45 years	17	40.5
Above 45 years	03	7.1
Total	42	100.0

It is seen from the table 1 that young age group (upto 30 years) was dominant (52.4%) followed by middle age group (40.5%). Old age group (above 45 years) was very minimum (07.1 %) in number among progressive cane growers.

Family size: It is seen from the table 2 that average family size was observed 8.5 with minimum 3 to maximum 18 and standard deviation 3.9. The frequency of medium family (6-10 members) was very high (61.9%), whereas small and large family were about the same (19.1%).

Table 2. Family size of the farmers interviewed.

Family size	Number of farmers	%
Small family (<5 members)	8	19.05
Medium family (6-10 members)	26	61.90
Large family (>11 members)	8	19.05
Total	42	100.00

Ratio of male-female and children: Ratio of male-female and children was observed 156, 113 and 114 respectively. The children means upto 10 years old offspring of the respondent. Hence the total population under the study was 383.

Religion: Out of 42 respondent, only 2 were Hindus and remaining 40 were Muslims. Hence the percentage of Hindus and Muslims were 4.8 and 95.2 among the cane growers.

Family labour: Average family labour was obtained 2. Minimum 1 to maximum 8, with a standard deviation of 1.27.

Education: Average year of schooling was obtained 10 with minimum score 5 to maximum 14 and standard deviation 2.23.

Size of total farm and cane farm: Average size of total farm was 4.15 ha with a range of 0.41 ha to 12 ha. The standard deviation was 2.44. Average size of cane farm was 2.63 ha with a range of 0.27 ha to 7.0 ha. The standard deviation was 1.64. According to BBS (1991) all of the farmers were belongs to large farmer group.

Occupation: Occupation is the major factor which influence the farmers' economically (Table 3). It has been observed that major farmers were occupied with the production of cane plus other crops followed by a group of farmers who grow sugarcane and do other business and farmers group who produce sugarcane and do service. Extremely cane growers who was not engaged with other business was absent among the respondents.

Table 3. Occupation of the farmers interviewed.

Occupation category	Number of farmers	%
Cane + other crop	21	50.0
Cane + business	14	33.3
Cane + service	7	16.7
Total	42	100.0

Social contact: All the respondent farmers were engaged with any one or more organization or samity. According to score they are mainly related with cane growers samity (13), hat-bazar committee (10), contact farmer (6), co-operative society (5) and other social-welfare organizations (3).

Contact with extension agents: Extension contact between farmers and extension agents with a view to improving the farmers in all aspects related to agricultural production and community development are the major source of informal learning and the formation of attitude towards the modern scientific technologies. In this study, we observed that the sugarcane farmers were contacted with 3 types of extension agents, i.e. sugarmills extension, national extension system (DAE) and non-government organizations (NGO).

Table 4. Social contact of farmers interviewed .

Extension agent	Farmers contacted	%
Sugar mills only	19	45.2
Sugar mills + DAE	16	38.1
Sugar mills + DAE+Others	7	16.7
Total	42	100.0

Thus we conclude that the socio-cultural attributes of the progressive cane growers of that area is closely related to the attributes of innovators and early adopter farmers, those are very much interested to adopt any new technology than others. Hence we can utilize those farmers for rapidly transferring of innovations by training, demonstration etc.

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