



A ROLE OF WOMEN FARMERS CONTRIBUTES TO MAIZE PRODUCTION

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ABSTRACT

This study contribution of women farmers to maize production in Vappanthattai taluk, Perambalur. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 50 women farmers as sample size for the study. Data collected through interview schedule were analysed using frequency counts, percentages and mean while Chi-square were used to test the relationships that exist between selected socioeconomic characteristics and contributions of women farmers to maize production.

Results revealed the mean age of respondents was 43years; majority of the respondents had no formal education. Majority of the respondents engaged in farming for both commercial and subsistence purposes, and activities such as, planting, fertilizer application, harvesting, processing, storage and marketing were performed by women farmers whereas ridging, land clearing and weeding were considered laborious and were usually contracted to hired labour.

The results of chi-square analysis showed that there is no significant association with contributions of women farmers to maize production in the study area. Hence, the study recommended that female education (through adult literacy) be intensified, young women be encouraged to be more involved in maize production, women should form themselves into group to learn techniques of trapping farm pests and in time of surplus, women maize farmers should form supply cooperatives to transport their produce to areas where it commands higher prices.



KEY WORDS : Maize Production, Contributions, Women Farmers.

INTRODUCTION

Maize is the most important cereal in the world after wheat and rice, it serves several purposes. As a result of increased production, dried maize is available in local market for much longer period than in the past. More so, new uses have been found for the increased production. Contribution of women in agriculture and food security in many developing countries continue to have poor attention over a range of productive resources, including education, land, information, and financial resources (Odame et al. 2002; World Bank 2001; Welch et al. 2000) as men have reportedly continued to dominate farm decision making, even in areas where women are the larger providers of farm labour. This indicated that women have been relegated to the background despite their unquantifiable efforts in agricultural production. In recent time however, women have been noted to take prominent roles in farm production. Despite their noble contributions however, Fabiyi et al. (2007) noted that women farmers' contributions continue to be undervalued in conventional agricultural and economic analyses and policies. Tijani and Yano, (2007); Damisa et al. (2007) expressed the importance of women and their contributions in all categories of farm operations. While many past studies succeeded in reporting differences in farm productivity levels of men

and women farmers, only few of the studies actually attempted an evaluation of the particular contributions of women farmers to maize production.

This study evaluated the contributions of women farmers to maize production in Veppanthattai Taluk, Perambalur. Specifically, the study described the socio-economic characteristics of women farmers in the study area, identified farm resources available to respondents, determined the contributions of the respondents in terms of activities performed in maize production, and identified constraints faced by the respondents in contributing to maize production in the study area. Based on the objectives of the study, the following hypothesis was stated in the null form – there is no significant relationship between selected socio-economic characteristics of women farmers and level of contributions to maize production in the study area.

According to Mohan Paramkusam and Sivaramane (2016) study is to examine the cropping pattern and socio-economic status of the maize farmers of three districts Guntur, Karimnagar and Mahabubnagarin Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Three districts were selected with a sample size of 30 per district and a total of 90 farmers were randomly selected. For assessing the existing situation, data was collected through primary as well as secondary source of information. The agricultural marketing and market related infrastructure and investment made was collected from secondary data. The details on households, cropping pattern, share of existing seed and pesticide companies and other sources were collected through a field survey conducted in 2011-12. Data were analyzed using SPSS software and Garrett scoring technique. The cropping pattern of paddy-maize with 100% alone dominated in Guntur where as in Karimnagar and Mahabubnagar cropping pattern dominated by Paddy-Maize (57%) and Maize-Maize (37%). The average illiterates are 41.1 % in all three districts. Major proportions of the farmers found in the studied area are illiterates. Most of the farmers are not following recommendations after the soil testing, this may result in sub-optimal utilization of plant nutrients. All the seed companies are working vigorously in all the surveyed districts. Among the companies, Pioneer Hybrid India (PHI) is the major contributor and has large share in all the three district markets, followed by Kaveri seeds. As all the practices are almost common in maize crop in all the locations surveyed, there is a less difference in the expense on different activities. Major cost is incurred on labour (Rs.5,588); due to availability of alternate works labour wages has been increased. Next to labour, major expenditure is for fertilizers. The strategy of the agricultural development should particularly focus on small and marginal farmers. Agriculture in the above study area is very well responsive to the changes in numerous social, economic, scientific and market dynamics. There is a need to follow situational marketing approach and subsidies from public sectors which are encouraging for cost optimization.

METHODOLOGY

The target populations for the study were all women farmers who cultivate maize. Simple random sampling procedure was used to select 50 women maize farmers as sample size. The needed information was elicited from the respondents using structured interview schedule. Data collected were subjected to both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, means and percentages were used. However, chi-square was used to test the relationship that exists between the variables.

Data analysis and interpretation

Table-1: Socio-demographic profile of the respondents

Particulars	No.of respondents (n=50)	Percentage (100%)
Age		
Below 30yrs	9	18
31 to 40yrs	12	24
41 to 50yrs	18	36

51yrs & above	11	22
Marital status		
Married	42	84
Single	8	16
Educational qualification		
Illiterate	11	22
Literate	39	78
Cultivation experience		
Traditional	34	68
Seasonal	16	32
Level of contribution		
Low	11	22
High	39	78

Source: Primary data

The above table reveals that one third (36 per cent) of the respondents were 41 to 50yrs of age group, 24 per cent were 31 to 40yrs, 22 per cent were above 51yrs and remaining 18 per cent were below 30yrs. Vast majority (84 per cent) of the respondents were married and remaining 16 per cent were divorced, widow and destitute like single status. Vast majority (78 per cent) of the respondents were literate and remaining 22 per cent were illiterate. Majority (68 per cent) were traditional farming experiences and remaining 32 per cent were seasonal experiences. Vast majority (78 per cent) of the respondents were high level contribution for maize production and remaining 22 per cent were low level.

Table – 2: Association between educational qualification of the respondents and their level of contribution

Educational qualification	Level of contribution			Statistical inference
	Low	High	Total	
Illiterate	4 (8%)	7 (14%)	11 (22%)	$\chi^2=2.348$ Df=1 $.064>0.05$ Not Significant
Literate	7 (14%)	32 (64%)	39 (78%)	
Total	11 (100%)	39 (100%)	50 (100%)	

Statistical test: Chi-square test was used the above table

Research Hypothesis: There is no significant association between educational qualification of the respondents and their level of contribution

The above table find out that There is no significant association between educational qualification of the respondents and their level of contribution. Hence, the calculated value is greater than table value (.064>0.05). So the research hypothesis is accepted.

CONCLUSION

This study concluded based on findings that nearly half of the women farmers were yet to receive any formal education. Also, adult women were more involved in farming activities than young women. Respondents often faced several constraints which include insufficient fund, problem of transportation, and pests' infestations. Age, education attainments, marital status, household size and farm size were significantly related to women farmers' contributions to maize production in the study area. It is therefore recommended that women farmers form themselves into group wherein techniques of trapping farm pests would be learnt, female education (through adult literacy) should be intensified, young women be

encouraged to be more involved in maize production, and in time of surplus, women farmers should form supply cooperatives to transport their produce to areas where it commands higher prices.

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