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Socio personal impact of coconut producer society: An explorative study

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Abstract

Coconut Producer Organisations (CPO's) are a farmer co-operative, formed through the lively institutional aid and monitoring by the Coconut Development Board. A study on assessing the socio personal impact of Coconut Producer Society was conducted in Thiruvananthapuram district of Kerala. Kilimanoor, Perumkadavila and Athiyannoor were the three blocks purposively selected for the study. A sample size of 130 respondents were selected primarily based on proportionate random sampling from each panchayat from the chosen blocks. The findings indicated that majority (58.46%) of the respondents had medium socio-personal impact. This is followed by 21.54 per cent with high and 20.00 per cent with low socio-personal impact. About 61.54 per cent of respondents had an increase in knowledge on harvest and post-harvest related aspect and 38.46 per cent of respondents had no change in knowledge on harvest and post-harvest related aspects. Slightly higher than three-fifths (61.54%) of the respondents acquired an improved skill in identifying appropriate planting material and this is followed by the skill in using coconut climber (56.15%), skill in fertilizer application (54.62%), skill on primary processing of coconut into value added products (52.31%), neera extraction skill (51.53%). Majority (90.77%) of the respondents had an increased contact with other CPS members and a meagre (9.23%) per cent of respondents opined that they had no change in their contact with other CPS members.

Keywords: Coconut, coconut producer organisations, impact, coconut producer society

Introduction

Cocos nucifera, eulogized as the 'Kalpavriksha' meaning the tree of the heaven is a principal cash crop that supports millions of farmers. It belongs to the family Arecaceae and belonged to Malesia, which is a bio geographical region comprising of Indonesia, Australia, New Guinea, South East Asia and several Pacific island groups (Ahuja *et al.*, 2014) ^[1]. The secondary origin of coconut was identified as the Indian subcontinent and South Asia (Randhawa, 1980) ^[2]. The coconut tree plays an important part of life especially in coastal zones in tropical regions of all the continents of the world for of its heavy productivity. (Chopade *et al.* 2019) ^[5] The benefits of using each and every parts of coconut tree from its leaves to roots have been realized by the people throughout the world. The demands of coconut and its products are in increasing trend in modern life style. Considering this, India has wide scope in research and development of coconut palm, its products and by-products so as to utilize the possibilities of coconut palm to improve the national economy and employment generation of the rural people of our country. Coconut Producer Organisations (CPO's) are a farmer co-operative, formed through the lively institutional aid and monitoring by the Coconut Development Board. It is a three level structure comprising of Coconut Producer Societies, Coconut Producer Federation and Coconut Producer Company and this assist in uniting the unorganised coconut sector in the country. The coconut producer societies are the small scale farmer producer organisations and comprising of 40-100 coconut farmers with a total minimum of 4000-5000 palms in a contiguous area. The members of coconut producer society have to contribute equity capital and the CPS undertakes interest for improving productivity, cost minimisation, collective marketing, and processing. The CPS serves as the basic unit of FPO framework in the coconut sector which helps in the socio-monetary upliftment of the coconut farmers. Coconut Producers Federation (CPF) is formed by combining 8-10 CPS. A CPF would have around 1,00,000 palms under it.

CPF is also registered as a charitable society and further it is registered with the CDB. A Coconut Producers Company (CPC) is an association of 8-10 CPFs. Around 10,00,000 yielding palms are present under one CPF. This company would be registered under section 581B of Indian Companies Act of 1956. The farmers are wholly and fully owning the producer company. The CPS enables the farmers to practice scientific farming practices in coconut cultivation and it provides opportunity for the farmers to get acquainted with new technologies in production, plant protection, processing and marketing and to reduce cost of cultivation through group activities. Thus the coconut producer societies will ultimately benefit the coconut farmers and helps in improving their overall well-being. With this background, the objective selected for the study was to assess the impact of Coconut Producer Society as perceived by the respondents.

Materials and Methods

Thiruvananthapuram district was purposively selected and from the 11 blocks of the district, 3 blocks specifically Kilimanoor, Perumkadavila and Athiannoor have been purposively selected. A sample size of 130 respondents were selected primarily based on proportionate random sampling from each panchayat from the chosen blocks. Fourteen independent variables and impact of coconut producer society as dependent variable were selected for the study. The data were collected using a pre-tested interview schedule and collected data were analysed.

Results and Discussion

Socio-personal impact

In order to thoroughly comprehend the social and personal characteristics of the sample respondents from the CPS, socio-personal impact analysis was employed. To understand the socio-personal impact, data were collected and presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to their socio-personal impact (n=130)

S. No	Category	Number	Per cent
1.	Low	26	20.00
2.	Medium	76	58.46
3.	High	28	21.54
Total		130	100.00

From Table 1, it is clear that more than half (58.46%) of the sample CPS members were having medium level of socio personal impact. Further 21.54 per cent of the members of CPS had high socio-personal impact and 20.00 per cent had low socio-personal impact. After getting memberships from the CPS, trainings and meetings were organized by the Coconut Development Board and this aided the farmers to improve their knowledge, skill and communication aspects. This could be the promising reason for medium to high level socio-personal impact. The findings derives support from the findings of Krishna Priya.

Aspects of Socio-personal impact

The socio-personal impact was studied using three aspects

namely improvement in knowledge, skill development and communication aspects.

Improvement in Knowledge

The basic idea of a farmer organisation is to improve the access of farmers to knowledge and modern technologies. This helps the farmers in improving their crop productivities and their overall status. Data were collected on improvement in knowledge of the respondents and are furnished in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents based on change in their improvement in knowledge (n=130)

S. No	Particulars	Increased		No change	
		No	%	No	%
i.	Planting season	39	30.00	91	70.00
ii.	Coconut varieties	73	56.15	57	43.85
iii.	Mother palm selection	62	47.69	68	52.31
iv.	Nursery management	54	41.53	76	58.47
v.	Cultivation practices	78	60.00	52	40.00
vi.	Implements for coconut cultivation	77	59.23	53	40.77
vii.	Irrigation management	29	22.31	101	77.69
viii.	Nutrient management	62	47.69	68	52.31
ix.	Pest and disease management	50	38.46	80	61.54
x.	Weed management	23	17.69	107	82.31
xi.	Harvest and postharvest related	80	61.54	50	38.46
xii.	Coconut processing and value addition	78	60.00	52	40.00
xiii.	Market related information	37	28.46	93	71.54

From Table 2 it is observed that about 61.54 per cent of respondents had an increase in knowledge on harvest and post-harvest related aspect and 38.46 per cent of respondents had no change in knowledge on harvest and post-harvest related aspects. An equalising proportion of the respondents had an increase in knowledge on cultivation practices (60.00%) and on coconut processing and value addition (60.00%). It was also noted that 59.23 per cent of respondents had an increase in knowledge on the implements for coconut cultivation whereas 40.77 per cent had no change in their knowledge on the implements used for coconut cultivation. The possible reason for this might be that the coconut producer society members had undergone trainings on these aspects and this enabled them to gain an increase in their knowledge. Further no change in knowledge was observed largely on weed management (22.31%), irrigation management (22.31%), market related information (28.46%), planting season (30.00%) pest and disease management (38.46%), nursery management (41.53%), mother palm selection (47.69%) and nutrient management (47.69%).

Skill Development

Skill development has an utmost importance in the field of agriculture. For making farming a productive and profitable venture, skill development plays a crucial role. Farmers organisations like coconut producer societies serves as a platform for developing the skill of farmers. Data were collected on skill development from the respondents and are furnished in Table 3.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents based on their change in skill development (n =130)

S. No	Particulars	Increased		No change	
		No	%	No	%
i.	Identification of appropriate planting material	80	61.54	50	38.46
ii.	Coconut nursery management	50	38.46	80	61.54
iii.	Hybridization techniques	10	7.69	120	92.31
iv.	Skill in identifying disease	48	36.92	82	63.08
v.	Skill in identifying pests	49	37.69	81	62.31
vi.	Procedure for fertilizer application	71	54.62	59	45.38
vii.	Coconut climbing	7	5.38	123	94.62
viii.	Use of coconut climber	73	56.15	57	43.85
ix.	Use of implements	13	10.00	117	90.00
x.	Mixed or inter or multiple cropping	44	33.84	86	66.15
xi.	Extraction of Neera	67	51.54	63	48.46
xii.	Primary processing of coconut into value added products	68	52.31	62	47.69

From Table 3, it is observed that slightly higher than three-fifths (61.54%) of the respondents acquired an improved skill in identifying appropriate planting material and this is followed by the skill in using coconut climber (56.15%), skill in fertilizer application (54.62%), skill on primary processing of coconut into value added products (52.31%), neera extraction skill (51.53%). This might be because the CDB had organized several skill training programmes for coconut producer organisations like training on neera extraction which helped the respondents for acquiring different skills on coconut cultivation and value addition.

It is also evident that majority of the respondents predominantly had no changes in their skill development on coconut climbing (94.62%), hybridization techniques (92.31%) and use of implements (90.00%). About 66.15 per cent of respondents had no change in mixed/ inter/ multiple cropping and 33.84 per cent had an increase in skill on

mixed /inter /multiple cropping. Further 61.54 per cent had no change in their skill on coconut nursery management and 38.46 per cent of respondents had opined an improvement in skill on coconut nursery management. It is also noted that 63.08 per cent had no change in skill on identifying diseases and 62.31 per cent of respondents had no change in skill on identifying pests. The reason for this might be the shift in focus of farmers to other crops like rubber and hence they are not taking much care on coconut trees.

Communication Aspects

Communication is an effective tool which helps the farmers in solving their crop related problems and also it helps to keep them updated with the modern technologies. Data were collected on communication aspects and are discussed in Table 4.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents based on their change in communication aspects (n=130)

S. No	Particulars	Increased		No change	
		No	%	No	%
i.	Contact with other CPS members	118	90.77	12	9.23
ii.	Contact with CDB	65	50.00	65	50.00
iii.	Contact with other line departments	35	26.92	95	73.08
iv.	Information seeking	93	71.54	37	28.46
v.	Information sharing	90	69.23	40	30.77
vi.	Communication skills	46	35.38	84	64.62

From Table 4, it is perceived that majority (90.77%) of the respondents had an increased contact with other CPS members and a meagre (9.23%) per cent of respondents opined that they had no change in their contact with other CPS members. This might be because the CPS served as a platform for increasing their communication with other coconut cultivators through meetings and trainings and the coconut cultivators contacted other farmers for getting immediate help in protection, processing and marketing of coconuts. It is also apparent that less than three-fourths (71.54%) of the respondents had an increase in their information seekness and 28.46 per cent of respondents opined that there was no change associated with information seekness. It is clear that 69.23 per cent of respondents had an increase in information sharing and 30.77 had no change in sharing the information to other CPS members on coconut cultivation. Exactly half (50.00%) of the respondents had increased their contact with Coconut Development Board.

It is also observed that 64.62 per cent of respondents had no change in their communication skills and 35.38 per cent of

respondents had an increase in their communication skills. Further less than three-fourths (73.08%) of the respondents had no change in their contact with other line departments and 26.92 per cent opined an increase in contact with other line departments.

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