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### A study on the socio-economic status of fig growers in major fig-growing areas of Maharashtra

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#### Abstract

The present study was undertaken with the main objective to “understanding the socio-economic conditions of Fig growers in major fig-producing districts of Maharashtra”. The study was conducted in Pune district of western region and Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar district of Marathwada region of Maharashtra. 300 fig growers were selected by using multi stage sampling techniques. Ex-post Facto research region was used for conducting the study. The data were collected through the personal interview. The data collected was analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. From research revealed that, majority (58.00%) of the respondents belonged to “middle age” group, (39.33 per cent) “secondary level” of education, (48.67 per cent) “medium size of family”, (52.33%) “Medium” category of experience in fig cultivation, (58.67%) “Medium” level of social participation category. (59.33%) “Medium income category” of annual income, (44.00%) possessed “Small” land holding, (58.67 per cent) and (27.33%) “Small” area under fig cultivation, (59.34%) “Medium” level extension contact, (55.34%) “Medium” level of mass media exposure, (60.00%) “Medium” level of economic motivation, (62.00%) “Medium” level of risk orientation and (70.00%) “Medium” scientific orientation.

**Keywords:** Profile, socio-economic status, fig growers, Maharashtra

#### Introduction

Agriculture plays a crucial role in sustaining rural livelihoods in India, with horticulture emerging as a key subsector for income enhancement and diversification. Among fruit crops, fig (*Ficus carica* L.) has gained increasing importance due to its high economic returns, nutritional value, and adaptability to semi-arid climatic conditions. Maharashtra is one of the leading fig-producing states in India, with districts like Pune and Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (formerly Aurangabad) contributing significantly to its cultivation.

Pune district is well known for its organized fig orchards, better irrigation infrastructure, and higher adoption of improved cultivation practices. In contrast, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar district, characterized by relatively drier agro-climatic conditions, has witnessed gradual expansion in fig cultivation due to its drought tolerance and market potential. Despite these regional advantages, fig growers in both districts face several challenges, including climate variability, water scarcity, pest and disease incidence, price

fluctuations, and limited access to advanced technologies.

The socio-economic characteristics of farmers play a pivotal role in determining their capacity to adopt improved practices, manage risks, and sustain productivity. Variables such as age, education, landholding size, farming experience, income, access to irrigation, credit availability, and extension contact significantly influence the decision-making behavior and overall performance of fig growers.

A comparative understanding of the socio-economic profile of fig growers in Pune and Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar districts is essential to identify regional disparities, constraints, and development needs. Such analysis can help in designing location-specific interventions, strengthening extension services, and promoting sustainable fig cultivation.

Therefore, the present study aims to examine the socio-economic profile of fig growers in these districts and to generate insights for improving their livelihood security and enhancing the overall efficiency of fig-based farming systems.

## Objective

To understand the socio-economic conditions of Fig growers in major fig-producing districts of Maharashtra.

## Materials and Methods

A multistage sampling technique was used for the selection of districts, tahsils, and villages. At the first stage, the leading district from the zone had selected. In the second stage, three tahsils selected from the district. The final stage consisted of selecting four villages from the each selected tahsil. The selection of district on the basis highest area under commercial fig cultivation, tahsils based on maximum number of growers and villages was basis on the maximum area under commercial fig cultivation. Pune and Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar district of Maharashtra state had purposively selected for present study. Because maximum area under fig production, and productivity among the other districts. Furthermore, these districts are located in Maharashtra's western & marathwada region and had administered by MPKV, Rahuri. The list of fig growers obtained from the District Superintendent Agricultural Officer (DSAO), Agricultural Development Officer (ADO), and Regional Fig Research Station Pune. The tahsils having maximum number of fig growers had selected. Accordingly, Purandar tahsil from Pune district and Gangapur tahsils from Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar districts were selected, as these tahsils have a larger area under Fig cultivation tahsils were selected for the present study. A list of all fig-growing villages was prepared for each selected tahsil separately. From the list, only those villages, having maximum area under Fig cultivation, had considered for sampling. Later first four villages were select from each of the three tahsils by random sampling method. Thus, total numbers of twelve villages were selected for the study. The village wise list of the Fig growers for the selected tahsils was prepared. The farmers growing minimum 2 ha. Area of Fig trees on commercial basis has considered respondents for this study. Twenty-Five Fig growers from each selected village had selected randomly. Thus, total 300 respondents had selected for this study. The data were collected through personal interview with the help of interview schedule prepared based on objectives of the study. The collected data were scored, tabulated and analyzed by using frequency, mean, percentage and standard deviation.

## Results and Discussion

### Age

Age denotes the chronologically completed calendar years by the fig growers. Age is one of the important determinants of a personal behaviour. It is the basic character of an individual linked up with maturity. The information was collected regarding the age of the fig growers and they were then grouped into three categories based on mean  $\pm$  standard deviation. The findings are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Distribution of the Fig growers according to their age

| Sr.           | Category (score)      | Respondents (n=300) |            |
|---------------|-----------------------|---------------------|------------|
|               |                       | Frequency           | Percentage |
| 1.            | Young (Up to 35)      | 40                  | 13.34      |
| 2.            | Middle Age (36 to 55) | 174                 | 58.00      |
| 3.            | Old (56 & above)      | 86                  | 28.66      |
| Total         |                       | 300                 | 100.00     |
| Mean: 45 Yrs. |                       | SD.: 10             |            |

It is observed from Table 1 that majority (58.00 per cent) of the fig growers belonged to 'middle age' group, followed by 'old age' (28.66 per cent) and rest 13.34 per cent of the fig growers were in 'young age' categories. The average age of the fig growers was 45 years.

The findings from Table 1 indicated that majority of the fig growers belonged to middle age group. This might be due to fig cultivation is largely practiced by economically active individuals who possess sufficient farming experience and managerial ability. Orchard crops such as fig require continuous management, technical knowledge and financial investment, which are generally undertaken by fig growers in their middle age. Middle-aged fig growers also tend to have better exposure to extension services and agricultural information compared to older farmers, while possessing greater decision-making ability and risk-bearing capacity than younger fig growers. The present findings are similar to the findings of Manjuntha (2016), Romade (2016) and Kakde (2018) [8], Karangami (2021) [9]. Moreover, dissimilar to Kalamkar (2022) [2].

### Education

Formal education improves the problem-solving capacities of an individual. It helps to broaden the viewpoint of a person and is important in determining his attitude towards the development. The fig growers were classified into three categories as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Distribution of the fig growers according to their level of education

| Sr.   | Education levels                                         | Respondents (n=300) |            |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------|
|       |                                                          | Frequency           | Percentage |
| 1.    | Illiterate (No education)                                | 46                  | 15.34      |
| 2.    | Primary (Up to 4 <sup>th</sup> )                         | 86                  | 28.66      |
| 3.    | Secondary (5 <sup>th</sup> to 10 <sup>th</sup> )         | 120                 | 39.33      |
| 4.    | Higher Secondary (11 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> ) | 28                  | 10.00      |
| 5.    | Graduation (Degree & above)                              | 20                  | 6.67       |
| Total |                                                          | 300                 | 100.00     |

It can be seen from Table 2 that majority (39.33 per cent) of the fig growers were educated up to secondary school, followed by the respondents educated up to primary school (28.66 per cent). About 15.34 per cent of the fig growers were illiterates. The 10.00 per cent of the fig growers were educated up to higher secondary school. Very few i.e., 6.67 per cent of the fig growers were graduates.

Thus, majority (84.00 per cent) of the fig growers were educated. This could be due to an education enhances farmers' ability to acquire information, understand extension messages and adopt improved agricultural technologies. Educated fig growers are also more capable of accessing weather information and implementing climate-resilient agricultural practices. The predominance of fig growers with secondary education indicates that most respondents possess basic literacy, which enables them to understand improved cultivation practices and climate advisories. The present findings are similar to the findings of Manjuntha (2016), Patil (2017) [12] and Bari (2020) [6], Patil (2021), and Kalamkar (2022) [2]. Dissimilar to Shankara (2019) [3].

### Family size

Family size refers to the total number of members consisting

of men, women and children live together in a family of fig growers. The family size of the fig growers as a single unit, affects the thoughts and actions of the individual fig growers in taking decision about avoiding climate change effects on the farm. Generally, the large family finds it more difficult to arrive at a decision when compared to small sized families. The data in this regard are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Distribution of the fig growers according to their family size

| Sr.                     | Category (members) | Respondents (n=300) |            |
|-------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------|
|                         |                    | Frequency           | Percentage |
| 1.                      | Small (Up to 3)    | 114                 | 38.00      |
| 2.                      | Medium (4 to 8)    | 146                 | 48.67      |
| 3.                      | Big (9 and above)  | 40                  | 13.33      |
| Total                   |                    | 300                 | 100.00     |
| Mean= 6 members S.D.= 7 |                    |                     |            |

It is evident from the data showed in Table 3 that majority (48.67 per cent) of the fig growers belonged to 'medium' family size; followed by 38.00 per cent and 13.33 per cent of the 'small' and 'big' family size, respectively.

The most of the fig growers were having medium to small family size. It might be because medium-sized families often provide sufficient family labour for carrying out various agricultural operations such as pruning, irrigation management, harvesting, and marketing. Availability of family labour also reduces dependence on hired labour and helps fig growers manage orchard crops more efficiently.

The findings are quite similar to the findings of Manjuntha (2016), Kolgane (2019), Adha *et al.* (2021) and Kalamkar (2022) [2]. And dissimilar to Shankara (2019) [3].

### Farming Experience

Farming experience denotes the number of years the fig growers were actively engaged and involved in farming activity at the time of data collection, was taken into consideration in round years. The information regarding the experience of fig growers were collected, tabulated, and

analyzed. Data in this connection are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4:** Distribution of the fig growers according to their experience in fig cultivation

| Sr. No.              | Experience in cultivation fig | Respondents (n=300) |            |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|------------|
|                      |                               | Frequency           | Percentage |
| 1.                   | Low (up to 9)                 | 54                  | 18.00      |
| 2.                   | Medium (10 to 16)             | 157                 | 52.33      |
| 3.                   | High (17 & above)             | 89                  | 29.67      |
| Total                |                               | 300                 | 100.00     |
| Mean:13 years S.D: 4 |                               |                     |            |

It is revealed from Table 4 that majority (52.33 per cent) of the fig growers belonged to 'medium' category of experience in fig cultivation, followed by 18.00 per cent and 29.67 per cent of the fig growers who belonged to 'low' and 'high' category of farming experience, respectively. The majority of the fig growers had medium category of farming experience.

From the above findings, it may be concluded that slightly more than half i.e., 52.33 per cent of the fig growers had medium farming experience, which might be due to fig growers with greater farming experience generally possess better knowledge of orchard management practices such as irrigation scheduling, pest and disease management and adaptation to climatic fluctuations. The finding of the study was similar with those reported by Vishalakshi (2016), Romade (2016), and Bari (2020) [6].

### Social participation

Social participation refers to the degree of participation of fig growers in the occasions of the formal and informal organizations simply as a member or as an office bearer. Social participation brings an individual in close connection with other members of the social organization. This can provide an instance to discuss ideas, acquaintance, and experiences. Data in this connection are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5:** Distribution of the fig growers according to their social participation

| Sr. No.          | Social Participation (score)    | Respondents (n=300) |            |
|------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|------------|
|                  |                                 | Frequency           | Percentage |
| 1.               | Low participation (up to 5)     | 74                  | 24.67      |
| 2.               | Medium participation (6 to 11)  | 176                 | 58.67      |
| 3.               | High participation (12 & above) | 50                  | 16.66      |
| Total            |                                 | 300                 | 100.00     |
| Mean: 7.1 S.D: 2 |                                 |                     |            |

It is revealed from Table 5 that majority (58.67 per cent) of the fig growers 'medium' category of social participation, followed by 24.67 per cent & 16.66 per cent of the fig growers had 'low' & 'high' category of the fig growers social participation, respectively.

The reason for above trend might be the social organization exists in rural area and provides valuable support to community member. Participation in such organizations also

facilitates knowledge sharing among fig growers and enhances collective decision-making related to crop management, irrigation practices and marketing activities. Fig growers with higher social participation generally develop stronger social networks, which contribute to improved adaptive capacity towards climate variability. The finding of the present study is in line with the findings of Mundhe *et al.* (2019) and Patil (2021) [12].

**Table 5.1:** Distribution of fig growers according to their social participation

| Sl. no. | Social Organizations                      | Members        | Office bearer | Frequency of Use (n=300) |                |               |
|---------|-------------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------------------|----------------|---------------|
|         |                                           |                |               | Regular                  | Occasional     | Never         |
| 1.      | Gram panchayat                            | 12<br>(4.00)   | 5<br>(1.67)   | 9<br>(3.00)              | 288<br>(96.00) | 3<br>(1.00)   |
| 2.      | Zilla Parishad                            | 2<br>(0.67)    | -             | 1<br>(0.33)              | 298<br>(99.33) | 1<br>(0.33)   |
| 3.      | Panchayat Samiti                          | 1<br>(0.33)    | -             | 1<br>(0.33)              | 205<br>(68.33) | 94<br>(31.33) |
| 4.      | Dairy Co-operative Society                | 108<br>(36.00) | 21<br>(7.00)  | 69<br>(23.00)            | 201<br>(67.00) | 30<br>(10.00) |
| 5.      | Primary Agricultural Co-operative Society | 76<br>(25.33)  | -             | 54<br>(18.00)            | 264<br>(88.00) | 18<br>(6.00)  |
| 6.      | Farmer Producer Organization              | 32<br>(10.67)  | 2<br>(0.67)   | 24<br>(8.00)             | 268<br>(89.33) | 8<br>(2.67)   |
| 7.      | Anjeer fruit growers association          | 26<br>(8.67)   | 13<br>(4.33)  | 17<br>(5.67)             | 275<br>(91.67) | 7<br>(2.33)   |
| 8.      | Self Help Groups                          | 78<br>(26.00)  | 7<br>(2.33)   | 63<br>(21.00)            | 221<br>(73.67) | 13<br>(4.33)  |
| 9.      | Fig Growers Groups                        | 34<br>(11.33)  | 2<br>(0.67)   | 21<br>(7.00)             | 266<br>(88.67) | 13<br>(4.33)  |
| 10      | Bhajani Mandal                            | 27<br>(9.00)   | 1<br>(0.33)   | 25<br>(8.33)             | 170<br>(56.67) | 5<br>(1.67)   |

The findings indicate that although fig growers are associated with different social organizations, their participation is mostly occasional in nature. However, participation in such organizations helps in sharing of information, improving access to inputs and services, and strengthening collective decision-making. This may contribute to better adaptation of fig growers towards climate variability. The findings are consistent with Romade (2016) and Musani (2021) <sup>[10]</sup>.

### Annual income

Fig growers with sound economic conditions can purchase necessary agricultural inputs, whatever they require. This situation ultimately results in higher access perceived impact by the farmers. Keeping this in view, the annual income of the fig growers was studied. Annual income refers to the total annual earning of family members through all the sources. The respondents were grouped in to three classes. The data with regard to annual income of respondents are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6:** Distribution of the fig growers according to their annual income

| Sr. No.                         | Annual income                  | Respondents (n=300) |            |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|------------|
|                                 |                                | Frequency           | Percentage |
| 1.                              | Low (Up to ₹2,50,000)          | 46                  | 15.33      |
| 2.                              | Medium (₹250,000 to ₹5,00,000) | 178                 | 59.33      |
| 3.                              | High (₹5,00,000 and above)     | 76                  | 25.34      |
| Total                           |                                | 300                 | 100.00     |
| Mean: ₹ 3,5,000 S.D: ₹ 1,45,000 |                                |                     |            |

The data regarding annual income from Table 6 indicate that more than half (59.33 per cent) of the fig growers were 'medium income category' of annual income, followed by 25.34 per cent of the fig growers were 'high income category' of annual income and 15.33 per cent of the fig growers were 'low income category' annual income respectively. The majority of responders had medium-sized land holdings, which may be the most likely explanation for

this.

It is concluded from these findings that, maximum fig growers had medium category of annual income due to majority of them were having small and semi-medium land holdings. The most likely reason might be, the fig cultivation, being a high-value horticultural crop, provides relatively better economic returns compared to many traditional field crops. The findings of the present study are in line with the findings of Galande (2014), Patil (2017) <sup>[12]</sup>, and Kakde (2018) <sup>[8]</sup>.

### Land Holding

Land holding means the number of hectares of land owned by the dryland farmer and his family as a whole. Here, size of the land holding was measured in terms of ha of the land owned and worked by the farmers. The data relating to the land holding of the fig growers is presented in Table 7.

**Table 7:** Distribution of the fig growers according to their size of land holding

| Sr. No. | Size of land holding (ha)   | Respondents (n=300) |            |
|---------|-----------------------------|---------------------|------------|
|         |                             | Frequency           | Percentage |
| 1.      | Marginal (up to 1.00)       | 104                 | 34.67      |
| 2.      | Small (1.01 to 2.00)        | 132                 | 44.00      |
| 3.      | Semi- medium (2.01 to 4.00) | 36                  | 12.00      |
| 4.      | Medium (4.01 to 10.00)      | 20                  | 6.67       |
| 5.      | Big (10.00)                 | 8                   | 2.66       |
| Total   |                             | 300                 | 100        |

A perusal of data displayed in Table 7 clearly indicates that, 44.00 per cent of fig growers possessed 'small' land holding, followed by 'marginal fig growers (34.67 per cent), 12.00 per cent of fig growers had 'semi-medium' land holding and 6.67 per cent of fig growers had 'medium' land holding. Only 2.66 per cent of fig growers had 'big' land holding. This study publicized that most of the fig growers had small land holding.

It can be concluded that the sub division and fragmentation of the farmland from one generation to another generation is

the main cause for declining the size of land holding. Small fig growers often prefer high-value horticultural crops such as fig in order to maximize returns from limited land areas. Landholding size also influences farmers' capacity to invest in irrigation infrastructure, orchard management practices and improved cultivation technologies. Fig growers with larger landholdings generally possess greater economic resources and better opportunities for crop diversification. The findings of the present study are in line with the findings of Kolgane.

### Area under fig cultivation

It is the number of hectares of land under fig cultivation that a fig grower holds and cultivates. The data with regard to Area under fig cultivation of respondents are presented in Table 8.

**Table 8:** Distribution of the fig growers according to area under fig cultivation

| Sr. No.                    | Area under fig cultivation (Ha) | Respondents (n=300) |            |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|------------|
|                            |                                 | Frequency           | Percentage |
| 1.                         | Small (Up to 2.00)              | 176                 | 58.67      |
| 2.                         | Medium (2.01 to 4.00)           | 82                  | 27.33      |
| 3.                         | Large (4.01 and above)          | 42                  | 14.00      |
| Total                      |                                 | 300                 | 100.00     |
| Mean= 2.11 ha S.D.=1.45 ha |                                 |                     |            |

According to Table 8 showed that slightly more than half (58.67 per cent) and 27.33 per cent of fig growers had small and medium area under fig cultivation, respectively followed by only 14.00 per cent had large area under fig cultivation. It can be concluded that the majority of fig growers had small area under fig cultivation. Majority of the fig growers had small and medium size of land holding. The possible explanation could be initially there is high investment & same time more risk involved at the initial stage i.e orchard establishment, irrigation infrastructure and long-term crop management. Fig growers often begin fig cultivation on smaller areas and gradually expand orchard size as they gain experience and financial stability. Small orchard sizes also enable fig growers to diversify their cropping systems and reduce production risks associated with climatic variability. The results were more or less in conformity with those reported by Patil (2021) <sup>[12]</sup>.

### Extension contact

It denotes the frequency of contact of the fig growers with diverse extension agencies such as Agricultural Assistant, Circle/Taluka Agricultural Officer, Extension Officer, Scientist etc. for acquirement of the information. The data in this regard were collected and are presented in Table 9.

**Table 9:** Distribution of the fig growers according to their extension contact

| Sr. No.     | Extension contact (Scores) | Respondents (n=300) |            |
|-------------|----------------------------|---------------------|------------|
|             |                            | Frequency           | Percentage |
| 1.          | Low (Up to 7)              | 88                  | 29.33      |
| 2.          | Medium (8 to 10)           | 178                 | 59.34      |
| 3.          | High (11 and above)        | 134                 | 11.33      |
| Total       |                            | 300                 | 100        |
| Mean = 8.90 |                            | S.D. = 2.17         |            |

The findings in Table 9 indicated that, more than half (59.34 per cent) of the fig growers had 'medium' level extension contact, followed by 29.33 per cent had 'low' level extension contact and 11.33 per cent of the fig growers had 'high' level extension contact, respectively. From this, it can be concluded that most of the fig growers had medium level of extension contact. Regular interaction

with agricultural officers, KVK scientists and extension agencies enhances farmers' knowledge regarding improved orchard management, pest control measures, irrigation practices and climate adaptation strategies. This finding of present study is supported by Patel (2010), Kakde (2018) <sup>[8]</sup> and Islam *et al.* (2019).

**Table 9.1:** Distribution of fig growers according to their extension contact

| Sl. No. | Extension agencies                                         | Frequency of contact |             |             |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|-------------|
|         |                                                            | Regular              | Occasional  | Never       |
| 1.      | Agricultural Assistant                                     | 98 (32.66)           | 144 (48.00) | 58 (19.34)  |
| 2.      | Circle Agricultural Officer                                | 54 (18.00)           | 134 (44.66) | 112 (37.34) |
| 3.      | Taluka Agricultural Officer                                | 18 (6.00)            | 106 (35.34) | 176 (58.66) |
| 4.      | Agricultural Extension Officer                             | -                    | 78 (26.00)  | 222 (74.00) |
| 5.      | Agricultural University Scientist                          | 2 (0.67)             | 38 (12.66)  | 260 (86.67) |
| 6.      | KVK (SMS)                                                  | 14 (4.66)            | 128 (42.67) | 158 (52.67) |
| 7.      | MPKV Scientist (Horticulture AICRP on Fig & Custard apple) | 24 (8.00)            | 158 (52.66) | 118 (39.34) |
| 8.      | Private Agencies (input dealers/ consultants)              | 36 (12.00)           | 170 (56.66) | 94 (31.34)  |

Fig growers had good extension contacts, the possible reason might be, they are having many issues while doing farming. That's why they focused to be in contact with extension personals to solve their problems. But there is need to reduce gaps and increase regular contact level. The finding is in line with the findings of Bahiram (2010), Kakde (2018) <sup>[8]</sup> and Maraddi *et al.*

### Mass media exposure

The extent to which the respondents were exposed to various media outlets regarding fig-farming methods, which was determined by tracking how frequently the respondents used the various media outlets. A schedule developed by to gauge how much fig growers featured in the media. The data regarding mass media exposure of the fig growers were

collected and are categorized into three groups as shown in 4.12.

**Table 10:** Distribution of the fig growers according to their mass media exposure

| Sr. No.    | Mass media exposure (Scores) | Respondents (n=300) |            |
|------------|------------------------------|---------------------|------------|
|            |                              | Frequency           | Percentage |
| 1          | Low (Up to 12)               | 92                  | 30.66      |
| 2          | Medium (13 to 20)            | 166                 | 55.34      |
| 3          | High (21 and above)          | 42                  | 14.00      |
| Total      |                              | 300                 | 100.00     |
| Mean=16.66 |                              | S.D=3.75            |            |

A perusal of data displayed in Table 10 that the majority (55.34 per cent) of the fig growers had 'medium' level of

mass media exposure, while 30.66 per cent of the fig growers had 'low' level and 14.00 per cent of the fig growers had 'high' level of mass media exposure.

According to the findings, more than three fourth growers had a "medium to high" level of mass media exposure. The fig growers' consumption of mass media emphasizes the critical need for rapid technology acquisition and review. The mainstream media regarded as the most trustworthy source of information. Better education, participation in social organization and sound economic positions this could be reason for the above findings. Exposure to media sources such as television, internet platforms and mobile applications helps fig growers remain informed about agricultural advisories, market trends and weather forecasts. This finding of present study supported by Rishi.

**Table 10.1:** Distribution of the fig growers according to their frequency of use of mass media channels

| Sr. No. | Category                         | Respondents (N=300) |              |              |
|---------|----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|
|         |                                  | Regular             | Occasional   | Never        |
| 1.      | Newspaper                        | 64 (21.34%)         | 96 (32.00%)  | 140 (46.66%) |
| 2.      | Farm magazines                   | 28 (9.34%)          | 72 (24.00%)  | 200 (66.66%) |
| 3.      | Television                       | 172 (57.34%)        | 82 (27.34%)  | 46 (15.32%)  |
| 4.      | Radio/ Community Radio           | 10 (3.34%)          | 58 (19.34%)  | 232 (77.32%) |
| 5.      | Exhibition                       | 30 (10.00%)         | 84 (28.00%)  | 186 (62.00%) |
| 6.      | Internet/YouTube                 | 120 (40.00%)        | 72 (24.00%)  | 108 (36.00%) |
| 7.      | Mobile Apps, WhatsApp, Facebook) | 76 (25.34%)         | 130 (43.34%) | 94 (31.32%)  |
| 8.      | Field day                        | 13 (4.43%)          | 142 (47.33%) | 145 (48.33%) |
| 9.      | Field visit                      | 55 (18.33%)         | 189 (63.00%) | 56 (18.67%)  |

The findings suggest that fig growers predominantly rely on electronic and digital media sources, particularly television and mobile-based platforms, for obtaining agricultural information. In contrast, traditional media such as radio and printed materials are less preferred. The relatively low participation in extension activities such as exhibitions and field days indicates the need for strengthening farmer engagement through these channels. The findings are in conformity with those reported by Khan *et al.* (2010), Romade (2016), and Musani (2021) <sup>[10]</sup>.

### Economic motivation

Economic motivation refers to the relative importance that an individual farmer places on achieving economic gains through farming activities. It reflects the extent to which farmers are oriented towards increasing income, maximizing profit, and adopting economically beneficial practices.

The responses from the fig growers were obtained for each statement based on their level of agreement or disagreement using a five-point continuum ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. The information regarding the economic motivation of the fig growers is presented in Table 11

**Table 11:** Distribution of the fig growers according to their economic motivation

| Sr. No.   | Economic motivation (Scores) | Respondents (n=300) |            |
|-----------|------------------------------|---------------------|------------|
|           |                              | Frequency           | Percentage |
| 1.        | Low (Up to 20)               | 84                  | 28.00      |
| 2.        | Medium (21 to 23)            | 180                 | 60.00      |
| 3.        | High (24 and above)          | 36                  | 12.00      |
| Total     |                              | 300                 | 100.00     |
| Mean = 22 |                              | S.D. = 2            |            |

As regards the economic motivation, it could be observed from Table 11 that more than half (60.00 per cent) of the fig growers had 'medium' level of economic motivation. About 28.00 per cent of the fig growers had 'low' economic motivation and lastly 12.00 per cent of the fig growers had 'high' economic motivation.

Therefore, it can be concluded that majority 72.00 per cent of fig growers had medium to high economic motivation. This may be due to high literacy level and medium scientific orientation of the fig growers. The relatively high economic motivation observed among fig growers may be attributed to the commercial nature of fig cultivation and its potential for higher economic returns compared to traditional crops.

**Table 11.1:** Statement wise distribution of fig growers according to their Economic motivation

| Sr. No. | Statements                                                                                                                    | Response category |              |              |              |             |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
|         |                                                                                                                               | SA                | A            | UD           | DA           | SDA         |
| 1.      | A farmer should work towards higher yields & economic profit of fig                                                           | 90 (30.00%)       | 162 (54.00%) | 30 (10.00%)  | 18 (6.00%)   | -           |
| 2.      | The most successful farmer will make more profit of fig                                                                       | 66 (22.00%)       | 190 (63.34%) | 30 (10.00%)  | 14 (4.66%)   | -           |
| 3.      | A farmer should try any new idea / technology that may earn him more money from fig crop                                      | 46 (15.34%)       | 172 (57.34%) | 56 (18.66%)  | 26 (8.66%)   | -           |
| 4.      | Most profitable farmer is the one who transfer dryland into irrigated land through watershed development practices in fig     | 32 (10.67%)       | 120 (40.00%) | 80 (26.67%)  | 68 (22.66%)  | -           |
| 5.      | A farmer must earn for his living but most important thing in life is the one in which it cannot be defined in economic terms | -                 | 26 (8.67%)   | 56 (18.00%)  | 158 (52.66%) | 62 (20.67%) |
| 6.      | A farmer should grow fig crops to increase monetary profits instead of field crops for home consumption                       | 12 (4.00%)        | 60 (20.00%)  | 102 (34.00%) | 112 (37.34%) | 14 (4.66%)  |

SA- Strongly Agree, A-Agree, UD- Undecided, DA- Disagree, SDA-Strongly Disagree (Figures in parentheses indicate percentages)

Overall, the findings indicate that fig growers possess a moderate to high level of economic motivation, with a clear orientation towards profit maximization, while also balancing traditional and subsistence needs. The findings are in line with those reported by Doijad (1998), Kavad *et al.* (2015), and Pandya and Timbadia (2016) <sup>[11]</sup>.

### Risk Orientation

The risk orientation is degree to which fig growers oriented towards risk & uncertainty in agriculture & has ability to face risk in fig farming. This is the prime attribute in efficient management practices of fig cultivation. The data with regard to risk orientation presented in Table 12

**Table 12:** Distribution of the fig growers according to their risk orientation

| Sr. No.        | Risk orientation (Score) | Respondents (n=300) |            |
|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------|------------|
|                |                          | Frequency           | Percentage |
| 1.             | Low (Up to 16)           | 50                  | 16.67      |
| 2.             | Medium (15 to 25)        | 186                 | 62.00      |
| 3.             | High (26 and above)      | 64                  | 21.33      |
| Total          |                          | 300                 | 100.00     |
| Mean:21 S.D: 5 |                          |                     |            |

It is evident from Table 12 that majority (62.00 per cent) of the fig growers had 'medium' level of risk orientation, followed by 21.33 per cent of the fig growers with 'high' level of risk orientation and rest 16.67 per cent of them were 'low' level of risk orientation respectively.

Thus, it can be conclude that majority of fig growers "medium to high" level of tendency toward encountering risk & uncertainty in fig cultivation. Fig growers in the study area may be attributed to uncertainties associated with climate variability and fluctuating market conditions. Fig growers often prefer to minimize potential losses by adopting improved technologies only after gaining sufficient confidence regarding their performance and profitability.

Mundhe *et al.* support this finding of present study.

### Scientific orientation

The scientific orientation is degree to which Fig growers oriented to the use of scientific methods in decision-making farming. This is the prime attribute in scientific management of fig cultivation. The respondents were categories into three categories shown in Table 13

**Table 13:** Distribution of the fig growers according to their scientific orientation

| Sr. No.           | Scientific orientation (Score) | Respondents (n=300) |            |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|------------|
|                   |                                | Frequency           | Percentage |
| 1                 | Low (Upto 12)                  | 52                  | 17.34      |
| 2                 | Medium (13 to 33)              | 210                 | 70.00      |
| 3                 | High (34 and above)            | 38                  | 12.66      |
| Total             |                                | 300                 | 100.00     |
| Mean: 23 S.D.: 11 |                                |                     |            |

A close observation of Table 13 indicated that more than two-third (70.00 per cent) of the fig growers had 'medium' scientific orientation, followed by 17.34 per cent of the fig growers had 'low' scientific orientation and lastly 12.66 per cent of the fig growers had 'high' scientific orientation.

Therefore, it can be concluded that majority 82.66 per cent of fig growers had medium to high scientific orientation. This may be due to the medium scientific orientation among respondents indicates that most fig growers possess a Moderate level of awareness regarding improved cultivation practices, but they may still rely partially on traditional knowledge and conventional farming methods. Enhancing farmers' scientific orientation through training programmes, demonstrations, exposure visits and extension activities can significantly improve the adoption of improved agricultural technologies and climate-resilient practices. Similar findings were seen with Bahiram, Dalvi and Pandya (2016) <sup>[11]</sup> and Pandya and Timbadia (2016) <sup>[11]</sup>.

**Table 13.1:** Statement wise distribution of fig growers according to their scientific orientation

| Sr. No. | Statements                                                                                                 | Response category |                 |                 |                 |                |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
|         |                                                                                                            | SA                | A               | UD              | DA              | SDA            |
| 1.      | New methods of fig farming give better results to farmer than the old methods                              | 94<br>(31.34%)    | 170<br>(56.66%) | 36<br>(12.00%)  | -               | -              |
| 2.      | Even a farmer having a lot of experience should use new method of fig farming                              | 56<br>(17.33%)    | 178<br>(59.34%) | 66<br>(22.00%)  | -               | -              |
| 3.      | Though it takes time to learn the new method in fig farming it is worthy in fig farming                    | 22<br>(7.34%)     | 172<br>(57.33%) | 106<br>(35.33%) | -               | -              |
|         | The way fig growers fore-fathers practiced still the best way even today                                   | 12<br>(4.00%)     | 48<br>(16.00%)  | 70<br>(23.34%)  | 106<br>(35.33%) | 64<br>(21.33%) |
| 4.      | Traditional method of fig farming has to be changed in order to raise the standard of living of the farmer | 66<br>(22.00%)    | 144<br>(48.00%) | 80<br>(26.66%)  | 10<br>(3.34%)   | -              |
| 5.      | A good farmer experiments with new ideas in fig crop                                                       | 58<br>(17.34%)    | 182<br>(60.66%) | 60<br>(20.00%)  | -               | -              |

SA- Strongly Agree A-Agree UD- Undecided DA- Disagree SDA-Strongly Disagree, (Figures in parentheses indicates the percentage)

Overall, the findings indicate that fig growers possess a favourable orientation towards scientific methods and improved agricultural practices. The findings are in line with those reported by Benal *et al.* (2010), Dalvi and Pandya (2016) <sup>[11]</sup>, and Pandya & Timbadia (2016) <sup>[11]</sup>.

### Conclusion

The study findings indicate that the majority of the Fig

growers were middle- aged with a secondary education and moderate level size of family and farming experience, respectively. Most of the farmers have medium level of annual income with "Small" area under fig cultivation. Fig growers possessed "Small" land holding. They had moderate exposure to social participation and mass media as well as moderate level of economic motivation, scientific orientation, and risk orientation.

However, variations in socio-economic characteristics indicated disparities in resource availability, access to information, and adoption of improved practices. Farmers with better education, larger landholdings, and higher extension contact were observed to have relatively better economic outcomes. On the other hand, limited access to institutional support and modern technologies constrained the progress of some growers.

Overall, the findings suggest that while fig cultivation has strong potential to enhance farmers' socio-economic status, there is a need for targeted interventions, improved extension services, and better access to resources to ensure inclusive and sustainable development of fig growers in the study area.

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