

Factors Influencing Decision Making of Farmers in Farm and Non-Farm Activities*

Agriculture is the largest sector of our country, which provides livelihood to more than 70 per cent of the population and contributes about 40 per cent to the national production. Agriculture progress in India depends on millions of farmers, who must know, understand and act upon the new technology. In rural families too, the decisions are required to be taken in farming as well as in other family activities.

The decision-making process passes through a series of "Ifs and Buts" before finally arriving at a decision. Farmers of today need to be more choosy than ever before about the type of crop they grow, the inputs they use, the market they sell their produce and so on. Farmers have to consider a number of factors before arriving at any decision regarding farm and non-farm activities. Because, the present decision has its roots in the past and reflects upon the future decision. Keeping this in view the present study was undertaken to know the factors influencing decision making of farmers in farm and non-farm activities.

The study was conducted in five villages of Shikaripur taluk in Shimoga district of Karnataka state during 2002. From the selected villages 150 farmers were taken as respondents by proportionate random sampling. The respondents were asked to indicate which of the factors indicated by researcher or any other factor as felt by the respondent influences their decision making in farm and non-farm activities. Based on the response the factors were given ranks on the basis of frequencies.

The findings of the study indicated that labour availability and cost were considered as the factors influencing decision making in farm activities by 54 per cent of the farmers, where as, comparative advantage was considered as

the factor by 41.33 per cent of the respondents, crop requirement by 36 per cent of the respondents, availability and cost of the input by 28.67 per cent of the respondents, Only 15.33 per cent of the respondents considered infrastructure as the factor (Table 1) influencing their decision making in farm activities.

Since machnization has not yet touched the heart of rural areas and also the size of the holding being small, obviously the availability and cost of labour become the most influencing factor in farm decision making. It is the tendency of farmers to seek better results even with the least efforts and cost, Hence comparative advantage is the factor next to labour.

The findings were in partial agreement with the results obtained by Singh and Sinha (1968) and Sadaphal *et al.* (2001).

The findings of table 2 indicated that economic status of the family was considered as the factor influencing decision making in non-farm activities by 55.33 per cent of the respondents followed by the nature of the situation (46 per cent) and cost involved (34 per cent) Only 19.33 per cent considered facilities available as the factor influencing decision-making.

For taking decisions in the area of financial management, marriage and education, farmers had to consider the economic status of the family, as this will have a bearing on the type of investment they make and the image of the family in the eyes of the society. To Farmers also considered nature of the situation in non-farm decision maxing as this will help in searching suitable alternative to find solution to the problems.

The findings were in agreement with the studies of Singh and Sinha (1968) and Chaudhari *et al.* (1998)

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Table 1. Factors influencing decision making of farmers in farm activities

Sl.No.	Factors	Frequency	Per cent	Rank
1	Comparative advantage	62	41.33	II
2	Severity and type of pest and disease	39	26.00	VI
3	Crop requirement	54	36.00	III
4	Availability and cost of inputs	43	28.67	V
5	Labour availability and cost	81	54.00	I
6.	Market price and location	49	32.67	IV
7.	Infrastructure	23	15.33	VII

(multiple responses obtained)

Table 2. Factors influencing decision making of farmers in non farm activities

Sl.No.	Factors	Frequency	Per cent	Rank
1	Nature (Complexity) of the situation	69	46.00	II
2	Economic status of the family	83	55.33	I
3	Tradition, caste, religion etc	57	38.00	III
4	Sources of finance and interest rate	31	20.67	V
5	Cost involved	51	34.00	IV
6	Facilities available	29	19.33	VI

(multiple responses obtained)

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