

## DIFFERENTIAL PROFILE OF FARMERS ALONG THE TECHNOLOGICAL GAP IN SOIL CONSERVATION PRACTICES OF KERALA\*

Several studies indicate that adoption of the integrated soil conservation practices in Kerala is not complete even in the scheme areas where the farmers enjoy the loan and subsidy extended by the soil conservation unit. A study has been conducted during 1982 and 1983 to identify the differential characteristics of farmers belonging to the high, medium and low technological gap categories of farmers of the soil conservation scheme areas in Kerala.

The cultivators who possessed lands in the completed soil conservation scheme areas of the selected districts of Kerala were selected for the study through a multi-stage sampling procedure. Two scheme areas each from Kozhikode, Quilon and Trichur districts were selected at random, having 35 selected respondents per scheme area, thus the total sample size being 210. The three components of the integrated soil conservation practices were taken into consideration for the study.

The farmer respondents were grouped into low, medium and high gap categories with respect to the technological gap in integrated soil conservation practices. The grouping was based on three equal divisions of technological gap scores. Applying the 't' test, the differences between low, medium and high gap categories of farmers were tested to find out the differential characteristics of the three categories with respect to 5 techno-economic, 8 socio-psychological, 6 innovation and 3 communication variables.

Table 1 revealed that there were no significant differences among the low, medium and high gap categories of farmers with regard to their farm size and degree of fragmentation. There were significant differences between the low and medium gap categories with respect to slope of land, cropping intensity and status of land tenancy, whereas the medium and high gap categories were not different in these characteristics.

The three categories differed significantly in their average family education status, social participation, attitude towards soil conservation practices, risk orientation, orientation towards competition, indebtedness, perception of simplicity-complexity, cost of innovation, profitability, physical compatibility, immediacy of return, observability, utilisation of mass media, utilisation of personal cosmopolite sources and utilisation of personal localite sources.

The low gap category was significantly different from the medium gap category regarding their innovation proneness, whereas the medium and high gap categories were alike regarding this character.

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Table 1

Significance of differences in the mean values of characteristics with respect to the low, medium and high gap categories of farmers

Characteristics	't' values		
	Low gap category & medium gap category	Low gap category & high gap category	Medium gap category & high gap category
<i>Techno-economic variables</i>			
Farm size	0.043 NS	0.704 NS	0.659 NS
Slope of land	2.952 *	6.393 **	1.234 NS
Degree of fragmentation	0.867 NS	0.222 NS	1.144 NS
Cropping intensity	8.855 **	6.546 **	0.003 NS
Status of land tenancy	2.049 *	2.238 "	0.316 NS
<i>Socio-psychological variables</i>			
Family education status	4.160 **	8.280 **	4.311 **
Social participation	9.245 **	9.136 **	2.185 *
Attitude towards soil conservation practices	15.989 **	10.747 **	2.301 *
Knowledge about soil conservation practices	10.862 **	11.980 **	4.960 **
Riskorientation	13.333 **	11.881 **	2.463 *
Innovation proneness	13.311 **	11.904 **	1.887 NS
Orientation towards competition	13.304 **	12.975 **	3.178 **
Indebtedness	4.480 **	7.156 **	2.819 *
<i>Innovation variables</i>			
Simplicity-complexity	8.688 **	10.596 **	6.068 **
Cost of innovation	7.552 **	8.492 **	4.435 **
Profitability	7.092 **	11.054 **	5.901 **
Physical compatibility	7.076 **	10.947 **	6.319 **
Immediacy of return	6.198 **	8.355 **	3.050 **
Observability	6.769 **	8.451 **	2.681 **
<i>Communication variables</i>			
Utilisation of mass media	9.702 **	10.150 **	6.535 **
Utilisation of personal cosmopolite sources	10.468 **	11.154 **	5.199 **
Utilisation of personal localite sources	7.596 **	11.544 **	5.808 **

NS= Not significant; \* = Significant at 5 per cent level of probability

\*\* = Significant at 1 per cent level of probability

Twenty two independent variables were examined for testing the differential characteristics between the low gap, medium gap and high gap categories of farmers in the soil conservation scheme areas of Kerala. The three categories differed significantly with respect to 15 variables.

### സംഗ്രഹം

കേരളത്തിലെ മണ്ണുസംരക്ഷണപദ്ധതി പ്രദേശങ്ങളിലെ മണ്ണുസംരക്ഷണ പരിപാടികളിലെ സങ്കേതിക വിഭവവിഭാഗം അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ അവിടങ്ങളിലെ കൃഷിക്കാരുടെ മൂന്നുതരത്തിൽ തിരിച്ചുകൊടുക്കുകയുണ്ടായി. ഇരുപത്തിരണ്ടു സ്വഭാവ ഘടകങ്ങൾ പരിശോധനയ്ക്ക് കൈക്കൊണ്ടു. സാങ്കേതിക വിദ്യ, ഏറ്റെടുക്കലും, ഇടത്തരംമാത്രം വിടവുള്ളവരും, വളരെ കൂടുതൽ സാങ്കേതിക വിദ്യ ഉള്ളവരും തികച്ചും വ്യത്യസ്തരായിരുന്നതും 15 ഘടകങ്ങളിലായിരുന്നു.

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