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Correlates of successful agripreneurship: A study of awardee farmers of Tamil Nadu*

Farmers are getting disillusioned and leaving agriculture as a profession to join measly jobs elsewhere. We have cases of achiever farmers who have become inspirational to others by earning substantially from their lands. Achiever farmers in today's context have been able to withstand ambiguities, cash-in on the available opportunities and excel in comparison to several others who have succumbed to trivialities of farming in changing times. Central and state government institutions, agricultural departments, NGOs and some private organisations recognise these farmers by awarding them for achievement in production level maintenance of quality of the produce or due to strategies adopted by them.

What is it that differentiates awardee farmers from other farmers who think that farming is not remunerative enough? The differences may be due to varied knowledge levels, skills possessed and differences in certain psychological attributes. Something that creates such achiever farmers, like their demarcating characteristics, their modus-operandi, kind of strategies these achiever farmers utilize etc, are some of the intriguing aspects for researchers and policy planners. The present study aimed at analysing the personal, socio-economic and psychological correlates of successful agripreneurship.

A total of thirty award winning agripreneurs from 12 districts of Tamil Nadu constituted the sample for the study conducted in 2010, for which data was collected in 2010. An appropriate interview schedule based on the survey research rules was used to collect data. Personal face-to-face interviews of awardee farmers were conducted by the researcher. Standardised scales for measuring Aspirations (Muthayya, 1971), Credit Orientation (Mishra, 1979), Risk Taking Willingness (Singh, 1972), Innovation Proneness (Moulik, 1965) were used. Aspirations were recorded in terms of education to children, income enhancement and increase in enterprises. For measuring Agripreneurial Success, scale developed earlier by Akhouri (1979) was modified as per the present study requirement. Measuring precisely the success – failure of the diversifiers in their diversified occupations of varying nature is difficult and complex in absence of a standardised scale. Akhouri (1979) developed Entrepreneurial Economic Success Index (EESI) for assessing the success-failure of an entrepreneur. EESI has four economic indicators namely, extent of investment of his own capital to his own capacity to invest, his capability of borrowing or raising the capital, amount of profit per unit investment and proportion of total profit reinvested to develop a composite index. The use of this index warrants very precise economic facts which are difficult for any researcher to get from the rural people as they do not maintain any good record. Moreover, the index suits well for industrial entrepreneurs and not so much for rural occupations which are very diverse in nature. In this study the farmers were asked to score on dimensions of agripreneurial success under economic dimension Gross returns on investment, Re- investment of profit in ventures and net Income (Rs/Annum). Under social dimension perceived degree of satisfaction and opinion leadership. The data was then analysed using SPSS package for calculating frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and correlation.

Most (90%) of the farmers belonged to middle aged group whereby elderly farmers were only 6.7 % to the sample. 73.3 % of the farmers were belonged to Other Backward Classes (OBC) while 13.3 per cent constituted Scheduled Castes (SC). OBCs were the major landowners having familiarity with the farming occupation. 93.3 per cent of population was Hindus while Christians occupied the second place with 6.7 per cent. Most of the (50%) award winners were found to have had education upto high school level and 36.7% respondents were found to be educated upto primary level. Education provides them with knowledge, updated information and skills like innovativeness. Majority (70%) of the awardee farmers (70%) belonged to the family size of 4-6 members and 23.3 % of respondents were having family size of 7-9 persons. This also signifies emergent social changes in rural settings where predominance of joint families has given way to smaller nuclear families.

The award winning farmers' main source of living and income is from the agricultural sectors (86.7 per cent of the respondents). Only 10 per cent of the respondents were found seeking employment during lean season.

Majority of the farmers (56.7 %) had 16-30 years of farming experience while 20 % of the farmers were having more than 30 years farming experience. Farmers with medium land holding dominated the total population of achiever farmers with nearly half of the population (43.3 per cent). 50 percent of the respondents were found to be irrigating their half of the land or 1/4th of total land area. If we also consider 1/3rd of total land area irrigated, 70 % respondents were found to be distributed in these three categories.

Majority of the respondents belonged to lower middle class category, which constituted nearly half of the total population (46.7 per cent) and middle class category (30 per cent) of the population. Regarding Social Participation, majority (73.3 %) of the awardee farmers were found to be an ordinary member or office bearer in the organizations related to their farming work. 40 per cent of the respondents were office bearers while 33.3 % respondents were having membership in some organization. 3.3 % of the respondents were both members in one organization as well as office bearer in some other organizations.

Majority of the farmers were found having moderate level of aspiration (Table 2). 43.3 percent of respondents were possessing low levels of aspirations in terms of giving education to the children, increasing their level of income and their enterprise (farm) growth. 36.7 per cent of the respondents were found to occupy second quartile, scores ranging from 46-49. Only 6.7 per cent of the respondents were having more scores than 54 and occupied last quartile. It may be attributed to the fact that these farmers were already achiever farmers, which must have resulted in their higher satisfaction levels and low future aspirations since they had already succeeded in their endeavours.

Credit behaviour was found to be ranging predominantly from moderate to very good with 66.7 per cent respondents occupying the first three categories. Only 33.3 per cent

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Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to their personal, socio economic characteristics n=30

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age (in years)	Young (up to 25)	1	3.3
	Middle aged(26-50)	27	90.0
	Elderly (51-75)	2	6.7
Caste	Scheduled Castes	4	13.3
	Scheduled Tribes	1	3.3
	Other Backward Classes	22	73.3
	Un Reserved	3	10.0
Religion	Hindu	28	93.3
	Christian	2	6.7
Education	Can read and write	2	6.7
	primary school	11	36.7
	High school	15	50.0
	Higher secondary	1	3.3
	Graduate/ post graduate	1	3.3
Family size	4-6 Persons	21	70.0
	7-9 Persons	7	23.3
	>10 Persons	2	6.7
Occupation	Agriculture	26	86.7
	Industrial	3	10.0
	Service	1	3.3
Experience in farming	6-15 years	7	23.3
	16-30 years	17	56.7
	>30 years	6	20.0
Land holding and nature of land	Small land holding (1.1-2 ha)	3	10.0
	Semi medium (2.1-4 ha)	9	30.0
	Medium land holding (4.1-10 ha)	13	43.3
	Large land holding (>10 ha)	5	16.7
Socio-Economic Status	Lower middle class	14	46.7
	Middle class	9	30.0
	Upper middle class	7	23.3
Social participation	Non Member	7	23.3
	Member	10	33.3
	Office bearer	12	40.0
	Both Member and Office Bearer	1	3.3

Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to their psychological factors n= 30

Psychological Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Aspirations	Quartiles (Score)		
	I (Up to 45)	13	43.3
	II (46-49)	11	36.7
	III (50-54)	4	13.3
	IV (>54)	2	6.7
	Category (Score)		
Credit Orientation	Very good (5)	4	13.3
	Good (4)	11	36.7
	Moderate (3)	5	16.7
	Bad (2)	6	20.0
	Very bad (1)	4	13.3
	Probability of risk		
Risk taking willingnes	No risk	5	16.7
	20 percent risk	10	33.3
	50 percent risk	8	26.7
	80 percent risk	7	23.3
	Category (Score)		
Innovation proneness	Low (1-3)	5	16.7
	Medium (3.1-6.0)	14	46.7
	High (6.1-9.0)	11	36.7

Table 3. Distribution of respondents according to their agripreneurial success

Measures of Agripreneurial Success	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gross Returns on Investment	21-40% of the investment	5	16.7
	41-60% of the investment	4	13.3
	61-80% of the investment	5	16.7
	81-100% of the investment	2	6.7
Re- Investment of profit in ventures	Upto 20%	2	6.7
	21-40%	9	30.0
	40-80%	11	36.7
	81-100%	8	26.7
Net Income (₹)	Upto 30,000	9	30.0
	30,001-60,000	9	30.0
	60,001-1,00,000	10	33.3
	1,00,001 and above	2	6.7
Opinion leadership	None	4	13.3
	Low	11	36.7
	Medium	14	46.7
	High	1	3.3

respondents were assessed as having bad credit orientation as per the scale used. Good credit orientation enabled the respondents farmers to plan effectively their enterprises and achieve success. Fig 1. Regarding risk taking behaviour, 60 per cent of the respondents were found to undertake risk of 20-50 percent probability. It validates the earlier research findings that entrepreneurs are moderate risk takers. Only 23.3 percent of the respondents indulged in high risk taking behaviour (80% risk). Fig 2. The study found that majority (60%) of the farmers were innovative, 36.7 per cent having high level of innovation proneness and 46.7 per cent having medium level of innovation proneness. Only 16.7 per cent of the respondents were found having low innovation proneness. (Fig 3)

Agripreneurial success was the dependent variable in this study. Respondents interviewed were found mostly belonging to the moderate level of income earners from their investment (Table 3). Majority of the farmers belonged to second, fourth and sixth level of category in which they equally occupy 16.7 per cent of the population separately.

Table 3 shows that most of the respondents invested 40-80% of profit in their venture to maintain the average level of income per year. Around one third of the respondents received ₹ 60,001- ₹ 1, 00,000/ annum net income in their ventures. As many as 60 percent had a net income of upto ₹ 60,000. Most of the respondents had low level of opinion leadership quality while 13.3% of the respondents were never

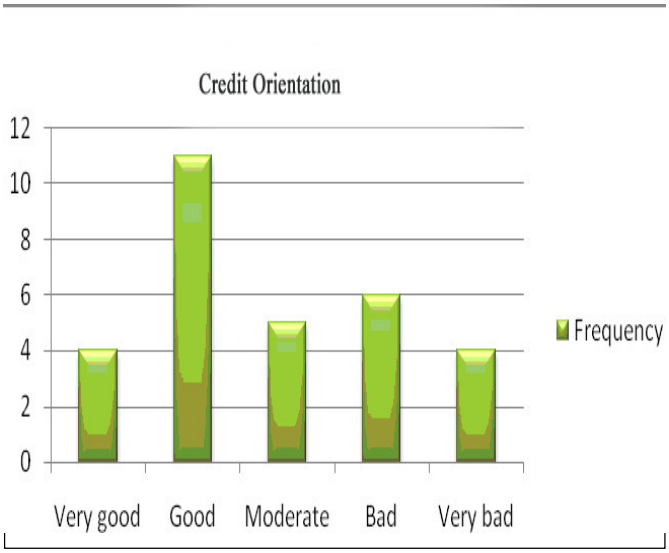

Fig 1. Distribution of respondents according to their credit orientation

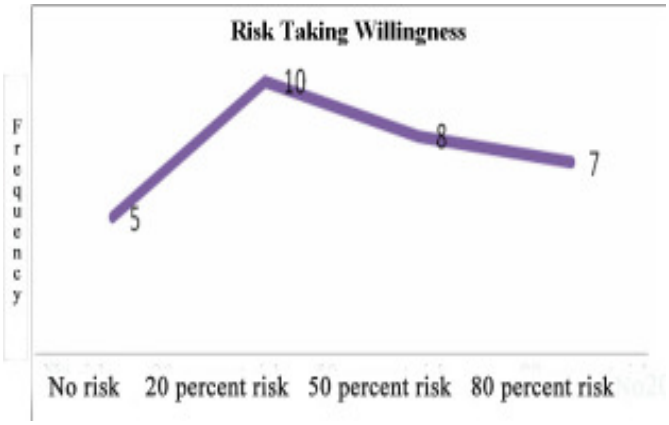

Fig 2. Distribution of respondents according to risk taking willingness

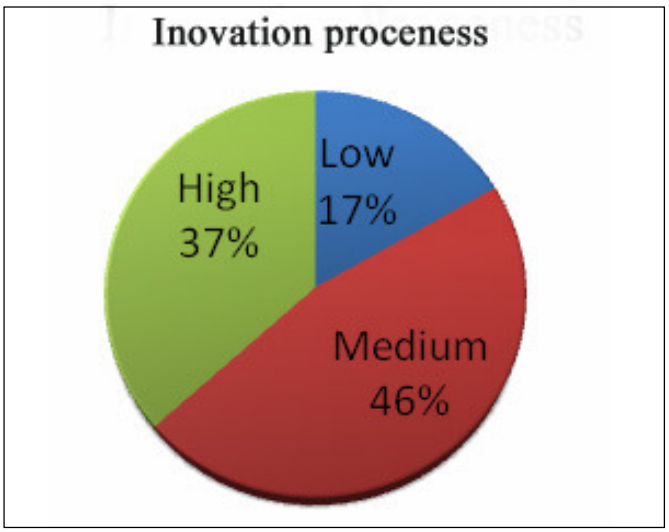

Fig 3. Distribution of respondents according to their innovation proneness

Table 4. Distribution of respondents according to their perceived degree of satisfaction

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Highly dissatisfied	1	3.3
Least satisfied	5	16.7
Moderately satisfied	12	40.0
Highly satisfied	12	40.0
Total	30	100

approached for their opinions. Almost 50% of the respondents were distributed in both categories *viz.,* first, having medium to high opinion leadership quality and secondly, having low to none opinion leadership quality.

In this study**,** most (80%) of the respondents showed either moderate or high level of perceived degree of satisfaction. Only 20% of the respondents were found dissatisfied which strongly support the findings regarding majority having low aspiration levels.

Correlation between agripreneurial success of awardee farmers with their selected personal, socio-economic and psychological variables were studied with the help of Spearman's correlation co-efficient. The results given in the Table 5, show that age of the farmers was positively and non-significantly correlated (0.358) with their agripreneurial success. Caste of awardee farmers is positively and non-significantly correlated (0.142) with their agripreneurial success. This indicates it could not be a significant factor. OBCs owning land have been traditionally engaged in farming which gives them an edge in achieving their goals and success.

Religion of awardee farmers is negatively and non-significantly correlated (-0.016) with their agripreneurial success. It was found to have no role in their agripreneurial success. Results showed that education of the farmers is positively and significantly correlated (0.408**) with their agripreneurial success and showed that education has some role especially from middle high school level, which is evident from the frequency analysis also. Education equips them with knowledge and skills to take their enterprises towards success.

Table 5. Correlation analysis of agripreneurial success with personal, socio-economic and psychological variables.

Variables	Correlation Co-Efficient (r) Agripreneurial success
Personal variables	
Age	0.358
Caste	0.142
Religion	-0.016
Education	0.408*
Family size	0.343
Experience in farming	0.526**
Size of Land holding	0.366*
Irrigation nature of land	0.526**
Socio-Economic variables	
Socio- economic status	-0.129
Social participation	0.474**
Psychological variables	
Aspirations	0.247
Credit orientation	0.592**
Risk taking willingness	1.000**
Innovation proneness	0.510**

Family size of awardee farmers is positively and non-significantly correlated (0.343) with their agripreneurial success. The study showed there is no concrete evidence for relation between these variables. Experience in farming is positively and significantly correlated (0.526**) with their agripreneurial success. This is also evident from the frequency analysis. Experience in farming accumulates knowledge and rich potential to do the work in efficient way. Size of the land holding is positively and significantly (0.386*) correlated with their agripreneurial success. It shows that if size of land holding increases, their adoption behaviour would increase. Nature of land (irrigated or un-irrigated) gave positive and significant relationship (0.408**) with their agripreneurial success and showed that if irrigated land increases, it would lead to more adoption of recent agricultural technologies and farming can be possible in all the seasons. Socio- economic status is negatively and non-significantly (-0.129) related with agripreneurial success, and shows that it does not have much impact of the dependent variable. It implies that farmer from any strata can achieve success if they are determined enough and social or economic class doesn't determine achievement.

Social participation showed positive as well as significant relationship (0.474*) with the agripreneurial success and shows that there is a positive effect of participation of awardee farmers on their success in ventures. Networking is essential prerequisite for success. Aspirations had positive and non-significant relationship (0.247) related with agripreneurial success. It eggs them on to achieve success in their endeavors.Credit orientation of awardee farmers had positively and significantly (0.592**) related with agripreneurial success and credit seeking behaviour of farmers led to adoption of some recent, cost effective technologies to increase their net income through cultivation of more crops with credit to purchase the required inputs to their farming.

Risk taking willingness of awardee farmers is positively and significantly (1.000**) related with their agripreneurial success and showed calculated moderate level of risk taking behaviour is must to adopt profitable technologies to get more net income as compared to others. Innovation proneness of awardee farmers is positively and significantly (0.510**) related with their agripreneurial success and showed that innovative behaviour of testing and adopting new technologies leads to higher profits. Being in tune with the times and adopting recent technologies helps one to increase farm productivity which is translated into huge profits. Economic success paves the way for social recognition in form of awards.

The study attempted to identify correlates of agripreneurial success of award winning farmers of Tamil Nadu. The profile emerging out of the study of these thirty farmers revealed that awardee farmers were middle aged belonged to small families and lower to middle socio-economic class. The majority had 16-30 years of farming experience and were found to be actively participating in social organizations. They possessed moderate to good credit orientation, medium to high innovation proneness and engaged in moderate risk taking. They were also found to be scoring high on various dimensions of agripreneurial success.

Correlation analysis revealed that education, experience in farming, size-nature of landholding, social participation, credit orientation, risk taking willingness and farmers' propensity towards innovation were positively and significantly related to agripreneurial success. Age, caste, family size, socio economic status and aspirations were found to have no impact at all on the success of agripreneurs. Good credit orientation, moderate risk taking willingness and high innovation proneness of awardee farmers led them to achieve agripreneurial success. These are all basic entrepreneurial competencies belonging to human domain of farmers which if inculcated through appropriate training interventions can give rise to entrepreneurial farmers bringing agricultural transformation in the country. It is heartening to note that socio economic status was not related to agripreneurial success. It is hence concluded that through personal grit and hard work a farmer can achieve success if he has the right perspectives on risk taking and innovativeness.

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