



DRY LAND FARMING IN MECHERI PANCHAYAT: AN EXPLORATION OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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ABSTARCT-----

Dry land farming is a vital livelihood strategy for rural communities in Mecheri Panchayat, Tamil Nadu. However, these farmers face numerous socio-economic challenges, including water scarcity, soil degradation, and market fluctuations. Dry lad farmers were selected from Mechri randomly selected, which accounted to 60dry land farming. The filed data collection was carried out were related to agriculture year 2024-2025. Simple percentage and average values were used to describe the socio-economic profile of the selected sample in dry land farmers. This study explores the socio-economic dynamics of dry land farming in Mecheri Panchayat, with a focus on the livelihood strategies, challenges, and coping mechanisms of dry land farmers. Using a mixed-methods approach, this research reveals the complex interplay between social, economic, and environmental factors that shape the lives of dry land farmers. The findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to support dry land farmers, including irrigation infrastructure, agricultural extension seroices, and market linkages. This study contributes to our understanding of the socio-economic realities of dry land farming and informs policy and practice aimed at promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development.

KEYWORD: *Income, Livestock, Fabricator, Harvest, Input revenue, Dry and farmers.*-----

INTRODUCTION

Dry land farming pertains to high-yield; and high-efficient agricultural Production on areas without irrigation and largely depending upon natural rainfall. Through the adoption of different dry land farming technologies. In India, about 65 percent cultivated area is under rain fed agriculture on which production of all the crops depend on the pattern of monsoon. Dry land or rain fed-farming continues to be a key priority area for the Government of India

Currently, rain fed areas contributes nearly 41 percent to the national food. Basket and Support 40 percent of human and 60 percent livestock population (Ramakrishna and venkateshwarlu, 2006). Further the farming community of these areas has poor resource base and is not capable of harvesting the advantages of the improved technologies for improving the productivity of the crops. Constraints like uncertain monsoon, frequent droughts and degraded soils and socio-economic status of the farmers, small land holding, poor infrastructure and credit facilities are factors which unable to invest adequately in crop production of Dry land areas.

Tamil Nadu has about 5.96 per cent of the Nation's population, occupies 4 percent of the land area and has 3 percent of the Nation. The demographic changes, economic Growth and social development assisted by welfare measures would in the coming decades, exertstrong and competing demands on the finite natural resource of the states, such as land, water, raw-materials, etc. In Tamil Nadu, the per capita availability of land is only 0.18 ha while the per capita net sown area is only 0.07 ha. Even though the share of agriculture to be a major source of livelihood for the rural people.

Agriculture still employees about 40 percent of the workforce in the State. As a basic input for agriculture, land occupies a predominant position among all the resources required for a modern economy. Competition between agricultural and nonagricultural sectors for land is intensifying due to the increase pressure on land for food production, housing and industrial expansion. Between 1960-61 and 2009-10 the total cultivated area in Tamil Nadu decreased from 7.32 million ha to 5.57 million ha and the net sown area has decreased from about 6 million ha to



4.90 million ha during the same period. However, this reduction in cropped area has been compensated by the increase in productivity of crops so that higher production as been possible.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chandra Gowda and Jayaramiah (1990) in this article say that found in chothawari watershed of Karnataka that socio-economic status and annual income of the small and marginal farmers have increased to a considerable extent as a result of watershed development programme. Nimje *et al.* (1990) revealed that majority of respondents had medium innovativeness.

Saxena *et al.* (1990) in this article reported that 65.50 per cent farmers were not aware of the latest technologies which were the most important factor for non-adoption. Singh (1990) reported that low average knowledge and slightly favourable attitude of farmers indicated a need to develop proper extension teaching methods to impart useful agricultural knowledge to the farmers.

Ingle and Kude (1991) revealed that proportion of respondents about the improved dryland agricultural technology. Singh (1991) reported that majority of the respondents belonged to middle age group, having low socio-economic status, extension participation and mass media exposure.

Kher (1991) concluded in his study that the most of the formers were unaware about the improved dry land agricultural technology. Singh (1991) reported that majority of the respondents belonged to middle age group, having low socio-economic status, extension participation and mass media exposure.

Sinha *et al.* (1991) in this article say that reported that relatively higher proportion of the respondents (44.29 per cent) was illiterate. Bharad (1996) had stated that lack of awareness in case of vegetative bunds and different drains in saline tract of Vidharbha region.

Kadam *et al.* (2001) found that majority of the beneficiaries had knowledge about the practices 'dividing the fields with small bunds' (82.00 per cent) and 'small earthen bunds' (76.66 per cent). More than two-fifth of the beneficiaries had knowledge about the practices namely, 'stubble and agro waste plucking' (46.00 per cent), 'drains/trenches' (43.33 per cent) and 'intercropping' (42.00 per cent).

Yerpude and Khare (2003) reported that majority of the respondents belonged to middle age group and joint family, illiterate or can read only, had less than 10 members in their family, had medium to big size of land holding, had medium material possession, had farming among with one subsidiary occupation, low to medium in annual income and medium social participation.

Bavalatti and Sundarswamy (1990) found that 67 and 48 per cent of farmers adopted contour cultivation and contour bundina practices respectively. Ingle and Kude (1991) revealed that none of the respondents in Monoli Watershed had adopted contour sowing.

Jahagirdar (1991) studied some growth parameters of Mandi Watershed Development Project in Akola district of Maharashtra and found that adoption of in soil moisture conservation technology and in particular vegetative barriers helped in increased yield per hectare of various crops.

Kharge *et al.* (1998) found that majority of respondents belonged to medium adoption group of dry land package of practices. Khade *et al.* (1998) reported that majority of respondent's belonged to medium adoption group of dry land technology.

METHODOLOGY

Objectives of the research article (a) A study on Socio-Economic conditions of dry land farmer's in the study area. (b) To study on Economic viability of dry land farmer's in the study area. (c) To study awareness of the dry land farmer's in this study area. In this connection scope of study the article design and methods are backbone of any research project. Therefore, the research methodology was designed after reviewing the relevant literature and the suggestions of members of researchers and primary data was collected through questioner. The response of respondents for each question was recorded on questioner. The questioner was done on the farmer's field or at their residence. Salem district in mecheri block was selected purposively selected study area because most of the farmers



depend up on Dry land farmers. Percentage analysis method was used research article and Simple Percentage and average values were used to describe the Socio-economic, economic viability and awareness of dry land farmer's. period of the study relevant field data have been collected from dry land farmers for one crop year. The survey period was reported as normal agriculture year (2024-2025) in this study area.

This study is largely based on primary data are collected in large number of dry land agriculture farmers are cultivated in the Mecheri Block, name of selected villages, P.N.Patti (15) , Mecheri (15) , Chinna Soragai (15) , Chinnakoundanur (15). From each selected village 15 farmers were selected randomly. Thus total 60 farmers were selected as respondents for the purpose of this study area of dry land farmer's. In this connection profile of study area About 50 km from Mecheri wonderful waterfalls is situated in a place called Hogenakkal, which is a Chennai line of Kavery river water from Karnataka to Tamil Nadu, lies in Dharmapuri district. Male Mahadeshwarabetta, Karnataka is a hill temple of Lord Eswaran, which is 68 km from Mecheri, a famous pilgrimage center for people around the town. Mettur Dam Park is another science recreational center close to Mecheri. 10 km from Mecheri a village called Koonandiyyur gets the Kavery river water as a back water from Stanley reservoir is a lovely river side location.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Mecheri Block is situated in Salem district. It has a total of 17 panchayat village. The Total population 25,676 male 53 of the population and female 47 percentage Mecheri has an average literacy rate of 59 per cent, slightly lower than the national average of 59.5 per cent. Male and female literacy 65 per cent. Twelve per cent of the population is under six years of age. The total area under this panchayat was recorded as 1672.96 hectares, out of which 70.43 hectares was irrigated, 1308.07 hectares.

Table – 1 Gender – Wise Classification of the Selected Respondents

S. No	Sex	No of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Male	54	90
2.	Female	6	10
Total		60	100

Sources: Primary Data

The gender-wise classification of selected respondents was examined in the Table 4. 1 table reveals that out of 60 selected respondents nearly 54 of them was male, which accounted to 90 per cent to the total and 6 farmers was female 10 percent. Compared to more number of male was involved in dry land farmers in this area.

Table – 2 Age Composition of the Respondents

S. No	Age	No of Respondents	Percentage
1.	<-30	5	8
2.	31-50	30	50
3.	51-70	23	39
4.	71->	2	3
Total		60	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 4.2 examined the age composition of the selected respondents for this study. Among select 60 farmers who was engaged in dry land farmers 50 per cent (30 farmers) were in the age group of 31 years to 50 years. 23 farmers (39 percent) were in the age group 51 years to 70 years. 5 farmers (8percent) were in the age group less than 30 years, followed by 2 farmers above 3 years.

Table – 3 Community – Wise Classification of the Select Respondents

S.No	Community	No of Respondents	Percentage
1.	MBC	27	45
2.	BC	25	42
3.	SC	8	13
Total		60	100

Source: Primary Data



In the Mecheri Block people belonging to most backward community and schedule caste was regarded as residence of this block and it was presented in Table 4.3 Among the 60 respondents selected for this study the maximum number of respondents was belong to the most backward community, which accounted 45 percent ie., 27 respondents followed by 25 of them from backward community (42 per cent) and nearly 13percent to them hailed from schedule caste community.

Table 4 Education Status of the Respondents

S.No	Education Attainment	No of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Illiterate	27	45
2.	Secondary	25	42
3.	Higher Secondary	8	13
	Total	60	100

Source: Primary Data

Education status of the respondent was presented in Table 4.4.It was evident from table that nearly 27 respondents was observed to be Illiterate which nearly 45 percent total. In case of dry land farmer who have obtained secondary level education was 25 respondents and 8 of them with High secondary. It could be concluded from the below table that majority of the farmers involved in dry land farmers was secondary education.

Table – 5 Total Member of Family Respondents

S. No	Categories	No of Respondents	Percentage
1.	1 -3	15	25
2.	3 -5	34	57
3.	5 -7	5	8
4.	8 – Above	6	10
	Total	60	100

Source: Primary Data

A member of family in selected study area among the selected farmers of this study was examined in Table 4.5. It was observed from the table that 57 percent farmers had an family members of 3.5 years in dry land farmers and 25 percent farmers in 15 respondents in 1 to 3 members of selected study area.

Table – 6 Secondary Source of Income Household Members among the Selected Respondents

S. No	Income	No of Respondents	Percentage
1.	< - 20000	-	-
2.	20000 – 40000	3	5
3.	40000 – 60000	8	13
4.	60000 – 80000	9	15
5.	80000 - >	40	67
	Total	60	100

Source: Primary Data

Dry land farmers animal investment of the household members among the select respondents was studied in Table 4.5. Among respondents was majority of than where in the investment categories of than RS.80,000 above which accounted to 40 farmers that is 15 per cent of the total. 9 farmers acknowledge that they were able to get investment ranging from RS.60,000to 80,000 and 8 farmers groups in RS.40,000 to 80,000 from investment in dry land farmers. This study area most of the farmers was involved in dry land production.

Table – 7Crop of the Respondents

S.No	Crop	No of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Cumbu	21	11
2.	Cholam	37	19
3.	Tomoto	4	2
4.	Groundnut	11	6
5.	Kollu	24	13
6.	Avarai	32	17



7.	Ulundhu	3	2
8.	Thattaipaier	14	7
9.	Pachchaipaier	13	7
10.	Sugar Cane	31	16
	Total	190	100

Source: Primary Data

In the table 4.7 the various crops cultivated by the selected respondents was studied. The selected farmers for this were also involved in Cumbu, Cholam, Tomoto, Groundnut, Kollu, Avarai, Ulundhu, Thattaipaier, Pachaipaier, Sugarcane, and vegetables respectively. Among them the majority of the farmers reported of cultivation of Cholam (37 farmers) and less than 3 farmers revealed that they cultivated cumbu, cholam, tomoto, groundnut, kollu, avari, ulundhu, thattaipaier, pachaipaier, sugarcane and vegetables respectively.

CONCLUSION

From the results present investigation, it can be concluded that there is a wide scope for planners and extension personnel to put efforts in the direction of complete adoption of improved package. Practices of dry farming of gram through educating young farmers in the villages and timely supplying input materials like fertilizer and seed of the recommended improved early varieties suitable for rain fed conditions. Education, farming experience, scientific orientation and innovativeness were found to be the variables, which can be manipulated. It may be mentioned that four components of dry land agricultural technology need to be emphasized: management of plant protection measures, seed treatment, soil and water conservation through bunding and leveling and chemical fertilizer. Hence, "all educational efforts using" both mass media and interpersonal communication needs to be strong then for enhancing adoption of dry farming of gram among farmers.

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