



Assessing the Socio-Economic Status of Cashew Growers in Kannur District, Kerala

Pooja Vardhini S¹, Dr. R. Govindasamy²

¹Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Economics, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore – 46.

²Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore – 46.

Corresponding Author: Pooja Vardhini S

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Abstract

Cashew, the commercial crop has higher demand all over the world. It has been seen especially in west coast as well as east coast regions on India. The present study focuses on Kannur district of Kerala state which examines the socio-economic status of cashew growers in the selected panchayats namely, Ayyankunnu, Kelakam and Eruvessy. Social characteristics such as age, gender, education, and family structure along with the influencing economic factors like income, expenditure, and land holding patterns, were analyzed. The results indicate male dominance in cashew farming, with most growers being married and aged between 49 and 65 years. Eruvessy leads in income and land holding, while agriculture remains the primary occupation for the majority of respondents. The study highlights significant differences in economic profiles across panchayats, influenced by land ownership and cultivation practices.

Keywords: Agriculture, Ayyankunnu, Cashew growers, Eruvessy, Income, Kelakam, Landholding, Socio-economic conditions etc.

I. Introduction

Cashew, scientifically known as *Anacardium occidentale*. L is a perennial and commercial crop in higher demand in the global market. Initially a neglected crop, it has become a popular snack food worldwide because of its taste (Sajeev et al., 2015). India is the second largest producer as well as processor of Raw Cashew Nut (RCN) in the world (Elakkiya et al., 2017). India accounts world's 65 per cent and 564 million rupees of cashew kernels and markets respectively (Israrullah et al., 2022). In India, cashew cultivation is mostly visible in states like Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Goa, Andhra Pradesh and so on (IBEF). Kerala stands in fifth position in the production (Indiastat). In Kerala, Kannur district is in the predominant position for the area, production

and productivity of cashews followed by Kasargod (Agricultural Statistics 2005-20).

Cashew has gained commercial status due to technological advancements in propagation, production, management, and mechanized processing (Sajeev et al., 2014). The main characteristics of the crop are low capital requirement for orchard establishment, limited management and maintenance, low nut perishability etc. make it a successful crop in less fertile soils (Jafee, 1995). Therefore, the present study mainly focuses on the socio-economic conditions of the cashew growers in the selected panchayats of Kannur district in Kerala state.

II. Literature Review

Sajeev et al., (2015) tried to check the technological adoption as well as the socio-economic characteristics of cashew growers from the districts of North Kerala, especially Kannur and Kasargod. The results expressed that technological adoption has a positive effect on socioeconomic conditions and a negative impact on factors such as number of yielding trees, extension participation, sources of income and farm size.

Anusuya et al., (2020) focused on the background of cashew growers living in the Ariyalur and Cuddalore districts. They found from their studies that the majority of the respondents are highly dependent on cashews for their livelihood. The annual income of the growers was mostly from cashew cultivation which was followed from the ancestral period. The outcome predicts that growers are ready to adopt emerging technologies for better production of cashews.

III. Objectives of the Study

- To know about the social profile of cashew growers in the selected panchayats.
- To analyse the economic conditions of cashew growers in the study area.



IV. Methodology

The present study is descriptive in nature which has been led using a structured questionnaire during the period from April to June 2023. The survey was conducted in Kannur district of Kerala. The samples were selected using the multi-stage

proportionate random sampling technique based on cashew production and the population of growers. Ayyankunnu, Kelakam and Eruvessy are the three panchayats chosen based on highest population of growers with 120, 116, and 60 respondents correspondingly.

V. Results and Discussion

Table 5.1: Social Profile of Cashew Growers in Kannur District

Sl. No.	Category	Ayyankunnu (120)		Kelakam (116)		Eruvessy (60)		Total (296)		χ ²
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	
Age										
1	Below 49	27	34.2	34	43.0	18	22.8	79	100	2.75 ^{NS}
2	49-65	65	45.1	52	36.1	27	18.8	144	100	
3	Above 65	28	38.4	30	41.1	15	20.5	73	100	
	Total	120	100	116	100	60	100	296	100	
Gender										
1	Male	103	85.8	105	90.5	52	86.7	260	87.8	1.31 ^{NS}
2	Female	17	14.2	11	9.5	8	13.3	36	12.2	
	Total	120	100	116	100	60	100	296	100	
Education										
1	Primary	6	5.0	15	12.9	1	1.7	22	7.4	32.46 ^{***}
2	HS	63	52.5	61	52.6	29	48.3	153	51.7	
3	HSS	17	14.2	25	21.6	18	30.0	60	20.3	
4	UG	29	24.2	13	11.2	5	8.3	47	15.9	
5	PG	5	4.2	1	0.9	6	10.0	12	4.1	
6	Others	-	-	1	0.9	1	1.7	2	0.7	
	Total	120	100	116	100	60	100	296	100	
Marital Status										
1	Married	109	90.8	115	99.1	57	95.0	281	94.9	9.34 ^{**}
2	Single	2	1.7	-	-	-	-	2	0.7	
3	Widowed	9	7.5	1	0.9	3	5.0	13	4.4	
	Total	120	100	116	100	60	100	296	100	
Family Type										
1	Nuclear	67	55.8	64	55.2	35	58.3	166	56.1	0.17 ^{NS}
2	Joint	53	44.2	52	44.8	25	41.7	130	43.9	
	Total	120	100	116	100	60	100	296	100	
Nature of House										
1	Thatched	30	25.0	9	7.8	11	18.3	50	16.9	20.41 ^{***}
2	Tiled	49	40.8	37	31.9	21	35.0	107	36.1	
3	Concrete	41	34.2	70	60.3	28	46.7	139	47.0	



Total	120	100	116	100	60	100	296	100		
Ownership of House										
1	Own	119	99.2	116	100	60	100	295	99.7	1.47 ^{NS}
2	Rent	1	0.8	-	-	-	-	1	0.3	
Total		120	100	116	100	60	100	296	100	
Main Occupation of the Respondents										
1	Agriculture	107	89.2	107	92.2	48	80.0	262	88.5	8.57 ^{NS}
2	Government	7	5.8	4	3.4	8	13.3	19	6.4	
3	Business	3	2.5	2	1.7	3	5.0	8	2.7	
4	Others	3	2.5	3	2.6	1	1.7	7	2.4	
Total		120	100	116	100	60	100	296	100	
Subsidiary Occupation of the Respondents										
1	Agriculture	13	56.5	9	60.0	12	75.0	34	63.0	2.08 ^{NS}
2	Business	1	4.3	1	6.7	-	-	2	3.7	
3	Others	9	39.1	5	33.3	4	25.0	18	33.3	
Total		23	100	15	100	16	100	54	100	

Source: Primary Data

Table 5.1 denotes the social characteristics of the cashew growers in the selected panchayats namely, Ayyankunnu, Kelakam and Eruvessi in the Kannur district. The social characteristics comprise of age, gender, education, marital status, family type, nature & ownership of house, and also the main and subsidiary occupation of the respondents. There seems to be a male domination in the cultivation of cashews because of the place of cultivation and its working conditions. Among them most of the growers are married and are under the age group of 49 to 65 years. While considering the family type of the respondents more than half of them are living in the nuclear family and around half of them were joint family. So, it has been noticed that almost both nuclear as well as joint family prevailed in the study areas. From this, only one family is living in the rented house due to her financial and family situation, whereas majority of the respondents are living in

their own houses. In the case of education more than half of the two villages such as Ayyankunnu and Kelakam, and around half from the Eruvessy have high school education. The least number of respondents belongs to other categories from Kelakam and Eruvessy which include diploma, illiterate etc. Out of 120 from Ayyankunnu, 116 from Kelakam, and 60 from Eruvessy, only 23, 15 and 16 respectively from the three villages have subsidiary occupation such as agriculture, business and others consisting of shops, MGNREGA, other private fields etc. Of 296 respondents, the majority (88.5 per cent) of them are primarily dependent on agriculture for their basic utilities. Only a minimal of around 12 per cent of the respondents' prime sources are occupation is varied to different fields like government sector organisations or institutions, business, other private sector institutions, personal works (stitching, embroidery, catering) etc.

Table 5.2: Economic Profile of Cashew Growers in Kannur District

Sl. No.	Descriptive Statistics	Ayyankunnu	Kelakam	Eruvessy	Total	ANOVA
Main Annual Income						
1	Mean	190375.00	151354.31	218360.00	186696.44	2.96**
	Min	30000	30000	33000	31000	
	Max	600000	1400000	1800000	1266666.67	
	N	120	116	60	296	
Subsidiary Annual Income						
2	Mean	213913.04	135066.67	158975.00	169318.24	1.86^{NS}
	Min	50000	42000	19200	37066.67	
	Max	620000	250000	600000	490000	
	N	23	15	16	54	



Household Annual Income						
3	Mean	400038.33	399847.41	473960.00	424615.25	0.98^{NS}
	Min	50000	40000	42000	44000	
	Max	1460000	2214000	2460000	2044666.67	
	N	120	116	60	296	
Annual Expenditure						
4	Mean	369249.90	322445.40	278691.63	323462.31	10.32^{***}
	Min	110620	66320	73800	83580	
	Max	883120	553400	1020400	818973.33	
	N	120	116	60	296	
Area of Owned Irrigated Total Land Holding						
5	Mean	1.82	1.36	2.19	1.79	1.01^{NS}
	Min	0.23	0.20	0.75	0.39	
	Max	12.00	5.50	12.00	9.83	
	N	33	36	13	82	
Value of Owned Irrigated Total Land Holding						
6	Mean	7364939.39	5302416.67	10071153.85	7579503.30	1.43^{NS}
	Min	931500	760000	3225000	1638833.33	
	Max	49200000	22000000	62400000	44533333.33	
	N	33	36	13	82	
Area of Owned Rainfed Total Land Holding						
7	Mean	4.73	3.27	4.33	4.11	3.66^{**}
	Min	0.62	0.25	1.00	0.62	
	Max	27.50	50.00	14.00	30.5	
	N	120	116	60	296	
Value of Owned Rainfed Total Land Holding						
8	Mean	15528041.67	10815770.04	15429858.33	13924556.68	3.62^{**}
	Min	1984000.00	850000	3550000	2128000	
	Max	118250000.00	16000000.00	51800000.00	110016666.7	
	N	120	116	60	296	

Source: Primary Data

The economic profile is important to find out the standard of living of the cashew growers in the study area. The economic characteristics such as main, subsidiary and household annual income, expenditure and land holding pattern of the respondents and their families are represented in table 5.2. While considering the annual main as well as household income, Eruvessy stands predominant position whereas in the case of subsidiary income, the panchayat stands second position after Ayyankunnu. This situation was almost the same as in the case of land holding pattern. Eruvessy has the largest area of land holding followed by Ayyankunnu and Kelakam considering owned irrigated land. It makes the variation in income of the growers. This is because the panchayat is situated approximately in the centre of the district. Taking into account annual expenditure, which is high among Ayyankunnu, followed by Kelakam and Eruvessy. In the case of owned rainfed land, there exist a mild variation in area and value of land among Ayyankunnu and

Eruvessy which are five per cent significant with the ANOVA value at 3.66 and 3.62 correspondingly.

VI. Conclusion

Cashew growers in Ayyankunnu, Kelakam and Eruvessy are predominantly middle-aged, married and rely on agriculture. Educational levels vary and social structures are balanced between nuclear and joint families. The economic profile reveals Eruvessy leading in household income and landholding. Ayyankunnu has higher subsidiary income and expenditure. Differences in land ownership, particularly irrigated land, contribute to income disparities among the panchayats. These results reflect a diversification in socio-economic conditions of the growers across the region.

VII. Recommendations

- Promote co-operative farming to address the disparities in land ownership
- Advocate technical as well as financial inclusion programmes comprise of the access to



credit and insurance facilities to invest more in modern practices by the cashew growers.

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