

## Socio-Economic Conditions of the Farmers: A Case Study of Hirakud Command Area, Western Odisha

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### Abstract

A careful examination of the socioeconomic circumstances of farmers is a requirement for the effective planning and execution of government development initiatives. The research was done in the Hirakud Command Area, western Odisha between Kharif crop (*Reetu*) 2020-21 and Rabi crop (*Dalua*) 2021-22 to look into the socioeconomic profiles of the farmers. A total of 399 respondents from the Hirakud Command Area served as the sample size. As well as a properly well-structured questionnaire was used to collect the primary data for this study. The goal of this study was to evaluate the socioeconomic characteristics of the district of Hirakud Command Area, Western Odisha. The study's findings showed that most farmers maintained nuclear families as well as large family members. The majority of the farmers are considered to be marginal farmers who had low income, and limited access to institutional sources of financing. Young people are less interested in agriculture because it is not profitable, and instead, they turn to nonagricultural activities. In order to keep people engaged in farming, agriculture profitability should be increased, providing assured source of irrigation facilities, providing institutional sources of credit, extension services, and many more.

**Key Words: Hirakud Command Area, Socio-Economic, Farmers, Kharif, Rabi**

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## I. Introduction

The law of diminishing returns always applies to agriculture. As a result, adding increasingly larger amounts of additional capital and other types of inputs will not allow one to develop very quickly. The element of labour, however, has a proverbial voice that can produce radical results and is always important for revolutionizing both the average and marginal productivity of agriculture (Palanisamy and Mahesh, 2014 ). The Green Revolution For some people, technological advancements may have brought prosperity and fortune, but not to the agricultural labourers. A person is referred to as an agricultural laborer if their primary source of income in the previous year was agricultural wages, or wages received for working on someone else's farm (Government of India,1956-57). It is debatable whether the development will also benefit agricultural labourers, despite the fact that they are one of the most crucial aspects of a country's agricultural development (Chaudhary & Singh, 2021). Better policymaking decisions depend on the socioeconomic traits of the farmers. The main source of income is livestock farming. for the villagers of Ibrahmpur, as well as a reliable source for the family's nutritional requirements (Reddy et al., 2017). India is a developing nation with a sizable population involved in growing various crops. Particularly in the state of Karnataka, farmers make a living by growing a variety of crops. Ginger is a key crop in this category (Peter & Maruthi, 2021). However, in western Odisha majority of the population depends on agriculture sector to maintain their livelihoods. So, the income from cultivation is the major source of income form them . In this context the study is trying to investigate the socio-economic conditions of the farmers in western Odisha.

## II. Materials and Methods

The study is based on the primary survey conducted in the Hirakud Command Area of Western, Odisha. The study was carried out in the Hirakud Command Area, Western Odisha. The Hirakud Command Area project provides irrigation to the four districts: Bargarh, Sambalpur, Sonepur, and Bolangir. The sample has been chosen based on multistage stratified random sampling. From each district, two blocks were selected except Bolangir districts, namely Barapali, Atabira, Maneswar, Dhankauda, Dunguripali, and Binka, and from each block, and two villages were chosen in the form of Head, Middle, and Tail. In Bolangir district there was only one block and there were very few villages that have adopted canal irrigation and hence, not considered. This study's analysis heavily relies on quantitative information obtained from the structured survey questionnaire. The research was done in the Hirakud Command Area,

western Odisha between Kharif crop (*Reetu*) 2020-21 and Rabi crop (*Dalua*) 2021-22 to look into the socioeconomic profiles of the farmers

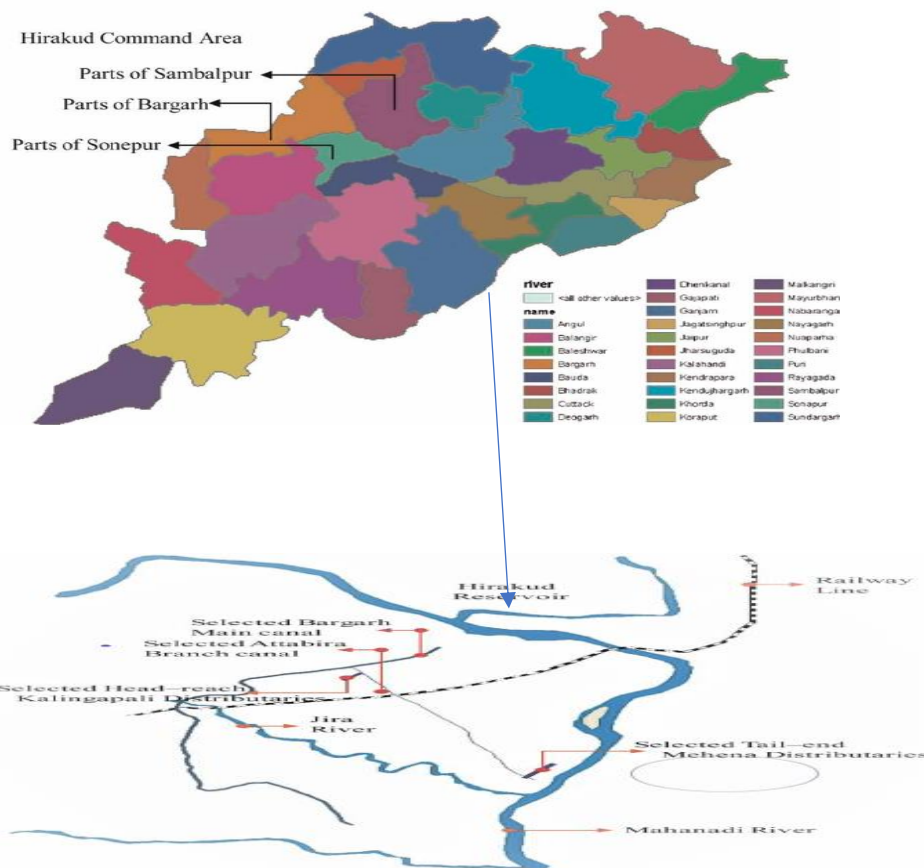
The total population N is 68542, resulting in a sample size of 398 with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error using the Yamini formula. Taking into account the sample size of agricultural households, the district, block-level, and village-level samples were distributed based on the population proportion of selected districts, blocks, and villages". So, for Bargarh district, 156 samples were selected, for Sambalpur districts 68 and for Subarnapur district, 174 samples were selected.

### **The Research Location: Hiraikud Command Area, Western Odisha**

**Figure- 1: Map of India**



Odisha



Source: Maps of India

### III. Analysis

#### 3.1 Demographic Profile of The Farmers

##### 3.3.1 Age distribution of farmers (Per cent)

As shown earlier among all sizes of landholding, MGL in the age group of 20-30 years have very less share, farmers in the age group of 31-40 years have 19 Per cent of which 12 Per cent are MGL, 5 Per cent are SML, negligible share for SMM and MDM. In the 50 Per cent for all Sizes of landholding belong to farmers in the age group of 41-50 years. Of this, 32 Per cent are MGL, 9 Per cent are SML, 6 Per cent are SMM, negligible share for MDM, and LRG. In the age group of 51-60 years, 19 Per cent are MGL, 7 Per cent are SML, 3 Per cent SMM, less share for MDM and LRG and 28 per cent are for all size of landholding (Table 4.1.). It is clear that young farmers are less in number and 50 per cent of farmers are under 41 to 50 years old. This means that the young are not involved in agriculture, this may be because the agriculture is no more profitable for them.

### 3.3.2 Educational distribution of farmers

The table 4.1 represents the education of farmers in all categories of size of landholding. Among all farmers, 12 per cent are illiterate, 20 up to elementary education, 15 per cent up to the secondary. Most of the farmers with small land holdings are illiterate. 32 per cent below primary level for MGL and 8 for SML. 14 per cent farmers with primary level of education belong to MGL and 5 per cent to SML. With secondary level of education, 6 per cent belong to MGL, 5 per cent to SML, 2 per cent to SMM and MDM.

Table 4.1: Demographic profile of the distress farmers (in Percent)

Characteristics		MGL	SML	SMM	MDM	LRG	ASG
Age	20-30	1	0	0	0	0	1
	31-40	12	5	1	1	0	19
	41-50	32	9	6	2	1	50
	51-60	19	7	3	0	1	28
	61 and above	1	1	0	0	0	2
Education Status	Illiterate	10	2	0	0	0	12
	Below Primary	32	8	0	0	0	40
	Primary	14	5	1	0	0	20
	Secondary	6	5	2	2	0	15
	Senior Secondary	2	1	4	0	0	7
Social Category	Graduation	0	0	3	2	2	6
	OBC	40	12	5	2	1	60
	SC	17	8	3	1	0	29
	ST	5	0	1	0	0	7
	GEN	2	1	0	1	0	4
Experience on Farming	10-20	44	13	7	3	1	68
	21-30	19	7	3	0	1	29
	31-40	2	1	0	0	0	3
Occupation Status	Primary occupation Only	20	5	3	1	0	29
	Primary and subsidiary	45	16	7	2	2	71
Family Size	Small (0-3)	3	0	0	0	0	3
	Medium (4-6)	41	18	8	2	2	71
	Large (7-9)	19	3	2	1	0	25
	Very large (Above 9)	2	0	0	0	0	2

Source: Author Calculation from Field survey

\*\*\*Note: (0-1 Hectare, MGL: Marginal Farmers); (1-2 Hectare SML: Small Farmers); (2-4 Hectare SMM: Semi-medium Farmers); (4-6 Hectare MDM: Medium Farmers); (6-10 Hectare LRG: Large Farmers), ASG: All Sizes

At senior secondary level 2 Per cent are MGL, less for SML, 4 Per cent for SMM. at graduation level 3 per cent for SMM, 2 per cent for MDM and LRG. Hence it is clear that less per centage of farmers have education up to secondary level, even less when it comes to senior secondary and graduation level of education. This means that maximum farmers have very low level of education. It would also mean that because farmers are less educated, they are unaware about the government's policy on agriculture. Also, they may be less skilled compared to the educated farmers.

### 3.3.3 Social Distribution of farmers

The social category includes OBC(Other Backward Classes), SC(Scheduled cast), ST(Scheduled Tribes), and GEN (General) Category. For all sizes maximum are OBC followed by SC, ST, and GEN. within the social category among OBC and SC maximum are farmers with extremely low land.

### 3.3.4 Distribution of Farmers by Experience

Experience of farming helps the farmers make better use of cost-effective production techniques. As mentioned earlier, maximum farmers belong to higher age group. The experience on farming is classified into three categories viz., experience of 10-20, 21-30 and 31-40 years. 68 Per cent of farmers have the experience of 10-20 years. In which 44 per cent are MGL, 13 per cent SML, 7 Per cent SMM, and very low percent of MDM and LRG. With 21-30 years of farming experience, 19 per cent are MGL, 7 per cent are SML, less for SMM and LRG, and for all size farmers share 29 per cent. Under 31-40 years of farming experience, 3 Per cent are for all the different size of landholding. Therefore, from this table, it is clear that, most of the farmers have experience of on an average 30 years.

### 3.3.5 Distribution of Farmers by Occupation Other than Agriculture

Another characteristic of farmers is occupational status with different landholding sizes, including primary and subsidiary occupations. 29 per cent of farmers engaged in primary occupation of which 20 per cent are MGL, 5 per cent SML, low percent for SMM and MDM and no large farmers are engaged in primary occupation. In Primary and subsidiary occupation status, 71 per cent are all size farmers, in which 45 per cent are MGL, 16 per cent are SML, 7 per cent SMM, 2 per cent are MDM and LRG. Therefore, from this it can be concluded that

most of the farmers are engaged in both the primary and subsidiary occupation. In subsidiary occupations, most of the respondents are engaged in laborer, pan shop, diary, and poultry.

### 3.3.6 Family Size

The Family size of the farmers is classified into four categories which includes small size of the family which with 3 members; medium size with 4 to 6 numbers, large family size having 7 to 9 members, and very large family size with more than 9 members. 3 Per cent of all farmers have small family size in which marginal farmer are 3 Per cent. Maximum farmers have medium and large size. Only 2 Per cent of farmers have very large family size. These are all small farmers. Hence, it can be said that a high per centage of marginal farmers have medium and large families.

### 3.3.7 Landholding Pattern and Tenancy Structure of Farmers

Table 4.2 represents landholding and Tenancy status (in Acre) among the various sizes of landholdings. The average landholding size for marginal farmers is 2 Acres, in which leased 1 and own land is 2 acres. The Small farmers occupy 4 acres, in which the leased land 2 and 3 acres their own land.

Table 4.2: Average Size of Landholding and Tenancy status (in Acre)

Landholdings	MGL	SML	SMM	MDM	LRG
Leased Land	1	2	3	4	7
Own Land	2	3	5	9	18
Av.Landholding	2	4	8	13	25
All Size (%)	65(257)	21(83)	10(38)	3(13)	2(7)

Source: Author calculation from Field survey

Figure in the parentheses indicate numbers

The average size of landholding for semi-medium farmers is 8 acres of land, in which the average size of leased land is 3 acres of land and 5 acres of own Land. The average size of landholding for medium farmers is 13 acres, of which, lease land is 4 acres and 9 acre own land. The average size of landholding for large farmers is 25 acre, of this, leased land is 7 acres and 18 acres of own land. Thus, most of the respondent farmers are have low size of landholding.

#### IV. Conclusions and Summary

The present study analyses the socio-economic conditions of farmers in the Hirakud Command Area, Western Odisha. It is clear that young farmers are less in number and 50 per cent of farmers are under 41 to 50 years old. This means that the young are not involved in agriculture, this may be because the agriculture is no more profitable for them. Similarly, farmers education is concerned, it is clear that less per centage of farmers have education up to secondary level, even less when it comes to senior secondary and graduation level of education. This means that maximum farmers have very low level of education. It would also mean that because farmers are less educated, they are unaware about the government's policy on agriculture. Also, they may be less skilled compared to the educated farmers. Where as social category, for all sizes maximum are OBC followed by SC, ST, and GEN. within the social category among OBC and SC maximum are farmers with extremely low land. Therefore, for the occupation point of view, it can be concluded that most of the farmers are engaged in both the primary and subsidiary occupation. In subsidiary occupations, most of the respondents are engaged in laborer, pan shop, diary, and poultry. Maximum farmers have medium and large size. Only 2 Per cent of farmers have very large family size. These are all small farmers. Hence, it can be said that a high per centage of marginal farmers have medium and large familes. The average size of landholding for large farmers is 25 acre, of this, leased land is 7 acres and 18 acres of own land. Thus, most of the respondent farmers are have low size of landholding. Thus, the issue of these poor people's uplift should be the government's top priority. For agricultural labourers specifically, loan waiver programmers and employment guarantee schemes should exist so they can escape debt and raise their standard of living.



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