

## **Socio-Economic Ailment of Apple Growers and Production Practices in Balochistan: A Gender Based Concern**

**Shahida Habib Alizai,<sup>1</sup> Dr. Kamleshwar Lohana<sup>2</sup>  
& Ahmed Ali Mengal<sup>3</sup>**

### **Abstract**

*Present study was sought to define the socio-economic determinants of apple growers and production practices in Kalat district Balochistan, Pakistan. A descriptive research method was used. Structured inquiry form as survey was utilized. A sample size as target population was one hundred twelve (112) farmers through random sampling. Cronbach's Alpha used however, in this connection reliability coefficients oscillated from .80 to .83. The information were analysed by statistical software (SPSS). Further, inferential statistics was applied so that detect comparison between farmers groups perception. Finding revealed that (55%) farmers were uneducated. However, 55% fall in age group up to 31 years. Most (66%) of the respondents by gender were male. The rank order was estimated based on mean score so as to find out the relative ranking of each category. Agronomic practices, advice for the utilization of pesticides and insecticides and advice for plant protection measures were on 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> rank, respectively. Following was recommendation study. The researchers were observed that poorer marketing square was existed especially for female due to the social and tribal limitations at district level, therefore it should be suggested that proper marketing square was developed on priority bases so as to enhance the farming communities socio-economic condition.*

**Keywords:** Apple, Balochistan, Kalat, Production practices, Socio-economic.

### **Introduction**

Apple cultivation is limited in the upland zones of Balochistan province. Balochistan province is the major contributor of apple producing approximately "438,000" tonnes of Apple, which constitutes the seventy seven percent of production (Bashir *et al.*, 2001). Slightly the cultivation of apple is confined in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and hilly tracts of Punjab. However, the Balochistan province yields an extensive variety of fruits as

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<sup>1</sup> Gender Study Department, University of Balochistan

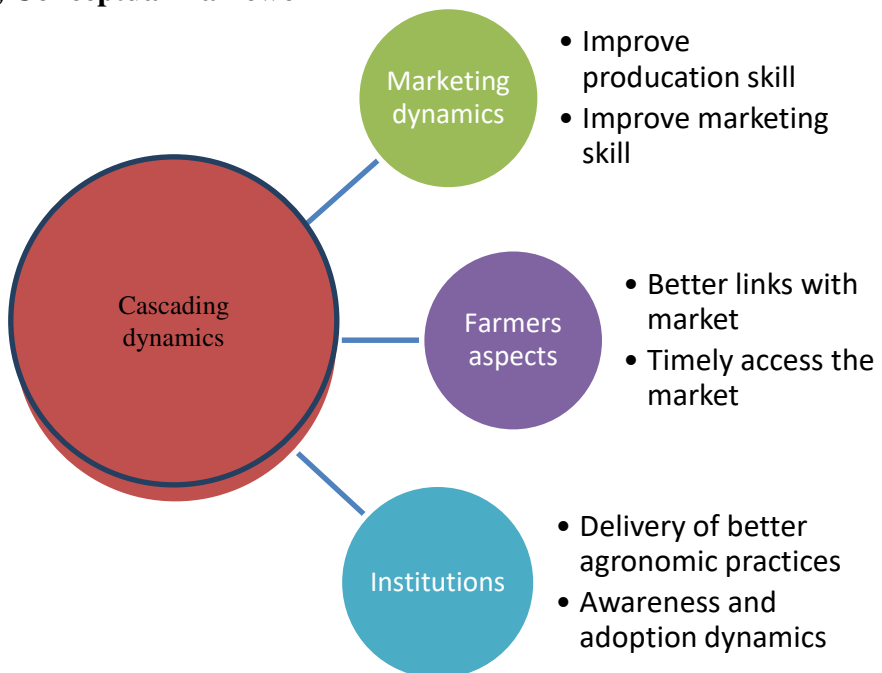
<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor Mehran Engineering and Technology University Sindh Jamshoro

<sup>3</sup> Agribusiness, Agriculture Research Institute ARI, Sariab Quetta Balochistan

well as quite sizeable volumes of vegetable as well. Therefore, in this regard the Balochistan province legitimately named as fruit basket of country.

Due to very little precipitation during fruiting season particularly in the upland areas the high quality deciduous fruits like apricots, almonds grapes, apples and plums are grown. The total country cultivation and production of apple is “1, 13,100 hectares with annual fruit production of 566,700 tonnes”, respectively. However, 7,500 cultivars of apple at worldwide known. In this regard, diverse cultivars have different tastes and uses for the purpose in cooking, eating and cider production. The Government of Balochistan has taken step to enhance the apple production based on scientific research techniques and proper intensive farming methods.

**Figure-1, Conceptual framework**



### **Problem statement**

There was a huge gap between potential and actual yield, “which indicates the gap between technology dissemination and adoption processes”. “As a result, the socio-economic condition of the farming community has not yet improved”. “The questions that come to mind are whether the technology is sufficiently profitable to provide the incentive for its adoption, and what socio-economic factors affect its adoption in the study area”. However,

marketing was another obstacle for apple crop (Abdul, 1994). The female farmers was very restricted role in agriculture sector. Therefore, the present research was conducted so as determine the socio-economic determinants of the intended beneficiaries in the district Kalat, Balochistan.

The “general objectives were to: describe the socio-economic characteristics of apple growers (by gender) and evaluate their influence on apple technology adoption, assess the extent to which farmers use the technology in the study area”.

The specific objectives are as under:

### **Objectives**

- To explore the socio-economic features of apple growers;
- To determine perceived perceptions of respondents by gender regarding socio-economic conduction;
- To develop the concrete recommendations for policy-makers and planners.

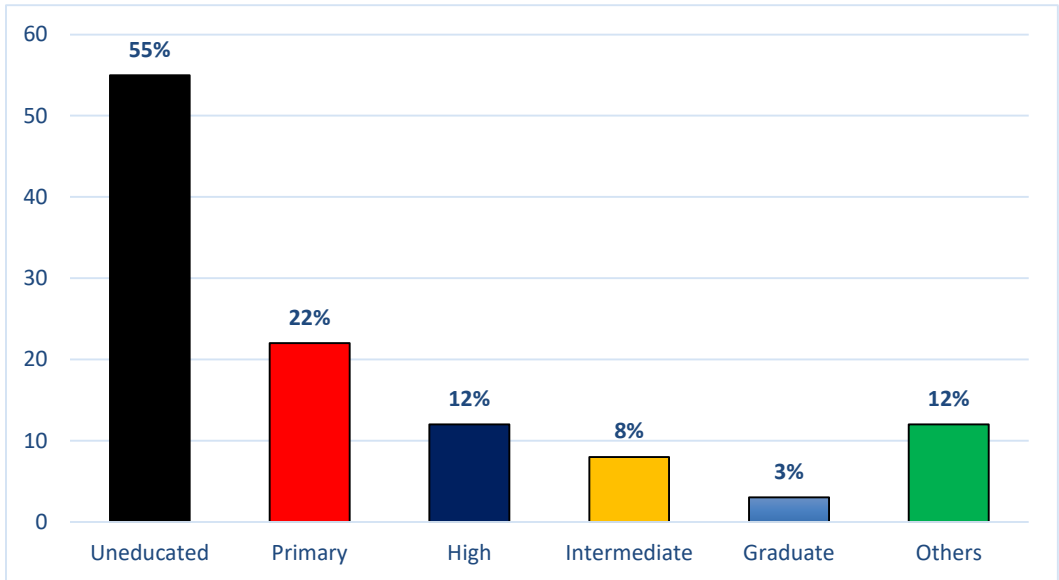
### **Methodology**

A descriptive research method was used. In this regard. “A structured questionnaire was used as research instrument. However, this structured questionnaire was administered through interview. Instrument was pre-tested for the validity and reliability for 10 farmers”. Cronbach’s Alpha was used in the present study so that to check the reliability of research instrument (Ary et al., 1996). However, in this connection the reliability coefficients oscillated from .80 to .83, which showing that reliability of questionnaire was superb (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; and Rothbard & Edwards, 2003). A sample size as target population was one hundred twelve (112) farmers among them 66 male farmers and 46 female farmers in the district Kalat were selected and by using the sample random sampling. Sample size as target population was measures the table of Wunsch (1986) “selecting sample sizes from given population”. Information was analysed by statistical software (SPSS). Further the inferential statistics was applied so that measures the comparison between farmers groups perception. “The t-test analysis were applied. Before t-test application total recommendations regarding awareness & adoption were computed through SPSS”.

## Results

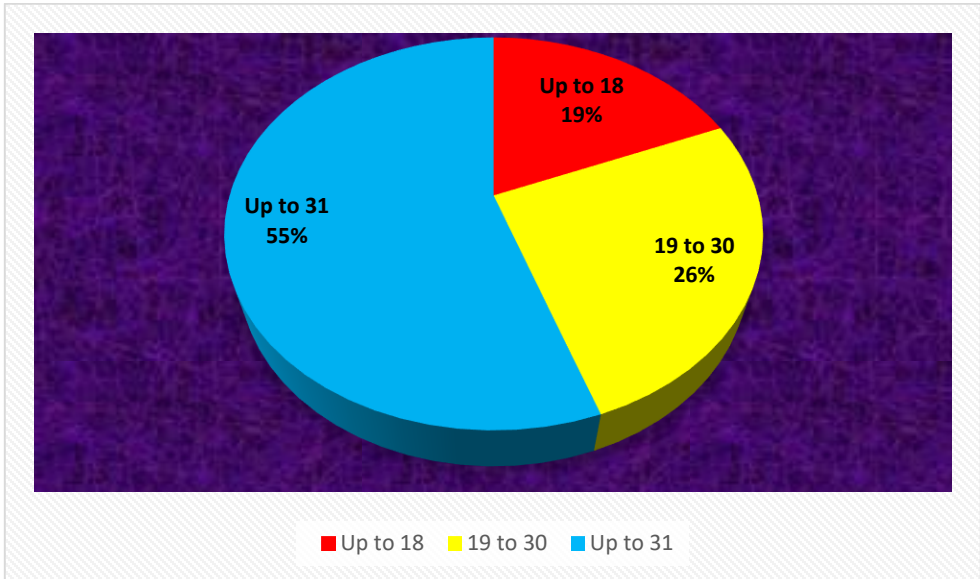
The demographic profile which is one of the imperative aspects of the present study. In this regard, the educational dynamics and age composition of the respondents were determined by using the SPSS software.

**Figure-2, Educational level distribution of respondents (n=112).**



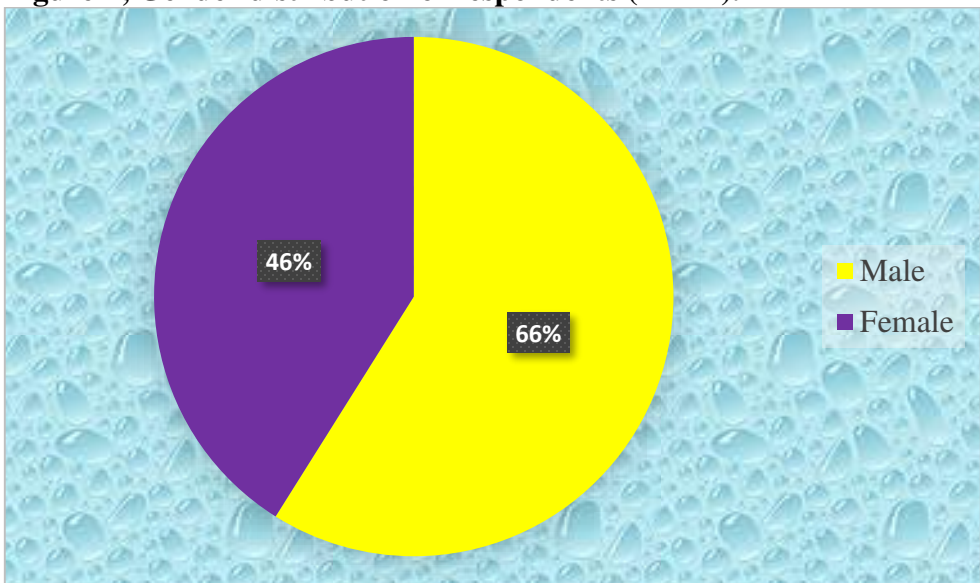
The educational dynamic data were collected as shown in figure-2. More than half (55%) the farmers were uneducated. Whereas 22% the farmers were had primary level of schooling. Only, 8% the farmers having Intermediate level of education.

**Figure-3, Age distribution of respondents (n=112).**



The age composition was reflected positive within the term of decision-making process. In this regard, the raw data were gathered as shown in figure-3. Most 55% of farmers was in age composition up to 31 years, while 26% farmers was fall the age category (19 to 30).

**Figure-4, Gender distribution of respondents (n=112).**



Most (66%) of the respondents by gender were male and remaining (46%) of the respondents by gender were female as shown in figure-4.

**Table-1 Relative ranking regarding recommendations of agronomic practices used by farmers.**

Agronomic practices	Weighted Score	Ranked Order	Mean	SD
Advice for the utilization of pesticides and insecticides	1136	1 <sup>st</sup>	3.66	1.19
Advice for plant protection measures	1117	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3.60	1.18
Suggestions for fertilizer requirement	1108	3 <sup>rd</sup>	3.57	1.22
Suggestions for irrigation applications	1056	4 <sup>th</sup>	3.41	1.14
Recommendations for seed rate/ seed treatment	1036	5 <sup>th</sup>	3.34	1.24
Recommendations for new varieties	1021	6 <sup>th</sup>	3.29	1.18
Advice for soil and water testing	984	7 <sup>th</sup>	3.17	1.21
“Recommendations for proper grading/packing/ harvesting/ storage of fruits & crops”	903	8 <sup>th</sup>	2.91	1.25
Guidance for integrated pest management (IPM)	737	9 <sup>th</sup>	2.38	1.13

The rank order was estimated based on mean score as shown in table-3. Agronomic practices, advice for the utilization of pesticides and insecticides and advice for plant protection measures were on 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> rank, respectively. “While recommendations for proper grading/packing/ harvesting/ storage of fruits & crops” and guidance for integrated pest management (IPM) on the bottom of the ranking.

### **Conclusion and recommendation**

The province of Balochistan is blessed with enormous natural resources. On the other hand, the agriculture sector contributes more than 52% of GDP and constitute the 65% of work forces of province. The province is contributing 90% of cherry and grape, 34% of apple, 70% of dates and 60% of peach. Nearly 80% of quality apples are exported from province, but the socio-economic ailment farmers not hitherto enhanced. Keeping in the view, importance of socio-economic acceleration of the farming

communities following recommendation put forwarded. The researchers were observed that inferior marketing square was existed at district level, and female participation in this regard null and void, therefore government should be initiative the steps regarding the framed and proper marketing square mechanism on priority bases so as to enhance the farming communities socio-economic condition particular, female farmers thought the effective marketing mechanism.

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