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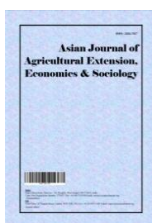
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Socio-economic and Socio-personal Characteristics of Agri-Entrepreneurs: A Study of Uttarakhand and Punjab State of India

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the Socio-economic and Socio-personal characteristics of agripreneurs. The study was conducted in Uttarakhand and Punjab states. Data for the investigation were collected from 120 respondent trainees, 60 each from the selected state. The study discovered that the majority of respondents (65.83) belonged to middle age group of 29-40 years, were married (75.83%) and had a low level of experience (0-5 years) in the agri enterprises. It was found that the majority of the respondents (50.83%) were engaged in agriculture belonged to the General caste and had education up to graduation (57.50%). A maximum number of the respondents were involved in social and political institutions holding more than one position (35.83%), belonged to medium family size (49.17%), possessed 5-10 animal (biogas plant, pump set, two-wheeler (36.67%). The majority of the respondents (81.17%) had a medium level of socio-economic status (SES).

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1. INTRODUCTION

Agri-entrepreneurship is frequently construed as a tool for empowering the rural unemployed agri-graduates, who have the caliber, capability of starting a venture and to excel in the field of agriculture and allied to agriculture [1]. Country like India Agri-enterprises sector is dominated by small, micro and medium enterprises. It is suggested that for challenges in national and international markets, agriculture needs to functional with an entrepreneurial approach [2]. Agriclincs provides advice and services to farmers on various technologies with an aim to enhance crop productivity and increase the income of the farmers. Agribusiness centers undertake activities like maintenance and hiring on rent of farm equipment, sales of inputs, and other services in agriculture and allied sectors of agriculture. The problems like lack of business and field experience, fear of sales, long procedures mixed up in getting the bank loans, huge risk involved were found to be the other major problems for establishing agri-ventures [3].

Agriculture as an enterprise or industry is going through a transition phase globally. It is presuming new shape, scope, and no more mere cultivation of crops and rearing of animals or as an enterprise for the rustic population. Aspects like value addition, high-tech agriculture, global marketing, trading, and organic farming have redefined agriculture [4,5]. These have lead to improved performance of the sector and enhanced development of human resource initiatives. Misconception like Many people earlier viewed agriculture as an enterprise that is laden with hard work and little profit. Agriculture is a dynamic field or enterprise, offering numerous profitable opportunities for engagement along with the value chain [6,7].

For encouraging and enhancing economic growth and sustainable development sometimes ago, the government of India initiated and pursued a growth and development policy plan especially to encourage agripreneurship and self-employment. Transfer from paid employment to self-employment has been an important agendum in the economy of many developed nations. To be self-sustaining economically, individuals must transit from paid employment to self-employment [4,8,9].

Subsequently, a scheme for setting up of Agriclincs and Agribusiness centers by agricultural graduates was announced on February 28, 2001. National Agricultural Bank for Rural Development (NABARD) has formulated a model scheme for financing Agriclincs and Agribusiness Centers to make self-dependent of agricultural graduates [10]. The scheme is jointly implemented by NABARD, MANAGE and SFAC since from April 9th, 2002. The objective of the present investigation was: To identify the Socio-economic and socio-personal characteristics of agripreneurs [2].

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was carried out in two states of India i.e., Uttarakhand and Punjab. This Descriptive study focused on the Socio-economic and socio-personal characteristics of the trainees who have taken training from the two training centers College of Agribusiness Management(CABM), Pantnagar, Uttarakhand and Indian society of agribusiness professional (ISAP), Amritsar, Punjab. Trainees were randomly selected for the present study. The interview schedule was used as a tool for collecting data in a face-to-face situation. The interview schedule was validated by experts related to the field. The tool was pilot tested in the field conditions, on 30 non-sample respondents. Then the necessary modifications, alterations, and suggestions were incorporated before conducting the survey for data collection.

The data for the investigation were collected from 120 respondent trainees, 60 each from the selected state. The data were collected with the help of a semi-structured interview schedule. In order to validate the data collected through quantitative technique some qualitative techniques like a case study, and observation were also used. The data collected were coded, tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted with the help of appropriate procedures and statistical techniques.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Socio Personal and Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Respondents

The Socio personal and Socioeconomic characteristics of the Agricultural Graduates engaged in Agri-clinics and Agri-business (in

terms of age, marital status, year of experience, source of earning, landholding, caste, education, social participation, family size, and possession) were studied using appropriate measurement procedures and results have been presented under following heads.

3.1.1 Socio personal characteristics

Age: The data regarding the age composition of trainees have been divided into three categories as shown in Table 1. It is clear from the table that the majority of the respondents (65.83%) belonged to the middle age group followed by old (20.00%) and young (14.17%). This finding is supported by earlier studies of [11] revealed that 20-40 years of age was the best period to enter into any enterprise or innovative establishment.

Year of experience: Table 1 showed that the maximum number of the respondents (56.67%) found in a low level of experience (0-5 years) in the Agri-ventures followed by (32.5%) in the middle category (6-10 years). Few respondents (10.83%) reported under the high category (11 and above). It indicated that most of the respondents practiced in Agri-ventures as an enterprise, not for a longer time.

4. MARITAL STATUS

It is evident from Table 1 that the majority of the respondents were married (75.83%), followed by unmarried (24.17%). Thus, the study clearly indicated that the Agricultural Graduates engaged in Agriclincs and Agribusiness were the relative of the middle age group, having experience of 0-5 years and married respectively. The findings are supported by Palmurugan [12] who indicated that the majority of the respondents had a medium level of

experience in agriventures followed by a low and high level of experience in Agri- ventures.

4.1 Socio-economic Characteristics

4.1.1 Source of earning

Table 2 indicates that the majority of the respondents (50.83%) were engaged in agriculture followed by business (25.00%) and services (24.16%) as their source of earning. Some of the respondents were not confined to one category but were engaged in other jobs as well. It might be because of the fact that the social status of an individual is directly linked with the source of earning which mainly depended upon the factors like higher education, higher income, high ambition, and multiple avenues for employment.

4.1.2 Land holding

The data presented in Table 3 inferred that a majority of (28.33 percent) respondents were marginal farmers having land holding less than one hectare followed by small farmers (25.83%) having land holding 1-2 ha, medium farmers (16.67%) and large farmers (15.83%) having more than four ha land. Only 13.33 percent belonged to the landless category.

4.1.3 Caste

In India, the social stratification in rural communities is generally based on caste distribution. The caste distribution of the Agricultural Graduates engaged in agricultural entrepreneurial activities according to the classification mentioned in Table 4 showed that 37.50 percent of respondents belonged to General cast followed by other backward castes (28.33%) and scheduled caste (22.50%). Only 11.67 percent of respondents belonged to the scheduled Tribe.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to their socio personal characteristics

S.No.	Variables	Categories	Frequency (N=120)	Percentage
1.	Age (in years) Mean=34.65 S.D.=6.23	Young (up to 28)	17	14.17
		Middle (29-40)	79	65.83
		Old (41 and above)	24	20.00
2.	Year of experience	Low(0-5)	68	56.67
		Medium (6-10)	39	32.50
		High (11 and above)	13	10.83
3.	Marital status	Unmarried	29	24.17
		Married	91	75.83

4.1.4 Education

The data relating to the educational status of the respondents as depicted in Table 5 made it clear that (57.50%) percent of the respondents were graduates followed by postgraduates (34.17%) and Doctorate (8.33%). It emerged from the above analysis that entrepreneurship is highly associated with the educational status of the individual. Ramaswami [11] stated that education was a crucial factor for developing modern entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial spirit.

4.1.5 Social participation

The data relating to the representation of respondents in different levels of social participation has been presented in Table 6 ahead. It is evident that 35.83 percent of the respondents were involved in social and political institutions with more than one post followed by 22.50 percent of them held a post in social and political institution and 21.67 percent of the respondents were without any post in social and political institution. Twenty percent of respondents collected money to distribute money

for social upliftment. Thus, the results of the study indicate that agripreneurs were socially and politically more active. Because they worked in groups so they have more opportunities to interact with organizations. Another reason was that it was because of the fact that the agripreneurs had more zeal and enthusiasm to participate in public activities and they have greater interaction with outside agencies.

4.1.6 Family size

The data pertaining to the family size of the respondents' Table 7 were collected under three categories viz. small (1-4 members), medium (4-6 members) and large (more than 6 members), which reflected that most of the respondents (49.17%) belonged to medium family-size followed by large(40.00%) and small family size(10.83%). The reason of this type of findings can be expressed as in the case of the medium family size, attention is more diverted towards earning the bread and butter for the family rather than giving importance to other public welfare activities.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to their source of earning

S.No.	Categories	Frequency(N=120)	Percentage
1	Agriculture	61	50.83
2	Business	30	25.00
3	Service	29	24.16

Table 3. Distribution of respondents according to their land holding

S.No.	Categories	Frequency (N=120)	Percentage
1	Landless	16	13.33
2	Marginal (<1 ha)	34	28.33
3	Small (1-2 ha)	31	25.83
4	Medium (2-4 ha)	20	16.67
5	Large (>4 ha)	19	15.83

Table 4. Distribution of respondents according to their caste

S.No.	Categories	Frequency(N=120)	Percentage
1	Scheduled Caste	27	22.50
2	Scheduled Tribe	14	11.67
3	Other Backward Caste	34	28.33
4	General	45	37.50

Table 5. Distribution of respondents according to their education

S.No.	Categories	Frequency(N=120)	Percentage
1	Graduate	69	57.50
2	Post Graduate	41	34.17
3	Doctorate	10	8.33

4.1.7 Possession

A perusal of the Table 8 reveals that 36.67 percent of the respondents possessed 5-10 animals (biogas plant, pump set, two-wheeler) by 35.83 percent were having More than ten animals (animal, tractor, vehicle). 25.83 percent were having 3-4 animals (agricultural instrument/ electrical institution). Only 1.67 percent of respondents had 1-2 animals.

4.1.8 Socio economic status

On perusal of Table 9, it is clear that about 81.17 percent of the respondents came under the medium level of socio-economic status (SES) group. Ten percent of respondents had the lower SES category, whereas 5.83 percent of respondents belonged to a higher level of SES.

Thus the analysis of the figures brought out the fact that the agripreneurship concentrates more on the medium level of SES, when the rapid growth of development takes place in all spheres. The reason for this finding can be enumerated as the people having a medium level of socio-economic status, had more risk-bearing capacity over the low level of socio-economic status people in carrying out some assignments. On the other hand, the upper levels of socio-economic status respondents are gradually losing their supreme dominance over others because of the introduction of a democratic grouping system in the sector of particular agripreneurships.

However, the findings regarding socio-economic status indicated that the majority of the respondents belonged to the medium class.

Table 6. Distribution of respondents according to their social participation

S.No.	Categories	Frequency (N=120)	Percentage
1	Without any post in social and political institution	26	21.67
2	More than one post in social and political institution	43	35.83
3	Hold official post in social and political institution	27	22.50
4	To collect money to distribute money for social upliftment	24	20.00

Table 7. Distribution of respondents according to family size

S.No.	Categories	Frequency(N=120)	Percentage
1	Small (1-4 members)	13	10.83
2	Medium (4-6 members)	59	49.17
3	Large (More than 6)	48	40.00

Table 8. Distribution of respondents according to possession

S.No.	Categories	Frequency(N=120)	Percentage
1	1-2 animals	2	1.67
2	3-4 animal (agricultural instrument/ electrical institution)	31	25.83
3	5-10 animals (biogas plant, pump set, two-wheelers)	44	36.67
4	More than 10 animals (animal, tractor, vehicle)	43	35.83

Table 9. Distribution of respondents according to socio-economic status

S.No.	Level of SES	Categories	Frequency (N=120)	Percentage
SES	Lower class	Less than 12	12	10.00
Mean=13.95	Middle class	12-16	101	81.17
S.D.=1.86	Upper class	More than 16	7	5.83

5. CONCLUSION

Agripreneurship (agricultural entrepreneurship) can provide direct employment and income to a large section of the residents. Agripreneurship outside offering opportunities is also a necessity for improving agricultural production, productivity and trigger the growth of allied sectors. The study discovered that the majority of respondents (65.83) belonged to middle age group of 29-40 years, were married (75.83%) and had a low level of experience (0-5 years) in the agri-enterprises. It was found that the majority of the respondents (50.83%) were engaged in agriculture belonged to the General caste and had education up to graduation (57.50%). The maximum number of the respondents were involved in social and political institutions holding more than one post (35.83%), belonged to medium family size (49.17%), possessed 5-10 animal (biogas plant, pump set, two-wheeler (36.67%). The majority of the respondents (81.17%) had a medium level of socio-economic status (SES).

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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