

# Satisfaction level of farmers regarding custom hiring services through cooperative agricultural service societies (CASSs) in Ludhiana district of Punjab

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## ABSTRACT

Custom hiring services (CHSs) enable the farmers to take the required equipment on hire basis for a defined period only thus paying for the services of the machines without having them. The present study was undertaken to find out the satisfaction level of farmers availing the services from the cooperative agricultural service societies (CASSs). A sample of 150 farmers who were availing the custom hiring services from five CASSs was selected. It was observed that majority of the farmers were in the age group of 44 to 62 years; lived in joint families; had educational level up to matric and medium to semi-medium operational landholding. Majority of the farmers had low to medium mass media exposure. Maximum number of farmers acquired information regarding custom hiring services from the officials of CASSs. Majority of them had a high level of satisfaction regarding the CHSs. About one-fifth of the farmers were dissatisfied with the less number of machines in the society followed by non-availability of machines at the time of requirement. The other prominent reason for the dissatisfaction of farmers was non-availability of required number of machines.

**Keywords:** Satisfaction; custom hiring services (CHSs); cooperative agricultural service societies (CASSs)

## INTRODUCTION

The history of agriculture dates back to thousands of years and it was the crucial development in the rise of settled human civilization (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agriculture>). In India around 70 per cent population depends on agriculture; approximately one-third of our national income comes from agriculture and about 80 per cent of the landholdings are operated by small and marginal farmers owning <1 and 1-2 ha holdings respectively. Among the different states Punjab is one of the leading states in Indian agriculture. Punjab is called the 'Granary of India' or 'India's Bread-basket' ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy\\_of\\_Punjab,\\_India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_Punjab,_India)).

Agriculture plays an important role in its culture and economy of the communities. Agriculture in Punjab is mainly characterized by abundance of small holdings but highly mechanized. Most of the farmers belong to the categories of small and marginal. Resources at their command do not make it feasible to go for heavy

mechanization due to high investment involved. Single farm ownership and use of heavy and expensive machinery on these farms are not economically viable. An alternative to surmount this constraint and at the same time to get the benefits of mechanization is to custom hire the required machinery and implements by the farmers.

Custom hiring services (CHSs) enable the farmers to take the required equipment on hire basis for a defined period only thus paying for the services of the machines without having to own them. Custom hiring is particularly helpful in wake of specialized machines which are costly to purchase. Primary agricultural cooperative societies as agro-service centres providing custom hiring services are particularly beneficial to the small farmers to cut down their cost of production, enhance productivity and increase their net farm income.

The present investigations were carried out to examine the satisfaction level of farmers availing

custom hiring services from the cooperative agricultural service societies (CASSs) in Ludhiana district of Punjab.

## METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Ludhiana district of Punjab state. Out of 13 blocks of Ludhiana district, five blocks namely Ludhiana-1, Khanna, Doraha, Samrala and Sudhar were selected randomly for the purpose. A total sample of 150 respondents was drawn with the help of probability proportional to the total number of farmers availing the services from these societies. The data were collected by personally interviewing the respondents with the help of interview schedule. Level of satisfaction was measured on a three-point continuum and scores assigned to the responses were 3, 2 and 1 to 'satisfied', 'somewhat satisfied' and 'dissatisfied' respectively.

## RESULTS and DISCUSSION

### Socio-personal characteristics of the farmers

The information regarding socio-personal characteristics of the farmers has been presented in Table 1. The data show that a little less than half of

the farmers (48.00%) belonged to the age group of 44 to 62 years. Similar findings were reported by Singh (2006), Kakkar (2011) and Anand (2016). It was found that 54.67 per cent farmers belonged to joint families and 45.33 per cent had nuclear families. Majority (55.33%) of the farmers were educated up to matric. Only 30.67 per cent of the farmers had medium operational landholding followed by 28.00 and 20.00 per cent who had semi-medium and marginal operational landholding respectively. Only 7.33 per cent farmers had large operational landholding. Similar findings were reported by Anand (2016).

More than half of the farmers (51.33%) had low mass media exposure followed by 34.67 per cent who had medium level of exposure and only 14.00 per cent had high exposure. Of the total farmers 55.33 per cent had medium level of extension contact whereas 37.33 per cent had low extension contact. Only 7.34 per cent of farmers had high extension contact. These findings are in line with the findings of Kakkar (2011).

### Satisfaction of the farmers regarding CHSs

Satisfaction is the level of fulfilment of need regarding different aspects of custom hiring services provided by the CASSs.

Table 1. Distribution of farmers according to their socio-personal characteristics (n= 150)

Socio-personal characteristic	Category/range	Frequency	Percentage
Age (years)	25-43	55	36.67
	44-62	72	48.00
	63-81	23	15.33
Family type	Joint	82	54.67
	Nuclear	68	45.33
Education	Illiterate	9	6.00
	Primary	19	12.67
	Up to matric	83	55.33
	Senior secondary	27	18.00
	Graduate	12	8.00
Operational landholding (acres)	Marginal (< 2.5)	30	20.00
	Small (2.5-5.0)	21	14.00
	Semi-medium (5-10)	42	28.00
	Medium (10-25)	46	30.67
	Large (>25)	11	7.33
Mass media exposure	Low (13-17)	77	51.33
	Medium (18-22)	52	34.67
	High (23-27)	21	14.00
Extension contact	Low (4-6)	56	37.33
	Medium (7-9)	83	55.33
	High (10-12)	11	7.34

Table 2. Distribution of farmers on the basis of satisfaction regarding various aspects of custom hiring services (n= 150)

Aspect of CHS	Satisfied		Somewhat satisfied		Dissatisfied		Mean score	Rank
	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Timely availability of machines	79	52.67	44	29.33	27	18.00	2.35	6
Number of machines available for custom hiring	70	46.67	49	32.67	31	20.67	2.26	7
Availability of required machines	93	62.00	38	25.33	19	12.67	2.49	5
Rent of the machines	89	59.33	51	34.00	10	6.67	2.53	4
Procedure followed by the society while giving the machines on rent	117	78.00	24	16.00	9	6.00	2.72	3
Dealing of staff	140	93.33	10	6.67	-	-	2.93	1
Condition of machines	120	80.00	29	19.33	1	6.67	2.79	2

**Satisfaction regarding various aspects of custom hiring services:** The farmers availed the CHSs from the cooperative societies. Their responses were recorded with regard to various aspects of services and are given in Table 2. It was found that among all the aspects of custom hiring, farmers were highly satisfied with the dealing of staff which was ranked at top. Farmers were dissatisfied with the number of machines available for CHS and it was ranked last.

Table 3. Distribution of farmers on the basis of their overall satisfaction level regarding custom hiring services (n= 150)

Category	Level of satisfaction (score)	Frequency	Percentage
Low	10-13	17	11.33
Medium	14-17	29	19.33
High	18-21	104	69.34

**Level of satisfaction of the farmers:** Level of satisfaction of the farmers was measured by summing up the scores for the satisfaction regarding different aspects of services and it was categorized into three categories viz low, medium and high using range method.

The results presented in Table 3 reveal that majority of the farmers had high level of satisfaction (69.34%); 19.33 per cent had medium and 11.33 per cent of them had low level of satisfaction. Thus majority of the farmers were satisfied with the services provided by the cooperative societies. The findings are similar to the findings of Kakkar (2011) and in contradiction to the findings of Anand (2016).

#### Reasons for dissatisfaction of the farmers

The data given in Table 4 show that the farmers (20.67%) who were dissatisfied with the availability aspect of CHS reported the less number of machines as the major reason for their dissatisfaction

Table 4. Distribution of farmers according to the reasons for their dissatisfaction about various aspects of CHSs (n= 150)

Component	Reason	Frequency*	Percentage
Timeliness	Machines not available at the time of requirement	27	18.00
Availability	Less number of machines	31	20.67
	Non-availability of required machines	19	12.67
Payment	Rent on higher side	10	6.67
Management	First come first served procedure not followed strictly	9	6.00
Condition	Irregularity in maintenance	1	0.67

\*Multiple responses

followed by non-availability of machines at the time of requirement (18.00%). The other reason for the dissatisfaction of farmers in view of the availability aspect was non-availability of machines of requirement (12.67%). The high rent (6.67%) was also the reason for the dissatisfaction of the farmers. The data further reveal that 6.00 and 0.67 per cent farmers were dissatisfied with the management and conditions aspects respectively.

#### **Relationship between socio-personal characteristics and level of satisfaction of farmers regarding custom hiring services**

Relationship between the socio-personal characteristics and level of satisfaction of farmers regarding custom hiring services was worked out and the data are presented in Table 5. The relationship between age and level of satisfaction was found to be negative and non-significant. This shows that change in age did not affect the level of satisfaction. The relationship between operational landholding and level of satisfaction was also found to be negative and non-significant. The education, mass media exposure and extension contact had a positive and non-significant relationship with level of satisfaction.

Table 5. Relationship between socio-personal characteristics and level of satisfaction of farmers regarding custom hiring services

Socio-personal characteristics	Level of satisfaction (r-value)
Age	-0.020
Education	0.066
Operational landholding (acres)	-0.077
Mass media exposure	0.055
Extension contact	0.014

#### **Relationship between number of machines in the cooperative societies and level of satisfaction of farmers regarding custom hiring services**

Relationship between number of machines in the cooperative societies and level of satisfaction of farmers regarding custom hiring services was worked out (Table 6) and the relationship between number of machines in the cooperative societies and level of satisfaction was positive and significant at 1 per cent level of significance. It implies that with the increase in number of machines level of satisfaction of farmers also increased. This may be due to the reason that

Table 6. Relationship between number of machines in the cooperative agricultural service societies and level of satisfaction of farmers regarding custom hiring services

Component	Level of satisfaction (r-value)
Number of machines in the cooperative societies	0.727**

\*\*Significant at 1 per cent level

with more number of machines they had not to wait for the machines and it increased their satisfaction.

It was concluded that majority of the farmers had high level of satisfaction. Farmers were highly satisfied with the dealing of the staff. About one-fifth farmers were dissatisfied with the less number of machines in the society followed by non-availability of machines at the time of requirement.

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