

Socio-economic status and communication behaviour pattern of the dairy farmers in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir state to find out the of socio-economic status of the dairy farmers. For the study 120 farmers who had at least one milch animal at the time of investigation were selected as respondents. The independent variables such as education, land holding and age were measured using Somasundaram (1995) scale with slight modification and classification. Study revealed that majority of farmers belonged to medium socio-economic status and had medium information source utilization pattern. The main source of information was the radio followed by television which were frequently used by the farmers. The reach of extension contact to remote villages of the state was found to be low.

Keywords: Socio-economic status; radio; dairy farmers; source of information; extension contact

INTRODUCTION

Livestock production is an integral part of farming system (Anon 2000). Dairy farming dominates livestock production. Dairy production is the most important agricultural activity in the country. This sector is also the major source of income for an estimated 27.6 million people (Anon 2012). The majority of milk production in India is

still carried out by small scale often landless farmers. The socio-economic status of farmers is very much important to assess the actual ground status of farmers that reflects their livelihood. Communication plays a vital role in disseminating information to farmers. In field both direct and indirect communication exists. Through various sources of information farmers can update themselves with latest technologies being

used in the field of dairy and agriculture which in turn can improve their socio-economic status. Keeping this in view the present study was conducted to study the socio-economic characteristics of the farmers, their communication behavior and the utilization pattern of information sources used by them.

METHODOLOGY

The study was undertaken in purposively selected Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir in 2011-2012. Out of eight blocks, three blocks were selected randomly and 2 villages in each block were selected to draw a sample of 120 farmers who had at least one milch animal and were using ITKs. The data were collected personally with the help of pre-tested structured interview schedule and analyzed with the help of frequency and percentage. The data included information about socio-economic profile, communication behavior and utilization pattern of information sources used by farmers.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Socio-economic profile of the respondents

A perusal of Table 1 shows that majority (65.00%) of the farmers belonged to old age group followed by middle age group (31.67%). The minimum and maximum age was 35 and 89 years respectively. Only 31.67 per cent of the

respondents were illiterate and remaining 68.33 per cent were literate. Among literates 24.16 percent were educated up to secondary level followed by 20.00 per cent having middle level education.

The study also revealed that 56.67 and 43.33 per cent respondents were having joint and nuclear families respectively which indicates that still people in rural areas preferred joint family. The study also revealed that 48.33 per cent of the respondents were in the category of marginal landholding followed by 39.17 per cent in small holding.

A look on economy reveals that 41.67 per cent of the respondents had annual income less than Rs 50000 followed by medium (Rs 50000-150000) and high (Rs >150000) income category farmers comprising of 40.00 and 18.33 per cent respectively. The data indicated that 49.17 per cent of the respondents were involved in low social participation followed by 43.33 and 3.33 per cent having medium and high social participation respectively. Agriculture along with dairy formed the main occupation of the people.

Majority of farmers (68.33%) had medium herd size (3-7 animals) whereas 25.83 per cent were having small herd size (<3) and very few (5.83%) farmers had more than 7 (large category) dairy animals in their herd. The contribution of indigenous cows in herd was more as compared to

Table 1. Socio-economic profile of the farmers (n= 120)

Parameter	Respondents		Mean	SD
	Frequency	Percentage		
Age (years)			50.33	7.10
Young (up to 35)	4	3.33		
Middle (36-50)	38	31.67		
Old (>50)	78	65.00		
Education				
Illiterate	38	31.67		
Functionally literate	2	1.67		
Primary	17	14.17		
Middle	24	20.00		
Secondary	29	24.16		
Higher Secondary	6	5.00		
Graduate and above	4	3.33		
Family size (number of persons)			6.16	1.81
Low (<5)	24	20.00		
Medium (5-7)	72	60.00		
High (>7)	24	20.00		
Family type				
Nuclear	52	43.33		
Joint	68	56.67		
Social participation			1.38	0.87
Low (<1)	59	49.17		
Medium (1-2)	52	43.33		
High (>2)	9	7.50		
Occupation				
Agric + Dairy	59	49.17		
Agric + dairy + service	31	25.83		
Agric + dairy + business	23	19.17		
Labour + dairy	7	5.83		
Land holding (ha)			1.52	0.77
Landless (0)	4	3.33		
Marginal (<1)	58	48.33		
Small (1-2)	47	39.17		
Semi-medium (2-4)	8	6.67		
Medium (4-10)	3	2.50		
Large (>10)	0	0.00		

Total Annual Income (Rs)				
Low (<50000)	50	41.67		
Medium (50000-150000)	48	40.00		
High (>150000)	22	18.33		
Total herd size (number of animals)			4.62	4.96
Small (<3)	31	25.84		
Medium (3-7)	82	68.33		
Large (>7)	7	5.83		
Milk production (litres/day/household)			7.18	14.58
Low (<3)	43	35.83		
Medium (3-6)	62	51.67		
High (>6)	15	12.50		
Milk consumption (litres/day/household)			2.92	1.30
Low (<3)	64	53.33		
Medium (3-5)	50	41.67		
High (>5)	6	5.00		
Milk sale (litres/day/household)			4.26	13.87
Low (<3)	4	3.33		
Medium (3-6)	24	20.00		
High (>6)	9	7.50		
No sale	83	69.17		
Milk disposal pattern				
Milk sold occasionally	83	69.17		
Cooperatives	6	5.0		
Directly to consumers	30	25.00		
Hotel or sweetmakers	1	0.83		

buffalo and crossbred cows. The data revealed that majority (51.67%) of the farmers herd fell in medium category of milk production followed by 35.83 and 12.50 per cent of the farmers belonging to low and high categories of milk production respectively.

Majority of the farmers (69.17%) were not selling milk followed by 25.00 per cent of the farmers who were selling milk directly to consumer, 5.00 per cent selling

to cooperatives and only 0.83 per cent selling to hotels or sweet makers and none of the respondents were selling milk to middlemen.

Source of information of utilization pattern

Data were further analyzed for knowing the utilization pattern of various information sources (Table 2). It was observed that majority of the respondents (65.00%) used information source to

Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to utilization of information sources (n= 120)

Category	Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage
Low (<35)	31	25.83
Medium (35-55)	65	54.17
High (>55)	24	20.00

Mean= 45.70, SD= 14.1

medium extent whereas 35.00 per cent used at low and only 20.00 per cent at high level. The mean score of information sources utilization pattern was found to be 45.70.

Communication behavior of the farmers

It was found that majority (55.00%) of the farmers were having low access to mass media sources followed by 35.83 per cent having medium exposure (Table 3). Radio was the most important mass media source utilized by the farmers for any information. It shows that

information pertaining to animal husbandry or agriculture should be disseminated through radio so that large number of farmers can be benefitted and can update their knowledge in the study area. Majority (60.83%) of the farmers had low extension contact, 30.83 per cent were in medium and 8.34 were in high category of extension contact. The reach of extension contact to remote villages of Jammu and Kashmir was found to be low. Similar findings have been reported by Pandey (1996), Mandal (1999) and Meena (2000).

Table 3. Communication behaviour of the farmers (n= 120)

Variable	Respondents		Mean	SD
	Frequency	Percentage		
Mass media exposure			2.23	1.50
Low (<2)	66	55.00		
Medium (2-4)	43	35.83		
High (>4)	11	9.17		
Extension agency contact			1.28	1.05
Low (<2)	73	60.83		
Medium (2-3)	37	30.83		
High (>3)	10	8.34		

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that majority of the respondents belonged to old age group and only 68.33 per cent were literate. In the era of small family pattern majority of the respondents were still having medium sized families. Majority of the farmers were having medium herd size and milk production and low level of income. Radio and television were the most important sources of information for the farmers of the study area. It is implicated from the study that the reach of extension contact to remote villages of Jammu and Kashmir was found to be low. So it is need of the hour to strengthen the communication channels and various sources of information so that each technology being developed in research institutes could reach the farmers at large which would uplift their socio-economic status and livelihood status.

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