



Socio-Personal, Communication Characteristics and Information Needs of Vegetable Growers of Hill Region of Uttarakhand

Gaurav Papnai , Neelam Bhardwaj, S K Kashyap and Shweta Sunetha

Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Chinyalisaur, Uttarkashi, 249 196 (Uttarakhand)

ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to identify the relationship between socio-personal & communication characteristics and information needs for designing distance learning modules for farmers of hill districts of Uttarakhand. One hundred and twenty vegetable growers of four hill districts of Uttarakhand state comprising of Kumaon and Garhwal region were selected for the study. Data were analyzed by using percentage, frequency and chi-square analysis. It was observed that vegetable growers of hill regions of Uttarakhand had moderate to high need for information as well as knowledge. The most important areas in which respondents had high information needs were seed treatment, weed management, disease and pest control, chemical fertilizer application, harvesting, post harvesting and marketing. The findings revealed there were no direct meaningful relationship between information needs and Socio-personal profiles.

Key Words: Information needs, Socio-economic, Vegetable growers, Relationship.

INTRODUCTION

Farmers of hill region are engaged in growing of different in different altitudinal zones and in all the geographical location. In terms of production, some areas are producing high quality and quantity of vegetables but the production is not as much as can be desired keeping favourable geo-environmental conditions in view. The villages, which are located in the highland, are exporting vegetables, particularly potato, tomato cabbage, pea in the regional market and earning high income. At the same time, most of the regions in the mid-slopes are producing vegetable domestically while the agro-ecological conditions are quite suitable for high production. It is because farmers are still unaware about the new cultivation practices and technologies available with the research institutes. Hence, it is essential to disseminate information about new technologies so that farmers can make use of these technologies. There also existed a gap between research findings and the need of the farmers. It has been reported by Raut (2005) that about 73 per cent respondents need information related to agriculture followed

by horticulture (59 %) and animal husbandry (18 %). Different extension agencies like Krishi Vigyan Kendras, District Horticulture Officers and other non government organizations are providing information about agriculture to the farmers in closer proximity but still the information gap is prevailing in the hilly region. Hence, the present study was undertaken to find out relationship between personal, socio-economic and communication characteristics and information needs of vegetable growers in hill regions of Uttarakhand..

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Out of the six districts of the Kumaon region, Nainital and Champwat and from seven districts of the Garhwal region, Rudraprayag and Tehri Garhwal district on the basis of productivity of vegetables were selected for the study. Out of these districts KVK of each district was selected purposively and one adopted vegetable growing village from each KVK was selected purposively. Thirty farmers from four selected villages each who were engaged in vegetable cultivation were

selected by using census method. The data for the investigation were collected from 120 respondents with the help of semi structured interview schedule and knowledge test. The relationship among the selected characteristics (includes personal, socio economic and communication characteristics) and information needs of vegetable growers as perceived by the respondents were determined by computing the correlation coefficients (r value). The data collected were coded, tabulated, analyzed and interpreted with the help of appropriate procedures and statistical techniques.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio personal characteristics

The data (Table 1) showed that majority of the respondents (70.00%) belong to middle age group followed by old (15.84%) and young (14.16%) age group. Raut (2005) also found that majority of the respondents belonged to middle age followed by young and old. Regarding educational status of the farmers, it was observed that 30.83 per cent of the respondents were having primary education followed by middle level (26.67%) and intermediate and more (20.00%) where as only 18.33 per cent of the respondents have education up to high school. Some of the farmers (4.17%) were found illiterate (Table 1).

Majority of the respondents (48.34%) were having medium level of experience in the enterprise, followed by high level (38.33 %) and few farmers (13.33%) came under low category. The values for land holdings revealed that a majority of the respondents (53.33%) were small followed by marginal (40%), medium (5%) and large (1.67%) category of land holding. The reason behind this might be that in hilly area, the land is scattered and divided in the families so maximum number of the farmers were marginal and small.

It was noticed that majority of the respondents (78.34%) belonged to general category which included Brahmins and Thakur followed by other backward caste (15.83%) and Scheduled caste

Table1. Distribution of respondents according to their socio personal characteristics.

Parameter	Category	Frequency (N=120)	Percentage
Age Mean=33.71 S.D.=11.41 Middle (22-45 yr) Old (>45 yr)	Young (<22 yr)	17	14.16
		84	70.00
		19	15.84
Education Primary Middle level High school Intermediate and more	Illiterate	05	04.17
		37	30.83
		32	26.67
		22	18.33
		24	20.00
Year of experience Medium (5-9 yr) High (> 9 yr)	Low (<5 yr)	16	13.33
		58	48.34
		46	38.33
Marital status Married Widow	Unmarried	16	13.33
		102	85.00
		2	01.67
Land Holding	Marginal (<1 ha)	48	40.00
	Small (1-2 ha)	64	53.33
	Medium (2-4 ha)	6	05.00
	Large (>4 ha)	2	01.67
Caste	Scheduled Caste	07	05.83
	Other Backward Caste	19	15.83
	General	94	78.34
Source of Earning	Agriculture	120	100.00
	Unskilled	24	20.00
	Skilled worker	71	59.17
	Business	57	47.50
	Service	42	35.00
Social Participation	Cooperative society	28	23.33
	Farmers forum	16	13.33
	Youth club	14	11.67
	Dairy cooperative	06	05.00
	Panchayat membership	38	31.67
	No Membership	46	38.33

Information Needs of Vegetable Growers

(05.83%) including Gorkhaali and Jatav. The data regarding Source of earning in Table 1 indicate that all the respondents (100 %) were engaged in agriculture followed by skilled workers (59.17%), business (57.50%) and services (35.00%) as their source of earning. Only 20 per cent were found to be unskilled worker. It was evident (Table 1) that regarding social participation that 31.67 per cent of the respondents were involved in socio-political institutions like Panchayat followed by 23.33 per cent in co-operative societies, 13.33 per cent in societies like farmers forum and 11.67 per cent of the respondents were engaged in various Youth clubs like Yuvak Mangal Dal and Yuvati Mangal Dal. Merely five per cent of the respondents were engaged in dairy co-operatives.

Socio economic status (SES)

It refers to the status and the position of the respondents' family in the society. It is relevant from Table 2 that most of the respondents 63.34 per cent had medium level of socio economic status (SES) followed by upper level (23.33%) and lower level (13.33%). Therefore, the analysis of the figures reveals that majority of the respondents were found in medium level of SES.

Communication characteristics

It is apparent from Table 3, that maximum of respondents (63.33%) had medium level of extension agency contact, followed by low (22.50%) and high extension agency contact (14.17%). Majority of the respondents were having contact with extension agencies because these villages were adopted by the Krishi Vigyan Kendras of the respective districts. It was that most of the respondents (65.00%) were having medium level of information seeking behaviour,

followed by low level (23.33%) and high level of information seeking behaviour (11.67%). Singh and Kalra (1993) reported that farmers preferred radio for seeking agricultural information followed by television, newspaper, agricultural magazines, films and audio cassettes. It was evident that most of the respondents (57.50%) were having medium level of information processing behaviour, followed by low level (30.00%) and high level (12.50%). Majority of the farmers processed the information through remembering and documenting the literature. Some farmers also maintained the file for processing the information.

It was pertinent to note that most of the respondents (61.66%) had medium level of information sharing behaviour, followed by low (26.67%) and high level (11.67%). Maximum of the respondents shared the gained information with their relatives, neighbours and with the needy persons of their locality. Donner (2009) shared a number of services that use mobile phones for interaction with rural farmers. Providing market information was the most frequently offered service.

The finding regarding communication characteristics showed that majority of the respondents had medium extension agency contact, information seeking behaviour, information processing behaviour and information sharing behaviour.

Information needs analysis through knowledge test

Information needs of the vegetable growers were analyzed and prioritized. The level of Information need was determined with the help of average mean score and standard deviation (SD). The Information need was identified by various methods

Table 2. Distributions of respondents according to socio economic status.

Parameter	Level of SES	Category	Frequency (N=120)	Percentage
SES Mean=27.85 S.D.=8.57	Lower	Less than 19	16	13.33
	Middle	19-35	76	63.34
	Upper	More than 35	28	23.33

Table 3. Distribution of respondents according to communication behaviour.

Category	Frequency (N=120)	Percentage
1. Extension Agency Contact		
Low	27	22.50
Medium	76	63.33
High	17	14.17
2. Information Seeking Behavior		
Low	28	23.33
Medium	78	65.00
High	14	11.67
3. Information Processing Behavior		
Low	36	30.00
Medium	69	57.50
High	15	12.50
4. Information Sharing Behavior		
Low	32	26.67
Medium	74	61.66
High	14	11.67

viz. knowledge test, interview schedule, focused group discussion and non participant observation. The content of Knowledge test was divided into different segments so that each aspect was covered adequately. It covered the content related to pre-sowing (field preparation, seed treatment), weed management, pest control, insecticide & pesticide application, marketing, infrastructural facilities. The data (Table 4) indicated that majority of the respondents (70%) had medium level of knowledge about their enterprise followed by low (17.50%) and high (12.50%).

Medium level of knowledge was probably due to the reason that most of them were cultivating vegetables for many years and they gained

experience in this sector. They were supported by governmental agencies like Krishi Vigyan Kendras, District Horticulture Board and some NGOs time to time.

Prioritizing of information need on vegetable cultivation practices of respondents

The level of information needs was determined with the help of average mean score and standard deviation. It was evident (Table 5) that most of the farmers possessed moderate and high level of information need. The areas like field preparation, seed treatment, seed sowing, weed control, organic farming, harvesting, post harvest management and marketing information of the respondents categorized under moderate level of information needs categories whereas insect & pest control and chemical fertilizer application were found to be in high level of information need.

The salient issues which emerged during focused group discussion were farmers needed more information on disease and pest identification and its control. They did not know the exact method of application of pesticides and insecticides. Most of the time the crop get damaged due to the infestation of any pest or any disease and if they apply the insecticides and pesticides again by improper use the remaining crop also get damaged. Some of the farmers opined that they needed information regarding better quality and variety of seeds. They told that many times extension personnel provided seeds but they did not germinate or get destroyed. It might be because they were not told about the appropriate sowing methods of the particular variety. Besides vegetable cultivation practices they stressed that they lack information on marketing of their product.

Table 4. Distribution of respondents according to information need.

Variable	Category	Frequency (N=120)	Percentage
Knowledge level Mean=28.28 S.D=5.40	Low (less than 23)	21	17.50
	Medium (23-33)	84	70.00
	High (more than 33)	15	12.50

Information Needs of Vegetable Growers

Table 5. Prioritization of information need on vegetable cultivation practices (N=120)

Sr. No.	Major information need areas	Percentage of re-spondents	Level of information need
1.	Field Preparation	56.50	Moderate
2.	Seed Treatment	62.50	Moderate
3.	Seed Sowing	45.50	Moderate
4.	Weed Control	48.33	Moderate
5.	Insect & Pest Control	83.17	High
6.	Chemical Fertilizer Application	85.00	High
7.	Organic Farming	62.33	Moderate
8.	Harvesting	43.66	Moderate
9.	Post Harvest Management	66.50	Moderate
10.	Marketing	68.66	Moderate

It was clear from Table 3 that there is no significant relationship of socio personal and communication characteristics with information needs. In contrary to the findings Yadav (2008) found that training need or knowledge level had positive and significant relationship with personal and socio economic characteristics, viz. education ($r=0.2895$), social participation($r=0.1795$) and overall socio economic status($r=0.2994$). Sharma (2016) also reported that the farmers in the age group of 20-30 yr were found to be more interested in acquiring trainings, demonstrations and exposure visits and acquired high level of knowledge as compared to the elder group of more than 40 years of age.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the major findings of the study it was concluded that vegetable growers of hill regions of Uttarakhand had moderate to high need for information/ knowledge. The most important areas in which respondents had high information needs were seed treatment, weed management, disease control, insect-pest control, chemical fertilizer application, harvesting, post harvesting

Table 6. Relationship of socio personal and communication characteristics with information needs.

Sr. No.	Variable	Correlation coefficient (r)
1	Age	0.067
2	Years of experience	-0.078
3	Education	0.121
4	Social participation	0.033
5	Extension agency Contact	-0.011
6	Information seeking behaviour	-0.042
7	Information processing behaviour	-0.112
8	Information sharing behaviour	-0.002
9	Marital status	0.038
10	Earning source	0.032
11	Land holding	-0.038
12	Caste	0.125
13	SES	0.064

* *Significant at 0.05 level of probability*

and marketing. The results depicted that majority of the respondents dominated by middle age group, married, under middle level of experience in the enterprise, skilled workers, small farmers, belonged to general caste and had primary and middle level of education. Maximum number of the respondents was involved in social and political institutions with and without holding any post, belonged to medium family size possessed agricultural instruments/ electrical instruments/ animals and had pucca house. Majority of the respondents came under the medium level of socio economic status (SES) group. The findings revealed there were no direct meaningful relationship between information needs and Socio-personal profiles.

REFERENCES

- Donner J (2009). Mobile-Based Livelihood Services in Africa: Pilots and Early Deployments in M. Fernandez-Ardevol and A. Ros (eds.), Communication Technologies in Latin American and Africa: A Multidisciplinary Perspective. Microsoft Research. Available at: <http://in3.uoc.edu/web/>

Papnai et al

- PDF/communication-technologies-in-latin-america-and-africa/Chapter_01_Donner.pdf (accessed 12-09-2014).
- Raut A A (2005). *Developing Distance Learning Framework for Promoting Agriculture Education among Farmers in Uttaranchal*. M. Sc. Thesis. Department of Agricultural Communication, G. B. Pant University of Agriculture & Technology, Pantnagar.
- Sharma M (2016). Effect of age and educational level of dairy farmers on knowledge and adoption of dairy farming practices in Kapurthala district of Punjab. *Int J Farm Sci* **6** (4): 254-262
- Singh G S and Kalra R K (1993). Utilization of Mass Media Sources by Farmers. *Indian J Ext Edu* **28** : 1-2.
- Yadav N (2008). *Designing Training Module on Entrepreneurship Behaviour for Women Engaged in Sericulture: A Study in Uttarakhand*. Ph. D. Thesis. Department of Agricultural Communication, G. B. Pant University of Agriculture & Technology, Pantnagar.

Received on 01/03/2017 Accepted on 30/05/2017