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Research Article

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF VEGETABLE GROWERS

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in Kullu district of Himachal Pradesh during 2016-17. Three community development Blocks i.e. Manali, Kullu and Banjar were purposively selected based on highest number of vegetable growers and from each block, three villages were selected and from each village, twenty farmers were selected randomly, thus the total sample comprised of 180 respondents. The expost facto research design was used for the study. The data were collected using pre-tested structured interview schedule personally. The collected data were analysed using appropriate statistical tools. The results of the study revealed, majority of the respondents was middle aged and more number of farmers had studied up to high school, majority of the vegetable growers had high farming experience with small land holdings. Majority of the farmers belonged to high annual income (>Rs. 60000) and more than half of the farmers had regular habit of consulting neighbors and relatives as a source of information for taking operational decision for both agriculture as whole in addition to vegetable production. High majority of the farmers regularly participated in training, krishi mela and demonstrations. Cent percent of respondents were regular viewer of Television, occasional listener of Radio and occasional reader of news papers. Majority of farmers belonged to medium level category of economic motivation, risk orientation, scientific orientation and market orientation.

INTRODUCTION

The vegetables are the most important to the human diet for better health, because they possess high nutritive value and are rich source of carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins and minerals. The selection of research area in Kullu Valley of Himachal Pradesh was due to the very good conditions for temperate vegetable production of the same. Hence the area was suitable for both that the vegetable production and their breeding for most of the temperate types of vegetables. The summer being mild was suitable for many sub-tropical important vegetables. Still in this area the vegetable production is low, because the rate of adoption of improved vegetable production technology is not fully adopted by the farmers at their own field (Suman, 2008). Even if they produce, the marketing problems are faced by them. Therefore, this research programme is aimed to find out the adoption behavior of the farmers about the vegetable production technology.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in Kullu district of Himachal Pradesh during 2016-17. Kullu district was purposively selected for the study because the district stands top in vegetable cultivation. Ex-post facto research design was employed in this study. Out of five community development blocks, three blocks i.e. Manali, Kullu and Banjar were purposively selected and from each block, three villages were selected and from each village, twenty farmers were selected randomly. Thus, the total sample size constituted 180 respondents for the study. The data were collected using pre-tested structured interview schedule personally. The collected data was analysed using appropriate statistical tools like frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and correlation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results obtained from the present study as well as discussion have been summarized under the following heads:

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Distribution of the respondents based on their personal characteristics

Age

The results pertaining to age presented in Table 1 indicated that majority (75.00%) of the respondents was middle aged followed by old age (15.83%) and young age (9.17%). Middle aged farmers are more enthusiastic had more knowledge and experience regarding vegetable cultivation. Generally this age group (between 31-49 years) farmers have more physical vigor, active in adoption and agricultural practices and also have more responsibility towards family than younger ones. Thus, most of the vegetable growers were from middle age group that could be justified.

Table 1 Distribution of the respondents according to their personal characteristics (n = 180)

Sr. No.	Personal Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
1.	**Age**		
	Young age group (up to 30 years)	34	18.89
	Middle age group (31 – 50 years)	112	62.22
	Old age group (>50 years)	34	18.89
2.	**Education**		
	Illiterate	14	7.78
	Primary	30	16.67
	Middle	64	35.55
	High School	51	28.33
	Graduate	12	6.67
	Degree / Diploma	9	5
3.	**Farming experience**		
	Low	30	16.67
	Medium	50	27.78
	High	100	55.55

Education

With regard to level of education, it is evident that more number (35.55%) of farmers had studied up to middle followed by high school (28.33%), primary (16.67%) and illiterate (7.78%). The rest were educated up to graduate (6.67%) and degree / diploma (5.00%). Non-realization of the influence of formal education in one's life, illiteracy of the parents might have come in the way of providing better education by their parents. Another contributing reason could be the rural social environment might have not encouraged their parents to give education to the children. As the rural people are still traditional based they generally do not prefer to sent their children to college and they expect their children to assist in farm and household activities. The distance of higher study centres from villages and financial constraints also might have prevented the parents from providing higher education to their children.

Farming experience

A perusal of the table 1 indicated that majority of the vegetable growers (55.55%) had high farming experience followed by medium (27.78%) and low (16.67%) farming experience. Farming experience mainly depends upon age and education of the farmers. Majority of respondents belonged to middle aged and old age category and they might have started farming in their early age itself. So majority of respondents had medium farming experience. Since agriculture is the main occupation of majority and the need to support family members.

Land holding

With respect to land holding, 47.22% percent of vegetable growers belonged to small farmers' category followed by marginal farmers (26.67%), semi medium farmers (10.55%), medium farmers (8.89%) and very few (6.67%) belonged to large farmers (Table 2). Around 70% of the farmers' community belonged to small and marginal land holding this could be due to fragmentation of ancestral land from generation to generation because of increased population day by day might have land to smaller size of land holding. However, 15.56 percent of the respondents who had land holding above ten acres. The possible reasons that could be attributed to this were those who had agriculture as the main occupation of the family almost depended on their land for their livelihood. Since the size of land holding will be generally high in dry areas.

Table 2 Distribution of the respondents according to their economic characteristics (n = 180)

Sr. No.	Economic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
1.	**Land holding**		
	Marginal (up to 2.5 acres)	48	26.67
	Small (2.51 – 5.00 acres)	85	47.22
	Semi medium (5.01 – 10.00 acres)	19	10.55
	Medium (10.00 – 25.00 acres)	16	8.89
	Large (>25.00 acres)	12	6.67
2.	**Annual income**		
	Low income group (up to Rs. 20000)	11	6.11
	Medium income group (Rs. 20001 – Rs. 40000)	30	16.67
	Semi medium income group (Rs. 40001 – Rs. 60000)	54	30.00
	High income group (> Rs. 60000)	85	47.22

Table 3 Distribution of the respondents according to their source of information (n = 180)

Sr. No.	Source of information	Extent of participation					
		Regular		Occasionally		Never	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Relatives	105	58.33	95	52.78	22	12.22
2.	Neighbors	95	52.78	85	47.22	14	7.78
3.	Private agencies	57	31.67	83	46.11	19	10.55
4.	Subject matter specialists	46	25.55	65	36.11	11	6.11
5.	Agricultural staff	58	32.22	70	38.89	13	7.22
6.	Horticultural staff	49	27.22	57	31.67	9	5.00
7.	Non government organizations	32	17.78	41	22.78	14	7.78
8.	Bank	35	19.44	24	13.33	21	11.67
9.	News papers	56	31.11	51	28.33	25	13.89

Annual income

Data presented in table 2 indicated that a majority of the respondents (47.22%) belongs to high annual income group (>Rs. 60000) followed by Semi medium annual income group (30.00%). The possible reason could be due to large size of land holding and also income from fruit production. Whereas 16.67 percent of vegetable growers were in medium annual income of Rs. 20000 – Rs. 40000 followed by low annual income group (up to Rs. 20000). This could be due to family background of the respondents. The other reasons were small land holding of size, lack of technical knowledge or guidance

about scientific vegetable cultivation and low risk taking ability leading to low income.

Source of information

More than 50% of respondents had regular habit of consulting neighbors, relatives as a source of information for taking operational decision for agriculture as whole in addition to vegetable cultivation.

In case of occasional participation more than 50 percent of the respondents had habit of consulting to relatives, neighbors, subject matter specialists, agricultural staff, horticultural staff. Bank and news papers also the possible reason might be relatively higher income group, larger size of land holding relatively medium to high both risk and scientific orientation of the respondents. Whereas in case of never participation meager percentage of the farmers were not consulting any source which are being listed in the research tools (table 3).

Extension participation

It could be observed from table 4 that, 92.78 percent respondents were regularly participated in krishi mela followed by training (75.00%), demonstrations (73.33%) and field days (56.11%). From the above results we come to know that, more than 50.00 percent of the respondents had participated in krishi mela, training, demonstrations and field days as ir is organized by ICAR institutions, SAU, State Department of Agriculture and Horticulture, KVK etc. Also 20 – 50 percent of the trained respondents had participated regularly in field visit, group meetings, agricultural exhibition and educational tours. The probable reason for above findings might be due to their interest in extension activities, which directly helps them to get information on relevant innovations, technologies and skills which helps them to seek information from extension experts, subject matter specialists, scientist etc. from the Krishi Vigyan Kendra and NGOs. This intern helps to increase their knowledge and adoption level.

Mass media participation

It is evident from the table 5 that, 92.78 percent respondents were regularly viewers of Television, occasional and listener of radio and news papers respectively. The probable reason for majority of the trained and untrained farmers to be in regular and occasionally listener, viewers and readers of the radio, T.V. and news papers with regarded to agricultural programme might be due to their interest in acquiring latest information in agriculture and market news etc. The mass media provides information on experience of successful farmers through various channels like television, radio and news papers etc. which creates the awareness in other farmers to take up similar activities or try out new innovations.

Economic motivation

It is clear from the table 6 that the majority of the respondents (38.56%) to medium level of economic motivation category followed by high economic motivation category (31.11%) and low economic motivation category (30.56%) respectively. The reason for medium economic motivation category of the respondents might be due to low economic background of the respondents and most of the decisions are made by the older members of the family. The responsibilities of middle and younger were restricted to care and management of agricultural enterprises.

Risk orientation

The results shown in the table 6 that, majority (41.67%) of the farmers had medium level of risk orientation category followed by high (36.66%) and low category (21.67%) respectively. It should be mentioned here that, the individuals will be very critical and cautious in understanding different aspects of technology. There is a tendency in farmers to take risk based on their income, land holding and other resources. Risk taking varies with socio-economic status of the individuals. In the study most of the respondents belonged to small land holding. Hence, the results could have been obtained.

Table 4 Distribution of the respondents according to their extension participation (n = 180)

Sr. No.	Extension activities	Participation		Extent of participation					
		Yes		Regularly		Occasionally		Never	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Training	135	75.00	21	11.67	101	56.11	58	32.22
2.	Demons-trations	132	73.33	20	11.11	100	55.55	60	33.33
3.	Field days	101	56.11	23	12.78	51	28.33	106	58.89
4.	Field visit	90	50.00	18	10.00	42	23.33	120	66.67
5.	Group meeting	86	47.78	9	5.00	45	25.00	126	70.00
6.	Agri. Exhibition	68	37.78	15	8.33	56	31.11	109	60.56
7.	Krishi mela	167	92.78	132	73.33	34	18.89	14	7.78
8.	Education tours	52	28.89	22	12.22	61	33.89	93	51.67

Table 5 Distribution of the respondents according to their mass media participation (n=180)

Sr. No.	Sources	Subscribed		Programme	Frequency use					
					Regular		Occasional		Never	
		Frequency	Percentage		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Radio	34	18.89	Agriculture	6	3.33	34	18.89	140	77.78
				General	20	11.11	65	36.11	95	52.78
2.	TV	167	92.78	Agriculture	35	19.44	65	36.11	80	44.44
				General	155	86.11	20	11.11	5	2.78
3.	News paper	124	68.89	Agriculture	15	8.33	45	25.00	120	66.67
				General	45	25.00	80	44.44	55	30.56
4.	Magazine	22	12.22	Agriculture	2	1.11	12	6.77	166	92.22
				General	15	8.33	34	18.89	141	78.33

Table 6 Distribution of the respondents according to their psychological characteristics (n = 180)

Sr. No.	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
	Economic motivation		
	Low (Mean – 0.385 SD)	55	30.56
1.	Medium (Mean ± 0.385 SD)	69	38.33
	High (Mean + 0.385 SD)	56	31.11
Mean = 7.98 and SD = 1.79			
	Risk orientation		
	Low (Mean – 0.385 SD)	39	21.67
2.	Medium (Mean ± 0.385 SD)	75	41.67
	High (Mean + 0.385 SD)	66	36.66
Mean = 4.89 and SD = 0.91			
	Scientific orientation		
	Low (Mean – 0.385 SD)	57	31.67
3.	Medium (Mean ± 0.385 SD)	67	37.22
	High (Mean + 0.385 SD)	56	31.11
Mean = 8.32 and SD = 1.28			
	Market orientation		
	Low (Mean – 0.385 SD)	36	20.00
4.	Medium (Mean ± 0.385 SD)	104	57.78
	High (Mean + 0.385 SD)	40	22.22
Mean = 9.42 and SD 2.54			

Scientific orientation

The results shown in the table 6 revealed that majority (37.22%) of the vegetable growers had medium scientific orientation whereas, 31.67 percent and 31.11 percent of them had high and low level of the scientific orientation respectively. The possible reason could be scientific orientation is the orientation of farmers to adopt new technologies in a scientific way. This might be due to the willingness to take risk partly.

Market orientation

Data from table 6 revealed that more than half (57.78%) of the respondents had medium level of market orientation, whereas 22.22 percent of respondents had high market orientation and 20.00 percent respondents had low market orientation. This might be due to relatively large size of land holding of the respondents influence the availability of more and more quantity of crop residues which tempted the farmers to produce more and more vegetables to meet self requirements and remaining quantity will be plan to sell in the market resulting in a medium level of market orientation. Similar work related to the present study was also conducted by Bhople *et al.*(1997), Kanvi (2000), Nagesh (2006), Natikar (2001), Raghvendra (2007), Temkar (2000) and Vijaykumar (1997).

CONCLUSION

It is clear from the results of this study that majority of the vegetable growers was middle aged and more numbers of respondents had studied up to high school, majority of the farmers had high farming experience with small land holdings.

Majority of the respondents belonged to high annual income group (> Rs. 60000) and half of the farmers had regular habit of consulting neighbors and relatives as a source of information for taking operational decisions for both agriculture as whole in addition to vegetable production. High majority of the farmers regularly participated in training, krishi mela and demonstrations. Most of farmers were regular viewer of television, occasional listener of radio and occasional readers of news papers. Majority of the respondents belonged to medium level category of economic motivation, risk orientation, scientific orientation and market orientation.

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