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SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF VEGETABLE FARMERS IN EASTERN UTTAR PRADESH

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Abstract: The present paper attempts to examine the personal and socio-economic profile of vegetable farmers of eastern Uttar Pradesh of India. The study was conducted in ten villages located at Araziline and Chakiya block of Varanasi and Chandauli districts of the said area. Data for the study was collected from a sample of 205 vegetable farmers. The findings of the study reveal that, the 35.61% of the vegetable farmers had high school education. Among the sample about 57.56 per cent of farmers were marginal. With respect to farming, about 61.5% had medium level of farming experience. As far as social participation is concerned about 25.37 per cent of vegetable farmers were the member of two organizations. The annual income of vegetable farmers revealed that About 56.59 per cent were found in the medium income category ranging from ₹55,001 to ₹1,90,000. The study revealed that 57.07% of vegetable farmers had medium level of socio-economic status.

Introduction: Uttar Pradesh state of India shares 26% in total horticulture production of the country. It ranks third in fruits, second in vegetable and first position in potato production among all states. This state is the second largest producer of vegetables in the country after West Bengal. The vegetable cultivation has an increasingly important commercial role, especially for low income house holds^[1]. It has great potentiality and scope for improving socio-economic condition of small and marginal farmers since it provides higher yield and high economic return in short time as compared to food grains. It has more income per unit area and employment generation in short span of time and thereby have attracted the farmers of the state. These crops have proved to be the boon to the small and marginal farmers of the state who accounts for more than 90% holding of the State. It was, therefore, required to study the profile of vegetable growers to get some knowledge about socio economic profile of vegetable growers.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Araziline and Chakiya blocks of Varanasi and Chandauli districts of Uttar Pradesh state of India. A sample of 205 vegetable farmers were selected randomly from ten villages from the selected blocks. The pre-tested interview schedule was used for collection of data and the data was analysed by using appropriate statistical methods such as percentage (%), mean and standard deviation.

Results and Discussion

The socioeconomic approach is mainly concerned with the social, economic, and political aspects of individuals or social groups in society. Generally the socioeconomic approach focuses on identifying the adaptive capacity of individuals or communities based on their internal characteristics such as, education, gender, wealth, health status, access to credit, access to information and technology, formal and informal (social) capital, political power, and so on. Variations of these factors are responsible for the variations in socioeconomic characteristics of farmers. The findings about the socioeconomic status of the study area are given in Table 1.

Table-1 Distribution of vegetable farmers according to their various socio-economic characteristics

			n=205
Variable	Category	Frequency (Percentage)	
Age	Young (upto 35)	32 (15.61)	
	Middle (36 to 50)	122 (59.51)	
	Old (above 50)	51 (24.88)	
Education	Illiterate	24 (11.71)	
	Primary School	21 (10.24)	
	Middle School	35 (17.08)	
	High School	73 (35.61)	
	Intermediate	32 (15.61)	
	College Education	20 (9.75)	
Caste	ST	1 (0.49)	
	SC	67 (32.68)	
	OBC	74 (36.10)	
	General	63 (30.73)	
Land Holding	Marginal (below 1 ha.)	118 (57.56)	
	Small (1.0 to 2.0 ha.)	46 (22.44)	
	Medium (2.0 to 3.0 ha.)	25 (12.20)	
	Large (3.0 ha and above)	16 (7.80)	
Housing Pattern	Kachcha	22 (10.73)	
	Mixed	130 (63.41)	
	Pacca	53 (25.86)	
Occupation	Farming and wage earning	77 (37.56)	
	Farming and business	24 (11.22)	
	Farming and service	31 (15.61)	
	Farming as a sole profession	73 (35.61)	
Farming Experience	Low (upto 16 years)	46 (22.44)	
	Medium (16 to 32)	126 (61.46)	
	High (above 32)	33 (16.10)	
Social Participation	Not a member of any organisation	26 (12.68)	
	Members of one organization	118 (57.56)	
	Member of two organizations	52 (25.37)	
	Member of more than two organizations or office bearer	09 (4.39)	
Annual Income	Upto Rs. 55,000/-	59 (28.78)	
	55001/- to 1,90,000/-	116 (56.59)	
	More than 1,90,000/-	30 (14.63)	
Extension Contact	Low (below 14)	48 (23.42)	
	Medium (14 to 32)	112 (54.63)	
	High (more than 32)	45 (21.95)	

Farming Experience: Mean=23.63; SD=7.97; Extension Contact: Mean: 23.26; SD: 9.12

Age: Study indicates that majority of the vegetable farmers (59.51%) were in middle age group, 24.88 per cent of vegetable farmers belonged to old age group & 15.61 per cent vegetable farmers were in young age group. The similar findings were also reported in other studies [2, 3].

Education: The majority (35.61%) of the vegetable farmers had up to high school level followed by middle school level (17.08%), intermediate level (15.61%), illiterate (11.71%), primary level (10.24%) and college level (9.75%) of education. Some studies have shown the similar education level among vegetable farmers [3,4,5].

Caste: It was found that 36.10 per cent of vegetable farmers belonged to OBC caste category followed by SC (32.68%) and General (30.73%). Only one respondent was found from

ST category. Patel [6] had also found similar result in his study.

Land Holding: Study depicts that 57.56 per cent of vegetable farmers were having less than 1 ha of land, thus belonged to marginal farmers category. The farmers who belonged to small and medium categories were 22.44 per cent and 12.20 per cent, respectively. Data also shows that only 7.80 per cent of vegetable farmers were having large land holding. Thus, it may be concluded that majority of the vegetable farmers were marginal farmers having less than 1 hectare of agricultural land. This is due to the fact that in Eastern Uttar Pradesh, per capita agricultural land is comparatively less. The other reason may be the fragmentation of the holdings due to nuclear family system [4,5,6].

Housing Pattern: It is apparent from the data shown in the Table 1, pertaining to type of house possession, that mixed type of habitation was

observed to the extent of 63.41% followed by 25.8% pucca category and 10.00% kachcha. So, it can be concluded that vegetable farmers were having better quality house. This may be due to good to socio-economic condition of the vegetable farmers, which is the result of good vegetable production. It also indicates the status of vegetable farmers in the society of the study area ^[6].

Occupation: The above table indicates that out of 205 vegetable farmers about 77 (37.56%) were dependent upon farming and wage earning for their livelihood, while 73 (35.61%) vegetables farmers have only farming as their occupation. 15.61% farmers are in category of farming and service, and 11.22% are involved in some kind of business along with farming. It may be said that farming with wage earning and farming as a sole profession were two main categories to which majority of vegetable farmers belonged to their occupation ^[6].

Farming Experience: Farming experience shows the number of years the farmer has spent in agricultural and allied farming. For measuring the variable, open response from farmers was recorded. Table 1 depicts that majority of vegetable farmers (61.5%) had have medium level of farming experience followed by low level (22.4%) and high level (16.1%). Findings are in the line with the results of Pawal ^[5].

Overall Socio-economic Status: There were different elements in socio economic status such as education, income, social participation, etc. The responses of the vegetable farmers were

Table-2 Distribution of vegetable farmers according to overall socio-economic status

n=205			
S. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Low (below 17)	57	27.80
2.	Medium (18 to 23)	117	57.07
3.	High (more than 23)	31	15.13
Total		205	100

Mean: 20.42; SD: 2.96

The study revealed that 57.07% vegetable farmers had medium level of socio-economic status. About 27.80 per cent of them belonged to low socio-economic status, while only 15.13 per cent of vegetable farmers were found having high socio-economic status. It can be said that vegetable farmers of eastern Uttar Pradesh are having comparatively better socio-economic status. High vegetable production, good market access and better irrigation based on river Ganga may be the reason for such findings.

Conclusion: The socioeconomic characteristics of farmers are important for better policy

Social Participation: The table 1 shows that the 57.56 per cent of the vegetable farmers were the member of one organization, while 25.37% were the member of two organizations. In this way, 82.93% of vegetable farmers were associated with the organizations like panchayats, cooperatives, youth-club, religious and political organization. It can also be concluded that only 4.39% of vegetable farmers were holding office in one or more organization. Yadav ^[2] reported that most of beneficiaries (58%) were not the members of any organization. It may due to fact that they may not be aware about the organizations or its benefits.

Annual Income: The table 1 reveals that the annual income of 56.59% vegetable farmers was found in the medium category of ₹55001 to ₹1,90,000 followed by 28.78 per cent vegetable farmers in low income category (upto ₹55000) and 14.63 per cent vegetable farmers in high income category (more than ₹1,90,000). Other studies also presented the similar kind trend of income in their study ^[2,6].

Extension Contact: Table 1 demonstrates that 54.63 % of vegetable farmers have medium level of extension contact, while 21.95 per cent of vegetable farmers had high level extension contact. Out of the total sample of farmers 23.42 per cent of vegetable farmers have low level of extension contact. Adebayo ^[7] also found the similar results in their research.

recorded in terms of scores. On the basis of total score, mean score and SD the classification of farmers was done as under.

options. On the basis of the findings it is suggested that socio-economic status of the farmers can be improved by imparting technical knowledge/ training to vegetable farmers, increasing their education level and increasing their social participation.

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