

AN ANALYSIS OF SOCIO-PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF STRAWBERRY GROWERS

Tabina¹, Syed Shafat Kubrevi ² and Sajad Saraf ³

1 M.Sc Student, Division of Agri. Extension & Communication ,FoA Wadura SKUAST-Kashmir India

2 Assistant Professor, Division of Agri. Extension & Communication ,FoA Wadura SKUAST-Kashmir India

3 Assistant Professor, Division of Agri. Economics & Statistics ,FoA Wadura SKUAST-Kashmir India

Email:shafatkubravi2015@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted in districts Srinagar and Baramulla of Jammu and Kashmir with sample size of 105 respondents. These districts were purposively selected because of having maximum area under strawberry cultivation. The data was collected from a total of five villages viz. Gassu (Srinagar), Druru, Battroo, Khanchipora and Hard e Shoora (Baramulla). Socio- personal characteristics of the respondents viz- age, education, family size, land holding, income, occupation, experience, sources of information, extension contacts, extension participation, economic motivation and innovativeness were studied. It was revealed that majority of the respondents were young (46.67%), literate (57.15%), had small family size (53.33%), small land holding (52.38%), had farming as their main occupation (54.28%), belonged to low income group (60.00%), had experience between 10-22 years in strawberry cultivation (48.57%), had access to medium sources of information (57.14%), medium extension contacts (46.667%), having low extension participation (42.85%), exhibiting medium economic motivation (61.90%) and medium innovativeness (44.76%).

Keywords: strawberry, socio-personal, respondents

INTRODUCTION

The strawberry (*Fragaria* sp.) is a member of family Rosaceae which also includes the major crops such as apple, pear, plum, peach, almond etc. Strawberry is a mouth-watering, alluring and nutritious fruit having a distinctively pleasurable aroma and delicate flavor. The fruit is of aggregate type, having seeds (achene) on the surface of red fleshy receptacle. The edible portion of the fruit is about 98 per cent (Pandey *et al.*, 2012).

In India, the commercial production of strawberry is confined to temperate and sub-tropical regions only. Horticulture sector has emerged as a potential player in the Indian economy, contributing 30.4 per cent to GDP in agriculture from mere 8.5 per cent area as well as a means of diversification in overall development of agriculture (Anon., 2020). Talking about Kashmir, a state whose considerable amount of economy is well dependent on horticulture sector; this diversification within the horticulture sector has helped farmers to ensure their economic securities.

Taking up the cultivation of cash crops such as strawberry will withhold and boost the interest of present and upcoming generation to look into the horticulture sector as a profitable venture. The strawberries in Kashmir always

remain in demand as they are very rich in sugar content than strawberries grown in Himalayas and northern regions of India. Kashmir valley can earn considerable revenue from strawberry cultivation, if its cultivation is extended throughout the valley.

Keeping in view the economic importance of strawberry and its commercial value, the present study was carried out to know the socioeconomic characters of the farmers indulged in strawberry cultivation.

OBJECTIVE

To know the socio-personal characteristic of strawberry growers

METHODOLOGY

Kashmir valley has 10 districts and the present study was conducted in district Baramulla and district Srinagar having maximum area and production under strawberry cultivation. These districts were selected purposively as the commercial strawberry cultivation was confined only to these two districts of Jammu and Kashmir.

The horticulture zones were selected purposively on the basis of maximum area under strawberry cultivation.

As such, two horticulture zones were selected from district Baramulla viz. horticulture zone Kunzer and horticulture zone Tangmarg. Similarly, one horticulture zone from district Srinagar viz. horticulture zone Shalimar was selected for the present study.

From horticulture zone Kunzer, two villages viz. Hard-e-Shoora and Khanchipora and from horticulture zone Tangmarg, two villages viz. Druru and Battoo were selected; whereas from horticulture zone Shalimar, only one village namely Gassu was selected purposively for the study as these were the only villages from the respective horticulture zones where strawberry was cultivated. A total of 105 respondents were selected in total from all the five villages combined and the individual respondents to be interviewed were selected randomly.

The socio-personal variables studied in the present investigation are as follows:

Age: The age of the strawberry growers was measured as the number of completed years reported by the respondent at the time of interview.

Education: It refers to the formal schooling years completed by the respondent. It was measured using socio-economic scale (SES) developed by Trevedi (1963)

Family size: It has been operationalized as total number of members in the family of the respondent.

Land holding: It refers to the number of kanals of land owned by the respondent.

Occupation: It refers to the economic activities on which a respondent's family is mainly dependent for their livelihood.

Annual income: It was operationalized as total annual income from agriculture and allied activities. Annual income was studied in terms of main and secondary occupation.

Strawberry cultivation experience: It refers to the number of completed years since the respondent was involved in strawberry cultivation.

Sources of information: It refers to an individual's (farmer's) exposure to or contact with different communication media, sources and personalities, the strawberry growers are utilizing for getting information and the degree of contact with them.

Extension contacts: It was operationalized as the degree to which the farmer had maintained contact and the frequency of contacts with extension personnel.

Extension participation: It was operationalized as the degree to which a respondent involves or participates in various extension activities conducted by development agencies.

Economic motivation: It refers to the extent of the values

or attitudes which attach greater importance to profit maximization as the ends and means. It was measured with the help of scale developed by Supe (1969).

Innovativeness: It refers to the behavior pattern of an individual who has interest and desire to seek changes in farming techniques and is prepared to introduce such changes into his farming operations wherever practical and feasible. The innovativeness was measured by using self-rating scale developed by Moulik (1965).

Measurement of variables: The variables age, family size, land holding, income and strawberry cultivation experience were categorized with the help of cumulative cube root method.

The other variables like sources of information, extension contacts, extension participation, economic motivation and innovativeness were categorized using their mean and standard deviation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data presented in Table 1 revealed that majority of the respondents 46.67 per cent belonged to the young age group followed by 30.47 per cent belonging to middle age group and only 22.85 per cent respondents were in the old age group. Young people are more inclined to try new ideas in farming as they have a fresh perspective and have more knowledge seeking attitude. The results are in line with the findings of Dhakad (2018).

It was also revealed through Table 1 that 42.85 per cent were illiterate while 57.15 per cent respondents had received formal education up to varied levels, out of which 21.9 per cent of the respondents were educated up to middle, 15.23 per cent were educated up to high school, 10.47 per cent of the respondents had educational qualification of graduation and above, 5.71 per cent of the respondents had up to higher secondary level, followed by 3.80 per cent of the respondents having educated up to primary school. Most of the respondents were young who understood the value of education in day to day life. The findings get upheld from Moulasab (2004).

It can be inferred from Table 1 that majority 53.33 per cent of the respondents belonged to family group, followed by 30.47 per cent of the respondents had medium family size and 16.19 per cent of the respondents belonged to the large family size. The explanation behind majority of respondents falling in small family size is that in present day individuals want to have small family unit size to keep up their financial status and occupation, likewise the rise of government arrangements which underlines on having little families additionally may be one reason. This is in similarity with the discoveries of prior examinations by Kumar, S. (2015).

Table 1: Socio-personal profile of the strawberry respondents

(n=105)

Sr. No.	Variable	Category	Mean	Standard deviation	Respondents	
					Frequency	Percentage
1	Age	Young (25 – 40 years)	-	-	49	46.67
		Middle (41 – 57 years)			32	30.47
		Old (Above 57 years)			24	22.85
2	Education	Illiterate	-	-	45	42.85
		Primary level			4	3.80
		Middle level			23	21.90
		High school			16	15.23
		Higher secondary			6	5.71
		Graduate and above			11	10.47
3	Family size	Small (Up to 6 members)	-	-	56	53.33
		Medium (6 – 9 members)			32	30.47
		Large (Above 9 members)			17	16.19
4	Land holding	Small (Up to 6 kanal)	-	-	55	52.38
		Medium (6 – 12 kanal)			26	24.76
		Large (Above 12 kanal)			24	22.85
5	Occupation	Farming	-	-	57	54.28
		Farming + Labour			22	20.95
		Farming + Business			22	20.95
		Farming + Service			4	3.80
6	Income	Low (up to ₹ 2.57 lakh)	-	-	63	60.00
		Medium (₹ 2.57 – ₹ 4.54 lakh)			30	28.57
		High (Above ₹ 4.54 lakh)			12	11.42
7	Strawberry cultivation experience	Up to 10 years	-	-	45	42.86
		10 to 22 years			51	48.57
		Above 22 years			9	8.57
8	Sources of information	Low(below mean- S.D)	5.28	2.22	23	21.90
		Medium(btwn mean ±S.D)			60	57.14
		High(above mean +S.D)			22	20.95
9	Extension contacts	Low(below mean - S.D)	3.18	2.45	31	29.52
		Medium(btwn mean ± S.D)			49	46.67
		High(above mean + S.D)			25	23.80
10	Extension participation	Low(below mean- ½S.D)	2.86	3.13	45	42.85
		Medium(btwn mean ± ½S.D)			25	23.80
		High(above mean +½S.D)			35	33.33
11	Economic motivation	Low(below mean- S.D) (< 10.80)	13.36	2.56	18	17.14
		Medium(btwn mean ± S.D) ($10.80 – 15.92$)			65	61.90
		High(above mean +S.D) (> 15.92)			22	20.95
12	Innovativeness	Low(below mean- S.D) (< 11.37)	14.18	2.81	27	25.71
		Medium(btwn mean +S.D) ($11.37 – 16.99$)			47	44.76
		High(above mean +S.D) (> 16.99)			31	29.52

It is cleared from the above Table 1 that majority 52.38 per cent of the respondents had a land holding up to 6 kanals, followed by

24.76 per cent of the respondents possessed a land holding of 6 to 12 kanals and 22.85 per cent of the respondents owing a land holding of above 12 kanals. Small land holdings of the respondents can be attributed to the fact that the land gets distributed in each family when new members are added and as a result, the land holdings get smaller for each succeeding generation. Similar results were reported by Ashraf *et al.* (2015) in their study.

Table 1 depicted that a large percentage of the respondents 54.28 per cent relied on agriculture farming only as their only source of livelihood. A fairly equal percentage of 20.95 and 20.95 per cent of respondents were dependent on labour and business respectively as their source of livelihood in addition to the farming practices. Only a meagre 3.80 per cent of the respondents were government employees apart from being associated with the farming activities. Due to the increasing unemployment, majority of the youth who have the land resource at their disposal prefer self-employment and choose farming as a means to become independent. In addition, many schemes are aimed to retain the youth in farming in order to prevent their migration. The results are in line with the findings of Daffall *et al.* (2015).

It can be inferred from Table 1 that more than half of the respondents 60.00 per cent had an annual income of up to Rs.2.57 lakh, followed by 28.57 per cent of the respondents having an annual income of Rs.2.57 to Rs.4.54 lakh and only 11.42 per cent of the respondents had an annual income of more than Rs.4.54 lakh. majority of respondents had only agriculture as their main occupation as the source of income. The findings are similar to the findings reported by Kaine and Bewsell (2008).

Table 1 depicted that 48.57 per cent of the strawberry respondents were having an experience of 10 - 22 years in strawberry cultivation, followed by 42.86 per cent of the respondents having an experience of up to 10 years and only 8.57 per cent of the respondents had an experience of more than 22 years in strawberry cultivation. The possible explanation behind this fact is that the respondents had started strawberry cultivation from an early age. The results are in line with the findings of Kumari (2008).

It can be interpreted from the Table 1 that a fairly large number of respondents 57.14 per cent availed medium sources of information, while 21.90 per cent and 20.95 per cent of the respondents availed low and high sources of information respectively to gather information related to

various aspects of agricultural activities. The explanation for this reality might be that dominant part of respondents had a place with center degree of schooling, which influences the overall data looking behaviour of an individual. The aftereffects of this finding is in accordance with the past investigation held Motiwale (2017) and Omede et al., (2019).

It can be inferred from Table 1 that 46.67 per cent of the respondents had medium level of extension contacts, followed by 29.52 per cent of the respondents having low extension contact and 23.80 per cent of the respondents had high level of extension contacts. can be attributed to the small family size and low income group of majority respondents as farm households' heads with low dependency on the number of earners in the farm families, have increasing dependency on extension contacts. Also, the easy and cheaper modes of communication also make the contact between people distantly placed widely accessible. The results are in line with the findings of Attar and Aski (2017) and Lavanya Raj and Aski (2019).

Table 1 showed that most of the respondents 42.85 per cent had low extension participation, while 33.33 per cent and 23.80 per cent of the respondents had high and medium extension participation respectively. The reason being that a fairly large number of the respondents had dual occupations which gave them limited time to access the activities arranged by the extension development agencies. The results are in line with the findings of Sumana (2017).

Table 1 showed that more than half of the respondents 61.90 per cent had medium level of economic motivation, followed by 20.95 per cent of the respondents had high economic motivation and only 17.14 per cent of the respondents had low economic motivation level. Since most of the respondents belonged to low and medium income level groups, therefore, majority of them tried to seek those avenues of income generation which would provide them sound profits accounting to the medium and high levels of economic motivation of the respondents. The results are in support with the findings of Nagesh (2007), Katke and Deshmukh (2012), Vinaya *et al.*, (2013), Farooq *et al.* (2020) and John *et al.*, (2020).

It can be inferred from Table 1 that 44.76 per cent of the strawberry respondents exhibited medium level of innovativeness, followed by 29.52 per cent of the respondents exhibited high innovativeness while as 25.71 per cent of the respondents exhibited low level of innovativeness. The medium innovativeness of the strawberry respondents may be correlated to the fact that they were literate, having medium information sources and extension contacts. Also being young, they were eager to not only gain information

regarding different and new aspects of farming as and when they came to know of it but also try out the new ideas which they anticipated to be fruitful. The results are in line with the findings of Ali (2017).

CONCLUSION

Strawberry is one of the important crop of Jammu and Kashmir, which has been developing in wide region by growers in the selected survey area. The temperate climate of the Kashmir valley already gives it an upper hand in producing quality product compared to the rest of the country. The main purpose of the investigation was to study different socio-personal characteristics of the strawberry growers like age, education, family size, land holding, occupation, annual income, experience, sources of information, extension contacts, extension participation, economic motivation and innovativeness. It was concluded that most of the respondents were young, educated, having small family size and land holding, having agriculture as their main occupation, belonging to low income group, having medium experience in strawberry cultivation, medium sources of information and extension contacts, low extension participation and exhibiting medium economic motivation and innovativeness.

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