



## **Socio-Economic Characteristics and Use of Information Sources by the Farmers of Kurukshetra District, Haryana: A Survey**

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### **Abstracts**

The study has highlighted the socio-economic characteristics and use of information sources by the farmers in nine villages of Kurukshetra district. It is revealed that 86.5 percent farmers had their self-ownership cultivated lands and 44.2 percent of them had the 3-4 acres land. Among all 71.2 percent farmers belongs to general category. 28.8 percent farmers had farming experience of more than 30 years and annual saving Rs. 50 thousand to 1 lac from agriculture. Farmers were contacted to the Department of Agriculture and Block Panchayat office each 26.9 percent for their needs of agriculture information. All farmers were communicating in Hindi with other farmers, friends and family members, and fertilizer vendors (96.2%) for their information needs. More than fifty percent farmers (51.9%) were verbally communicating with anyone in farmer fairs, rallies, and 28.9 percent with government officials and agricultural experts regarding information. More than 80 percent farmers were facing constraints of distance and difficulty in reaching researchers, and excessive bureaucratic procedures, poor government management and policies. Majority of farmers (65.4%) faced lack of funds and high cost of obtaining information. 71.2 percent farmers felt that information is very important in agriculture areas while 82.7 percent farmers were fully satisfied from verbal communication sources.



**Keywords:** Socio-economic characteristics, Information Needs, Kurukshetra district, Verbal communication, Agrarian, Information Sources

## 1 Introduction

India has been an agrarian country since ancient times and about 58% of its population is dependent on agriculture (Foundation, 2020). So, agriculture is the main sector of income for rural people in India. India is increasing its contribution to the global food trade every year, not because of its potential for added value to the food industry. Food industry is one of the largest industries in India, accounting for 32% of the total food market and ranked fifth in terms of production, consumption, exports and expected growth (Agritech India, 2020). Indian society itself is ushering in an era of knowledge-based economy, an era which requires knowledge as the most important capital among other countries of the world.

Agriculture is the backbone of the Indian economy and information is the main key component of an improved agricultural realm (Himani, 2014). Farmers require proper information time to time to plan for their agricultural activities such as making a choice of the inputs, and eventually on when and where to sell their crops products. So they can get adequate value of their crops. Thus, we see a direct relationship between the availability of information and agriculture. Agriculture has played an important role in economic growth. To make the economy better and grow, the information needs of the farmers should be met easily and at as low a cost as possible. (Elly & Silayo, 2013) During the 2011-2014 period, agriculture provided employment to 43% of men and 60% of women. Agriculture provides raw materials to our main industries which are important for strengthening the national economy (Reddy & Dutta, 2018).

In spite of this, small and marginal farmers in India account for 70% and farmers took loans from banks and private money lenders. The crisis of repayment of agricultural credit is due to the suicide of the farmers. National Crime Records Bureau Report (2015) stated that 38.5% of farmers committed suicide due to bankruptcy or indebtedness, 19.5% due to agricultural problems, 11.7% due to family problems, 10.5% due to illness. While 45.2% small and 27.4% marginal farmers were committed suicide. 12602 people committed suicide in the Indian agricultural sector, of which 8007 were farmers and 4595 of them were agricultural laborers. It is clearly shown that indebtedness (38.5%) was the leading cause of farmer suicides (Sraavanth & Sundaram, 2019).

Information is a communication tool between stakeholders and acts as a channel to shape decisions. Agricultural information and technical expertise are required, so the need for extension services is not readily available to all farmers due to diverse requirements. They face many problems (Darshan, Meena, & Meena, 2017 ). Information is an essential factor in the practice of farming and the quality of agricultural information rests strongly on accuracy, timeliness, and relevance. Accuracy implies this information is free from bias and timeliness means that the recipient can receive information when needed. Whereas relevance implies whether the information answers the user's questions. Farmers' information is very important to increase agricultural productivity. Farmers somehow engage in information search to fill information gaps and fulfill their goals (Salau, Saingbe, & Garba, 2013). Therefore information has become the essential element in our progressive society.

Information is “the fifth need of man ranking after air, water, food, and shelter”. Every person needs information in their day to day life. If information is used at the right time in agriculture, then agricultural productivity can be increased in many ways. Relevant and timely



information on soil quality, new technologies, weather and market trends helps the farmer make the right decisions about increase of their production, buy inputs and sell crop production (Acheampong, Frimpong, Adu-Appiah, Asante, & Asante, 2017). Prevention and control of pathogens in the agriculture often depends on adopting best management practices (Ritter, et al., 2017). We are living in an information society where everyone can create, access, use and share their information and knowledge to promote their development, communities and people to improve their quality of life.

Information sources are available in various forms print, non-print and verbal. Normally print and non-print sources are recorded for an individual, organization, and institutes. These information sources are radio, television, newspapers, magazine, books, mobile phones, computers, friends, family members, libraries, and institutes, etc. The use of sources of information is determined by various factors such as their information needs and purpose of use of information. Journalists and farmers are using information sources for various purposes (Kumar & Swain, 2017).

## **2 Material and Methods**

The present study was conducted on the farmers of nine village of Kurukshetra district, Haryana. 407 villages in the district of Kurukshetra Out, 9 (2.21 percent) villages were selected randomly from the Kurukshetra district. Data was collected through a questionnaire of Hindi language with the help of simple random to select the village. From each of the selected villages, 10 farmers were targeted randomly for the collection of data. 90 questionnaires were distributed and 72 questionnaires duly filled up were collected from farmers, out of which 52 questionnaires were found valid. For collection of data, the researcher visits all villages and met personally with the farmers at their homes or farms.

## **3 Objectives of the Study**

The following are the specific objectives of the study:

1. To identify the socio-economic characteristics of the farmers in Kurukshetra district;
2. To ascertain the verbal information sources used by the farmers;
3. To know the constraints faced by the farmers;
4. To explore the satisfaction level of the farmers;



## 4 Results and Discussion

Socio-Personal Profile of respondents:

Table 1  
Village and land wise distribution of the farmers

Sr. No.	Village	Land (in Acres)					
		2 and less than 2 acres (%)	3-4 acres (%)	5-8 acres (%)	9-12 acres (%)	More than 12 acres	Total (%)
1	Amin	1 (1.9)	1 (1.9)	1 (1.9)	-	-	3 (5.8)
2	Dayalpur	2 (3.8)	5 (9.6)	2 (3.8)	1 (1.9)	-	10 (19.2)
3	Fatuhpur	-	2 (3.8)	1 (1.9)		1 (1.9)	4 (7.7)
4	Jyotisar	1 (1.9)	2 (3.8)	2 (3.8)	1 (1.9)	1 (1.9)	7 (13.5)
5	Kirmach	2 (3.8)	5 (9.6)	-	-	1 (1.9)	8 (15.4)
6	Kuvar Kheri	-	2 (3.8)	-	-	-	2 (3.8)
7	Sunheri Khalsa	3 (5.8)	1 (1.9)	-	1 (1.9)	-	5 (9.6)
8	Tigari Khalsa	3 (5.8)	1 (1.9)	-	-	-	4 (7.7)
9	Thana	3 (5.8)	4 (7.7)	-	2 (3.8)	-	9 (17.3)
Total		15 (28.8)	23 (44.2)	6 (11.5)	5 (9.6)	3 (5.8)	52 (100)

Table 1 show that highest respondents (19.2%) were from Dayalpur village followed by the farmers of 17.3 percent from Thana, Kirmach village with 8 (15.4%). While lowest respondents 2 (3.8%) were from Kuvar Kheri village. Most of them have 3-4 acres of land. Out of 52, maximum i.e. 23 (44.2%) farmers have 3-4 acres of the land followed by 15 (28.8%) who have 2 and less than 2 acres land. Whereas 3 (5.8%) have only more than 12 acres of land.



Table no. 2

Socio-economic characteristics of the farmers

Social Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Category		
General	37	71.2
Backward class	11	21.1
Schedule Caste	4	7.7
Land Ownership		
Self	45	86.5
Contract	4	7.7
Both	3	5.8
Occupation		
Wages	6	11.5
Govt. Job	-	-
Private job	2	3.8
Self business	10	19.2
Any other	5	5.8
Instrument		
Own Tractor	13	25
Rental Tractor	36	69.2



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Animals	3	5.8
Language		
Hindi	52	100
English	8	15.4
Punjabi	1	1.9
Experience		
Below 10 years	8	15.4
10 to 15 years	11	21.2
15 to 20 years	5	9.6
20 to 30 years	13	25
More than 30 years	15	28.8
Annual Savings		
Below 50 Thousand	8	15.4
50 thousand to 1 lac	15	28.8
1lack to 2 lacs	2	3.9
More than 5 lacs	1	1.9
Not replied	26	50

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Table 2 shows the social characteristics of the farmers. It revealed that majority of the farmers (71.2%) belongs to General Category, and 21.1 percent of the belonged to Backward Class. Only 7.7 percent were found Schedule Caste farmers in Kurukshetra district. With respect to the respondents ownership of cultivated lands, in which 86.5 percent of respondents cultivated their own land followed by 7.7 percent farmers who have contractual/rented land while 5.8 percent cultivated both their own and contractual land. It's good, 19.2 percent farmers were also



doing their own business as well as farming. This was a commendable move for the farmer communities. 11.5 percent of respondents were waging with agriculture. So they can live a better life.

Although some farmers in Kurukshetra do business, the majority of the 69.2 percent of respondents were doing farming with rental tractors, and 25 percent with the help of their own tractors. While collecting information, it was also felt that the economic condition of most farmers was not very good. All the respondents were communicating with each other in Hindi language with Haryana liability for their agricultural work and 15.4 percent both of them communicating in English and Hindi language. Only one respondent knew the Punjabi language as well as Hindi and English. Hence, it can be said that the farmers of Kurukshetra have chosen Hindi for their agricultural work.

On regard to the farming experience it was found that the highest number (28.8%) of respondents had more than 30 years of experience and 25 percent of them with 20 to 30 years experience for farming. 50 percent of the respondents did not reply about their annual savings from agriculture and it was felt that there is no savings in agriculture. 28.8 percent of them that they annually saving Rs. 50 thousand to 1 lac, and 15.4 percent below Rs. 50 thousand from agriculture.

Table no. 3

Age and marital status of the farmers

Status	Age groups						Grand Total
	Below 20 years (%)	21-30 years (%)	31-40 years (%)	41-45 years (%)	46-50 years (%)	More than 50 years (%)	
Unmarried	2 (100)	3 (42.9)	1 (9.1)	-	1 (12.5)	1 (5.6)	8 (15.4)
Married	-	4 (57.1)	10 (90.9)	6 (100)	6 (75)	17 (94.4)	43 (82.7)
Widow/er	-	-	-	-	1 (12.5)	-	1 (1.9)
<b>Total</b>	2 (100)	7 (100)	11 (100)	6 (100)	8 (100)	18 (100)	52 (100)

Table 3 shows that status of the respondents. Majority of 82.7 percent farmers were married and 15.4 percent of them were unmarried. Only one respondent was widow/er. Highest 18 respondents were more than 50 years and 11 respondents were between 31 to 40 years age groups. 8 respondents were from the age group of 46 to 50 years.



Table no. 4

Sources consulted by the farmers

Departments and Institutions	Respondents	Percentage
Agriculture Department	14	26.9
Agriculture University	2	3.8
Libraries	-	-
Block Panchayat Office	14	26.9

Table 4 shows that out of 52, 26.9 percent respondents consulted the Department of Agriculture as well as reached the Block Panchayat office for their agriculture related information.

Table no. 5

Sources used by the farmers for their information needs

Sources	Respondents	Percentage
Colleague farmers, friends and family members	52	100
Government officials and agricultural experts	15	28.9
Local leaders	9	17.3
From anyone in farmer fairs and rallies	27	51.9
Agriculture and fertilizer vendors	50	96.2

Table 5 shows that all respondents verbally interacted with agricultural farmers, friends, and family members for agricultural work, and 96.2 percent used agricultural and fertilizer vendors. More than fifty percent of respondents were talk to anyone in farmer fairs and rallies, whereas 28.9 percent of them interacted with government officials and agricultural experts.



Table no. 6

Timeliness of access information by the farmers

Source of information	On time	Sometimes on time	Never	Late	Sometimes late
<b>Government Departments and Institutions</b>					
Agriculture Department	4 (7.7)	10 (19.3)	38 (73)	-	-
Agriculture Mall	2 (3.8)	6 (11.6)	43 (82.7)	1 (1.9)	-
Agricultural University	-	1 (1.9)	50 (96.2)	1 (1.9)	-
Block Panchayat Office	7 (13.5)	7 (13.5)	38 (73)	-	-
<b>Information source</b>					
Colleague farmers, friends and family members	49 (94.2)	3 (5.8)	-	-	-
Government officials and agricultural experts	3 (5.8)	11 (21.2)	37 (71.1)	1 (1.9)	-
Agriculture and fertilizer vendors	39 (75)	10 (19.2)	2 (3.8)	1 (1.9)	-
From anyone in farmer fairs and rallies	4 (7.7)	14 (26.9)	25 (48.1)	7 (13.5)	2 (3.8)

Table 6 shows that information access timeliness of the respondents. 19.3 percent respondents accessed information sometimes on time from the agriculture department and 13.5



percent respondents' accessed information each on time or sometimes on time from Block Panchayat Office. Agricultural malls be used only sometimes on time by 11.6 percent of respondents for agriculture information. While a large number of respondent's never accessed information from Government Departments and Institutions.

Majority of 94.2 percent respondents were accessing information on time from Colleague farmers, friends, family members and 78.8 percent accessed sometimes on time from agriculture and fertilizer vendors. 21.2 percent of the respondents were receiving information sometimes on time from government officials, agricultural experts, and agricultural and fertilizer vendors (19.2%).

Table no. 7

Constraints faced by the farmers

Constraints	Respondents (%)
Lack of funds and high cost of obtaining information	34 (65.4)
Excessive bureaucratic procedures and poor government management and policies	42 (80.8)
distance and difficulty in reaching researchers	43 (82.7)
Information is too old	22 (42.3)

Table 7 described that majority of respondents (82.7%) were facing constraints of distance and difficulty in reach of researchers, and excessive bureaucratic procedures and poor government management and policies (80.8%). Most of the faced lack of funds, the high cost of obtaining information (65.4%), and 42.3 percent felt the availability of information too old.

Table no. 8

Importance of information by respondents

Level	Respondents	Percentage
Very important	37	71.2
Important	14	26.9



Cannot say anything	1	1.9
Less importance	-	-
Little importance	-	-

Table 8 shows that information is play vital role in agriculture like other fields of development. Majority of 71.2 percent respondents said that information is very important and 26.9 percent felt information is important in agriculture areas.

Table no. 9

Satisfaction of information by respondents

Level	Respondents	Percentage
Fully satisfied	43	82.7
Satisfied	8	15.4
Not satisfied	-	-
Less satisfied	1	1.9
Least satisfied	-	-

Table 9 shows that farmers were getting information through verbally communication from institutions, department and Colleague farmers, friends and family members, Government officials etc. It was found the majority of the respondents (82.7%) were fully satisfied with verbal communication sources and 15.4 percent satisfied. Only one respondent was less satisfied.

## 5 Findings and Conclusion

1. A large number of respondents (19.2%) belonged to the village of Dayalpur with their own land and 44.2 percent of the land belonging to the 3-4 acres group.
2. Majority of respondents (86.5%) had their self-ownership of cultivated lands and 7.7 percent on contractual/rented land.
3. Most of the respondents (71.2%) were from General Category and lowest 7.7 percent belonged to Schedule Caste in Kurukshetra district.
4. 69.2 percent of respondents were cultivated their land by a rental tractor while 25 percent had their own tractor.



5. Only 19.2 percent respondents were also doing their own business as well as farming and 11.5 percent wages.
6. Mainly respondents (28.8%) had farming experience of more than 30 years and 25 percent of 20 to 30 years experience. While 9.6 percent had of 15 to 20 years.
7. All the respondents were communicating in Hindi language for agricultural work and at the same time, 15.4 percent were also communicating in English.
8. Most of respondents were not replied about your annual savings from agriculture. 28.8 percent farmers were annually saving Rs. 50 thousand to 1 lac from agriculture while 15.4 percent respondents saving below Rs. 50 thousand.
9. Highest 82.7 percent respondents were married and 15.4 percent unmarried. While 18 respondents were more than 50 years and 11 respondents were from 31 to 40 years.
10. Mainly respondents had contracted the Department of Agriculture and Block Panchayat office each 26.9 percent for their needs of agriculture information.
11. All respondents verbally interacted with agricultural farmers, friends and family members, and 96.2 percent agricultural and fertilizer vendors. Majority of 51.9 percent respondents were communicated with anyone in farmer fairs, rallies, and 28.9 percent with government officials and agricultural experts.
12. Mainly respondents (19.3%) were accessing information sometimes on time from the agriculture department. While 13.5 percent respondents were accessing information each on time or sometimes on time from Block Panchayat Office.
13. More than ninety percent (94.2%) respondents were accessing information on time from Colleague farmers, friends, family members and 78.8 percent accessed sometimes on time from agriculture and fertilizer vendors.
14. More than 80 percent respondents were facing constraints of distance and difficulty in reaching researchers, and excessive bureaucratic procedures, poor government management and policies. Majority (65.4%) of respondents faced lack of funds and high cost of obtaining information.
15. Most of the respondents (71.2%) felt the information is very important and important (26.9%) in agriculture areas. While 82.7 percent respondents were fully satisfied from verbal communication sources.

## 6 Conclusion

It has been concluded that mainly farmers had small scale land and this cultivable land was their own. But they were farming by rental tractors. It is a good sign for farmers that they were doing their own business, but some also were wages. These farmers were doing agriculture for a long time and mainly communicated in Hindi. But their level of annual savings of farmers was very low.



The farmers mainly contacted the Agriculture Department and Block Panchayat Office for agriculture information. Farmers, friends and family members, agricultural and fertilizer vendors, farmers' fairs, rallies, government officials and agricultural experts were the main sources of information among the farmers. Some farmers were getting information from the Department of Agriculture and Block Panchayat office. Mainly farmers were accessing farming information from colleagues' farmers, friends, family members, agri-fertilizer vendors, farmer fairs and rallies. Distance and difficulty in reaching researchers, and excessive bureaucratic procedures, poor government management and policies, lack of funds, and high cost of were main problems among them. Most farmers agreed that information is very important in agricultural areas and fully satisfied with oral communication sources.

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