

Original Research Article

Socioeconomic Characteristics of Farmers Who Use Of Mobile Phone for Farming in Lakhnaur Block of Madhubani District of Bihar

ABSTRACT

Modern agriculture has become highly knowledge intensive and requires timely, reliable and accurate information on various aspects like crop management, markets, weather information etc. The nature of information always depends on a number of factors such as the farm activity, land holding, climatic conditions, marketing opportunities etc. Using the available information further depends on various factors like literacy, and economic status etc. This study is attempting to undertake a micro level analysis of collected data to assess characteristics of the respondents using mobile phone through study of Independent variables in Madhubani District of Bihar. Total of 100 farmers were randomly selected from Block Lakhnaur in Madhubani district of Bihar. Lakhnaur block consists of 44 villages, out of which 2 villages were selected randomly for this study. The data were collected through interview schedule, Present study was in term of frequency.

Key word: *Mobile, Farmer, Agriculture Information, socio-economic, Farming*

Introduction:

Agriculture continues to be the most important sector of the Indian economy and agriculture is a more or less a compulsion for livelihood of millions of farmers Land and water resources have almost reached their limits, price of commodities are fluctuating almost every day, profits are negligible for most of the marginal and small farmers and most of all getting information is cumbersome. In present day agriculture, soft resources like knowledge and skills are as important as hard resources like inputs, and sometimes more important, (Saravanan and Bhattacharjee, 2014).

Mobile phone effectively reduces the distance between individuals and institutions, making the sharing of information and knowledge easier and more effective. Social networks can be strengthened and individuals empowered through use of their handset. It is providing a direct global communication channel to rural communities. It also helps in making local content, rural services more efficient, cost-effective, reliable and timely communication channel in the context of markets,

33 extension advice, monitoring, finances, health, etc. It is provide multiple formats for information in one
34 device and accessibility for illiterate users (i.e. voice and images).

35 Modern agriculture has become highly knowledge intensive and requires timely, reliable and
36 accurate information on various aspects like crop management, markets, weather information etc.
37 The nature of information always depends on a number of factors such as the farm activity, land
38 holding, climatic conditions, marketing opportunities etc. Using the available information further
39 depends on various factors like literacy, and economic status etc, (ICRA Management Consulting
40 Services Limited, 2011).

41 Related studies in the same area

42 Cidro and Radhakrishna (2006) study that farmer under 50 years of age in their survey
43 accounted for (63.1%); while participants in this study from the same age group accounted for
44 (37.0%). The remainder were 51 years old or above. A majority of farmers in this experiment must be
45 seen as middle-aged or elderly farmers. Most participants (76.7%) had completed only a primary
46 school education, although (12.9%) of participants finished at the level of junior high school
47 Tantisantisom (2011) found that The participants were composed of 57 (49.1%) farmers from the
48 Muang District and 59 (50.9%) farmers from the Soongmen District. In total, the number of male
49 participants (71.6%) was many more than female participants (28.4%). A majority of farmers in this
50 experiment must be seen as middle-aged or elderly farmers. Most participants (76.7%) had
51 completed only a primary school education, although (12.9%) of participants finished at the level of
52 junior high school. the majority of participants from Muang District (77.2%) earned about 8001 –20000
53 baht whereas (69.5%) of those from Soongmen District earned 3001 – 8000 baht. Islam (2011) study
54 that people between 19 and 30 are most prone to mobile phone usages but the age group 31-50 is
55 not far behind and in fact they were the most frequent phone owners The age group 19-30 is
56 generally seen as the most important target group. Bachhav(2012) surveyed conducted in
57 Maharashtra, India reported that The highest pe (36%) belonging the age group 41-50 years followed
58 by the age groups of 31-40 (33.72%). Under educational status, maximum numbers of persons i.e.
59 (58.86%) are attained up to the higher secondary school, 12.57% are pass out diplomas, polytechnic,
60 while (10.28%) are graduate and only (18.81%) person are found illiterate in the study.

61 **Tetty (2013)** reported that sex of the respondents was made up of males (50%) and
 62 females (50%) with 39% owning farms with the sizes of less than an acre, (30%) between 1-2 acres
 63 whiles (31%) had farms above 2 acres. Majority (45%) of the respondents had their highest
 64 education at the Junior High/Middle School, (29%) had up to primary school education, (6%) had up
 65 to the tertiary level, (6%) had up to SHS/Vocation/ Technical education and (11%) had no formal
 66 education.

67 **Materials and methods**

68 The study was conducted in district Madhubani of Bihar. India is vast country, comprising of
 69 28 states and 7 union territories. Out of 28 states Bihar was selected, purposively. The State has
 70 cultivable land in the Indo-Gangetic Plain and abundant water, both surface and sub-surface, for
 71 irrigation. Agriculture is the dominant economic activity. Agriculture is the dominant economic activity
 72 employing around three quarters of the work force in the State. Bihar comprising 38 districts, out of
 73 which Madhubani district was selected purposively for study. Due to the following reason, Existing
 74 clusters of micro & small enterprises. The district has very rich & fertile land and is surrounded by
 75 three rivers i.e. Koshi, Kamla & Bagmati. Madhubani district comprises of 21 blocks. Out of these 21
 76 Blocks, "Lakhnaur" was selected purposely for this study. Lakhnaur block consists of 44 villages; out
 77 of which 2 villages were selected from Lakhnaur block randomly for this study. 60 farmers from
 78 Lakhnaur and 40 farmer's behat who possessed mobile selected randomly. Thus, total sample of 100
 79 respondents were selected for the present study. The obtained results were analyzed in the form of
 80 percentage.



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91 **Results and discussion:**

92 **Table 1: Distribution of the respondents in terms of socio-economic characteristics:**

I.	S.No.	Categories	Respondent (N=100)	
			Frequency	Percentage
Age	1	Young (up to 35)	36	36
	2	Middle (36 to 50)	42	42
	3	Old (above 50)	22	22
	Total		100	100
II.	1	Illiterate	15	15
Education	2	Primary	6	6
	3	Middle	33	33
	4	High school	21	21
	5	Intermediate	14	14
	6	Graduation	11	11
	Total		100	100
III.	1	Farming	52	52
Occupation	2	Govt. Service	5	5
	3	Farming & Business	16	16
	4	Private Service	27	27
	Total		100	100
IV.	1	Low(Below Rs. 50,000)	32	32
Family annual income	2	Medium(Rs.50,000 to 1,00,000)	47	47
	3	high (Above Rs .1,00,000)	21	21
	Total		100	100
V.	1	General	36	36
Cast	2	OBC	48	48
	3	SC/ST	16	16
	Total		100	100
VI.	1	Marginal (below 2 acre)	61	61
Land holding	2	Middle (2-4 acre)	28	28
	3	Large (above 4 acre)	11	11
	Total		100	100

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94 From the below Table 1 it can be clearly revealed that the sample was of 100 respondents of

95 which all were men. Majority of the respondents (42%) was belonged to the middle age category



96 followed by young age category and old age category. Literate respondent's categories into five

97 groups. The maximum no of respondents were in the category middle school (33%) followed by high

98 school (21%), about (14%) respondents standard up to intermediate,(6%) primary school ,while (11%)
 99 were graduate and only (15%) of respondents were illiterate. The similar result was reported by
 100 (Bachhav, 2012). Majority of respondents (52%) were farming as their main occupation followed by
 101 private job (27%) and farming and business (16%). Only (5%) respondents were in government job. It can
 102 conclude that most of the respondents were doing farming along as the main occupation. Maximum
 103 number of respondents (47%) had medium level of income category followed by low (32%) and high
 104 level (21%). Majority of respondents (48%) belonged to other backward caste followed by general
 105 (36%), and scheduled caste and scheduled tribe (16%) respectively. Majority of respondents (61%)
 106 had marginal land holding, (28%) had middle land holding and least by large land holding
 107 respondents were only (11%). Similar finding was reported by (Kameswariv et al., 2011) who also
 108 found majority of the respondents in their study area were marginal farmers.

109 **Conclusion:**

110 From the above findings it can be concluded that majority of the respondents belonged to the middle
 111 age, marginal land holding with medium level income, backward class and farming as their main
 112 occupation. Social economic characteristics plays important role in using mobile phone for different types
 113 of activities such as mobile have provided a platform to farmers for sharing and getting the information
 114 about agriculture. Farmers nowadays using a mobile phones for multipurpose some are using for
 115 getting the price of product from market while others are directly communicating with customers for
 116 selling their goods in better price. Furthermore, farmers are using SMS services for keeping the up to
 117 date about weather as well as use of pesticides in their farms,(Murthy,2009).

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