

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 appropriate, consistent, precise and timely 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 was collected through personal interview with the help of structured interview schedule.

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

Introduction:

Agriculture continues to be the most important sector of the Indian economy. It 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, [1].

Mobile phone effectively reduces the distance between individuals and institutions, making the sharing of information and knowledge easier and more effective [2]. Social networks can be strengthened and individuals are empowered through use of mobile. Mobile is providing a direct global communication channel to rural communities. Mobile also helps in making local content, rural

services more efficient, cost-effective, reliable and timely communication channel in the context of markets, extension advice, monitoring, finances, health, etc [3]. It is provide multiple formats for information in one device and accessibility for illiterate users (i.e. voice and images).

Related studies in the same area

Study that farmer under 50 years of age in their survey accounted for 63.1 per cent, while participants in this study from the same age group accounted for (37.0%). The remainder were 51 years old or above. The majority of farmers in this experiment must be seen as middle-aged or elderly farmers. Most participants (76.7%) had completed only a primary school education, although 12.9% per cent of participants finished at the level of junior high school [4]. Found that the participants were composed of 57 (49.1%) farmers from the Muang District and from the Soongmen District 59 (50.9%) farmers. In total, the number of male participants (71.6%) were many more than female participants (28.4%). The majority of farmers in this experiment must be seen as middle-aged or elderly farmers. Most participants (76.7%) had completed only a primary school education, although 12.9 per cent of participants finished at the level of junior high school. The majority of participants from Muang District (77.2%) earned about 8001 –20000 baht whereas (69.5%) of those from Soongmen District earned 3001 – 8000 baht [5]. Study that people between 19 to 30 age groups were mostly using to mobile phone but people of 31-50 age groups were not far behind and in fact they were the most frequent phone owners. The majority of persons (72%) were a monthly household income of less than USD 84. The majority of the farmers (68%) had an education level below the metric and secondary school. [6]. Surveyed conducted in Maharashtra of India, reported that the majority of person (36%) were belonged to age group 41-50 years followed by (33.72%) were the age groups of 31-40. Educational status showed that majority of persons (58.86%) had completed higher secondary school, 12.57 per cent had done diplomas, and polytechnic, while (10.28%) were graduate and (18.81%) person were illiterate [7]. Reported that sex of the respondents were made up of males (50%) and females (50%) with 39% owning farms with the sizes of less than an acre, (30%) between 1-2 acres whiles (31%) had farms above 2 acres. Majority (45%) of the respondents had their highest education at the Junior High/Middle School, (29%) had up to primary school, (6%) had up to the tertiary level, and (6%) had up to SHS/Vocation / Technical education and (11%) had no formal education [8]. Found that majority

(91.0%) of the farmers using cell phone were in the age bracket of 20-50 years. Most of male farmers (68.2%) were predominating in using cell Phone. Concerning farmers' educational status, majority of cell phone user (78.4%) had above secondary education. Most of the cell phone user (82%) earned higher average income of N81,000 – N90,000 per annum and majority of the cell phone user (61.7%) cultivated more than 10 hectare [9]. Stated that there was active involvement of people across all the age groups in using mobile phones for agricultural purposes and particularly the younger farmers were using the most. Most of them were well educated and more than 82% of the farmers had completed at least secondary level of education. [10] Out of the 384 respondents, females were 200 (52.1%), while 184 (47.9) were males. Based on mobile phone ownership, most respondents 306 (79.7%) indicated that they owned mobile phones. Furthermore, of the 384 respondents, the young numbered 262 (68.2%) and were aged between 20-45 years. This implied that over two thirds of the young respondents owned mobile phones [11]. Found that majority of the respondents (77.78%) belonged to middle age category and (17.22%) were from old age category. Rest of the respondents was in young age category. Educational level of the respondent showed that most of the respondents (25%) were educated up to high school and only 10 per cent of respondents were illiterates. Respondents who were involved in primary occupation Farming constituted (77.77%). Analysis of income of respondents revealed that most of the respondents (44.44%) were from high income group, low income group accounted for (33.34%), and middle income group constituted only (22.22%) of respondents. the maximum numbers (36.13%) of respondents were medium farmers whereas (30.55 %) were small farmer, and (16.66%) were marginal farmer. Most of young educated respondents were using mobile for agriculture purpose [12].

Materials and methods

The study was conducted in district Madhubani of Bihar. India is vast country, comprising of 28 states and 7 union territories. Out of 28 states Bihar was selected, purposively. The State has

89 cultivable land in the Indo-Gangetic Plain and abundant water, both surface and sub-surface, for
 90 irrigation. Agriculture is the dominant economic activity. Agriculture is the dominant economic activity
 91 employing around three quarters of the work force in the State. Bihar comprising 38 districts, out of
 92 which Madhubani district was selected purposively for study. The availability of large numbers of
 93 micro & small enterprises this district. The district has very rich & fertile land and is surrounded by
 94 three rivers i.e. Koshi, Kamla & Bagmati. Madhubani district comprises of 21 blocks. Out of these 21
 95 Blocks, Lakhnaur was selected purposely for this study. Lakhnaur block consists of 44 villages; out of
 96 which 2 villages were selected from Lakhnaur block randomly for this study. From Lakhnaur village
 97 and Behat village 60 and 40 respondents were randomly selected respectively who possessed mobile
 98 phones. Thus, total 100 number respondents were selected for this study. The obtained results were
 99 analyzed in the form of percentage.

112 **Results and discussion:**

113 **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. Education	1	Illiterate	15	15
	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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115 Majority of the respondents (42%) was belonged to the middle age category followed by
116 young age category and old age category. Literate respondent's categories into five groups. The
117 maximum number of respondents were in the category middle school (33%) followed by high school
118 (21%), about 14 per cent respondents standard up to intermediate,(6%) primary school ,while (11%)
119 were graduate and only (15%) of respondents were illiterate. Majority of respondents (52%) were
120 farming as their main occupation followed by private job (27%) and farming and business (16%). Only
121 (5%) of respondents were in government job. It can conclude that most of the respondents were doing
122 farming along as the main occupation. Maximum number of respondents (47%) had medium level of
123 income category followed by low (32%) and high level (21%). Majority of respondents (48%) belonged
124 to other backward caste followed by general (36%), and scheduled caste and scheduled tribe (16%)
125 respectively. Majority of respondents (61%) had marginal land holding, (28%) of respondents had
126 middle land holding and least by large land holding respondents were only (11%).

Conclusion:

From the above findings it can be concluded that majority of the respondents belonged to the middle age, marginal land holding with medium level of income, backward class and had farming as their main occupation. Socio economic characteristics of farmers play important role in using mobile phone for different types of activities. Thus mobile phones have provided a platform to farmers for sharing and getting the information about agriculture. Socio economic characteristics of farmers like age, level of education, income and farm size are significantly related to farmer's use of mobile phone [13].

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