



ISSN (E): 2277- 7695
ISSN (P): 2349-8242
NAAS Rating: 5.23
TPI 2022; SP-11(3): 1537-1540
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www.thepharmajournal.com
Received: 11-01-2022
Accepted: 15-02-2022

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A study on profile characteristics of farmers on knowledge, attitude and accessibility towards privatization of agricultural extension services

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Abstract

The study was conducted in Chhindwara district of Madhya Pradesh and Chhindwara, Amarwara, Chourai and Sausar blocks were selected purposively for the study as these blocks have different types of crops are growing hence number of PAESs services are available. The data were collected from 174 respondents from five villages from each block. It was observed that in case of age, family size, farming experience, farm power and implements, social participation, extension contact, mass media exposure, cosmopolitanism, information seeking behavior, innovative proneness, scientific orientation, risk preference, economic motivation and annual income maximum respondents were fall in medium category while in case of education, size of land holding and occupation, maximum respondents were educated upto middle school level and had small land holding and hold farming/cultivation as a major occupation. The majority of the respondents had 1.01 to 2 hectare under high yielding variety and maximum respondents had medium level of decision making ability, respectively.

Keywords: Extension services, privatization, knowledge, attitude, accessibility

Introduction

Agriculture is a major sector of the Indian economy. It contributes approximately 15.4 percent of GDP, employs 41.49 percent of the labour force, and continues to be the primary source of income for 60 percent of the population. (Indian Agriculture State Report 2019-20). India has always been forward-thinking in its pursuit of self-sufficiency in food grains. The rising cost of providing services, as well as the government's unwillingness to fully support the line departments of various extension services, have resulted in a wide ratio between extension worker and farmer. The emphasis of extension should be on crop quality, crop production costs, value addition, market-led extension, and cyber application in agriculture.

Unlike India, In Madhya Pradesh agriculture and allied services account for approximately 44 percent of the state economy, with agriculture directly or indirectly employing 78 percent of the workforce. In recent years, India has seen a shift in agriculture from subsistence to commercial, specialized, and capital-intensive production and marketing, necessitating quick and technically sound advice on production and marketing. Other reasons for privatization of extension services in agriculture include poor performance of public extension services, low coverage of the public extension system, a high extension worker-to-farmer ratio, a limited role for village extension workers, commercialization of agriculture, and existing market problems.

The term "privatisation" refers to the transfer of ownership from the state to private hands. According to Collin, privatisation entails handing over a previously owned by the state company or concern to a private individual or parties (Raut and Singh, 2001).

As the government faces an increasing shortage of funds/budget, it has a negative impact on the ability of most support services, including extension, to function efficiently. As a result, extension services are slowed, adjusted, and/or gradually phased out. Extension workers are especially helpless because they have been blamed, rightly or wrongly, for producing few results as being imposed on farmers, run with little regard for cost effectiveness, and operated by poorly motivated, untrained, and incompetent extension personnel. As a result, alternative methods of financing agricultural extension services have been considered and implemented in the form of introduction of privatization in agricultural extension agencies.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Chhindwara district of Madhya Pradesh and Chhindwara, Amarwara, Chourai and Sausar blocks were selected purposively for the study as these blocks have different types of crops are growing hence number of PAESs services are available. A sample of 174 respondents was selected by using simple random sampling from 5 villages from each block. The data were collected with the help of interview schedule. The study was conducted with the main aim of understanding farmer's knowledge, attitude and accessibility towards Private Agricultural Extension Services. An *ex-post facto* research design was used to carry out the research. Collected data were classified, tabulated and analyzed by using statistical methods like frequency and percentage.

Result and Discussions

Table 1. depicts that in case of age, out of the selected respondents, 57.47 per cent of them belonged to middle age group followed by young age (25.29%), and old age (17.24%). In case of size of family of farmers, out of the total farmers (44.25%) were having 6 to 8 member in family followed by (37.36%) up to 5 members in family and remain (18.39%) having above 8 members in a family. In context to education, 27.59 per cent of farmers belonged to middle school followed by graduate (25.29%), high school (24.13%), primary school (16.09%), can read and write only (2.30%) and illiterate (4.60). Thus it be clearly show that large majority 77.01 per cent of farmers were having education middle to graduate level formal education up to primary level however the high percentage of farmers (22.99%) were having formal education up to primary level. These results are partially confirmative with the study of Kavyashree (2016), Kanchula (2012), Sihare (2015) and Pandya (2018).

Majority of the farmers (58.05%) had farming experience had medium level of farming experience whereas, 25.86 per cent had low and 16.09 per cent had high level of experience. In respect to farmer's participation in activities that allow for interaction with others in society or the community, 56.32 per cent farmers had medium level of social participation followed by 22.42 per cent and 21.26 per cent of the farmers had high and low level of social participation respectively. Also, 43.10 per cent farmers having medium annual income Rs. 1,00,001 to 2,00,000 followed by 29.89 per cent had high annual income in range of above Rs. 2,00,000. While only 27.01 per cent farmers had low annual income. i.e. Up to Rs1,00,000 and 43.11 per cent were having small land holding followed by 25.28 per cent marginal size of land holding & 15.52 per cent semi medium, 13.22 per cent medium and only 2.87 per cent farmers having big size of land holding. These results are in line with the study of Kunchala (2012)^[4] and Vankudoth (2014)^[11] who stated that the farmers were primarily dependent on farming and they don't have diversified source of income in addition to as most of the farmers possess small land holding and it difficult to generate high income from traditional farming.

The study revealed that majority (49.42%) of the respondents had cultivation as their occupation, followed by service (16.09%), caste occupation (11.50%), independent profession (8.05%), agricultural labour (8.04%) and business (6.90%) and 47.70 per cent of the farmers had area of 1.01-2 ha. Under HYV followed by, up to 1 ha. (28.74%), 2.01-4 ha. (13.22%), 4.01-10 ha. and only 1.72 per cent farmers had above 10 hectare under high yielding varieties. Tinwane *et al.* (2007) had stated that high economic motivation and to secure high yield as income from agriculture influences farmers to adopt high yielding varieties. As far as in context to farm power in

which machinery such as tillage, planting, plant protection, harvesting, and threshing machinery, as well as other stationary jobs such as operating irrigation equipment, threshers/shellers/cleaners/graders, and so on. 52.87 per cent had medium farm power, followed by 28.16 per cent had high farm power and only 18.97 per cent have low farm power and implements, whereas in context to get information regarding scientific research and new knowledge in agricultural practices from agricultural officers, institutions and agencies, 54.02 per cent had medium level of extension contact followed by 28.16 per cent were low level of extension contact and 17.82 per cent farmers possessed in high level of extension contact. The study is partially consistent with the findings of Rahangdale *et al.* (2011)^[8] and Mehaboob (2015)^[7], who stated that farmers received better education and that, due to the presence of different extension agencies in the study area, farmers may be properly motivated to participate in various extension activities by extension functionaries.

In case of farmers mass media exposure and cosmopolitanism, 56.90 per cent had medium level of mass media exposure followed by 25.86 per cent were high level of mass media exposure and 17.24 per cent farmers comes under low level of mass media exposure whereas 54.02 per cent farmers had medium level of cosmopolitanism, followed by 24.14 per cent of farmers had high level of cosmopolitanism and 21.84 percent of farmers comes under low level of cosmopolitanism. Majority of the farmers 51.15 per cent had medium level of information seeking behavior, followed by 26.44 per cent of farmers had high level of information seeking behavior and only 22.41 percent of farmers comes under low level of information seeking behavior likewise, 55.75 per cent farmers had medium level of economic motivation, followed by 28.73 per cent of farmers had high level of economic motivation and only 15.52 per cent of farmers comes under low level of economic motivation. In respect to innovative proneness it was found that 51.72 per cent comes under innovative proneness followed by 31.61 per cent were high level of innovative proneness and 16.67 per cent farmers possessed in low level of innovative proneness. As literacy level of farmers these days have significantly improved as compared to the older times and this lead them to search new and innovative knowledge about agriculture and related activities, share their experiences and opinions with each other and adoption of high tech- innovative farming techniques. These results are confirmative with the studies of Kunchala (2012)^[4], Bhagya (2015)^[1], Mehaboob (2015)^[7] and Leelavathi (2017)^[12].

The study also revealed that 54.60 per cent had medium decision making ability, followed by 25.29 per cent farmers had comes under high level of decision making ability and only 20.11 farmers come under low level of decision making ability whereas 56.90 per cent farmers were having medium level of scientific orientation, followed by 24.14 per cent high level of scientific orientation and while only 18.96 per cent had farmers comes under low level of scientific orientation and 55.75 per cent farmers had medium level of risk preferences, followed by 22.41 per cent of farmers had high level of risk preferences and 21.84 percent of farmers comes under low level of risk preferences.

In reference to farmers knowledge, attitude and accessibility towards privatization of agricultural extension, none of the farmers had low knowledge towards private agricultural extension services, while 21.84 per cent farmers had medium level of knowledge and (78.16%) of farmers had high level of knowledge towards private agricultural extension services while (51.15%) had medium attitude towards private agricultural extension services. While, nearly about one third of farmers (28.74%) had high attitude followed by 20.11 per

cent had low attitude towards privatization of agricultural extension services. This could be because increased private sector involvement in agricultural extension delivery, funding, or management makes extension services more responsive to farmers' needs and changing economic and social conditions. The study also reflected that very few (7.47%) of the farmers

had low accessibility towards privatization of agricultural extension services, while 28.16 per cent farmers had medium level of accessibility. More than half (78.16%) of farmers had high level of accessibility towards privatization of agricultural extension services. The study is in line with the studies of Kaur *et al.* (2015)^[3] and Rakes (2008)^[9].

Table 1: Profile characteristics of farmers

S. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Education			
1	Young (Up to 35 years)	44	25.29
2	Middle (36 - 55 years)	100	57.47
3	Old (Above 55 years)	30	17.24
Size of family			
1	Small (Up to 5 members)	65	37.36
2	Medium (6- 8 members)	77	44.25
3	Large (> 8 members)	32	18.39
Education level			
1	Illiterate	8	4.60
2	Can read and write	4	2.30
3	Primary School	28	16.09
4	Middle School	48	27.59
5	High School	42	24.13
6	Graduate	44	25.29
Farming experience			
1	Low (Up to 15 years)	45	25.86
2	Medium (16 - 30 years)	101	58.05
2	High (Above 30 years)	28	16.09
Social participation			
1	Low (Up to 6 score)	37	21.26
2	Medium (7-14 score)	98	56.32
3	High (Above 14 score)	39	22.42
Annual income			
1	Low (Up to Rs. 100000)	47	27.01
2	Medium (Rs. 100001-200000)	75	43.10
3	High (Above Rs. 200000)	52	29.89
Size of land holding			
1	Marginal (up to 1 ha)	44	25.28
2	Small(1.01-2 ha)	75	43.11
3	Semi-medium (2.01-4 ha)	27	15.52
4	Medium (4.01-10 ha)	23	13.22
5	Big (above 10 ha)	5	2.87
Occupation			
1	Agricultural labour	14	8.04
2	Caste occupation	20	11.50
3	Business	12	6.90
4	Independent profession	14	8.05
5	Cultivation	86	49.42
6	Services	28	16.09
Area under HYV			
1	up to 1 ha	50	28.74
2	1.01-2 ha	83	47.70
3	2.01-4 ha	23	13.22
4	4.01-10 ha	15	8.62
5	above 10 ha	3	1.72
Size of Farm Power and Implements			
1	Low (Up to 4 score)	33	18.97
2	Medium(5-8 score)	92	52.87
3	High (9-12 score)	49	28.16
Extension contact			
1	Low (Up to 8 score)	49	28.16
2	Medium(9-16 score)	94	54.02
2	High (Above 16 score)	31	17.82
Mass media exposure			
1	Low (Up to 5 score)	30	17.24
2	Medium(6-11 score)	99	56.90
3	High (Above 11 score)	45	25.86
Cosmopolitaness			
1	Low (Up to 4 score)	38	21.84
2	Medium(5-8 score)	94	54.02

2	High (Above 8 score)	42	24.14
Information seeking behavior			
1	Low (Up to 19 score)	39	22.41
2	Medium(20 - 28 score)	89	51.15
3	High (Above 28 score)	46	26.44
Economic motivation			
1	Low (6-13 score)	27	15.52
2	Medium (14-22 score)	97	55.75
3	High (23-30 score)	50	28.73
Innovative proneness			
1	Low (Up to 11 score)	29	16.67
2	Medium(12-18 score)	90	51.72
3	High (Above 18 score)	55	31.61
Decision making ability			
1	Low (Up to 6 score)	35	20.11
2	Medium(7 -13 score)	95	54.60
3	High (14-20 score)	44	25.29
Scientific orientation			
1	Low (6-13 score)	33	18.96
2	Medium (14-22 score)	99	56.90
3	High (23-30 score)	42	24.14
Risk preferences			
1	Low (6-13 score)	38	21.84
2	Medium (14-22 score)	97	55.75
3	High (23-30 score)	39	22.41
Knowledge towards Private Agricultural Extension Services			
1	Low (Up to 11 score)	0	0.00
2	Medium(12- 24 score)	38	21.84
3	High (Above 24 score)	136	78.16
Attitude towards Private Agricultural Extension Services			
1	Low (Up to 46 score)	35	20.11
2	Medium(47 - 73 score)	89	51.15
3	High (Above 73 score)	50	28.74
Accessibility of PAESs			
1	Low (Up to 14 score)	13	7.47
2	Medium(15- 28 score)	49	28.16
3	High (Above 28 score)	112	64.37

Conclusion

It could be concluded that majority of the farmers were of middle age group, educated upto middle school, had 16 to 30 years farming experience, moderate level of social participation, extension contact, economic motivation, risk orientation, mass media exposure, cosmopolitaness, innovative proneness and decision making ability. Majority of the farmers had agriculture as prime occupation, had moderate annual income and small land holding. The study showed that the farmers had medium level of knowledge, attitude and accessibility towards privatization of agricultural extension services.

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