

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS OF THE FARMERS AND FARM WOMEN IN RURAL UDAIPUR, RAJASTHAN

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Abstract

In rural India, agriculture is a very important sector as the majority of the population primarily lies on farming and allied activities, as their main occupation. The present study tried to investigate the socioeconomic status (SES) of the people engaged in agricultural activities in the Udaipur district of Rajasthan. The target group was farmers and farm women residing in rural areas of district Udaipur. The study was conducted in *Badgaon* and *Vallabhnagarpanchayatsamities* of Udaipur district. A sample of 320 respondents was taken, out of which 160 were farmers and 160 were farm women through random sampling. The socioeconomic status (SES) scale developed under AICRP, Home Science Extension education was used with slight modifications for data collection. The personal, social, and economic variables of the respondents were analyzed using the interview technique. The findings revealed that 82.5 per cent of the respondents had low socioeconomic status while 17.5 per cent of the respondents had medium socio-economic status. None of the respondents was in the category of a high socio-economic category. It was recommended that the socioeconomic policies should be formulated and executed in a way that can improve the socioeconomic status of rural people, especially in light of social and economic variables.

Keywords: socioeconomic status, agriculture, farming, farmer and farm women

Introduction

Socioeconomic status (SES) refers to measuring the social and economic position of an individual as compared to others in the society. It has a significant role in determining an individual's accessibility to the common resources, household food & nutritional security, livelihood pattern, financial security, social engagement, financial engagement, etc. The SES of farmers is an important subject for study as a large portion of the Indian population lives in villages. They maintain their livelihood depending on agriculture. According to FAO, 70 per cent of Indian rural households are still dependent primarily on agriculture.

Rural development is crucial for developing the entire nation. The farmers who are only dependent on agriculture usually find difficulty in fulfilling their needs (Maslow's needs of hierarchy) whereas; farmers engaged in agriculture-related other allied activities such as animal husbandry, poultry, fisheries, apiculture, floriculture, etc. have better opportunities for satisfying their needs which results in their improved SES. Roy *et al.* (2013) surveyed to determine the SES of hill farmers and concluded that understanding the SES of the hill farmers and its determinants helps in accelerating the process of effective transfer of technology as it largely affects the adoption process. The difference in the socioeconomic status of the farmers exists even if they belong to the same region. In this context, the present study was to undertake an analysis of the socioeconomic status of the farmers and farm women in the Udaipur district of Rajasthan.

Materials and methods

Study area: The present investigation was imposed on rural areas of the Udaipur district. There are a total of twenty *panchayatsamities* (16 tribal and 4 rural *panchayatsamities*) in Udaipur, out of which two rural *panchayatsamities* i.e. *Badgaon* and *Vallabhnagar* were selected randomly. From each *panchayatsamiti* four villages were taken. Thus the total of eight villages was selected to have a representative sample for the study.

Selection of sample: From each selected village, a random sample of 20 farmers and 20 farm women were taken. Thus a total of 320 respondents (160 farmers and 160 farm women) were selected from both the *panchayatsamities*.

Collection of data: The study was based on the collection of primary data. For this purpose, the socioeconomic status (SES) scale developed under AICRP, Home Science Extension education (1997) with slight modifications was used.

Data analysis: All the collected information was accumulated and analyzed using statistical measures (frequency, percentage, mean percent score) and then presented in textual, and tabular form to understand the socioeconomic status of the respondents of the study area.

Results and discussion

The respondents were analyzed based on their personal, social, economic, and other variables.

Personal variables: The personal variable of the respondents includes their age, marital status, occupation, and level of education. A perusal of Table 1 reveals that the majority of the respondents (74.68%) are at their midlife i.e. age group (31-45 years), followed by young i.e. 18-30 years (15.94%), the upper-middle age group i.e. 40-60 years (88.75%) and above 60 years (0.63%). The findings aligned with the findings of Bannor and Sharma (2015) and Khatun *et al.* (2013). Concerning the marital status of the respondents, 96.56 per cent respondents were married while very few respondents were unmarried (1.25%), divorced (1.25%), and widowed (0.94%). Agriculture was the sole occupation for the majority of the respondents (80.94%) whereas 19.06 per cent of respondents were involved in the service sector also along with farming. None of the respondents was a non-wage earner or farm labor. With regard to the level of education, 29.69 per cent of respondents were educated up to middle school and 24.37 per cent of respondents were primary educated. The rest of the respondents were graduated (16.56%), educated up to high school (20%), and had post-matric diplomas (9.38%).

Table 1 Distribution of the respondents by their personal variables

S. No.	Personal variables	Farmers (n=160)	Farm women (n=160)	Total (n=320)
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		f	%	f	%	f	%
1. Age	1. 18-30 years	7	4.38	44	27.5	51	15.94
	2. 31-45 years	125	78.12	114	71.25	239	74.68
	3. 46-60 years	26	16.25	2	1.25	28	8.75
	4. Above 60 years	2	1.25	0	0	2	0.63
	2. Marital status						
2. Marital status	1. Unmarried	1	0.63	3	1.87	4	1.25
	2. Married	155	96.87	154	96.25	309	96.56
	3. Widowed	1	0.63	2	1.25	3	0.94
	4. Divorced	3	1.87	1	0.63	4	1.25
3. Occupation							
3. Occupation	1. Non-wage earner	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2. Farm labour	0	0	0	0	0	0
	3. Farming	101	63.13	158	98.75	259	80.94
	4. Farming and service sector	59	36.87	2	1.25	61	19.06
4. Education							
4. Education	1. Primary school	15	9.37	63	39.37	78	24.37
	2. Middle school	24	15	71	44.37	95	29.69
	3. High school	53	33.13	11	6.88	64	20
	4. Post metric diploma	21	13.13	9	5.63	30	9.38
	5. Graduation or above	47	29.37	6	3.75	53	16.56

Social variables: The social variables of the respondents include their caste, family structure, family occupation, and their organizational membership. Data presented in Table 2 indicate that the majority of the respondents (79.06%) were from a backward caste. Only 9.38 per cent of respondents belonged to the upper caste, followed by SC/ST (6.56%) and upper-middle caste (5%). Nearly three fourth of the respondents (74.37%) were residing in nuclear families while the remaining 25.63 per cent of the respondents were from joint families. The majority of the respondents (70.31%) had small size family up to four members, followed by 27.19 per cent and

2.5 per cent respondents having medium-sized families (5-8 members) and large size family (more than 8 members), respectively.

Concerning the main occupation of family, 61.25 per cent of respondents were engaged in farming as their main family occupation. The result was in conformity with that of Arya *et al.* (2012). However, 33.75 per cent respondents were engaged in business/service along with agriculture as their family occupation. Very few of the respondents (5%) were artisans/craftsman. Further, the majority of the respondents (71.25%) had no organizational membership and rests were members of non-formal organizations.

Table 2 Distribution of the respondents based on social variables

S. No.	Social variables	Farmers (n=160)		Farm women (n=160)		Total (n=320)	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	Caste						
	1. SC/ST	14	8.75	7	4.38	21	6.56
	2. OBC	116	72.5	137	85.62	253	79.06
	3. Upper middle caste	11	6.88	5	3.13	16	5
	4. Upper caste	19	11.87	11	6.87	30	9.38
2.	Family structure						
a)	Family type						
	1. Nuclear	121	75.62	117	73.12	238	74.37
	2. Joint	39	24.38	43	26.88	82	25.63
b)	Family size						
	1. Small (up to 4 members)	116	72.5	109	68.12	225	70.31
	2. Medium (5-8 members)	39	24.37	48	30	87	27.19
	3. Large (More than 8)	5	3.13	3	1.88	8	2.5
3.	Family main occupation						
	1. Farming	101	63.12	95	59.37	196	61.25
	2. Business/service	58	36.25	50	31.25	108	33.75
	3. Artisans/craftsman	1	0.63	15	9.38	16	5
	4. Labour	0	0	0	0	0	0
3.	Organization membership						

1. No Membership	125	78.12	103	64.37	228	71.25
2. Member of a formal organization	0	0	0	0	0	0
3. Office bearer of formal organization	0	0	0	0	0	0
4. Member of a non-formal organization	35	21.88	57	35.63	92	28.75
5. Office bearer of non-formal organization	0	0	0	0	0	0

Economic variables: The economic variables of the rural people can be measured as their landholding, type of housing, livestock ownership, dwelling for livestock. Visualization of Table 3 indicates that 82.18 per cent of the respondents possessed 1.0 to 2.5 acres of land while 17.19 per cent of respondents had 2.6 to 5 acres of land and only 0.63 per cent of respondents had landholding between 5.1 to 10 acres. All the farmers and farm women (100%) were residing in *pucca* houses. Regarding the ownership of livestock, 58.44 per cent of respondents had small herd size, followed by 35.62 per cent of farmers having medium herd size whereas, a few of the farmers (5.94%) had large herd size. Viveket *al.* (2015) also reported 69.60 per cent of the respondents had small herd sizes.

Further, the majority of the farm families (64.06%) had *pucca* dwellings for their livestock. Nearly one-third of the farm families (32.81%) had *kutch* dwelling followed by 3.13 per cent of farm families with an open dwelling for livestock.

Table 3 Distribution of the respondents based on economic variables

S. No.	Economic variables	Farmers (n=160)		Farm women (n=160)		Total (n=320)	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	Landholding						
	No land	0	0	0	0	0	0
	1.0 to 2.5 acres	135	84.37	128	80	263	82.18
	2.6 to 5.0 acres	25	15.63	30	18.75	55	17.19

	5.1 to 10.0 acres	0	0	2	1.25	2	0.63
	More than 10 acres	0	0	0	0	0	0
2.	Housing						
	<i>Kutchahouse</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Mixed house (Partially <i>kutchha</i> + <i>pucca</i> house)	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<i>Pucca</i> house	160	100	160	100	320	100
3.	Livestock ownership						
	Small herd size	88	55	99	61.87	187	58.44
	Medium herd size	59	36.87	55	34.38	114	35.62
	Large herd size	13	8.13	6	3.75	19	5.94
4.	Dwelling for livestock						
	Open/Nil	6	3.75	4	2.5	10	3.13
	Thatched / <i>Kutchha</i>	58	36.25	47	29.38	105	32.81
	<i>Pucca</i>	96	60	109	68.12	205	64.06

Other variables:

Media ownership: Data presented in Table 4 reveal that all the respondents possessed television at their homes while a few of the farmers (6.88%) and farm women (8.13%) were subscribers of the newspaper. None of the respondents possessed a radio/transistor at their home.

Table 4 Media ownership among the respondents

S. No.	Media ownership	Farmers* (n=160)		Farm women* (n=160)		Total* (n=320)	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	Nil	0	0	0	0	0	0
2.	Newspaper/ magazine	11	6.88	13	8.13	24	7.5
3.	Radio/ transistor	0	0	0	0	0	0
4.	Television	160	100	160	100	320	100

*multiple responses

Extension contact: Visualization of Table 5 reveals that more than half of the respondents (55.31%) had no extension contact. More than one-third of the respondents (35.62%) gathered information through extension contact once in a month. Very few of the respondents had extension contact frequently (5.94%) and once in a week (3.13%).

Table 5 Distribution of the respondents based on the frequency of extension contact

S. No.	Extension contact	Farmers (n=160)		Farm women (n=160)		Total (n=320)	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	Frequently	15	9.38	4	2.5	19	5.94
2.	Once in a week	8	5	2	1.25	10	3.13
3.	Once in a month	58	36.25	56	35	114	35.62
4.	Never	79	49.37	98	61.25	177	55.31

Participation in extension activities: A close observation of data presented in Table 6 reveals that most of the respondents (94.06-98.44%) had never participated in field days, field visits, and demonstrations in their nearby areas.

Further, 71.87 per cent and 64.06 per cent of respondents had never visited the exhibition and attended any training program, respectively. The exhibitions were occasionally visited by 46.56% of respondents while more than one-third of the respondents (35%) occasionally attended training programs related to agriculture and allied fields.

Concerning the Krishi Mela, more than half of the respondents (53.12%) never and 46.56 per cent of respondents occasionally visited Krishi Mela.

Table 6 Distribution of the respondents based on their participation in extension activities

Respondents	Extent of participation		Extension activities					
			Training program	Field day	Field visit	Demonstration	Exhibition	Krishi mela
Farmers (n=160)	Regularly	f	3	0	0	0	0	1
		%	1.88	0	0	0	0	0.63
	Occasionally	f	60	5	11	15	44	87

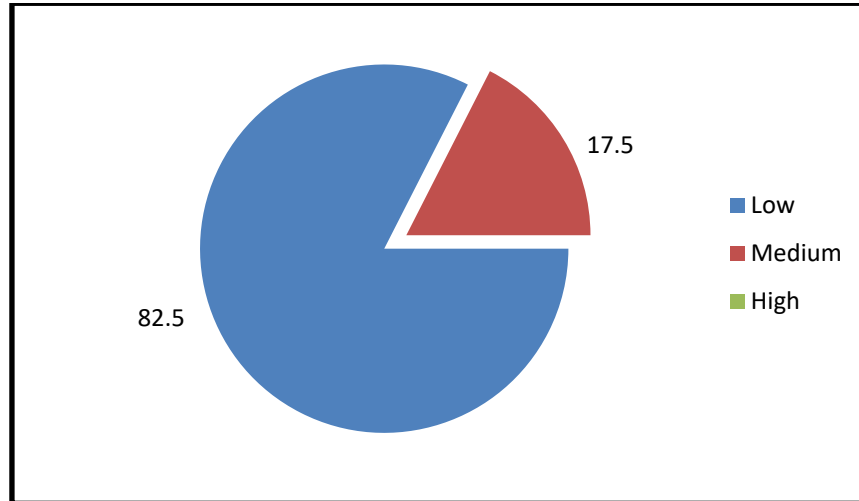
		%	37.5	3.13	6.88	9.38	27.5	54.37
	Never	f	97	155	149	145	116	72
		%	60.62	96.87	93.12	90.62	72.5	45
Farm women (n=160)	Regularly	f	0	0	0	0	0	0
		%	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Occasionally	f	52	0	1	4	46	62
		%	32.5	0	0.63	2.5	28.75	38.75
	Never	f	108	160	159	156	114	98
		%	67.5	100	99.37	97.5	71.25	61.25
Total (n=320)	Regularly	f	3	0	0	0	0	1
		%	0.94	0	0	0	0	0.32
	Occasionally	f	112	5	12	19	90	149
		%	35	1.56	3.75	5.94	28.13	46.56
	Never	f	205	315	308	301	230	170
		%	64.06	98.44	96.25	94.06	71.87	53.12

Socio-Economic Status: Based on the scores obtained by the respondents in different aspects of the SES scale, the respondents were categorized as having high, medium, and low socioeconomic status. Data in Table 7 and Figure 1 point out that majority of the farmers (79.37%) and farm women (85.62%) had low socio-economic status while 20.63 per cent of the farmers and 14.38 per cent of the farm women belonged to the category of a medium socio-economic category. None of the respondents was in the category of a high socio-economic category.

Table 7 Distribution of the respondents according to their socioeconomic status

S. No.	Socio Economic Status	Farmer (n=160)		Farm women (n=160)		Total (n=320)	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	Low	127	79.37	137	85.62	264	82.5
2.	Medium	33	20.63	23	14.38	56	17.5
3.	High	0	0	0	0	0	0

Figure 1 Categorization of the respondents according to their socioeconomic status



Conclusion: It can be concluded that out of the 320 respondents, the majority of the respondents (264 respondents) belonged to low SES whereas 56 respondents had medium SES. None of the respondents belonged to high SES. Considering the different observations during the present study it can be said that the socioeconomic policies should be formulated and executed in a way that can improve the socioeconomic status of rural people, especially in light of social and economic variables.

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