



Correlates of Available Livelihood Options among Rural Youth in Hills of Uttarakhand State, India

Divyata Joshi^{1*} and S. K. Kashyap²

¹Department of Extension Education, College of Agriculture, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, Punjab, 141004, India.

²College of Agriculture, G. B. P. U. A & T. Pantnagar, Uttarakhand, 263145, India.

Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Author SKK designed the study. Author DJ performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol, and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author SKK guided the analyses of the study and managed the literature searches. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Uttarakhand state has an immense opportunity for agriculture-based livelihood options yet the out-migration has not reduced. One reason behind may be the lack of awareness among youth hence, a study was conducted to compile the possible agricultural occupation for the area and identify the level of awareness among the youth about these livelihood options. The young people of the study were found to have low level of awareness for majority of the ventures particularly for those not being practiced traditionally in the area. This paper discusses the relationship between profile characteristics of youth and their level of awareness. The data was collected through multistage sampling and analyzed using SPSS software. The results revealed that majority of the respondents were young, females, educated up to higher secondary level, and belonged to medium size family. Majority of the respondents belonged to farming background, were students and unmarried. All of them owned television and majority of them owned mobile phones. They had medium level of mass media exposure, information seeking behaviour and cosmopolitanism and low level of extension agency contact. Among the socio-economic, personal, communication

*Corresponding author: E-mail: divyatajoshi01@gmail.com;

characteristics; age, extension agency contact and information seeking behaviour had a significant positive correlation with awareness about selected livelihood options related to agriculture in hills of Uttarakhand. A communication strategy can be formulated to facilitate contact of extension agencies with youth and more number of need-based trainings should be initiated for youth.

Keywords: Rural youth; awareness; socio-economic personal communication characteristics; relationship.

1. INTRODUCTION

Uttarakhand state has immense opportunities in terms of crop diversification, organic farming, forest based livelihood and agro-tourism due to a special kind of agro-ecological conditions [1]. But the state suffers from high degree of economic backwardness and out-migration [2]. Majority of the population who is migrating constitutes of youth migrate to urban areas for the search of secured source of income [3]. Youth now are shying away from agriculture and the possible reasons may be access to land, availability of finance, climate change, their interest in agriculture, market sustainability, education and training facility, policy and programmes top down approach and low service quality [4]. Studies also show that rural youth are not aware of the prospects in the hill farming. Azeez and Augustine [5] reports that youth are completely unaware of options, which can serve as the better source of livelihood for them. Their level of awareness was low about most of the diversified agricultural ventures which may serve them as a source of sustainable livelihood [6]. They lack information about new technologies, package and practices, commercialization of crops which is crucial for development of better source of livelihood for them. Communication channels such as mass media, community media and group contact, interpersonal and peer group contact and contact with extension agency which are available in the local level in the hilly areas play a vital role in dissemination of information. The understanding of communication characteristics of rural youth and their orientation towards information sources becomes crucial in this situation [7]. Further, the socio- personal correlates such as level of education, family background, and parental occupation influence the youth's awareness and participation in agricultural activities. Hence, socio-economic correlates regarding livelihood options among rural youth in Hills of Uttarakhand were studied in the present study with following objectives:

1.1 Objectives

1. To study the socio-economic, personal and communication characteristics of rural youth of hills of Uttarakhand.
2. To find out the relationship between socio-economic, personal and communication characteristics and extent of awareness about livelihood options.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Tehri Garhwal district of Uttarakhand. Two blocks namely Thauldhar and Chamba were selected randomly for the study. From Thauldhar block two villages Baur and Jaulangi and from Chamba block Manjhyur and Syuta villages were taken randomly for the study. As the population in the villages of hill area is scattered and the migration rate is also high, respondents were selected by census method for the study. In all, 82 youth were selected for the study. The descriptive research design was used to fulfil the objective of the study. The variables taken were age, gender, education, family size, occupation of the head of the household, occupation of the respondent, marital status, media ownership, mass media exposure, cosmopolitaness, extension agency contact, information seeking behaviour and extent of awareness among rural youth about identified livelihood options. Data was collected through structured interview schedule. Statistical tools and techniques such as frequency, percentage, arithmetic mean and standard deviation were used for analysis to make the study more pragmatic.

Correlation coefficient was used to understand the relationship between independent variables i.e. profile characteristics and dependent variable i.e. awareness about livelihood options. Since the data was taken from census method t-test could not be carried out. The correlation analysis was conducted on SPSS software (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Characteristics of Rural Youth

The results revealed that majority (52.4%) of the respondents were in the category of 19-25 years followed by 24.39 percent in the age group of 26-29 years. Rest of the respondents were in the category of 15.18 years. Out of the total respondents 58.75 percent were females while the remaining 41.25 percent were male. A vast majority (79.26%) of the respondents were unmarried followed by married.

Among the total respondents, maximum number (36.58%) of the respondents had studied up to higher secondary level followed by graduates (28.05%). 19.51 percent of the respondents were studied up to secondary level and 9.75 percent were pursuing post-graduate. Only 2.44 percent of the respondents were illiterate and only 1.22 percent were primary school drop outs. Data regarding education indicates that majority of the respondents were having above secondary level which shows that youth were fully aware about importance of education and its role for future development. Due to close proximity of the higher education institution, a comparatively high percentage of respondents were enrolled in under graduation programme which gives a positive picture of education among youth.

The findings revealed that most of the respondents (78.05%) belonged to medium size family followed by large family size. The results also showed that in majority (32.93%) of the households, the head of the family was engaged in cultivation/ farming followed by business service and labour. Only 7.32 percent of the head had taken independent profession as occupation. No one was engaged in their caste occupation.

The findings revealed that majority (40.24%) of the respondents were students. 20.73 percent of the respondents were unemployed. The major occupation was found to be farming as 14.63 percent of the respondents were engaged into it. Rest of the respondents were engaged in business, service and in the independent profession. Majority (40.24%) of the respondents were students and 20.73% were unemployed thus, vast majority (60.97%) of the respondents were not engaged in any kind of occupation. Due to lack of interest and negative attitude towards farming, the youth did not want to take

farming as an occupation even after being unemployed.

The findings showed that all the respondents owned television while 98.78 percent of the respondents owned mobile phones. 52.44 percent of the respondent had internet either in mobile phone or in computers followed by newspaper (39.02%). Computer was owned by only 31.70 percent respondents followed by radio 21.95 percent. No respondent had fixed phone in their home. Table 1 also shows that majority (51.22%) of the respondents were in medium category of media ownership followed by low (35.37%). Only 13.41 percent respondents had high degree of media ownership. Increased ownership and usage of media tools illustrates the more prospects of ICT based tools in spreading awareness rural areas.

The Table 1 explains that high proportion (80.48%) of the respondents had medium level of mass media exposure followed by high level 13.41 percent and only 6.09 percent of the respondents had low level of mass media exposure. The mass media tools are usually used in leisure time by the rural youth. There is a chance to increase the use of these tools as a source of information.

Among the total respondents, majority had medium level of cosmopolitanism and information seeking behaviour (73.17%) whereas 64.63 percent of the respondents had low level of extension agency contact. Young aged people are more cosmopolite and curious for new information around them. Further, due to less interest in farming led to comparatively low level of extension agency contact.

3.2 Relationship between Independent Variable and Awareness about Livelihood Options

The study also examined the relationship between independent variables taken for the study and the awareness regarding agriculture and allied sectors related livelihood options. For this, Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient was calculated taking all the variables and awareness. The correlation coefficient is a measure of relationship between two variables which are at the interval or ratio level of measurement. The range of correlation coefficient is between -1 to +1 where -1 stands for perfect negative correlation and +1 for perfect

positive correlation. It shows the linear relationship present between the variables. From the Table 2, it can be concluded that among all the variables, age, extension agency contact and information seeking behaviour had significant relationship with awareness.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents on the basis of their socio-economic, personal and communication characteristics (n=82)

S. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Very young (15-18)	19	23.17
	Young (19-25)	43	52.43
	Mature (26-29)	20	24.39
Gender	Female	47	58.31
	Male	33	41.24
Education	Illiterate	2	2.44
	Can read only	0	0
	Can write only	0	0
	Can read and write	0	0
	Primary education	1	1.22
	Secondary education	16	19.51
	Higher secondary education	30	36.59
	Diploma	2	2.44
	Graduate	23	28.05
Post graduate and above	8	9.76	
Family size	Small (up to 3)	7	8.54
	Medium (4-7)	64	78.05
	Large (above 7)	11	13.41
Occupation of the Head of the Household	Labour	11	13.41
	Caste occupation	0	0
	Business	21	25.61
	Independent profession	6	7.32
	Cultivation/ farming	27	32.93
	Service	17	20.73
Occupation of the Respondent	Labour	0	0
	Caste occupation	0	0
	Business	8	9.76
	Independent profession	4	4.88
	Cultivation/ farming	12	14.63
	Service	8	9.76
Marital Status	Married	17	20.73
	Unmarried	65	79.27
Media Ownership	Low (up to 2)	29	35.37
	Medium (3-5)	42	51.22
	High (above 5)	11	13.41
Mass Media Exposure	Low (up to 3)	5	6.10
	Medium (4-9)	66	80.49
	High (above 9)	11	13.41
Cosmopolitaness	Low (up to 1)	17	20.73
	Medium (2-4)	59	71.95
	High (above 4)	6	7.32
Extension Agency Contact	Low (up to 1)	53	64.63
	Medium (2-3)	26	31.7
	High (above 3)	3	3.66
Information Seeking Behaviour	Low (up to 2)	12	14.63
	Medium (3-10)	60	73.17
	High (above 10)	10	12.20

Table 2. Correlation coefficients of awareness regarding livelihood options among rural youth

S. No.	Dependent variable	Correlation coefficient (r-value)	p-value
1.	Age	0.242	0.029*
2.	Education	-0.117	0.293(NS)
3.	Family Size	0.159	0.153(NS)
4.	Occupation of the head of the household	-0.021	0.85(NS)
5.	Occupation of the Respondent	0.117	0.297(NS)
6.	Media Ownership	0.07	0.534(NS)
7.	Mass-media Exposure	-0.048	0.67(NS)
8.	Cosmopolitaness	0.156	0.162(NS)
9.	Extension Agency Contact	0.425	0.001**
10.	Information Seeking Behaviour	0.348	0.0001**

(** significant at 1% and * significant at 5% level of significance, NS= non-significant)

3.3 Age and Awareness

Age had the positive significant relationship with extent of awareness among rural youth. It can be depicted that youth with higher age were more aware than their less aged counterparts as they have gained more experience and have higher participation in the outer world. This result was found to be in line with the results of the study conducted by Nnadi and Akwivu [8] higher the age more the understanding about agricultural occupation which is attributed to self-realisation of the importance of agriculture with time and experience.

3.4 Extension Agency Contact and Awareness

Extension agency contact had positive significant relationship with the extent of awareness. It can be articulated that more the young people's involvement with extension agencies more would be the awareness as various extension agencies actively engage in making rural people aware about the livelihood options. The results were in line with the findings of Vihari et al [9] which showed extension contact has positive relationship with perception of rural youth towards agriculture as an occupation.

3.5 Information Seeking Behaviour and Awareness

Information seeking behaviour had a positive significant relationship with extent of awareness regarding livelihood options. Those youngsters who have interest in seeking information through various localite or cosmopolite sources are more aware of agriculture related livelihood options.

4. CONCLUSION

It can concluded from the study that rural youth had medium level of mass media exposure, cosmopolitaness and information seeking behaviour whereas they had low level of extension agency contact. Further, the variables such as age, extension agency contact and information seeking behaviour had significant positive relationship with the extent of awareness regarding agriculture related livelihood options. Hence, a strategy to facilitate more contacts with extension agencies should be formulated. More number of trainings must be organized for rural youth so as to create awareness and to change attitude of rural youth. More related studies with more number of profile characteristics should also be conducted for the future research.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, respondents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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