RESEARCH ARTICLE :

Study of psychological characteristics of farmers in lower Shivalik hills

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SUMMARY : The study was undertaken with the objective to study the psychological characteristics *i.e.* attitude towards forestry and level of aspiration of farmers in lower Shivalik hills. Two hundred and forty respondents from Hoshiarpur district, Punjab and Kangra district, Himachal Pradesh were selected using multistage random sampling design. The data were collected with the help of interview schedule. Findings of the study revealed that there was a non significant difference in the mean scores of attitude two districts. On further finding the overall attitude towards forestry by respondents, majority of the respondents in both districts were found to be lying in medium category. Level of aspiration was found to be medium in both the districts.

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BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Agricultural development of our country has been plagued by variety of factors including fragmented land holdings, irrigation problems, seed problems etc. The population of our country is rising at a very fast rate which leaves us with serious problem of providing food to everyone. Along with this one more serious problem which has come to limelight is the livelihood security of our farmers. Farmers are the lifeline of our country's agriculture. So the problem of providing livelihood security to the farmers becomes utmost important. The problem of livelihood security of the farmers emerged because farmers of our country are unable to

earn enough to sustain their lives. So, the need of the hour is that our farmers should have sustainable livelihoods. Livelihood is a means of securing the basic necessities of life *i.e.* food, water, shelter and clothing. Forests are important renewable natural resources generating livelihood requirements for more than 25 per cent of the world's population. Forestry is the second largest land use in India after agriculture covering 21.02 per cent of the total geographical area of the country. Forests provide a wide spectrum of livelihoods for people in the form of direct employment, self-employment and secondary employment. Dependence on forest resources is an important source of livelihood for a large

number of poor families. The ease of access and proximity to widely dispersed rural markets, enable people to generate a major share of their household income from forest based livelihood. But during the recent decades, the levels and patterns of forest dependence, nature and strength of needs for forest products and access to tree resources has changed considerably among people of the state. Therefore, in order to understand the contribution of forest and forest outputs to livelihood of the farmers, poverty reduction, socio-economic upliftment, environmental conservation and rural development, it is imperative to explore and devise a research plan on multi-disciplinary approaches. So keeping these points in view the present study was conducted with the following specific objectives, to study the psychological characteristics of respondents which includes attitude towards forestry and level of aspiration of farmers in lower shivalik hills.

RESOURCES AND METHODS

The present study was conducted in lower Shivalik hills of Punjab and adjoining areas in Himachal Pradesh. A multistage random sampling design was used for the selection of sample. From the state of Punjab, Hoshiarpur district and from Himachal Pradesh, Kangra district was selected randomly. From Hoshiarpur district, Dasuya and Mukerian blocks were selected and from Kangra district, Sullah and Nagrota blocks were selected randomly. From Dasuya block, Shangla, Hamja and Samanshahid villages were selected and from Mukerian block, Adampur, Tanda Ramshai and Budhobarkat villages were selected. Likewise in Kangra district under Sullah block, Gadiyara, Garh jamula and Baskehr villages were selected and under Nagrota block, Amtrar, Masal and Malan villages

were selected. Selection of respondents was done by proportionate stratified random sampling technique based on size of land holding namely marginal, small, semi-medium, medium and large. Twenty farmers from each village were selected randomly to make the total sample size of 240 respondents. The data were collected with the help of interview schedule from the respondents of both the districts. The data were analyzed with the help of common statistical tools, appropriate to the nature of data and for the purpose of the study. The statistical tools used in the analysis were mean score and z-test.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Psychological characteristics included attitude towards forestry and level of aspiration.

Attitude of respondents towards forestry:

The attitude of respondents towards forestry was measured by using scale developed by Sreenath and Veerabhadraiah (1993). The respondents were asked to respond to each statement in terms of three point continuum *viz.*, agree, neutral and disagree with their respective scores of 3, 2 and 1, respectively for positive statements and the reverse in case of negative statements. Data in Table 1 reveal that various items of attitude towards forestry, a non-significant difference in the mean scores of both the districts was found. This further infers that overall there was no significant difference in the mean scores of both the universities related to their attitude towards forestry.

Overall attitude of respondents towards forestry:

Data in Table 2 infer that more than half of the respondents (54.6%) in both the districts were having

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents according to their Attitude towards forestry				(n=240)
Sr. No.	Statements	Kangra (n_1=120) Mean score	Hoshiarpur (n_2=120) Mean score	z-test
1.	Agroforestry has increased the employment opportunities for people	2.21	2.35	0.23
2.	Forestry is not a suitable alternative to increase income	2.09	2.08	0.04
3.	Forests help in conservation of soil and preserves soil fertility	2.05	2.11	0.21
4.	Forestry reduces migration of people from rural to urban areas	1.66	1.64	0.09
5.	Forestry has helped in amelioration of micro-climate in area	2.53	2.54	0.04
6.	Forestry provides health benefits to people	2.75	2.68	0.29
7.	Forests are restricting the development of the area	2.04	2.00	0.17
8.	Deforestation is beneficial for environment of area	2.28	2.29	0.04
9.	Agroforestry is better alternative than agriculture alone	2.70	2.75	0.21
10.	Forests should not be cleared for agricultural cultivation	1.79	1.81	0.08

favourable attitude towards forestry. In Kangra district, 27.5 per cent respondents had neutral attitude towards forestry while 15.8 per cent respondents had unfavourable attitude towards forestry. In case of Hoshiarpur 38.3 per cent of the respondents had neutral attitude while just 9.2 per cent respondents had unfavourable attitude towards forestry. Overall, 32.9 per cent of the respondents had neutral attitude while just 12.5 per cent respondents had unfavourable attitude towards forestry. The results are in line with those of Sreenath and Veerabhadraiah (1993) and Jha and Jha (2001).

Level of aspiration :

It is operationally defined as future level of desire to achieve regarding children's education, increase in income, agricultural implements, material possession and increase in livestock in near future. It was measured on a modified scale of Supe and Singh (1969). A look at Table 3 revealed that majority of the respondents in both the districts wanted to take up agri-business as occupation in future with 54.2 per cent in Kangra and 62.5 per cent in Hoshiarpur. In both districts, around one-fourth respondents (24.2%) wanted to engage in agro-processing industry and rest wanted to be commission agents or ahartiya (middlemen). Overall, 58.3 per cent respondents wanted to take agri-business, 17.5 per cent

wanted to take commission agent/ahartiya and remaining 24.1 per cent wanted to engage in agri-processing industry as an occupation in future. Majority of the respondents in both districts with 69.2 per cent and 72.5 per cent in Kangra and Hoshiarpur, respectively wanted to have professional or technical degree for their children and rest wanted college education for their children. Overall, 70.8 per cent of the respondents wanted to have professional or technical degree for their children and rest wanted college education for their children.

Regarding new enterprises, which the respondents wish to start in future, 26.3 per cent, 21.6 per cent, 14.1 per cent, 13.3 per cent, 12.9 per cent and 11.7 per cent respondents wanted to start timber production followed by small scale industry, mushroom, beekeeping, poplar plantations and NTFPs, respectively in both districts as a new enterprise.

General aspirations :

Table 4 indicates that majority of the respondents with around three fourth (74.2%) in Kangra and more than 80 per cent (81.7%) in Hoshiarpur aspired to increase their land holdings in near future. Regarding agricultural implements also majority of the respondents (80.8% in Kangra and 72.5% in Hoshiarpur) in both districts wanted to purchase new machinery or

Table 2 : Overall attitude of respondents towards forestry						(n=240)
Range	Kangra (n₁=120)		Hoshiarpur (n₂=120)		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Unfavourable (1-4)	19	15.8	11	9.2	30	12.5
Neutral (4-7)	33	27.5	46	38.3	79	32.9
Favourable (7-10)	68	56.7	63	52.5	131	54.6

Table 3: Distribution of the respondents according to their level of aspiration								(n=240)
Sr. No.	Item	Level of aspiration	Kangra (n₁=120)		Hoshiarpur (n₂=120)		Total	
			f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	Occupations which you would like to take up in future	Agribusiness	65	54.2	75	62.5	140	58.3
		Commission agent/ahartiya	26	21.7	16	13.3	42	17.5
		Engage in agri processing industry	29	24.2	29	24.2	58	24.1
2.	Level of education want to have for children in future	College	37	30.8	33	27.5	70	29.1
		Professional/ technical	83	69.2	87	72.5	170	70.8
3.	New enterprises wish to start in future.	Beekeeping	14	11.7	18	15	32	13.3
		Mushroom	22	18.3	12	10	34	14.1
		Small scale industry	23	19.2	29	24.2	52	21.6
		Timber production	31	25.8	32	26.7	63	26.3
		Poplar plantations	11	9.2	20	16.6	31	12.9
		NTFPs	19	15.8	9	7.5	28	11.7

Table 4 : Distribution of the respondents according to their general aspirations (n=240)

Sr. No.	Item	Level of aspiration	Kangra (n₁=120)		Hoshiarpur (n₂=120)		Total	
			f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	Land holding	Increase	89	74.2	98	81.7	187	77.9
		Constant	31	25.8	22	18.3	53	22.1
2.	Agricultural implements/	Purchase	97	80.8	87	72.5	184	76.7
	machinery	Constant	23	19.2	33	27.5	56	23.3
3.	Farm animals	Increase	41	34.2	76	63.3	117	48.7
		Constant	32	26.7	21	17.5	53	22.1
		Sell	47	39.2	23	19.2	70	29.1
4.	Shelter for farm animals	Expansion	41	34.2	76	63.3	117	48.7
		As it is	32	26.7	21	17.5	53	22.1
		Use for other purpose	47	39.2	23	19.2	70	29.1
5.	House alteration/	Expansion	109	90.8	98	81.7	207	86.2
	construction	Same	11	9.2	22	18.3	33	13.7

Table 5 : Overall distribution of the respondents according to their level of aspiration (n=240)

Range	Kangra (n₁=120)		Hoshiarpur (n₂=120)		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Low (4-9)	21	17.5	17	14.2	38	15.8
Medium (9-14)	65	54.2	52	43.3	117	48.8
High (14-19)	34	28.3	51	42.5	85	35.4

implements. In case of farm animals in Kangra, 39.2 per cent of the respondents wanted to sell the animals while 34.2 per cent wanted to increase them and more than one-fourth (26.7%) wanted to keep the farm animals as constant.

In Hoshiarpur, more than 60 per cent of the respondents (63.3%) wanted to increase the farm animals, 17.5 per cent wanted to keep them as constant and 19.2 per cent wanted to sell their farm animals. Same was the case with shelter for farm animals where majority (39.2%) in Kangra district wanted to use the shelter for other purpose while in Hoshiarpur, majority (63.3%) wanted to expand the shelter for animals. This trend follows the choice of respondents to increase, sell or keep their animals as constant. In case of house alteration, majority of the respondents in Kangra (90.8%) as well as Hoshiarpur (81.7%) wanted to expand their houses. Overall, 77.9 per cent of respondents wanted to increase their land holdings and 76.7 per cent of respondents wanted to purchase agriculture implements/ machinery. 48.7 per cent of the overall respondents, wanted to increase their farm animals, 22.1 per cent wanted to keep them as constant and 29.1 per cent of respondents wanted to sell their farm animals. Regarding shelter for farm animals, 48.7 per cent of the overall

respondents wanted to expand the animal shelter, 22.1 per cent wanted to keep it constant and 29.1 per cent wanted to use it for other purpose. 86.2 per cent of the overall respondents wanted to expand their houses and 13.7 per cent wanted to keep it as it is.

Overall distribution of the respondents according to their level of aspiration :

Table 5 reveals that more than half of the respondents in Kangra (54.2%) had medium level of aspiration, 28.3 per cent had high level of aspiration and 17.5 per cent of respondents had low level of aspiration. On the other hand, in Hodhiarpur, 43.3 per cent respondents had medium level of aspiration while 42.5 per cent had high level of aspiration and only 14.2 per cent respondents had low level of aspiration. Overall, 15.8 per cent, 48.8 per cent and 35.4 per cent respondents had low, medium and high level of aspiration, respectively. Thus, it can be inferred that majority of the respondents had medium level of aspiration. Similar results were reported by Kumar and Siddaramaiah (1996) and Satyanarayan and Jagadeeswary (2010).

Conclusion :

Increasing local awareness about forestry practices

should be priority so that attitude of be made more favourable and henceforth the adoption of forestry practices could be increased. Extensionists should treat farmers as people with valuable information and knowledge about the local environment. This knowledge is vital for providing insights on how the needs of people can be met, which includes maintaining sound environmental conditions. The forest based small scale units such as furniture, handicrafts etc. should be encouraged and small market zones should be developed to provide direct access to markets outside. This will provide to the poorest an opportunity to earn a regular income through small income generation activities.

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