

Information Needs Assessment of Potato Growers

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Abstract

The present study was conducted in Udham Singh Nagar district of Uttarakhand. The three villages (Jaitpurghosi, Rajpurarani, and Dhanauri) from Kashipur block were selected purposively for this study. Sample of total 120 respondents was selected purposively who were actively engaged in potato farming. Potato is considered one of the most important food crops in the world, and it ranks third in terms of human consumption after rice and wheat. Mainly small farmers are found in Uttarakhand who depend on agriculture to meet the needs of their families. Pre-tested interview schedule and knowledge test were used for data collection. The findings of the present study revealed that majority of the respondents (67.50%) belonged to middle age group, had education high school level (32.50%), had 1-5 acres of land holding (53.40%), were having low annual income (61.60%), potato farming was a primary source of income, had medium experience in potato farming (71.70%), had medium scientific orientation (55%), half of respondents (50.80%) had medium extent of utilization of information sources, 59.20 per cent of the respondents had medium level of extension contact. The respondents needed information regarding insect pest and disease management, application of manure and fertilizer, and selection of variety.

Keywords: Needs; Assessment; Potato Growers.

INTRODUCTION

The fruit and vegetable sector is acting as a driving force for India's agricultural sector. It plays an important role in

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India's economy by increasing the income of rural people³ (Neeraj et al. 2017). Uttarakhand is primarily a mountainous state with only about ten percent of its total geographical area in the plains. Potato is a cash crop that provides significant income to farmers. Potato is a cash crop that provides significant income to farmers. As per Third Advance Estimate (2018-19), Potato production in 2018-19 is estimated to be 530.27 lakh tonnes. During year 2015-16, total production of vegetables was 9.45 lakh metric tonnes in an area of about 0.898 lakh hectare in the state, which increased to 9.89 lakh metric tonnes in 2017-18 in an area of about 1.0006 lakh hectare³ (*Horticultural Statistics at a Glance* 2018).

In India, major Potato producing states are Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Punjab. About 86 per cent of the land area of Uttarakhand is hilly and only

14 per cent of the state's land is flat. This area mainly consists of Tarai region where farmers have good land which is useful for agriculture. There are several constraints which have led to downfall in the production of the potato in India and Uttarakhand like unavailability of quality seeds, pest management, lack of farm machinery, field management, marketing problems, lack of transportation facility, irrigation facility, lack of post harvest management techniques, lack of technical knowledge for scientific cultivation, lack of extension workers and lack of research, technical guidance and sufficient capital¹ (Babu et al., 2012). Among all the above challenges, an information gap arises due to the wide proportion between farmers and extension workers and this information gap is the most prominent factor among farmers in potato production. Present research investigation was conducted with following objectives:¹ To study the socio-economic, communication and psychological characteristics of potato growers.² To assess the information needs of potato growers related to cultivation practices.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in Udham Singh Nagar district of Uttarakhand. The three villages (Jaitpurghosi, Rajpurarani, and Dhanauri) from Kashipur block were selected purposively for this study. Sample of total 120 respondents was selected purposively who were actively engaged in potato farming. The research was conducted in six phases. The first phase of the research was the rapport building phase in which researcher use non-participant observation method for the data collection. In the second phase, the researcher used a semi-structured interview schedule and construction knowledge test for the collection of personal information and tested previous knowledge about potato cultivation and arranged focused group discussion to find out the information needs of the people. The statistical tools used to include frequencies and percentages, arithmetic mean and standard deviation.

RESULTS

Socio-economic, communication and psychological characteristics of potato growers.

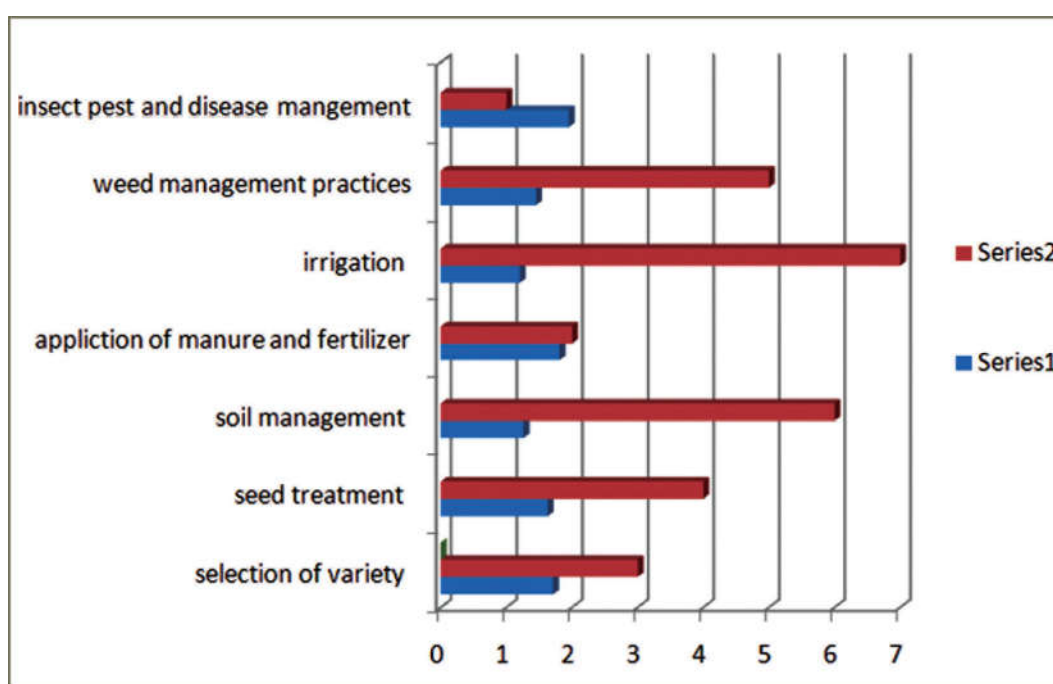
Majority (67.50 %) of the respondents belonged to middle age group (42-62 years) followed by 20.00 per cent respondents from young age group (<42 years) and rest 12.50 per cent respondents were found in old age group (>62 years). Maximum number of respondents (32.50%) were having high school education followed by those who were educated 8th standard (22.50%), Upto 5th standard 20.80 percent, 14.18 per cent respondents were educated Intermediate, graduate (5%), postgraduate (0.86%), and 4.16 percent of respondents were illiterate. Majority (53.4%) of the potato growers were having landholding between 1 to 5 acres while 31.6 percent potato growers were having small size of land holding up to 1 acre, 13.4 per cent respondents were having 5 to 10 acres and rest 1.6 percent potato growers were having more than 10 acre of landholding. Majority (61.6%) of the respondents were found in low income group, whereas 25 per cent were found in medium income group and only 13.4 percent were found in high income group. Potato farming was the primary source of income of all respondents. It is also clear that all potato growers were engaged in farming. Majority of the respondents (71.70%) had medium experience in potato farming followed by 17.50 per cent of those who had high experience in potato farming and only 10.80 per cent of the respondents had less experience in potato farming. Majority (55%) of potato growers were having medium level of scientific orientation, while 25 per cent potato growers were having low scientific orientation and rest 20 per cent potato growers were highly scientifically oriented. Majority of the respondents (50.80%) had medium utilization of information sources followed by 29.20 per cent of those who had high utilization of information and only 20 per cent of the respondents had low utilization of information sources. Majority (59.20%) of the respondents had medium level of extension contact followed by low for 28.30 percent of the respondents. Only, 12.50 percent respondents had extension contact of high level.

Information Needs of Potato Growers

The study reveals that Insect pest and disease management need was of prime importance for the potato growers with rank I, which is followed by information need for application of manure and fertilizer and selection of variety. Seed treatment was ranked IV based on the responses which was followed by rank V

Distribution of the respondents on the basis of information need (n=120)

S. No.	Information need	Weighted mean	Rank
1	Selection of variety	1.71	III
2	Seed treatment	1.63	IV
3	Soil management	1.26	VI
4	Application of manure and fertilizer	1.81	II
5	Irrigation	1.2	VII
6	Weed management practices	1.45	V
7	Insect pest and disease management	1.95	I



The findings of the present study were similar with¹ Babu et al. (2012) who observed that major thrust of information of the respondents was Insect pest and disease management.

for weed management practices and rank VI for soil management. Least information was required by growers for irrigation.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study will be useful for extension workers, research workers, and the administrators as it will provide them sufficient knowledge about the problems of potato growers and the use of mass media by potato growers and will enable them to improve their approach while working with the farmers.

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