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## Farm families livelihood Problems: A research study in rural areas of Haryana state, India

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**Abstract**

Livelihoods have a major bearing on many basic issues that affect the poor in India. Low income individuals living in developing countries regularly engage in a variety of formal and informal labour activities to support themselves and their families. The economic reforms in India did not include any specific package specifically designed for agriculture which showed low growth, poverty, unemployment, inequalities in access to health and education and poor performance of agriculture sector and experienced more farmers' suicides. It should be considered that Indian agriculture is the home of small and marginal farmers. Therefore, the future of sustainable agriculture growth and food security in India depends on the performance of small and marginal farmers. So the present study was an effort to analyse the livelihood problems of rural small and marginal farm families. The study was conducted in Gurgaon division of Haryana state and two districts from Gurgaon division i.e. Rewari and Mahendragarh were selected randomly. From selected two blocks Jatusana and Kanina, four villages (two from each block) Dahina and Maseet from Jatusana and Kakrala and Rambas from Kanina were selected randomly. From the selected villages a sample of 75 small and marginal farm families from was drawn randomly to make the total sample size of 300 farm families. In the study problems faced by farm families related to livelihood security was assessed and in Mahendragarh district sample households mainly faced the problem related to market (Rank I, WMS 2.16) followed by problems related to climate (Rank II, WMS 2.14), problems related to government (Rank III, WMS1.99), problems related to agriculture (Rank IV, WMS 1.85) and problems related to climate (Rank V, WMS 1.81) respectively.

**Keywords:** farm families, livelihood problems, rural areas

**Introduction**

A major farming community of India comes under small and marginal farming community, where the size of land holding is very low to achieve the standards of livelihood. Agriculture is the mainstay of the Indian economy, as it constitutes the backbone of the rural livelihood security system. It is the core of planned economic development in India, as the trickle-down effect of agriculture is significant in reducing poverty and regional inequality in the country. Small and marginal farmers, whose land holdings are below 2 ha, constitute almost 80% of all Indian farmers, and more than 90% of them are dependant on rain for their crops. In traditional farming practices, their costs of cultivation and risks of crop failure are so high that often the farmers cannot recover even the money spent. A majority of these farmers is suffering from poverty and unemployment, which results a failure to achieve necessary households makes a living over time. Now days, there is a need to critical review the sustainability parameter in agriculture and emphasis should be given on the efficient and sustainable utilization of natural resources, protecting the environment, sustainable agricultural growth, investment in agricultural research, infrastructure development and conserve bio diversity resources of the country. The government policies and programmes should be focused on small/marginal farmers and non farm laborers and should made available employment opportunities which will increase their income level, livelihood security and standard of living in rural areas. Government should make investment on vulnerable areas and employment rich areas such rural infrastructure, dairy sector, poverty reduction, integrated farming and natural resources conservation which help in rural development and livelihood security for rural India. Hence, in this study, an attempt was made to delineate the problems faced by farm families related to livelihood security in rural areas of Haryana state.

**Materials and Methods**

The study was conducted in Haryana state and it has been divided into four division- Hisar division, Rohtak division, Ambala division and Gurgaon division. The present study was conducted in Gurgaon division which comprises Faridabad,

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Gurgaon, Mahendragarh, Mewat, Palwal, Rewari district. sarajsarajsar. Out of five districts, two districts from Gurgaon division i.e Rewari and Mahendragarh were selected randomly. One block from each district viz., Jatusana block from Rewari district and Kanina block from Mahendragarh district, were selected randomly. From selected two blocks Jatusana and Kanina, four villages (two from each block) Dahina and Maseet from Jatusana and Kakrala and Rambas from Kanina were selected randomly. From the selected villages a sample of 75 small and marginal farm families from was drawn randomly. Thus a total of 300 respondents were selected randomly. Data was collected with the help of pre-structured interview schedule by the investigator from head of household of farm families. Statistical tools frequency, Percentages, weighted mean scores and ranking were applied for data analysis.

## Results and Discussion

### Information source utilization

**Localite sources:** Data clearly pointed out to the fact that 71.67 per cent of the respondents had utilized high localite source and only 28.33 percent had utilized medium localite source of information.

**Cosmopolite sources:** It is evident from Table 2 in pooled sample that more than half of the respondents (53.33%) were having low cosmopolite sources of information followed by medium and high cosmopolite sources of information utilization (32.67% and 14.00%) each respectively.

**Mass media:** As far as mass media exposure of the respondents was concerned, it is clear from the Table 2 that 67.00 per cent of the respondents had medium followed by high (19.00%) and low (14.00%) mass media exposure respectively.

**Table 1:** Communication profile of respondents

S. No.	Variables and category	Rewari (n=150)		Mahendergarh (n=150)		Total (n=300)	
		F	%	f	%	f	%
1.	Communication variables						
i.	Social participation						
	No membership	135	90.00	123	82.00	258	86.00
	Member of a formal organization	15	10.00	27	18.00	42	14.00
2.	Information source utilization						
i.	Localite sources						
	Low	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Medium	39	26.00	46	30.67	85	28.33
	High	111	74.00	104	69.33	215	71.67
ii.	Cosmopolite sources						
	Low	72	48.00	88	58.66	160	53.33
	Medium	52	34.67	46	30.67	98	32.67
	High	26	17.33	16	10.67	42	14.00
iii.	Mass media						
	Low	24	16.00	18	12.00	42	14.00
	Medium	99	66.00	102	68.00	201	67.00
	High	27	18.00	30	20.00	57	19.00

### Livelihood problems faced by farm families in Mahendergarh district

It is evident from the data in Table 2 that major problems related to agriculture 'Small size of land' ranked first with highest weighted mean score (2.23), 'Lack of farm implements' ranked second with the weighted mean score (2.10) and 'High cost of inputs' ranked third with the weighted mean score (1.91). It is also revealed that in problems related to household 'Lack of capital' ranked first with highest weighted mean score (2.01), 'low education' ranked second with the weighted mean score (2.00) and 'Lack of skills' ranked third with the weighted mean score (1.85). In

problems related to government 'Low support price' ranked first with highest weighted mean score (2.21), 'No timely procurement' ranked second with the weighted mean score (2.19) and 'Lack of cold storage facilities' ranked third with the weighted mean score (2.18). The findings of the study are in accordance with those of Acharya (2006)<sup>[1]</sup>, Babulo *et al.*, (2008)<sup>[2]</sup>, Chadha (2008)<sup>[3]</sup> and Kumar *et al.*, (2014)<sup>[8]</sup>.

Further results indicated that in problems related to market 'Lack of improved seeds and fertilizers' ranked first with highest weighted mean score (2.33), 'Price fluctuation of outputs' ranked second with the weighted mean score.

**Table 2:** Livelihood problems faced by farm families in Mahendergarh District.

S. No.	Category	Mahendergarh (n=150)						
		Always (3)	Sometimes (2)	Never (1)	Weighted frequency score	Weighted mean	Rank	Average Weighted mean
1.	Problems related to agriculture							
	Small size of land	76 (50.67)	32 (21.33)	42 (28.00)	334	2.23	I	1.85
	Pest infestation	31 (20.67)	62 (41.33)	57 (38.00)	274	1.83	V	
	Lack of farm implements	49 (32.67)	67 (44.67)	34 (22.67)	315	2.10	II	
	High labour cost	39 (26.00)	52 (34.67)	59 (39.33)	280	1.87	IV	
	High production cost	22 (14.67)	39 (26.00)	89 (59.33)	233	1.55	VIII	
	Post harvest losses	29 (19.33)	47 (31.33)	74 (49.33)	255	1.70	VI	
	High cost of inputs	41 (27.33)	55 (36.67)	54 (36.00)	287	1.91	III	
	Low productivity of livestock	15 (10.00)	59 (39.33)	76 (50.67)	239	1.59	VII	

2.	Related to household							
	Lack of capital	57 (38.00)	38 (25.33)	55 (36.67)	302	2.01	I	1.81
	Large family size	15 (10.00)	62 (41.33)	73 (48.67)	242	1.61	V	
	Occurrence of illness	6 (4.00)	70 (46.67)	74 (49.33)	232	1.55	VI	
	Poor access to resources	29 (19.33)	69 (46.00)	52 (34.67)	277	1.84	IV	
	Low education	38 (25.33)	75 (50.00)	37 (24.67)	301	2.00	II	
	Lack of skills	23 (15.33)	82 (54.67)	45 (30.00)	278	1.85	III	
3.	Related to government							
	Broadcasting time of agricultural program is not suitable	17 (11.33)	50 (33.33)	83 (55.33)	234	1.56	V	1.99
	Poor access to extension workers	30 (20.00)	59 (39.33)	61 (40.67)	269	1.79	IV	
	Lack of cold storage facilities	62 (41.33)	53 (35.33)	35 (23.33)	327	2.18	III	
	No timely procurement	54 (36.00)	71 (47.33)	25 (16.67)	329	2.19	II	
	Low support price	65 (43.33)	52 (34.67)	33 (22.00)	332	2.21	I	
4.	Related to market							
	Poor access to market	38 (25.33)	69 (46.00)	43 (28.67)	295	1.97	III	2.16
	Lack of improved seeds and fertilizers	72 (48.00)	55 (36.67)	23 (15.33)	349	2.33	I	
	Price fluctuation of outputs	57 (38.00)	64 (42.67)	29 (19.33)	328	2.19	II	
5.	Related to climate							
	Low rainfall	44 (29.33)	82 (54.67)	24 (16.00)	320	2.13	IV	2.14
	Declining soil fertility	68 (45.33)	52 (34.67)	30 (20.00)	338	2.25	II	
	Crop damage by late heavy rain	12 (8.00)	44 (29.33)	94 (62.67)	218	1.45	V	
	Unavailability of natural water bodies (e.g. canals, rivers)	107 (71.33)	43 (28.67)	-	407	2.71	I	
	Crop yield reduction due to drought effect	55 (36.67)	67 (44.67)	28 (18.67)	327	2.18	III	

(2.19) and 'Poor access to market' ranked third with the weighted mean score (1.97). Data further indicated that problems related to climate, 'Unavailability of natural water bodies (e.g. canals, rivers)' ranked first with highest weighted mean score (2.71), 'Declining soil fertility ranked second with the weighted mean score (2.25) and 'Crop yield reduction due to drought effect' ranked third with the weighted mean score (2.18) respectively. The findings of the study are similar with those of Papola (2010)<sup>[9]</sup>, Van den Berg (2010)<sup>[12]</sup> and Singh (2011)<sup>[10]</sup>.

Table further shows that in Mahendergarh district sample households mainly faced the problem related to market (Rank I, WMS 2.16) followed by problems related to climate (Rank II, WMS 2.14), problems related to government (Rank III, WMS 1.99), problems related to agriculture (Rank IV, WMS 1.85) and problems related to climate (Rank V, WMS 1.81) respectively. The findings of the study are similar with those Hegde (2013)<sup>[5]</sup>, Hogarth *et al.*, (2013)<sup>[6]</sup> and Kumar (2013)<sup>[7]</sup>.

Indian farmers are facing lot of problems whether it would be created by nature or by man made. The problem of rural farmers is major barriers in economic development of rural economy of a country like India where around 85.00 percent of the people belong to rural area. Therefore it is very necessary to focus on problems of small and marginal farmers related to agriculture, households, government, market and climate and to solve these to strengthen their livelihood security. The findings of Singh *et al.* (2013) are in accordance with the present study as they revealed that farmers faced many constraints in Punjab viz. high price of *Bt* seed (100.00%), labour shortage (75.80%), inadequate irrigation facilities (52.00%), low availability of irrigation water (38.30%), incidence of disease and pest attack (100.00%), lack of capital resources (98.70%). Similar findings were also reported by Mondal and Sinha (2015) who revealed main problems faced by cotton growers were endemic to pest and

disease, soil problem, effect of insecticides, drought and late heavy rainfall labour problems.

### Conclusion

Keeping the above problems of livelihood in the mind, it can conclude that sustainability in agriculture production and livelihood security is need of time for availability of food, employment to growing populations and conservation of natural resources as well as for the securing the environment. There is need of attention by policy makers towards the development of infrastructure and employment opportunities in the rural areas and improvement in the existing rural livelihood security system.

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