



Investigation of Social Variables among Kumaoni Population of Uttarakhand

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Abstract: Socioeconomic Status (SES) is a collective measurement of the social and economic factors such as amount of income, type of education, occupation, place of residence of an entity as compared to others in civilisation. While income, education, and occupation are commonly used as SES indicators, it is important to recognise that SES is a multidimensional construct that can also include other factors such as wealth, social capital, and access to resources and opportunities. It impacts the availability of different resources, food security, nutritional safety, patterns of livelihood, etc. It also forecasts the behavioural and psychological aspects of a sample namely, attitude, perception, economic motivation, adoption, aspiration level, etc. The current research investigates the socio-economic status of the Kumaoni population to relate it with their adoption of different practices which were typically for their higher returns, food, nutritional enrichment, etc. This study was performed in the Haldwani and Almora districts of Uttarakhand during 2020-21. 50 participants were randomly selected. Certain factors such as age, education, occupation, marital status, landholding, land size, farming experience, annual income, sources of drinking water, sanitation, house, cooking fuel, etc., were selected to determine the Socioeconomic status (SES). The data and information were collected using a structured interview by interviewing the participants personally. The study presents that the participant's average age was 36 years and agriculture was the only occupation of 22% of the participants whereas others had secondary occupations such as driving, shop keeping, etc. Overall, the study

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showed that 30% of the participants belonged to the low SES group and 18% to the the high SES group.

Keywords: Kumaon region, Socio-economic variables, Hill farmers, Socioeconomic status, Uttarakhand, Metabolic Syndrome.

Introduction

Socio-economic status (SES) is the vital determinant of livelihoods and is a united measurement of the social and economic position of a person or a category in association with others in a civilisation. It influences the levels of knowledge, skills, and stages of income conditions such as the behaviour of people (easy accessibility of foods high in calories), procurement of automobiles leading to a sedentary lifestyle, and low level of education that hampers access to preventative information, patterns of livelihood, food and nutritional awareness and safety, etc. (Cruz et al., 2014). SES also directs the behavioural and psychological segments of a sample namely, views, attitude, aspiration levels, knowledge, skills, the ability to bear risk, impetus in the economic facility, changes, etc. Various social and economic variables in a combined form define SES and the selection of all these variables mainly depends upon the participants, aims, and purpose of this study (Roy et al, 2013).

Uttarakhand accepts the challenge of encouraging livelihoods to recall people through the generation of income and local employment for enhancing their quality of life. As per the various reports, Indian women are more involved in activities related to agriculture and household. However, the extent and the nature of their involvement varies with the diversification in agro-production structures (Chandra et al., 2013).

The rural and urban regions of the Kumaoni area are greatly categorised into high to medium to low development levels which are shown in terms of per capita income, economic stability, and industrial and private sector development. There are different ways of livelihood such as agriculture which is the economic base of the hilly areas, while employment in terms of wages is the other means of livelihood. The traditional sources of additional income are logging and cultivation. So, on the basis of income, education, and occupation, it is a combined measurement of economic and sociological parameters of an individual's work experience, the economic status of a family, and social position in relation to others.

Typically, socioeconomic status is classified into three major groups: High SES, Middle SES, and Low SES. These are the three stages in which a family can be placed based on its income, education, occupation, and basic requirements

(Salgotra, 2017). Meher (2013) studied the health and socio-economic status of the tribal population in Orissa and on the basis of that reported the capacity-building strategies for the poor tribal population to come out of poverty life. However, in tribal areas, strengthening the facilities provided for public health care needs primary attention.

Roy et al. (2013) stated that the adoption behaviour of an individual depends on certain parameters such as attitude, perception, knowledge, aspiration levels, etc. All these variables are guided by the socio-economic status of a human that influences the adoption and the behaviour related to it. From the above discussion, it was rooted down that the present study tried to discuss the socio-economic status of Kumaon individuals in correlation with their adoption of farm practices or other sectors such as private, or government jobs (Serebrennikov, 2020).

This Ph.D research was carried out to investigate social variables among the Kumaoni population of Uttarakhand. The objective was to gain a deeper understanding of the social dynamics, cultural practices, and socioeconomic factors that influence the lives of the Kumaoni people. By examining social variables such as education levels, income disparities, occupational patterns, access to resources, and social networks within the Kumaoni community, the research aimed to identify and analyse the various social factors that contribute to their overall well-being and quality of life. The findings of this study can provide valuable insights for policymakers, researchers, and organisations working towards promoting social development, addressing inequalities, and formulating targeted interventions to improve the lives of the Kumaoni population in Uttarakhand.

Objectives of the Study

To examine the socio-economic status of the Kumaoni population on the basis of their occupation, income, and education status.

To determine the problems and the basic requirements of people living in hilly areas.

Methodology

Locale of the study

The present research was focused on studying the socio-economic status of the Kumaoni people. The study was performed in the Almora district of Uttarakhand, India from 2019 to 2020. Uttarakhand, also called Devbhoomi is one of the mountainous states besides Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) and Himachal

Pradesh. Devbhoomi, Uttarakhand consists of the North-Western Himalayan region of India, which is mainly categorised into 2 divisions: Garhwal and Kumaon. Out of 13 districts of Uttarakhand, 6 come in the Kumaon region and 7 are in the Garhwal region. Among these 13 districts, 10 are majorly hilly areas and Almora is one of the hilly districts which is situated at an average elevation of 1.604 m above sea level.

Sampling

There are 13 districts in Uttarakhand. Among these 13 districts, Almora and Nainital (Haldwani) were randomly selected. A total of 50 participants in the age group of 30-45 years of age were taken as sample.

Selection of Variables

Certain variables were selected purposively which comprise the socio-economic profile of a participant which are age, education, occupation, social participation, owing to agricultural land, income (annual), and possession of materials. If a participant owns a landholding, then the herd size and farming experience was also questioned.

Methods of Data Collection

A research schedule with detailed proforma was made keeping the objectives in mind. A letter of consent indicating the willingness of the participants towards the participation in the study was used to initiate data collection. A structured questionnaire was prepared for the study that included questions related to personal details, socio-economic status, dietary patterns, and anthropometric measurements. Data was collected by personal interview method.

Statistical tools

Simple statistical tools were used for analysing and interpreting the collected data. The tools were frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. On the basis of calculating mean and standard deviation, the participants were categorised into low, medium, and high categories.

Results and Discussion

Socio-economic Profile of Kumaon

Scrutiny of table 1 shows the percentage distribution of households in Kumaoni areas by using certain parameters or characteristics of the interviewed households. In this table 1, the percentage of respondents on the basis of their

literacy level was 32% for those who were found to be illiterate whereas 14% and 18% for those with primary and secondary education respectively, 18% were educated up to secondary level, while 12% and 6% were educated till higher secondary and college levels, respectively. Agriculture was found to be the sole occupation of 22% of the respondents whereas others included subsidiary occupations such as shopkeeping, labour, driving, etc. Misra (1979) and Kannan (2002) found that the majority of the respondents had a medium size of landholdings (68%). Most of the respondents were found to have a medium level of experience in farming (70%).

Table 1: Socio-economic Status of Kumaoni Population from Utrakhand, India

S. No.	Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
	Age	Young	06	12.00
		Middle	36	72.00
		Old	08	16.00
	Education	Illiterate	16	32.00
		Primary	07	14.00
		Middle	09	18.00
		Secondary	09	18.00
		Higher Secondary	06	12.00
		College & above	03	06.00
	Occupation	Agriculture	11	22.00
		Business	01	02.00
		Domestic Work	20	40.00
		Manual Worker	07	14.00
		Service	02	04.00
		Others	01	18.00
4.	Marital Status	Married	35	70.00
		Unmarried	10	20.00%
		Widow/Divorced	05	10.00
5.	Landholding	Small	07	14.00
		Medium	34	68.00
		Large	09	18.00
6.	Size of land	Low	10	20.00
		Medium	32	64.00
		Large	08	16.00

S. No.	Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
7.	Farming Experience	Low	06	12.00
		Medium	35	70.00
		Large	09	18.00
8.	Annual Income	Low	05	10.00
		Medium	28	56.00
		High	12	24.00
9.	Sources of drinking water	Piped	27	54.00
		Hand pump	13	26.00
		Surface water	09	18.00
		Other	01	01.00
10.	Sanitation facility	Flush toilet	09	18.00
		Pit toilet	40	80.00
		No facility	01	02.00
11.	Main source of lighting	Electricity	34	68.00
		Kerosene	15	30.00
		Gas/oil	01	02.00
12.	House	Pucca	23	46.00
		Semi-Pucca	17	34.00
		Kacha	20	10.00
13.	Cooking fuel	LPG	10	20.00
		Wood	36	72.00
		Kerosene	01	02.00
		Other	03	06.00

70% of the respondents were married whereas 20% were unmarried. Unmarried respondents included those who never got married and were continuously never-married; and 10% of the respondents were widowed, and divorced. This table 1 also provides information regarding the occupation of the respondents where 22% of the individuals were involved in agricultural work. About 40% of the respondents were engaged in domestic work whereas 14% were involved in manual work followed by service/sales (2%), business (2%), and other works (18%).

54% of the participant households had a supply of piped drinking water followed by 26% from a hand pump, 18% from surface water, and others (that included well and other sources) were only 2%. In regard to the sanitation facilities, 18% of the households had flush toilet facility and 80% had pit toilet

facility. While 2% of the households reported having no toilet facilities in their households. The majority age group of respondents was middle-aged (36%). The respondent's average age was obtained around 40 years. Researchers, Kannan (2002), and Sah (2005) also reported in their research that the majority of the participants belonged to a middle-aged group (37-48 years). Most of the respondents had a medium level of education. Rural areas had one-fourth of agricultural land in comparison to urban areas but in rural areas women are burdened more in comparison to men with the extra responsibilities of doing agriculture work along with household chores. Chunera (2018) stated that female farmers had low SES than male farmers in Kumaon, Uttarakhand area because of their low educational status, lower income group and were not included in secondary occupation.

Over 68% of households were using electricity as a main source of lighting. Some households still didn't use electricity as the main source whereas 30% used kerosene for the purpose of lighting. During my study, it was reported that 2% used gas/oil for lighting. The percentage of pucca houses was 46% higher in comparison to semi-pucca (34%) and kacha (20%) houses. Several types of fuel were used for cooking in Almora, Uttarakhand. In rural areas, wood i.e., 72% households used wood as the most common type of cooking fuel and LPG was the second commonest followed by the use of kerosene (2%).

Conclusion

In hilly areas, the major goal of agricultural development in hills is to encourage people adopt to new technologies that provide them profits. The socio-economic status was determined by using these 13 parameters which showed that nearly 30% of respondents belonged to the low SES category whereas nearly 18% had high SES. Studying and learning about the determinants of the respondents and their socio-economic status will further aid in escalating the procedure of efficient technology transfer as it majorly moves the rate of adoption. This study provides a preview of the socio-economic profile of respondents from Kumaoni hilly areas. But care should be taken before providing any technology for adoption, considering the socio-economic profile of the people and this profitable technology should be developed in a way that it maintains a balance between with the socio-economic status of the respondents.

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