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Exploring the socio-economic and psychological dimensions of agripreneurs in Kumaon, Uttarakhand

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ABSTRACT: Agriculture is pivotal to India's economy, providing livelihood to a significant proportion of the population. In Uttarakhand, particularly the Kumaon region, agripreneurship is emerging as a vital mechanism to enhance agricultural productivity and income generation. Agripreneurs bridge traditional farming practices with innovative entrepreneurial approaches, adopting modern marketing techniques to expand market reach and value addition. This study aims to investigate the entrepreneurial marketing practices among agripreneurs in Udham Singh Nagar district of Uttarakhand. The specific objectives include analyzing the socio-economic, psychological and communication profiles of agripreneurs, evaluating their marketing strategies and identifying constraints in marketing their products and services. The research involved 157 agripreneurs selected through simple random sampling from four blocks: Rudrapur, Bazpur, Sitarganj and Khatima. Data was collected via structured questionnaires and analyzed using statistical tools such as frequency, percentage and correlation analysis. Findings revealed that a majority (60.5%) of agripreneurs were middle-aged and 68.78% had marginal landholdings. Most respondents exhibited medium levels of information-seeking behavior (68.79%), innovativeness (58.6%) and decision-making ability (66.88%). Agripreneurs faced challenges such as limited market access, inadequate marketing infrastructure and low awareness of advanced marketing techniques. Addressing these challenges requires targeted interventions, including capacity-building programs, improved market linkages and financial support. This study highlights the potential of entrepreneurial marketing to transform agriculture in the Kumaon region, enhancing rural livelihoods and contributing to sustainable economic development.

Key words: Agripreneurship, entrepreneurial marketing, Kumaon region, socio-economic profile, agricultural innovation, market linkages, Uttarakhand

Agriculture is crucial to India's economy, with the agro-based industry as its extension. India, with 17.50% of the world's population and 2.4% of its land, once relied heavily on agriculture post-independence. Today, it contributes 18.3% to GDP, 11.9% to exports and employs 58.40% of the workforce, directly or indirectly involving 65% of the population. Despite being the world's second-largest food producer, India's international food trade is only 1.60%, indicating substantial potential in agripreneurship. As the economy has shifted away from agriculture towards industry and more recently towards a service-based structure, the role of agriculture has evolved significantly. Technological advancements, precision farming techniques and digital integration characterize modern agriculture. This modernization, combined with entrepreneurial initiatives, presents both opportunities and challenges for the sector. Entrepreneurial activities in agriculture are increasingly crucial as individuals explore innovative ways to harness its potential.

These activities encompass a broad spectrum, from small-scale agribusinesses to technology-driven agrotech firms, contributing not only to economic growth but also fostering innovation and market-oriented strategies within the sector. (Singh and Singh, 2017)

Entrepreneurship in agriculture involves utilizing entrepreneurial marketing techniques, allowing farmers and agribusinesses to strategically enhance product value, expand market reach and ensure long-term business sustainability. (Yadav *et al.*, 2013) The agricultural sector's significance to the economy is diverse, encompassing food security, economic development, rural livelihoods, environmental sustainability and global trade. Entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in advancing agricultural development by driving innovation, sustainability and economic growth within the sector. Entrepreneurial initiatives in agriculture introduce novel ideas, technologies and business models that

enhance productivity and benefit rural communities. Agribusiness entrepreneurs lead in adopting and implementing advanced technologies that transform farming practices. They also promote crop diversification and alternative agricultural products, reducing dependence on single commodities. This diversification not only mitigates risks from market fluctuations and climate impacts but also creates new avenues for income generation.

Under the present circumstances, the development of efficient marketing system and production management is needed. Further, agricultural marketing system should have provision for price information, marketing as well as forward and backward linkages for increasing market access. This requires intensified efforts on marketing policy research, market intelligence and trade program mission, centers of excellence, mode of operations and new approaches to generate appropriate marketing technologies. Agricultural products receive a much smaller portion of the consumer's rupee than do food processors. In recent years, the government has laid special emphasis on the need for conducting special entrepreneurial training programs for farmers to enable them to start their own ventures. Financial institutions and banks have also set up special cells to assist the agripreneurs.

Therefore, a need was felt to study the agripreneurial marketing and most importantly pinpoint the obstacles agripreneurs face in successfully marketing their agricultural products. Understanding these challenges is essential for developing precise interventions that enhance the overall entrepreneurial journey. The objectives are to study the socio-economic, communication and psychological characteristics of agripreneurs; to study the entrepreneurial marketing in agripreneurs; to study the relationship between the profile of agripreneurs and entrepreneurial marketing in agripreneurs; to study the constraints of agripreneurs in marketing their produce /services.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sample Size: The present study was focused on the

agripreneurs registered both in the MSME department and Vikas Bhawan of the U.S. Nagar district from 2022. The locale of study was Kumaon region of Uttarakhand, under which Udham Singh Nagar was chosen deliberately for study and further out of 7 blocks four blocks Rudrapur, Bazpur, Sitarganj and Khatima were chosen for study since they count for a maximum number of registered agripreneurs. Thereafter 10% of the respondents will be selected by simple random sampling and final respondents were chosen from each category thus, giving a total count of 157 respondents.

Variables: The independent variables were Age, Education, Landholding, Annual income, Social participation, Information-seeking behavior, Innovativeness, type of enterprise, Decision-making ability, Management orientation, Entrepreneurial orientation and achievement motivation whereas the dependent variable was Entrepreneurial Marketing.

Data Collection: Data collection was done through a pre-tested structured questionnaire by contacting in person with the agripreneurs and briefings about the study. The appropriate and required statistical tools and techniques such as frequency, percentage, range, coefficient of correlation and significance of correlation coefficient were used to analyze data for meaningful explanations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Age: It is concluded that the majority (60.50 %) of respondents were middle-aged followed by young (24.22%) and old age (15.28%) groups respectively. The findings of the present study indicated that the majority of the agripreneurs in the study were from the middle-age category (35 to 55 years). This might be due to fact that persons of the young generation were less interested in agripreneurship and may have migrated in search of better employment or for some other jobs. Usually, agripreneurship needs maturity with good exposure and experience in the Agri sector. This finding confirms the findings of Deepthi *et al.* (2018) who found that more than half (65.50%) of the agripreneurs were middle-aged followed by young (19.00%) and old-age (15.50%).

Table 1: General Information of respondents

S. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
	Age		
1	Young (Upto 35 years)	38	24.22
2	Middle (35-55 years)	95	60.5
3	Old (Above 55 years)	24	15.28
	Education		
4	Illiterate	10	6.36
5	Functional Literate	4	2.54
6	Primary school	18	11.46
7	Mid school	11	7
8	High school	58	36.94
9	Intermediate	22	14.01
10	College Education	34	21.65
	Landholding		
11	Marginal (Below 1 hectare)	108	68.78
12	Small (1-2 hectare)	38	24.2
13	Semi- Medium (2-4 hectare)	8	5.09
14	Medium (4-10 hectare)	3	1.91
15	Large (More than 10 hectare)	0	0
	Income		
16	Low (less than 172925)	35	22.29
17	Medium (172926-392386)	96	61.14
18	High (above 392387)	26	16.56
	Social Participation		
19	Low (less than 1.34)	44	28.02
20	Medium (1.35-3.38)	93	59.23
21	High (more than 3.39)	20	12.73

Education: Education is one of the most important factor assessing the skills and abilities of the person. It shows how the person thinks and how well they can handle the challenges and activities of daily life. Table 1 showed that the majority of respondents (36.94 %) had completed high school, followed by college (21.65%), intermediate (14.01%) and some with primary school education (11.46%). In addition, only 7 percent of respondents were mid school, 6.36 percent were illiterate and 2.54 percent were functionally literate.

Landholding: It is found that the majority of the respondents (68.78%) had marginal land holding (less than 1 hectare) followed by 24.2% percent with small land holding (1 to 2 hectare), 5.09% percent had semi-medium land holding (2 to 4 hectare) and only 1.91 percent had medium land holding (4 to 10 hectare). None of the respondents had more than 10-hectare land holdings. From the above results, it is inferred that most of the agripreneurs had marginal

land holdings. This could be because the majority of families in the study areas had land ownership split up because of the division of joint families. Sonam and Hans (2020) also reported that the majority of the respondents have Marginal Landholdings.

Income: The Table 1 indicates that majority (61.14%) of agripreneurs had a medium-income group followed by high (22.29%) and low (16.56%) levels of income. It can be concluded from the data that most of the agripreneurs belongs to the medium income group and the enterprises owned by the respondents were mainly micro-enterprises.

Social Participation: It is evident from Table 1 that the majority (59.23%) of the respondents had medium-social participation followed by low (28.02%) and high (12.73%) social participation respectively. It can be concluded that social participation among this group is predominantly at a medium level, with 59.23 percent of respondents falling into this category. This suggests that most agripreneurs are moderately engaged in social activities, possibly balancing their professional and social lives effectively. Meanwhile, 28.02 percent of the respondents exhibit low social participation, indicating a considerable segment that might be less involved in community or social events, possibly due to business commitments or other constraints. On the other hand, 12.73 percent of agripreneurs display high social participation, showing a smaller, yet notable group that is highly engaged in social activities. This distribution highlights the diversity in social engagement among agripreneurs in Udham Singh Nagar, pointing to varying degrees of community involvement and social networking within this population. In Rudrapur block one of the agripreneurs was found to be the secretary of polyhouse committee. These results are in accordance with Madhuprasad *et al.* (2008) who found that more than half of the respondents had medium social participation followed by low and high social participation.

Information Seeking Behaviour: The data Table 1 refers to the information seeking behaviour of the respondents based on various source of information. It is inferred from the data that the majority (68.7%)

of the respondents had a medium-income group followed by low (17.2%) and low (14.01%) of information-seeking behavior.

From the data it can be concluded that that most respondents displayed medium level of information seeking behaviour. This may be due to exposure of Pantnagar University in Udham Singh Nagar district, attending Kisan mela by farmers and visit of villages by extension personnel. Also, the availability of internet, mobile to contact with friends and cooperatives help them to gain knowledge about different farming practices.

Innovativeness: The data related to innovativeness of respondents can be studied under 3 categories mentioned in Table 4 which reveals that that most (58.6%) of the respondents had a medium level of innovativeness followed by high (21.02%) and low (20.38%) levels. The data indicates that a significant majority (58.6%) of the respondents exhibit a medium level of innovativeness it was because of their

education, more exposure and development outlook. This suggests that most agripreneurs in the district are fairly receptive to new methods and technologies but might still rely on traditional practices to a considerable extent. They are likely experimenting with or gradually adopting innovative approaches, balancing between conventional and modern techniques to enhance productivity and efficiency in their agribusiness operations.

Decision-Making Ability: The analysis in Table 4 showed that medium decision-making ability was observed in more than half (66.88%) of agripreneurs followed by those with low (21.02%) and high (12.01%) levels of decision-making ability. It can be concluded that agripreneurs possess a balanced and moderate approach to making decisions, likely integrating a mix of experience, knowledge and risk management in their business practices. Following this, 21.02% of respondents demonstrate a low level of decision- making ability, suggesting that a notable portion may struggle with or be less confident in their

Table 2: Information seeking behavior of respondents

Personal localite sources	Regularly		Occasionally		Never	
	frequency	%	frequency	%	frequency	%
Local Leader	81	51.59	63	40.13	13	8.28
Neighbor	30	19.10	62	39.50	65	41.40
Friend	44	28.02	75	47.78	38	24.20
Progressive Farmers	92	58.60	42	26.76	23	14.64
Relatives	39	24.84	43	27.38	75	47.78
Personal cosmopolite sources						
NGO Personnels	70	44.59	46	29.29	41	26.12
KVK SMS	59	37.58	52	33.12	46	29.30
Gram Sevak	78	49.69	44	28.02	35	22.29
BDO	53	33.76	52	33.12	52	33.12
AO	48	30.58	50	31.84	59	37.58
AFO	41	26.11	42	26.75	74	47.14
Mass media sources						
Television	59	37.58	58	36.94	40	25.48
Radio	0	0	46	29.30	111	70.70
Mobile Phone	106	67.52	40	25.48	11	7
Newspaper	55	35.04	51	32.48	51	32.48
Farm magazine	30	19.10	68	43.32	59	37.58
Extension education methods						
Training Programe	53	33.76	68	43.32	36	22.92
Field Trials	36	22.93	63	40.12	58	36.95
Demonstration	48	30.57	66	42.04	43	27.39
Meetings	54	34.40	59	37.58	44	28.02
Kisan Mela	112	71.34	28	17.84	17	10.82

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to information-seeking behaviour

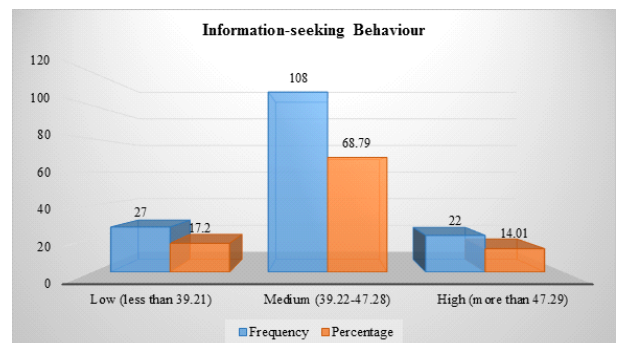
S. No	Information-seeking Behaviour	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low (less than 39.21)	27	17.2
2	Medium (39.22-47.28)	108	68.79
3	High (more than 47.29)	22	14.01

decision-making processes. Lastly, 12.10% of agripreneurs show a high level of decision-making ability, representing a smaller group that excels in making effective and confident business decisions. Emphasizing the predominance of medium-level decision-making ability suggests a commonality in the decision-making styles among agripreneurs, potentially providing a foundation for targeted training and support programs to further enhance their decision-making skills. The results are in accordance with the findings of Ram *et al.* (2013) who reported that nearly two-thirds (62.00%) of the respondents had medium decision-making ability.

Management Orientation: The analysis of data in Table 4 shows management orientation of respondents can be studied under 3 categories which reveals that the majority (68.15%) of the respondents had a medium level of management orientation followed by a high (17.83%) and low (14.01%) levels of management orientation respectively. The data indicates that a significant majority of respondents (68.15%) exhibited a medium level of management orientation. Through personal interactions and data collection with the participants, it was found that many agripreneurs initiated their enterprises following training received from local institutions such as the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) and the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA). These centers, along with successful entrepreneurs who had previously embarked on similar ventures, served as key sources of motivation for the respondents. Although they had the opportunity for training at these resource centers, the exposure primarily provided practical insights, but did not sufficiently enhance their knowledge in critical areas such as planning, production and marketing. This limitation may contribute to the prevalence of medium management orientation among the respondents. The finding is in accordance with those of Ram *et al.* (2013) who reported that

the majority of the respondents had a medium level of management orientation.

Entrepreneurial Orientation: The distribution of agripreneurs according to their Entrepreneurial orientation has been depicted in Table 4. It is visible from the data that the majority (71.34%) of the respondents had a medium level of entrepreneurial orientation followed by a low (14.65%) and high (14.01%) levels of entrepreneurial orientation respectively. The data indicates that a significant majority (71.34%) of the respondents exhibit a medium level of entrepreneurial orientation. This suggests that most agripreneurs in the district have a balanced approach to entrepreneurship. They are moderately inclined to innovate, take calculated risks and proactively seek new opportunities. This medium level of entrepreneurial orientation implies a stable yet dynamic approach to managing their agricultural businesses, reflecting an openness to growth and improvement while maintaining a certain degree of caution and reliance on proven methods. Conversely, a smaller portion (14.65%) of the respondents shows a low level of entrepreneurial orientation. These agripreneurs may be more risk-averse, less inclined to innovate and less proactive in seeking new opportunities. This lower level of entrepreneurial orientation could stem from various factors such as limited resources, lack of exposure to new ideas, or a preference for traditional practices. This cautious approach might limit their ability to adapt to changing market conditions and take advantage of new opportunities, potentially hindering their business growth and sustainability. Following this, 14.01 percent of the respondents demonstrate

**Fig. 1: Distribution of respondents according to information-seeking behaviour**

a high level of entrepreneurial orientation. These agripreneurs are highly innovative, willing to take significant risks and are very proactive in seeking out new opportunities and markets. Their strong entrepreneurial drive likely leads to the adoption of cutting-edge technologies, exploration of new business models and overall aggressive strategies for business expansion. This high level of entrepreneurial orientation positions them as leaders and potential trendsetters within the agricultural community, driving innovation and competitiveness. It can be concluded that the majority (71.34%) of the respondents had a medium level of entrepreneurial orientation.

Achievement Motivation: The classification of agripreneurs according to their achievement motivation is presented in Table 4 explains that the majority 59.87 percent of the agripreneurs had medium followed by low (22.29%) and high (17.83%) levels of Achievement motivation. It is visible from data that a significant majority (59.87%) of the respondents exhibit a medium level of achievement motivation. This indicates that most agripreneurs in the district are moderately driven to succeed and accomplish their goals. They likely possess a balanced approach, setting realistic and attainable objectives and showing a consistent effort to achieve them. This medium level of motivation suggests a stable commitment to improving their agribusinesses, although there may be room for further enhancement to reach higher levels of achievement. This finding is supported by the research conducted by Sah *et al.* (2009), which indicated that a significant majority of agripreneurs exhibited a medium level of achievement motivation.

CONCLUSION

The socio-economic and psychological profile of agripreneurs in the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand highlights their diverse backgrounds, unique motivations and adaptive capacities. The study reveals that agripreneurs play a crucial role in transforming traditional agricultural practices into sustainable and profitable ventures. Their entrepreneurial success is significantly influenced

Table 4: Distribution of respondents according to psychological characteristics (n=157)

S. No	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
[1]	Innovativeness		
1	Low (less than 8.21)	32	20.38
2	Medium (8.22-11.73)	92	58.60
3	High (more than 11.74)	33	21.02
[2]	Decision-making ability		
4	Low (less than 8.18)	33	21.02
5	Medium (8.19-12.20)	105	66.88
6	High (more than 12.21)	19	12.10
[3]	Management Orientation		
7	Low (less than 44.03)	22	14.01
8	Medium (44.04-59.76)	107	68.15
9	High (more than 59.77)	28	17.83
[4]	Entrepreneurial Orientation		
10	Low (less than 28.71)	23	14.65
11	Medium (28.72-42.22)	112	71.34
12	High (more than 42.23)	22	14.01
[5]	Achievement motivation		
13	Low (less than 8.21)	35	22.29
14	Medium (8.22-11.81)	94	59.87
15	High (more than 11.82)	28	17.83

by factors such as education, access to resources, market linkages and psychological traits like risk-taking ability, self-confidence and resilience. Moreover, the findings emphasize the importance of supportive policies, training programs and financial assistance to foster agripreneurship in the region. By addressing challenges such as limited infrastructure, unpredictable market conditions and climate variability, stakeholders can further empower agripreneurs to drive rural development and economic growth. This study underscores the potential of agripreneurs to innovate, generate employment and contribute to the overall progress of the Kumaon region, making them key agents of change in the agricultural sector.

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