

PROFILE OF FARMERS AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS SOIL HEALTH CARD SCHEME: A MEASURE FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF SOIL HEALTH

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Abstract: “This paper examined Deoghar district of Jharkhand state to access the attitude of farmers about Soil Health Card Scheme as a measure for the maintenance of soil health. This study has been conducted in six villages, viz. Pandanberha, Lakda, Gajjiamua, Nawadih, Dumma&Khobha. The soil health card scheme was launched in the International year of soils to maintain the health and quality of soil. A scale developed by previous researchers was used to measure attitude of 120 farmers. Farmers were approached personally by the investigator for the collection of data. From the data it can be revealed that three fifth (60.00 per cent) of respondents had favourable attitude towards soil health card programme. While, 23.33 per cent, 09.16 per cent and 3.33 per cent respondents had neutral, unfavourable attitude and highly unfavourable attitude towards soil health card programme, respectively. Whereas only 04.16 per cent of the respondents had most favourable attitude towards soil health card scheme. Education, mass media exposure, extension contact, scientific orientation, innovativeness, had significant and positive relationship with their attitude towards soil health card scheme.”

Key Words: Soil health, Soil health card scheme, Attitude, Profile

1. INTRODUCTION:

Soil Health invokes the idea that soil is an ecosystem full of life that needs to be carefully managed to regain and maintain our soil's ability to function optimally.

Proper maintenance of the soil health is necessary from agricultural point of view, which refers to the capacity of the soil to ensure proper physical, chemical and biological activities/processes for sustaining higher crop productivity. A productive soil would ensure proper retention and release of water and nutrients, promote and sustain root growth, maintain soil biotic habitat, respond to management and resist degradation.

Intensive agriculture has caused nutrient imbalance including greater mining of soil nutrients to the extent of 10 million tons every year depleting soil fertility, emerging deficiencies of secondary and micronutrients, decline of water table and its quality of water, decreasing organic carbon content, and overall deterioration in soil health. Thus, the current focus in soil and crop management is on maintenance of soil quality or soil health.

To avoid deterioration of soil in long run and visualizing the importance of balance nutrient in crop production, government of India launched soil health card scheme. Soil Health Card Scheme is a very beneficial scheme for farmers which carries crop-wise recommendations of nutrients and fertilisers required for the individual farms to help farmers to improve productivity through judicious use of inputs.

Attitude refers to the “degree of positive or negative feeling associated with some psychological object” In the present study, attitude is conceptualized as most unfavourable, unfavourable, neutral, favourable and most favourable feeling of farmers towards soil health card programme. Since change in knowledge and attitude preceded adoption of an innovation, it is therefore, always important to find out the factors responsible for positive or negative disposition associated with farmer towards the usefulness and application of soil health card scheme.

To understand feelings of the farmers against this system, there was an urgent need to study the degree of positive or negative disposition associated with farmer towards the usefulness and application of soil health card.

Hence, present study present research study entitled “Attitude of farmers towards soil health card scheme, a measure for the maintenance of soil health” was undertaken.

2. OBJECTIVE:

- To ascertain the attitude of farmers towards soil health card scheme.
- To find out the relationship between socio economic and personal profile of respondents and attitude.

3. METHODOLOGY:

The present study was conducted in Deoghar district of Jharkhand. This district consists of 10 blocks out of which two blocks viz., Deoghar and Mohanpur were selected purposively based on the availability of Soil Health Card holders. Six villages having more number of respondents from the blocks were selected. A comprehensive list of all the respondents having SHC was obtained from Department of Agriculture, Deoghar and ATMA, Deoghar office. Thus, twenty respondents from each village were selected at random sample for the study. For collecting the data from the respondent, personal interview method was used. To measure the attitude of respondents towards soil health card scheme, scale developed by Patel and Chauhan (2011) was used with due modification. Data were compiled, tabulated and analyzed to get proper answers for objective of the study. For calculating the relationship between profile and attitude, Karl Pearson's coefficient correlation was calculated. The statistics tools used were Frequency, Percentages, correlation of coefficient.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Attitude are frequently described in terms of personal consistency, as a "latent concept" that is individual dependent". Attitude strength is an important determinant of attitude behaviour relationship. To measure attitude of the respondents towards soil health card scheme, scale developed by Patel and Chauhan was applied. The overall attitude of respondents towards soil health card scheme has been depicted in Table below.

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents according to their attitude towards soil health card scheme n=120

Sr.No.	Category	Respondents	
		Frequency	Per cent
1.	Most unfavourable (up to 14.4 score)	4	03.33
2.	Unfavourable (14.4– 20.8 score)	11	09.16
3.	Neutral (20.8 – 27.2 score)	28	23.33
4.	Favourable (27.2 – 33.6 score)	72	60.00
5.	Most favourable (above 33.6 score)	5	04.16
Total		120	100.00

The data given in Table 1 illustrated that three fifth (60.00 %) of respondents had favourable attitude towards soil health card programme. While, 23.33 per cent, 09.16 per cent and 3.33 per cent respondents had neutral, unfavourable attitude and highly unfavourable attitude towards soil health card programme, respectively. Whereas only 04.16 per cent of the respondents had most favourable attitude towards soil health card scheme.

Relationship between attitude of farmers towards soil health card programme and their selected characteristics

Soil health card scheme is not a unit act but a complex process involving sequence and thought of action. The action of individual farmers is governed by personal, social, psychological and cultural factors involved in situation.

Some farmers manage new cultivation technology more quickly than others because of the difference in personal, socio-economical and communication characteristics.

Similarly, if there is difference in economic factors, process of action is changed, there by changing the pattern of management. Thus, it may be stated that the degree of attitude of the respondents towards soil health card scheme differs with their personal, social-communicational and economic characteristics. Hence considering the importance of these characteristics and review of past research studies, an attempt has been made in this investigation to ascertain the relationship if any, between personal, socio-economic and communicational characteristics of the respondents and their attitude towards soil health card scheme.

Correlation coefficient was used to calculate relationship between the characteristics of respondents and their attitude towards soil health card scheme. The results obtained are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Relationship between the characteristics of respondents and their attitude towards soil health card scheme n=120

Sr. No.	Independent Variables	Correlation Coefficient ('r' value)
1.	Age	-0.120 NS
2.	Education	0.702*
3.	Land holding	0.118 NS
4.	Annual income	0.124 NS
5.	Social participation	0.114 NS
6.	Extension contact	0.185*

7.	Mass media exposure	0.225*
8.	Scientific orientation	0.195*
9.	Innovativeness	0.201*
10.	Cosmopoliteness	0.076 NS

*=significant at 5% level of probability

NS= Non Significant

The data in Table-2 shows that education, extension contact, mass media exposure, scientific orientation and innovativeness are significant with attitude towards soil health card scheme whereas age, land holding, annual income, social participation and cosmopoliteness are non-significant with attitude towards soil health card scheme.

5. CONCLUSION:

It can be concluded that majority (60.00 percent) of the respondents had favourable attitude towards soil health card programme. Awareness among the farming community and a lot of publicity made by extension functionary about soil health card scheme might be the possible reason for this condition. Among the different personal, socio-economic, communicational and psychological variables, education, mass media exposure, extension contact, scientific orientation and innovativeness had established significant and positive relationship with their attitude towards soil health card scheme. While all other variables, viz. age, land holding, annual income, social participation and cosmopoliteness failed to show any significant influence on attitude of the farmers towards soil health card scheme.

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