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Relationship between profile characteristics and Communication behaviour level of Tribal farmers of Attapaddy Hills of Palakkad District in Kerala

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Abstract

The word 'Tribe', rooted in the Latin 'tribus', describes a specific social group in traditional societies. These groups comprise interconnected families or communities that share customs and beliefs. India's Scheduled Tribes now make up 8.6 per cent of the total population, growing at 23.66 per cent between 2001-2011. The exact number of tribes in India is debated. The 2011 Census of India recognized 705 Scheduled Tribe groups. Kerala is one of the leading states of southern India in case of tribal settlements. This study was conducted in Palakkad district of Kerala. The total tribal population of Palakkad district according to 2011 census is 48972. Proportionate random sampling method was adopted to select the 120 tribal respondents from the four selected villages. Zero-order correlation and Linear multiple regression was worked out to find out the degree of relationship of independent variables with each of the dependent variable. More than fifty per cent of the respondents (54.17 per cent) had medium level of communication behaviour of tribal farmers. Out of fourteen independent variables, three variables viz., educational status, farming experience and mass media exposure had exhibited positive and significant association with communication behaviour at 1 per cent level of probability. For multiple regression analysis, educational status and farming experience were positive and significant at 1 per cent level of probability towards communication behaviour.

Key words : Tribal, Communication behaviour, Correlation, Regression.

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The word 'Tribe', rooted in the Latin 'tribus', describes a specific social group in traditional societies. These groups comprise interconnected families or communities that share customs and beliefs. The Oxford Dictionary defines a tribe as "a group of people at a basic stage of development, recognizing a chief's authority and typically believing in a shared ancestor".

India's Scheduled Tribes now make up 8.6 per cent of the total population, growing at 23.66 per cent between 2001-2011. The 1991 census counted 67,583,800 tribal people (8.08 per cent of the population), up from 6.94per cent in 1971. The exact number of tribes in India is debated. The Anthropological Survey of India's 'People of India Project' identified 461 tribal communities, while the Government of India's Draft National Tribal Policy (2006) listed 698 Scheduled Tribes. The 2011 Census of India recognized 705 Scheduled Tribe groups.

Scheduled Tribes in Kerala are predominantly rural, with 89.33 per cent residing in villages and only 10.67 per cent in urban areas. District-wise distribution shows Wayanad district having the highest proportion of Scheduled Tribes (18.53 per cent), while Thrissur District has the lowest (0.30 per cent). The absolute number of Scheduled Tribes has increased by 120,650.

Attapady Hills comprise 187 hamlets: 144 Irula, 24 Muduga, and 19 Kurumba. There are approximately 7,328 families: 6,281, Irula, 649, Muduga, and 398 Kurumba. The total tribal population is 27627, with 13,708 males and 13,919 females. The Irula population is 23,370. The Muduga population totals 2,546. The Kurumba population is 1711.

According to Singh (2006), the term ex-post-facto is used to refer to an experiment in which the researcher rather than creating the treatment, examines the effect of a naturally occurring treatment after it has occurred. The main characteristic of this method is that the researcher has no control over the variable and only what has happened or what is happening can be reported. Ex-post-facto research design was used in this study to obtain the type of information needed.

Kerala is one of the leading states of southern India in case of tribal settlements. This study was conducted in Palakkad district of Kerala. The total tribal population of Palakkad district according to 2011 census is 48972. Palakkad district is comprised of six taluks namely Alathur, Chittur – Thathamangalam, Mannarkkad, Ottapalam, Palakkad and Pattambi. Among the 6 taluks, a greater number of tribal populations were noticed in Mannarkkad taluk. Hence the Mannarkkad taluk is purposively selected for this present study.

Palakkad district comprised of thirteen block panchayats namely, Alathur, Attapaddy, Chittur, Kollengode, Kuzhalmannam, Malampuzha, Mannarkkad, Nenmara, Ottapalam, Palakkad, Pattambi, Sreekrishnapuram and Thrithala. Among these thirteen blocks a greater number of tribal populations were noticed in Attapaddy block. Hence, Attapaddy hills (block), was purposively selected for this present study.

The Attapaddy block comprised of six revenue villages namely Agali, Kallamala,

Kottathara, Padavayal, Pudur and Sholayur. Among the six revenue villages the top four villages (Agali, Kottathara, Padavayal, and Pudur) were selected according to tribal population in the village.

Proportionate random sampling method was adopted to select the 120 tribal respondents from the four selected villages. The number of respondents from each of the selected tribal villages were fixed based on Proportionate random sampling techniques.

Zero-order correlation was worked out to find out the degree of relationship of independent variables with each of the dependent variable.

Zero-order correlation co-efficient.

$$\text{'r'} = \frac{\frac{\sum Xy}{n} - \bar{X}\bar{Y}}{\sigma X \cdot \sigma y}$$

Linear multiple regression was worked out to find the degree of functional relationship of the independent variable with the dependent variable. The following is the general formula of multiple regression equation,

$$Y=a+b_1X_1+b_2X_2\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots +b_nX_n$$

Where,

Y - Dependent variable

a - Intercept

X_1 to X_n - Independent variables

b_1 to b_n - Partial regression coefficient

It could be inferred from the Table-1, that more than fifty per cent of the respondents (54.17 per cent) had medium level of communication behaviour of tribal farmers followed by 25.00 per cent of the respondents had high level of communication behaviour and 20.83 per cent of the respondents had low level of communication behaviour of tribal farmers. Hence, it could be concluded that majority of the tribal farmers had medium level of communication behaviour. It may be due to their varying degree of exposure and utilization of various communication sources. This finding is in line with the findings of Uma Maheshwari[4].

It could be seen from the Table 2, that out of fourteen independent variables, three variables viz., educational status (X2), farming experience (X4) and mass media exposure (X8) had exhibited positive and significant association with communication behaviour at 1 per cent level of probability. The other variables namely farm size (X5), social participation (X7), extension agency contact (X9) and decision-making behaviour (X10) and innovativeness (X11) had exhibited positive and significant association with communication behaviour at 5 per cent level of probability. The other variables namely economic

Table-1. Distribution of respondents according to their overall communication behaviour

S.No	Category	Number	Per cent
1.	Low	25	20.83
2.	Medium	65	54.17
3.	High	30	25.00
TOTAL		120	100.00

Table-2. Zero order correlation and multiple regressions of the socio-economic and psychological characteristics of tribal farmers and their communication behaviour

(n = 120)

Variables No.	Independent variables	'r' value	Regression coefficient	Standard error	't' value
1	Age	-0.032 NS	-0.026	0.100	-0.269 NS
2	Educational status	0.276**	3.659	1.301	2.812 **
3	Occupational status	-0.083 NS	-0.060	0.086	-0.625 NS
4	Farming experience	0.259**	2.489	0.846	2.942 **
5	Farm size	0.199*	0.275	0.117	2.350**
6	Annual income	-0.011 NS	-0.018	0.119	-0.151 NS
7	Social participation	0.212*	0.178	0.081	2.198 *
8	Mass media exposure	0.268**	1.316	0.778	1.686 *
9	Extension agency contact	0.181*	0.557	0.349	1.596 *
10	Decision making behaviour	0.191*	1.923	0.998	1.927 *
11	Innovativeness	0.207*	0.621	0.312	1.990 *
12	Economic motivation	0.093 NS	0.054	0.095	0.568 NS
13	Risk orientation	0.116 NS	0.181	0.176	1.028 NS
14	Scientific orientation	0.764NS	0.113	0.085	1.329NS

$R^2 = 0.596$ a = 10.496 F = 6.986**

* - Significant at 5 per cent level of probability

** - Significant at 1 per cent level of probability

NS - Non significant

motivation (X12), risk orientation (X13) and scientific orientation (X14) had exhibited positive and non-significant relationship with the communication behaviour. The remaining variable age (X1), occupational status (X3) and annual income (X6) had exhibited negative and non-significant relationship with the communication behaviour. Educational status had shown positive and significant relationship with the communication behaviour of tribal farmers at 1 per cent level of probability. Education is the necessary thing for all to gain the information. Educated people have the good capability to acquire the information to the greater extent. This finding is in line with the finding of Kumar[2].

Farming experience had shown positive and significant relationship with the communication behaviour of tribal farmers at 1 per cent level of probability. As tribal farmers tend to gain experience in farming the urge to seek and share new information and technical guidance get increased. This might be the positive reason of farm experience with tribal farmers to have positive association with the

communication behaviour. This finding is in line with the findings of Kumar[2].

Farm size had showed a positive and significant association with communication behaviour of tribal farmers at 5 per cent level of probability. As the most of the farmers had small land holding and realized that they have more to follow farming practices as greater extent. This finding is in the line with the findings of Rahman *et al*.,[4].

Mass media exposure had shown positive and significant relationship with the communication behaviour of tribal farmers at 1 per cent level of probability. The respondents with more media participation will gather, process, and disseminate the information. This may be the attributed reason for the positive and significant that highly influences the communication behaviour of tribal farmers. This finding is in line with the findings of Kumar[2].

Social participation had shown positive and significant relationship with the communication behaviour of tribal farmers at 5 per cent level of probability. The respondents with higher social participations would have a chance to interact with resourceful persons and there by this would have enabled them to gain more knowledge about the enterprise, credit, and marketing facilities. It is obvious that members with high social participation tend to improve the communication behaviour of tribal farmers. This is in line with the findings of Janusia and Balamurugan[2].

Extension agency contact had shown positive and significant relationship with the communication behaviour of tribal farmers at 5 per cent level of probability. It is obvious that the respondents with high extension agency contact to adopt farming technologies to a greater extent. Thus, it may be stated that increase in extension agency contact would increase in communication behaviour. This finding is in line with the findings of Kumar[2].

Decision-making behaviour had shown positive and significant relationship with the communication behaviour of tribal farmers at 5 per cent level of probability. This may be due to the respondents had habit of discussing with family members and friends for decision making regarding farming operations. This finding is in line with the findings of Vignesh[5].

Innovativeness had shown a positive and significant relationship with communication behaviour at 5 per cent level of probability. This may be due to many of the respondents possesses medium level of extension agency contact that will increase in the level of knowledge and communication behaviour of tribal farmers. This finding is in the line with the findings of Kumar[2].

It could be observed from the Table 2, that all the fourteen variables taken together explained to the extent of (59.60 per cent) variation in the communication behaviour of tribal farmers. The 'F' value (6.986) was found be significant at 1 per cent level of probability. Hence, it could be concluded that the functional linear relationship between independent variables and dependent variables could be established of fourteen variables taken for analysis as educational status (X2) and farming experience (X4) were positive and significant at 1 per cent level of probability towards

communication behaviour. The other variables farm size (X5), social participation (X7), mass media exposure (X8), extension agency contact (X9) decision-making behaviour (X10) and innovativeness (X11) were positive significant at 5 per cent level of probability towards communication behaviour. The other variables namely age (X1), occupational status (X3), economic motivation (X12), risk orientation (X13) and scientific orientation (X14) had exhibited positive and non-significant relationship with the communication behaviour. The remaining variable annual income (X6) had exhibited negative and non-significant relationship with the communication behaviour of tribal farmers.

It can be concluded that more than fifty per cent of the respondents (54.17 per cent) had medium level of communication behaviour of tribal farmers. It could be concluded that out of fourteen independent variables, three variables viz., educational status, farming experience and mass media exposure had exhibited positive and significant association with communication behaviour at 1 per cent level of probability. The other variables namely farm size, social participation, extension agency contact, decision-making behaviour and innovativeness had exhibited positive and significant association with communication behaviour at 5 per cent level of probability. For multiple regression analysis, out of all the fourteen variables taken together it could be concluded that the functional linear relationship between independent variables and dependent variables could be established of fourteen variables taken for analysis as educational status and farming experience were positive and significant at 1 per cent level of probability towards communication behaviour. The other variables farm size, social participation, mass media exposure, extension agency contacts, decision-making behaviour and innovativeness were positive significant at 5 per cent level of probability towards communication behaviour.

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