

UTILIZATION OF INFORMATION SOURCES BY THE TRIBAL FARMERS: NEED FOR INTERVENING THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

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ABSTRACT

The Chhattisgarh region is predominated by the tribes. They were largely spreaded in the northern hills and Bastar plateau region. Agriculture is their backbone of economy, but the productivity of most of the enterprises are far behind than the non-tribal areas. The main reason behind it may be their low extension contact and other allied communication factors. Looking to these facts the present study was conducted with 240 tribal farmers of Chhattisgarh. The findings shows that this huge population is still living in primitive stage so far as their agriculture is concerned which leads to poor out-put and poor socio-economic status. Their acquiring of modern knowledge was also not up to the desired standard, which requires urgent attention for modernization and development of this society.

Key Words: Predominated, Nterprises, Communication.

INTRODUCTION

Scheduled Tribes constituted a sizeable chunk of the country's population. They are well spread in allover the country, from north to south, plains to plateaus and hills to costs. There are several areas identified in our country where they are in majority. The main features of tribes are their definite area of living, cultural homogeneity, unifying social organizations with local dialect, poor economic base and primitive technology. In these manners, most of the tribal communities have similar culture and status. These features pull them towards backwardness of their livelihood as well as their agriculture, the main occupation of earning. The acceleration of adoption of improved technologies among this huge population is therefore an important need of the time, which requires effective and efficient communication of innovations since, the existing efforts are not enough. Sharma and Khan (1997) and Khan et.al. (1997) rightly pointed out that the main reasons for low or non-adoption of improved agricultural technologies by the tribal farmers were the poor level of requisite knowledge may be due to inefficient communication pattern. Looking to these facts, the present study was carried out to identify the existing communication pattern of tribal farmers, its associated factors and to explore their suggestions for making the effective transfer of modern agricultural technologies.

METHODOLOGY

The primary data were collected by covering all the

16 districts of Chhattisgarh State in the sample. Proportionate stratified random sampling method was applied to have 240 scheduled tribe farm families, which were selected as respondents for this study from the 16 villages selected from the 8 tribal blocks of the state. The data were collected by using pre-tested interview schedule. The findings of this investigation are grouped into the following heads.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

1. Socio-Personal and Economic Characteristics-
The findings pertaining to this group are compiled in the three tables with a total of 10 variables as reported by the respondents. The findings revealed that majority of respondents (87%) belonged to more than 45 years of age. The education level of family male head as well as his spouse was quite low. Although, among the 55 per cent of literate male most of them were educated through adult education or only up to primary school level. The female illiteracy was found to be about 82 per cent, and only about 9 per cent female were school educated. Majority of the tribal family adopted nuclear family system with less than 7 members. The size of land holding was quite better, since about 49 per cent of them had 1 to 4 ha of land holding and also 20 per cent of them had more than 4 ha of land. The irrigation facility was found to be available only amongst 19 per cent of the respondents, that too for less than 50 per cent of their fields as semi-assured in nature.

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Table 1. Socio-Personal and Economic Characteristics of Respondents (n=240)

S. No.	Characteristics	Frequency	%	
1	Age :	< 30 years	09	3.7
		30 years	21	8.8
		30 years	103	42.9
		30 years	107	44.6
2	Education (Male head) :	Illiterate	108	45.0
		Can sign only	41	17.1
		Primary school	57	23.8
		High & Hr. secondary school	28	11.7
		College level	06	2.5
3	Education : (Spouse/female)	Illiterate	196	81.7
		Can sign only	21	8.7
		Primary school	17	7.1
		High & Hr. secondary school	06	2.5
		College level	00	0.0
4	Family type :	Nuclear	148	61.7
		Joint	92	38.3
5	Family size :	< 5 members	52	21.6
		5-7 members	102	42.5
		8-10 members	40	16.7
		> 10 members	46	19.2
6	Land holding :	< 1 ha	76	31.7
		1-2 ha	54	22.5
		2-4 ha	63	26.2
		>4 ha	47	19.6
7	Irrigated land :	Nil	194	80.8
		< 25 %	20	8.3
		25-50 %	09	3.7
		>50 %	17	7.2
8	Irrigation :	Semi assured	32	69.6
		Assured	14	30.4
9	Annual income :	<6500Rs. Per annum	14	6.2
		6500-15000Rs. Per annum	20	10.5
		15001-30000Rs. Per annum	103	42.9
		30001-50000Rs. Per annum	69	28.7
		> 50000Rs. Per annum	34	14.2
10	Occupation :	Agriculture	240	100.0
		Animal husbandry	219	91.3
		Forest products collection	94	39.2
		Labour	103	42.9
		Service	11	4.58
		Other business etc.	40	16.7

Agriculture was found to be practiced by all the respondents, followed by animal husbandry. A sizeable portion of the respondents also involved in minor forest product collection and labour activities. In this way majority of them were managed to acquire Rs. 15 to 30 thousand in a year from all the occupations. Further the analysis shows that agriculture contributes about 41 per cent to their annual income. Forest products and labour work shared about 18 and 17 per cent, respectively. The expenditure pattern shows that averagely 59 per cent expenditure incurred for domestic consumptions. A huge

amount of their income (about 18%) was expended on liquors and tobacco etc., while the expenditure on agriculture was only 3.7 per cent. It was also found that the tribal people allotted only less than half per cent of their total income on print media and less than 2 per cent on educational purposes. This may be the major set-back in utilizing modern media for gaining agricultural and allied information.

2. Communication Pattern For Technology Diffusion—The findings concluded that majority of tribal farmers still using personal localite sources for gaining modern information pertaining to agriculture and allied aspects, but the credibility of these sources was only 23 per cent. RAEOs play an important role for technology dissemination in these areas as reported by about 45 per cent respondents. Radio and progressive farmers also plays an important role as perceived by 31 and 24 per cent respondents, respectively.

Table 2. Annual Income and Expenditure Pattern

S. No.	Particulars	Share to total (%)
A.	Annual income :	
	Agriculture	40.9
	Animal husbandry	11.0
	Forest products collection	17.1
	Labour	18.1
	Service	7.8
	Other business etc.	5.1
B.	Expenditure pattern :	
	Agriculture	3.7
	Domestic purposes	58.5
	Education	1.8
	Tobacco, liquors etc.	18.1
	News papers, magazines etc.	0.1
	Others	17.5

The other important source of technology dissemination were reaches for less than 5 per cent respondents each, but most of these sources acquired very high credibility among its' users.

3. Knowledge and Adoption Pattern of Rice Production Technology :

A total of 9 technologies related with rice (grown by cent percent respondents) crop were considered and the result shows that tribal respondents had 20 to 30 per cent knowledge about water management, use of N fertilizers and improved varieties. Knowledge level of respondents about disease management, use of K and P fertilizers, pest management etc. also found quite low. Similarly, the overall adoption of all the modern practices was found only 10.2 per cent against the 20 per cent overall knowledge, similar finding was also reported by Rao & Rao (1994).

Table 3. Utilization of Sources for Gaining Modern Agricultural Information

S. No.	Information source	Frequency	%	Credibility index	Rank
1	Progressive farmers	58	24.2	70.7	III
2	RAEO, ADO etc.	109	45.4	67.9	V
3	Printed matter	12	5.0	70.4	IV
4	Radio	74	30.8	71.4	II
5	Kisan mela, meetings	11	4.6	60.8	VI
6	University scientists	6	2.5	91.2	I
7	Relatives/local people	169	70.4	23.0	VII

4. Correlation Between Utilization of Information and Independent Variables—The findings indicates that utilization of information sources increases with the increase in knowledge, adoption, annual income, irrigation facility and educational level of the respondents.

Table 4. Knowledge and Adoption Level of Selected Agricultural Technologies

S. No.	Particulars	Knowledge (%)	Rank	Adoption (%)	Rank
1	Improved varieties	21.9	III	17.7	II
2	Fertilizer management				
	Nitrogen	23.1	II	15.1	III
	Phosphorus	11.3	VI	5.3	VI
	Potash	3.2	VII	0.6	VII
3	Water management	30.0	I	26.5	I
4	Pest control	14.3	V	13.0	IV
5	Disease control	2.7	VIII	0.6	VII
6	Post harvest management	17.0	IV	12.4	V
	Overall	19.6		10.2	

The same was found to be decreases with the increase in age of the respondents. The remaining factors could not play significantly for the utilization of information source for seeking modern agricultural informations.

5. Suggestions for Increasing the Effectiveness of Information Sources—The majority of respondents suggests that the efficiency of information sources can be increased to a great extent if local language is used

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during the dialect. Need-based and timely supply of sufficient information may also perceived to be an added dimension for the efficiency of existing communication pattern.

Table 5. Coefficient of Correlation Between Selected Characteristics of Respondents and Utilization of Modern Information Sources

S. No.	Selected characteristics	Correlation coefficient	(*r ² value)
01	Age		
02	Education (Male)	0.26*	-0.31**
03	Education (Spouse)		
04	Family type	0.18	0.43**
05	Family size	-0.07	
06	Land holding	0.28*	
07	Irrigation facilities		
08	Irrigation availability	0.28*	0.37**
09	Annual income		
10	Knowledge about modern agricultural technologies		0.46**
11	Adoption of modern agricultural technologies	0.47**	0.36**

* Significant at 0.5 level **significant at 0.1 level

CONCLUSION

It is therefore concluded that the tribal farmers are little bit poor in socio-economic status. They are still dependent on multi-enterprise sources for sustaining their livelihood. They are using mostly personal localite and Govt. Extension workers for gaining modern information. The knowledge as well as adoption of most of the rice technologies was way behind than the desired level. Various variables were found to be closely associated and influence to the utilization of information sources. Hence, in light of the above facts, it is recommended that all agricultural and allied communication to the tribal farmers should be done in local dialect preferably by involving local people. This will help the people for better understanding the innovations leads to increase in knowledge and then helpful in adopting the recommendations for increased productivity and profitability. This all are based on effective information dissemination through effective communication.