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A bench mark survey on the Profile Characteristics of Malayali Tribes in Pachamalai Hills

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ABSTRACT

In Tamil Nadu state of India the total tribal population is rather small and scattered all over the state. The tribal population in Tamil Nadu state is about 5.2 lakhs representing 1.10 percent of the total population. Among the various tribal communities "Malayali Gounders" of Pachamalai hills in one of the predominant tribal communities in Tamil Nadu state. This paper focused about the socio – economic and psychological characteristics of tribal farmers. This study was conducted in Pachamalai Hills of Trichy district in Tamil Nadu. A sample size of three hundred tribal farmers was selected randomly from twenty villages. Data were collected by interview with the help of well-structured interview schedule. Majority of the farmer were young aged with primary education, most of them had agriculture their this primary occupation.

Keywords: Tribals, socio-economic characters.

Introduction

Tribal system is one of the earliest forms of society who live in a common unit in a particular area and sharing a common language and often kinship. The tribals are relatively homogenous whose social life is governed by tradition and customs. There is a comparative isolation from progressive society, where their prominence of conservation keeps of them away from intellectualism and conflicting ideologies, their rigid social structure with lesser social mobility keeps away from scientific and technologies process.

In Tamil Nadu state of Indian the total tribal population is rather small and scattered all over the state. Like the rest of India, the tribal population in the state is found to occur in and around hilly tracts. The tribal population in Tamil Nadu state is about 5.2 lakhs representing 1.10 per cent of the total population of the state.

An Indian tribe is a small, culturally distinct and economically self sufficient community with a language of its own and an autonomous political organization. (Goswami, 1984) [2].

In India the tribes are included in the schedule tribe list in the constitution of India. There are 414 tribes listed as per the 'Presidential Notification' in India. Among the various tribal communities 'Malayali Gounders' of Pachamalai hills is one of the predominant tribal communities in Tamil Nadu state.

The agricultural practices of tribes of Pachamalai were studied by various researcher (Shanmugaraja, 1998) [9]. In the present study, an attempt is made to analyse the communication behaviour of tribes of Pachamalai Hills. This study would bring into focus socio-economic and psychological characteristic of the tribes.

Methodology

Pachimalai hills located in Trichy district. It was planned to select all the four blocks in this tract to have unique representation. From each block five villages were selected based on their maximum population. It was finalized seed to have a sample size of 300 respondents. The total number of respondents to be selected from 20 villages was arrived at on the basis of proportionate random sampling procedure. Considering the objectives of the study a well-structured interview schedule was prepared for the collection of data. The data collected were processed coded, and tabulated for further statistical analysis.

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Finding and discussion

Socio-Economic and psychological characteristics of tribal farmers

The study reveals that the majority of the respondents belonged to the young age group. This might be due to the nature of the distribution of the respondents. This findings in line with the findings of Marimuthu (2001) ^[5]. With regard to educational level majority of the respondents (26.00 per cent) were found to be in primary level followed by middle school level (24.33 per cent), High school level (16.67 per cent) and Higher secondary school level (16.67 percent). Hence it may concluded that majority of tribal farmers were relatively educated. Though one would normally expect more illiterates among tribes, less number of illiterates are found in this tribal tract. The reason might be the effort of the government to improve literacy by establishing more schools in this tribal tract. The results are contradictory to the finding of Kanagasapathi (1988) ^[3].

Considering the occupation it could be observed that around one third of the tribal respondents (36.68 per cent) were found to have farming alone followed by 30.33 per cent who practiced farming and labour. It could be inferred that majority of the tribal farmer were practicing agriculture as their main occupation. This may be due to the fact that they practiced agriculture as a traditional occupation for several years and also due to the lack of opportunities to practice other kinds of occupation. This is in the with the finding of Sivasankaran (1996) ^[10].

Majority of the respondents (43.67 per cent) possessed the land size up to 5 acres, followed by 41.00 per cent of the respondents who possessed land holdings of 5.01 to 10 acres and 14.00 per cent of the respondents who possessed 10.01 acres to 15 acres. A smaller proportion of the respondents (1.33 pre cent) possessed land size of 15.01 to 20 acres. This may be due to the nature of the tribal farmers selected for this study. The tribal farmer were neither without land nor with more acreage of land. The results are in line with the findings of Rathinasabapathi (1987) ^[6].

Majority of the respondents (54.00 per cent) had more than 10 years of farming experience followed by 32.33 per cent of the respondents with 5.01 to 10 years of experience. Only a small proportion of the respondents (13.67 per cent) had upto 5 years of farming experience. The reason for more than 10 years of farming experience may be attributed as follows. The tribal farmers are growing various crops traditionally for several years. Agriculture, being the major occupation, majority of the tribal respondents depend only on agriculture for their livelihood. This condition would have enabled them to gain more experience in their cultivation. This finding derives support from the findings of Vasanthakumar (1979) ^[12] and Sivasankaran (1996) ^[10] who reported that majority of the tribal respondents had high level of farming experience.

With regard to annual income 39.67 per cent of the respondents earned an annual income of Rs.10,000 to Rs. 20, 000 followed by 35.33 per cent of the respondents with an annual income of Rs.20,001 to Rs.30,000 and 17.00 per cent of the respondents with an annual income of above Rs. 40,000. Only 4.00 per cent of the respondents were with an annual income of upto Rs. 10,000 and Rs.30,000 to Rs.40,000 each. This finding is in accordance with the findings of Balasubramanian (1992) ^[1].

Majority (62.00 per cent) of the respondents belonged to nuclear family type while the remaining (38.00 per cent) had joint family system. Though joint family system was part of culture of tribes,

such a systems is slowly disappearing and more nuclear families are emerging in this tract.

This may be due to the fact that most of the respondents were in young age category who prefer to live in nuclear type of families rather than joint families. This finding is in accordance with the findings of Mansingh (1990) ^[4].

Majority of the respondents (77.67 per cent) were with low level of social participation, 18.67 per cent of the respondents had medium level of social participation and a meager percentage of respondents had high level social participation. This might be due to the fact that the social organizations are comparatively less and the selective approach and encouragement of the officials of the organization in providing benefits such as loans and other facilities. Hence, the social participation was found to be discouraging. This finding is in line with the findings of Saraswathi (1993) ^[7] and Selvarani (2000) ^[8].

Majority of the respondents (65.67 per cent) had low level of socio-economic status followed by 19.33 per cent of the respondents with medium level of socio-economic status. 15.00 per cent had high level of socio-economic status. Loss of crop yields due to unpredictable natural calamities and absence of other off-farm occupations may be attributed as the reasons for such a reported low socio-economic status. This findings is in line to the findings of Subashini (1996) ^[11].

Half of the respondents (50.33 per cent) had medium level of mass-media exposure whereas 42.67 per cent of the respondents had low level and only 7.00 per cent of the respondents had high level of exposure to mass-media. The reason for medium mass-media exposure might be due to the fact that the respondents were found to be using radio, and news appears only to get farm information. Some of the respondents were depending on community TV sets for gathering information. Moreover television viewing was confined to people with high socio-economic status. All these might have contributed to medium level of mass-media exposure. This is in conformity with the findings of Balasubramanian (1992) ^[1] and Marimuthu (2001) ^[5] who also reported that most of the respondents had medium level of mass-media exposure.

Conclusion

Nearly 39.67 per cent of the tribal farmers were young aged and 26.00 per cent had primary school level education. The respondents were mainly engaged in agriculture (36.68). With regard to the farms size, 43.67 per cent had upto 5 acres. About 54 per cent of the respondents had more than 10 years of farming experience, majority of the respondents (69.67 per cent) had Rs.10,00 to Rs.20,000 as annual income and majority of the respondents (62.00 per cent) had nuclear type of family. Majority of the tribal farmers had low level of social participation (77.67 per cent), had low level of socio-economic status (65.67 per cent) and medium level of mass-media exposure (50.33 per cent).

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