

SOME FACTORS INFLUENCING COMMUNICATION PATTERNS AMONG MEMBERS OF CHARCHAMANDAL IN KERALA*

ABDUL RAHIMAN, O.

College of Agriculture, Vellayani, Kerala

Diffusion innovations in a community takes place mainly through interpersonal communication. The potentialities of interpersonal communication in groups has not been adequately appreciated in our country, till recently. Charchamandals (Farmer's Discussion Groups) were organised in villages with the prime objective of imparting useful information to their members and encourage the adoption of improved farm practices through group discussions and group decisions. But the communication patterns that emerge among the members of the Charchamandal and the effectiveness of the group may depend upon the structural characteristics and situational factors of the group. Hence, it was felt to study the communication patterns that evolve among the members of charchamandal and the relationship between communication patterns and some selected factors that influence communication acts of members such as age, socio-economic status member participation, and perception of members about radio support to the charchamandal. It was also felt to study the choice status (identification of key-communicators) of members and group cohesiveness in the charchamandal.

Pareek and Singh (1969) identified key-communicators, communicators and non-communicators in the sequential adoption process and graphically represented them. Stephan *et al*; (1962) conducted studies and found that as the group size increased, member satisfaction decreased. Beal *et al* (1962) observed that group productivity was related to the opportunities provided for member participation.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in 1972 in the Cannanore district of Kerala. Two blocks - One progressive block; Taliparamba (A) and one non-progressive block; Cannanore (B) in respect of adoption of high yielding varieties of paddy were chosen from the district by purposive sampling method. Eight charchamandals (A1, A2, A3, A4 and B1, B2, B3 and B4) - two best and two poor from each blok, in working effectiveness were selected for study, by stratified sampling method. 54 members from progressive block, 46 members from non-progressive block who were present for discussion meetings, formed the respondents. The respondents were numbered serially from 1 to 100,

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To depict communication acts of members, the form described by Northway (1960) was used. Discussion meetings of the individual charchamandais were attended by the investigator and data were recorded by participant observation technique. The persons to whom other members put questions most frequently were described as key-communicators, the persons who put questions to key-communicator, as communicators and those who did not participate in the discussion, as non-communicators. Scores were given at the rate of 5, 3 and 2 for key-communicators, communicators and non-communicators, respectively.

Figures were drawn for individual charchamandais on the pattern of Northway (1960) Target Sociogram. Total scores were divided quartiles and each section of the target diagram was marked off in values corresponding to the quartiles. The exact place of an individual with in a particular ring was based on the individual's score obtained for communication acts during discussion. The symbols - circle, triangle and square represented the key-communicators, communicators and non-communicators (Klee, 1961). An arrow was then drawn from the communicator to the key-communicator. Double headed arrow showed mutual communication.

Choice status was studied through oral elicitation from the members and recording their responses. From this, mutual choices were calculated and group cohesiveness was worked out.

Results and Discussion

Distribution of members according to level of communication acts. Out of the total of 100 members, 24 came under high, 15 under medium and 61 under low level of communication acts (Table 1).

Table 1

Distribution of members according to level of communication acts

Level of communication acts.	Charchamandal								Total
	A1	A2	A3	A4	B1	B2	B3	B4	
High (16 & above)	4 (26.66)	4 (28.57)	2 (16.70)	2 (15.38)	2 (15.38)	4 (28.57)	4 (44.44)	2 (20.00)	24
Medium (10-15)	2 (13.34)	3 (21.43)	2 (16.70)	2 (15.38)	0 (—)	2 (14.29)	2 (22.22)	2 (20.00)	15
Low (9 & below)	9 (60.00)	7 (50.00)	8 (66.60)	9 (69.24)	11 (84.62)	8 (57.14)	3 (33.34)	6 (60.00)	61
Total	15 (100)	14 (100)	12 (100)	13 (100)	13 (100)	14 (100)	9 (100)	10 (100)	100

Note: Percentages in parenthesis.

The smallest discussion group (B3) had the highest percentage (44.4) 01 members under high level of communication acts, whereas, the largest discussion group (A1) had only 26.6 per cent members under this category. This result confirms the finding of Stephan *et al.* (1962) that in a large group, only the more forceful individuals are able to express their abilities and ideas and a large proportion of group members experienced inhibition which blocked participation members (in the charchamandals in Kerala).

The relationship between communication acts and independent variables like age, socio-economic status of members was studied by deriving *rho* for individual charchamandals and chi-square value for the entire sample. The results are summarised below.

1. The communication acts of members were not dependent upon their age. This shows that age of members is not influential in the type of communication patterns that evolve among the members.

2. The communication acts of members was not dependent upon the socio-economic status of the members. This shows that the communication is neither vertical nor horizontal but global and task oriented.

3. Table 2 shows the distribution of members in relation to participation in charchamandal activities and communication acts.

Table 2

Member participation in relation to communication acts.

Communication acts.	Member participation			Total
	High	Medium	Low	
High	9	14	1	24
Medium	5	8	2	15
Low	1	46	14	61
	15	68	17	100

χ^2 (df 4) = 24.439 Significant at P = 0.05

The significant chi-square value established that communication acts of members in charchamandals depend more on the member participation which was operationalised as the sum total of all activities connected with the charchamandal. It shows that more member participation in all activities should be built up to increase the communication effectiveness.

4. The communication acts of members were not dependent upon their awareness of channels of communication. This indicates that the members of the charchamandals are not tapping all the information sources except in A1, where members were progressive farmers.

5. The communication acts of members were not dependent upon their perception of radio support to the charchamandal. This shows that the member's perception of the radio support to the charchamandal is inadequate. They have not understood that radio support is basic to the concept of charchamandal as an instrument of communication of high yielding variety information.

Diagrammatic representation of communication patterns among members

The communication patterns of individual charchamandals were graphically represented on the pattern of Northway (1960) Target Soeiogram based on observation during discussion meetings. The figures reveal that there were 2 to 3 key-communicators in each charchamandal. The communication patterns that evolved among the members were "completely connected" type and not circle, wheel or chain. Figure-1 shows the communication pattern in charchamandal-A1, one of the best charchamandals of the progressive block (N = 15). Code Nos. 88, 99 and 97 emerged as key-communicators in descending order in terms of number of questions answered. No. 99 was the convener of the charchamandal too. There were 9 communicators who asked questions, key-communicator No, 97 also put question to another key-communicator No. 88. Nos. 91, 94 and 96 did not participate in the discussion.

Figure 2 shows the communication patterns in charchamandal B4 one of the poor charchamandals of the non-progressive block (N=10). code Nos. 23, 30 and 26 emerged as key-communicators first, second and third respectively in terms of number of questions answered. No. 26 was also the convener of the charchamandal. There were 5 communicators who asked questions. There was mutual communication between No. 23 and 26. Nos. 25 and 32 did not participate in the discussions.

Thus, in both the charchamandals there were two strong key-communicators in addition to the conveners.

Sociometric test:

In four charchamandals, oral elicitation of choice status revealed more number of key-communicators than actually observed during discussion. In 5 charchamandals, some members who secured high choice status did not appear as key-communicators during discussion. All the conveners, except in charchamandal A2, secured high choice status. The relationship between size of the group and cohesiveness was statistically significant showing that the cohesiveness of the group was dependent on the size of the group.

Summary

The study revealed that charchamandals have not yet influenced the diffusion of information on high yielding varieties of paddy in the area studied.

This stresses the need for strengthening the charchamandals so that they will play the role expected of them. The size of the group may be limited to about ten. More participation of members in the charchamandal activities should be enlisted by sharing responsibilities among members and encouraging them to participate more in discussions. Radio has not yet played its conceptualised role in the charchamandal. Regular follow-up by Radio Contact Officer and other concerned will also play an important role to achieve this end. The members of charchamandals also expressed the opinion of changing the present timing of farm and home programme of AIR to a later time preferably after 8 P. M.

Acknowledgement

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സംഗ്രഹം

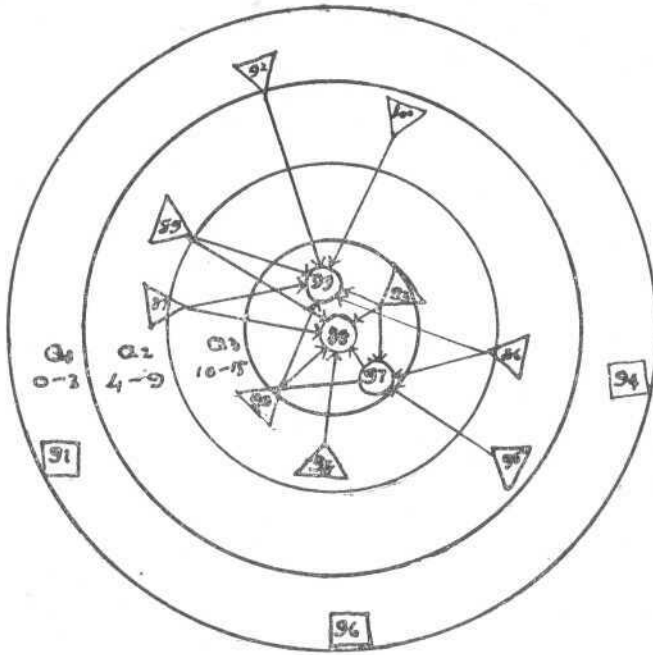
കണ്ണൂർ ജില്ലയിലെ തെരഞ്ഞെടുക്കപ്പെട്ട എട്ട് കർഷക ചർച്ചാമണ്ഡലം അംഗങ്ങളുടെ ആശയവിനിമയരീതി പഠനവിധേയമാക്കി. അത്യല്ലാദനശേഷിയുള്ള നെല്ലിനങ്ങളുടെ കൃഷിയെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള അറിവ് മറ്റു കർഷകർക്ക് നല്ലുന്നതിൽ ചർച്ചാമണ്ഡലങ്ങൾ ഉദ്ദേശിച്ചരീതിയിൽ വീജയിച്ചിട്ടില്ല എന്നു മനസ്സിലാക്കി.

ഇവയുടെ പ്രവർത്തനം കൂടുതൽ ഫലപ്രദമാക്കുന്നതിനു ചർച്ചാമണ്ഡലത്തിന്റെ അംഗസംഖ്യ 20 ൽ നിന്നും 10 ആയി പരിമിതപ്പെടുത്തുകയും, ചർച്ചാമണ്ഡലത്തിന്റെ ഔദ്യോഗിക സ്ഥാനം വഹിക്കുന്നതിനും ചർച്ചകളിൽ സജീവമായി പങ്കെടുക്കുന്നതിനും അംഗങ്ങളെ പ്രേരിപ്പിക്കുകയും, റേഡിയോ കൂടുതൽ ഫലപ്രദമായി ഉപയോഗപ്പെടുത്തുകയും ആകാശവാണിയുടെ "വയലും വീടും" പരിപാടിയുടെ ഇപ്പോഴത്തെ സമയം ഭൂരിഭാഗം അംഗങ്ങളുടേയും സൗകര്യം പരിഗണിച്ച്, വൈകുന്നേരം 8 മണിക്ക് ശേഷമാക്കുകയും ഔദ്യോഗിക നിലവാരത്തിൽ ചർച്ചാമണ്ഡലങ്ങളുടെ പ്രവർത്തനം കൂടുതൽ പരിശോധനാവിധേയമാക്കുകയും ചെയ്യാവുന്നതാണ്.

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FIG.1. COMMUNICATION PATTERNS IN CHARCHAMANDAL A1

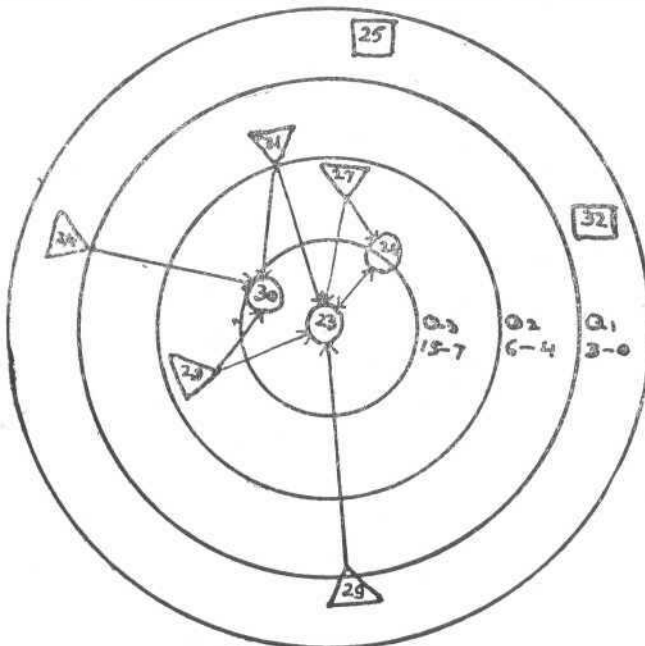


○ Key-communicator

△ Communicator

□ Non-communicator.

FIG.2. COMMUNICATION PATTERNS IN CHARCHAMANDAL B4



○ Key-communicator

△ Communicator

□ Non-communicator

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