

DIFFERENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS AND NON-PARTICIPANTS OF FARMERS' FUNCTIONAL LITERACY PROGRAMME

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Though quite a number of research studies on the progress made by the participants of the Farmers' Functional Literacy Programme (FFLP) in respect of literacy, knowledge of improved methods of cultivation, adoption of improved agricultural practices etc., have been conducted, studies examining the differential characteristics of participants and non-participants of FFLP are very few in number. Recognising this gap, the present study was undertaken with the specific objective of identifying social and communication characteristics of participants and non-participants of FFLP. The results of the study could be used for the proper understanding and selection of effective participants for this programme.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in Trivandrum District, Kerala. The farmers participating in Farmers' Functional Literacy Programme in the different literacy centres (experimental group) and the farmers who were non-participants of the Programme (Control Group) formed the population for the study. Ten literacy centres were selected at random and 75 practising rice farmers in these centres formed the experimental sample (Group A). Sixty five rice farmers were purposively selected from among the practising rice farmers who had not participated in functional literacy classes in such a way that this sample was similarly situated with the experimental sample with regard to personal and situational factors which does not come under the purview of the present study. This formed the control sample (Group B).

Five different characteristics were selected for the study. The characteristics thus selected were social participation, knowledge about improved rite culture, use of mass media, use of inter-personal cosmopolite sources and use of inter personal localite sources.

Quantification of the selected variables: The social participation scores were calculated as per the scoring system followed in the SES scale developed by Trivedi (1963). Knowledge was measured using a teacher-made test developed for the study as described by Remmers *et al.* (1967). Simple questions and constant alternative statements (True-False) regarding package of practices of rice cultivation formed the items included in the knowledge test.

The sources of information for agricultural technology were listed and were grouped into three categories as done by Wilkening (1962). The three categories were (a) mass media, (b) inter-personal cosmopolite sources and (c) interpersonal localite sources. These were treated as three separate variables and extent of use of each variable was measured. The respondents were asked to indicate as to how often they got information on agricultural technology from each of the listed sources. The possible range of responses and scoring were (a) most often—3; (b) often—2; (c) sometimes—1; and (d) never—0. Response scores were summed across each source to calculate information source indices.

The data were collected through a structured and pre-tested schedule developed for the study. The data were analysed and large sample test ('F' test) was employed to test the significance of difference of mean scores in the two samples.

Results and Discussion

The result of the data on different characteristics of participants and non-participants collected and analysed are presented in Table—1.

(a) **Social participation:** Table 1 reveals that while 72% of farmers from FL Group participated in social organization, only 35.4% of farmers from the Control Group belonged to this category. The mean score values of farmers in Group A and B differed significantly. There is reason to believe that the literate farmers will be more aware of the need for participating in various organisations than the illiterate farmers. Pal (1970) also found that the farmers who participated in FFLP differed significantly with regard to social participation.

(b) **Knowledge:** As revealed by Table—1, farmers in the FL Group have better knowledge about improved rice culture compared to the farmers in the Control Group. The mean knowledge scores of farmers in Groups A and B differed significantly. Understandably, this might be due to the opening of new vistas of knowledge to the participants of FFLP and subsequent use of retained literacy by them for acquiring more knowledge through print media, Veeraraghavan (1974) and Reddy and Murthy (1973) also reported similar findings.

(c) **Use of mass media** A perusal of Table 1 reveals that the use of mass media is more in the case of farmers in FL Group than those in the Control Group. The mean mass media use indices for farmers in Groups A and B differed significantly. This difference can be attributed to the increased use of mass media by the participants of FFLP compared to the non-participants. It is logical to think that the participants of FFLP will be more innovative and it has been proved beyond doubt that exposure to mass media is positively related to innovativeness Lerner (1958).

Table 1 Differential characteristics of participants and non-participants

| Sl. No. | Name of characteristic | Particulars | Category of farmers | | | | Statistical significance |
|---------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|--------|----------------------------|--------|--------------------------|
| | | | Participants (Group A) | | Non Participants (Group B) | | |
| | | | F | % | F | % | |
| 1. | Social participation | <i>Social participation score</i> | | | | | |
| | | 0 | 21 | 28.00 | 42 | 64.61 | F = 6.38 |
| | | 1 | 35 | 46.66 | 21 | 32.30 | (Significant |
| | | 2 | 19 | 25.33 | 2 | 3.07 | at 0.05 level) |
| | | Total | 75 | 100.00 | 65 | 100.00 | |
| | Mean score | 0.97 | | 0.40 | | | |
| 2. | Knowledge of improved rice culture | <i>Knowledge Score</i> | | | | | |
| | | Upto 8 | 0 | 00.00 | 9 | 13.84 | F=11.72 |
| | | 9 to 12 | 4 | 5.33 | 34 | 52.30 | (Significant |
| | | 13 to 16 | 22 | 29.33 | 18 | 27.69 | of 0.05 |
| | | Above 16 | 49 | 65.33 | 4 | 6.15 | level) |
| | Total | 75 | 100.00 | 65 | 100.00 | | |
| | Mean score | 16.93 | | 11.55 | | | |
| 3. | Use of Mass media | <i>Mass media use Index</i> | | | | | |
| | | 0 | « | 10.66 | 47 | 72.30 | F= 12.69 |
| | | 1 | 0 | 00.00 | 3 | 4.61 | (Significant |
| | | 2 | 0 | 00.00 | 5 | 7.39 | at 0.05 |
| | | 3 | 35 | 46.66 | 10 | 15.38 | level) |
| | Above 3 | 32 | 42.66 | 0 | 00.00 | | |
| | Total | 75 | 100.00 | 65 | 100.00 | | |
| | Mean score | 3.96 | | 0.66 | | | |

| CO | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
|----|---|-------------------------------------|-----|--------|-----|--------|----------------------|
| 4. | Use of Inter-personal cosmopolite sources | <i>Cosmopolite source use Index</i> | | | | | |
| | | 0 | 14 | 18.66 | 20 | 30.76 | F = 0.95 |
| | | 1 | 14 | 18.66 | 5 | 7.69 | (Not significant at |
| | | 2 | 29 | 38.66 | 20 | 30.76 | 0.05 level) |
| | | 3 | 13 | 17.33 | 8 | 12.30 | |
| | | Above 3 | 5 | 6.66 | 12 | 18.46 | |
| | | Total | 75 | 100.00 | 65 | 100.00 | |
| | | Mean | | 1.77 | | 1.94 | |
| 5. | Use of inter-personal localite sources | <i>Localite source use Index</i> | | | | | |
| | | 0 | 34 | 45.33 | 2 | 3.07 | t = 14.86 |
| | | 1 | 12 | 16.00 | 0 | 0.00 | (Significant at 0.05 |
| | | 2 | 14 | 18.66 | 6 | 9.23 | level) |
| | | 3 | 15 | 20.00 | 11 | 16.92 | |
| | | Above 3 | 0 | 00.00 | 46 | 70.76 | |
| | | Mean | | 1.13 | | 4.46 | |

(d) **Use of inter-personal cosmopolite sources** As revealed by the table, inter-personal cosmopolite sources were extensively used by both participants and non-participants of FFLP. It is seen that there is no significant difference with regard to use of this source of information by both the groups. There are more chances for the cosmopolite sources like the extension officers to come into contact with all kinds of farmers as a part of their extension activity which might have rendered it possible for both the participant and non-participant farmers of FFLP to extensively use this source of information.

(e) **Use of inter-personal localite sources** Table - 1 makes it clear that the inter-personal localite sources of information were more extensively used by the non-participants than the participants of FFLP. There is significant difference in the use of these sources between both the groups. Communication research has revealed that people tend to listen to communication which presents points of view with which they themselves are in agreement. Since

the respondents represented a more or less undeveloped community situation, it can be presumed that the friends, relatives, neighbours, etc., might neither have been better informed than they themselves were, nor were giving correct information, Hence there is every likelihood that the participants of FFLP use these sources to a much less extent. Jaiswal and Arya (1974) have reported that a literate farmer is less prone to depend on the advice of his fellow members at the proper time for application of improved technology.

Summary

An attempt was made to study the differential characteristics of participants and non-participants of F. F. L. P. in Trivandrum District, Kerala. Seventy-five participants of F. F. L. P. who were practising rice farmers and 65 non-participant practising rice farmers selected at random formed the respondents for this study. 'F' test was employed to test the significance of the difference of the mean scores of the various characteristics in the two samples. The study revealed that the participants of F. F. L. P. were having higher social participation, more knowledge about improved rice practices and higher use of mass media as compared to the non-participants. Inter-personal localite sources were more frequently used by the non-participants than the participants. Both the participant and non-participants of F. F. L. P. extensively used inter-personal cosmopolite sources and there was no significant difference between the two groups with regard to the use of this source,

സംഗ്രഹം

പ്രവൃത്യന്യൂഖ സാക്ഷരതാ പരിപാടിയുടെ കീഴിൽ പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്ന സാക്ഷരതാ ക്ലാസ്സുകളിൽ പങ്കെടുത്ത നെൽകൃഷിക്കാരുടേയും പങ്കെടുക്കാത്ത നെൽകൃഷിക്കാരുടേയും സമൂഹപരവും ആശയവിനിമയപരവും ആയ സ്വഭാവങ്ങളെപ്പറ്റി തിരുവനന്തപുരം ജില്ലയിൽ ഒരു പഠനം നടത്തി. ഈ പഠനത്തിൽ നിന്നും, നവസാക്ഷരരായ കൃഷിക്കാർ വിവിധസംഘടനകളിൽ ചേർന്നുള്ള പ്രവരത്തനങ്ങളിലും, നെല്ലിന്റെ ശാസ്ത്രീയമായ കൃഷിരീതികളെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള പരിജ്ഞാനത്തിലും പുതിയ അറിവിനായി റേഡിയോ പോലുള്ള ബഹുജനമാധ്യമങ്ങൾ ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്നതിലും നിരക്ഷരരായ കൃഷിക്കാരേക്കാൾ വളരെ മുമ്പിലാണെന്നു കണ്ടു.

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