

Tribal Farmers' Participation in and Opinion of Tribal Development Programmes

S.V. Suresha, K.M. Jayaramaiah¹ and Y.N. Shivalingaiah²

Department of Science and Technology
Karnataka Government Secretariat
Bangalore - 560 001, Karnataka
India.

ABSTRACT. *A study was conducted in Heggadadevanakote taluk of Mysore district, Karnataka State, India, to investigate the level of participation of tribal Jenukuraba farmers in Tribal Development programmes and their opinion including the aspiration of tribal farmers, by utilizing 125 respondents. The study highlighted that the tribals had not participated fully in planning and follow-up stages and in educational activities. A majority of tribal farmers expressed that the needed base survey was not conducted before implementing the programmes, failed to lift the beneficiaries above the poverty line, failed to increase employment opportunities, assets position, cropping pattern, livestock etc. The analysis of tribal farmers' opinions and aspirations on identified social aspects indicated that the majority of them were not ready to accept the higher order of social distance. Majority of them preferred nuclear families, preferred to marry their children outside the colony, aspired their sons and daughters to continue education. They also preferred their sons to join government services, and their daughters to practice agriculture and collection of minor forest produce.*

INTRODUCTION

India's 54 million tribal population constitute 7.8 % of the country's total population. Next to Africa, India has the second largest tribal population in the world. The tribes differ considerably from one another in race, language, culture, beliefs, myths and customs and thus present a spectacle of striking diversity. Notwithstanding so much diversity, there are

¹ Wasteland Development Project, University of Agricultural Sciences, G.K.V.K., Bangalore - 560 065, Karnataka, India.

² Department of Agricultural Extension, University of Agricultural Sciences, Hebbal, Bangalore - 560 024.

broad similarities between mutually divergent tribal groups. A tribal society is usually small, isolated and is largely organized on the basis of kinship. The primary objective of the Government policy in regard to tribal people has been directed to free them from poverty, in addition to the preservation of tribal culture and social customs from erosion, safe-guarding of traditional occupations and protection from exploitation by the more developed groups.

Several efforts have been made under various five-year plans to evolve suitable strategies and programmes for tribal development in the country. Despite these programmes on tribal development, their participation in the programmes was not encouraging, and without ensuring the participation of the beneficiaries it is not possible to get the expected dividends from the programme. The different developmental programmes, elicit the opinions and aspirations of the tribals on selected social aspects of the tribal society and their opinion on the different dimensions of Tribal Development Programmes. This study was conducted to investigate the tribal farmers' level of participation and opinion of tribal development programme.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Heggadadevanakote taluk of Mysore district of Karnataka state, India. Heggadadevanakote taluk was selected because of its highest concentration of Jenukuraba tribal population. From the exclusive Jenukuraba colonies, a list of colonies which had highest population of Jenukuraba tribal farmers was prepared, and then out of these colonies, eight were selected randomly. In the selected colonies, a list of Jenukuraba tribal farmers who were the beneficiaries of agriculture and horticultural programmes was prepared. Thus the sample size constituted for the study was 125. The data were elicited from the respondents through personal interview and also through personal observation wherever necessary, by using the structured and pretested schedule.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table I summarises the results relating to the extent of participation of beneficiaries in agriculture and horticulture programmes. Of the beneficiaries (respondents) who received bullocks under the planning stage of the programmes, only 20% respondents partially participated. In the execution stage half of the respondents had fully participated, but a large majority had not participated in any of the followup and educational activities

Table 1. The extent of participation of beneficiaries in agriculture and horticulture programmes.

Programmes	Planning			Execution			Follow-up			Educational		
	FP (%)	PP (%)	NP (%)	FP (%)	PP (%)	NP (%)	FP (%)	PP (%)	NP (%)	FP (%)	PP (%)	NP (%)
Bullocks	20.00	64.70	15.29	51.76	37.64	10.58	4.70	5.88	89.14	0.00	2.35	97.64
Bullock cart	100.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	-	100.00	-	-	-	100.00
Ploughs	41.17	38.23	20.58	61.76	29.41	8.82	-	5.88	94.11	-	-	100.00
Chemical fertilizers	80.76	15.38	3.84	88.46	11.53	-	-	3.84	96.15	3.84	-	96.15
Soil conservation												
Water drainage	2.10	10.52	87.36	80.00	11.57	8.42	-	10.52	89.47	-	5.26	94.73
Contour bunds	6.66	13.33	80.00	70.00	6.66	23.37	10.00	13.32	76.66	6.66	10.00	83.33
Farm pond	-	16.66	87.73	73.33	13.33	13.33	-	20.00	80.00	-	13.33	86.66
Gully checks	-	10.34	86.66	75.86	20.68	3.44	-	6.89	93.10	-	10.34	86.66
Strengthening of existing bunds	-	8.53	91.46	89.02	8.53	2.43	-	10.97	84.02	-	6.09	93.90
Horticulture supply of seedlings	32.69	59.61	7.69	79.80	20.19	-	1.92	54.80	43.21	0.96	51.92	47.11

FP - Full participation PP - Partial participation NP - Non participation

(Table 1). This may be because the authorities had not consulted the beneficiaries while deciding on the benefits to be given. Also it was evident from the respondents' opinion that the beneficiaries were not involved in decision making process about the benefits that they want, eventhough, it is compulsory on the part of the implementing authorities to consult the beneficiaries. The above observation may be attributed to the fact that at the execution stage beneficiaries are supposed to identify the units that they want, and that they also have the privilege of purchasing the units with the help of the implementing authorities. But in some cases the officials themselves purchased the units without the knowledge of the beneficiaries and gave them to the beneficiaries, which is against the programme principles. It is discouraging to note that a great majority of the respondents had not participated in any of the follow-up and educational activities conducted under this programme. The tribals did not consider the bullock pair as a productive unit because of their small land holdings and utility of the bullock pairs is restricted to only 4-5 days in a year. Further, there seems to be no alternative opportunities to use these bullock pairs to gain some economic benefits, because of the isolation of the colonies from the non-tribal areas.

In the case of beneficiaries who received plough as a programme component, 41% and 62% had fully participated in the planning stage and execution stage respectively (Table 1). This trend may be due to the facts that, under planning stage beneficiaries were not enthusiastic to receive this benefit as it was not considered as a productive unit and also because of lack of knowledge about the advantages of iron plough since they were only practicing Kumbri cultivation. Under execution stage, the beneficiaries were taken to the place where these ploughs were fabricated and explained to about its design and the materials required for its manufacturing. This might have motivated them to participate in the execution stage. However, 94% of them had not participated in follow-up activities and none of the beneficiaries had participated in the educational activities conducted (Table 1), possibly because of lack of interest in the asset they received. Most of the tribals considered that ploughing land with the iron plough is against their tradition/value system. The educational activities conducted by the authorities itself were low and also the use of the plough under dryland condition is limited only to 4-5 days in an year.

In the case of chemical fertilizers, a majority of the beneficiaries had fully participated in planning and execution stage; however, a majority had not participated in any of the follow-up and educational activities.

In agriculture programme, the respondents were also made to participate in soil conservation activities. Table 1 depicts that there was no full participation by any of the beneficiaries in soil conservation practices like water drainage, contour bunds, farm pond, gully checks and strengthening of existing bunds at the planning stage. This may be explained with the situational factor that the soil conservation was not a felt need of the beneficiaries and that the planning was made by the officials themselves without consulting the beneficiaries. But, the majority of beneficiaries participated fully in the execution stage. The unemployment and under employment situation of the beneficiaries had forced them to work under the soil conservation scheme, for which they received both money and kind component for labour. This might be the reason for their full participation in this activity. But, under the followup and educational activities, a large majority of the respondents had not participated. This could be due to the fact that the land holding of the beneficiaries is very small and that they feel there is a wastage of cropping area by maintaining the soil conservation structures.

Table 1 also reveals the extent of participation of tribals in horticultural programmes. Here, it is encouraging to note that 32.69% of the beneficiaries had participated fully in planning stage, 79.80% under execution stage. But, a negligible percentage of them had participated in followup and educational stages of the programme. This may be due to the fact that the Horticultural Department has been maintaining a few orchards, and the yields of which do not equal the interest on investment and the maintenance charges except that few tribals are employed on them. The orchards have no utility as training ground for tribals, because no tribal has raised orchards on his lands. However, they got some employment during the execution stage. This might have influenced them to participate in the execution stage fully. Some of the observations are in line with the results of the study conducted by Intodia (1990).

Opinion of the beneficiaries

Almost all the respondents (96.8%) were of the opinion that a household survey was not conducted before selecting them as beneficiaries (Table 2). This implies that selection of beneficiaries was not done on any

Table 2. Opinion of beneficiaries on the various tribal development programmes.

Statements	Yes (%)	No (%)
1. Whether any household survey was conducted before selecting you as beneficiary to the programmes?	3.2	96.8
2. Whether the programme designed to you was adequate to raise your level of income above the poverty line?	7.2	92.8
3. Is there any immediate market for the produce/goods produced by you?	5.6	94.4
4. Are you getting reasonable price for your commodity?	4.0	96.0
5. Is there any increase in your annual income after becoming beneficiary to the programme?	34.4	65.6
6. Is there any increase in no. of working days after participating in the programme?	70.4	29.6
7. Are you satisfied with income and employment generated through the programmes?	13.6	86.4
8. Is there any change in your asset position after participating in the programme?	18.4	81.6
9. Is there any change in your consumption pattern and living condition after participating in the programmes?	20.0	80.0
10. Did the programme motivate you to change the cropping pattern, livestock etc?	45.6	54.4
11. Did you notice any follow-up action by the implementing agency?	12.0	88.0
12. Did you think that the follow-up action is necessary after implementing the programme?	93.6	6.4
13. Is your colony affected by any of the development programmes?	5.6	94.4
14. Is the subsidy amount provided in the loan sufficient?	5.6	94.4
15. Did you face any difficulty in obtaining the loan?	91.2	8.8
16. Whether the time provided for the repayment of the loan amount is sufficient?	20.0	80.0
17. Are you getting enough information, guidance and assistance from the implementing agencies?	5.6	94.4

norms or acceptable data. It is true that the selection was made first and then data were collected about the beneficiaries. A majority of the beneficiaries were of the opinion that the programmes designed were not favourable to raise their level of income above the poverty line. Also 86.4% of them thought that they were not satisfied with the income generated through the development programmes (Table 2). This is because the sub-plans are prepared at a higher level, than at the grass root level with the people for whom they are meant. The various development departments submit their

tribal schemes to the Directorate of Social Welfare, and while submitting these proposals the tribals are not taken into confidence.

A majority of the beneficiaries opined that there was no increase in asset position, except land, no change in their consumption pattern and living conditions after participation in the programme (Table 2). Obviously they are still in the subsistence level. Under such condition one cannot expect them to increase their assets and bring changes in their living and consumption style.

A majority of the beneficiaries indicated that there was no immediate market for the commodity and they were not getting reasonable price for the commodities produced. The remoteness of the colonies, lack of infra-structural facilities to these colonies, exploitation by middlemen were the probable reasons for not getting a good price for their produce. Majority of the beneficiaries indicated that they were not aware of any follow-up action. However, a great majority of them had opined that the follow-up action was necessary. Usually many developmental programmes fail to achieve the targets because of their slackness in follow-up activities. Likewise even after spending crores of rupees on the programmes, the failure to follow-up results in programme failure.

Aspirations of beneficiaries

Table 3 reveals the opinions and aspirations of the tribal farmers on social aspects of the tribal society.

Social distance

Majority (97.6%) were ready to sit together and establish personal friendship (92%) with the other tribal groups. However, >95% of the respondents were not for eating together, to live in neighbourhood and to establish matrimonial relations with other tribal groups. The plausible reasons for the above, may be that sitting together and establishing friendship are considered as a lower degree of social relationship whereas eating together, preference for living in the neighbourhood and engaging in matrimonial relations are considered as higher orders of social relationship.

Table 3. Aspirations of Tribal Farmers.

Opinion	Yes (%)	No (%)
I Social distance:		
1. Sitting together	97.6	2.4
2. Eating together	4.0	96.0
3. Personal friendship	92.0	8.0
4. Preference for neighbourhood	4.0	96.0
5. Matrimonial relation with different tribes	1.6	98.4
II Family type:		
1. Single family	76.0	24.0
2. Joint family	24.0	76.0
III Marriage links:		
1. Within the colony	37.6	62.4
2. Between the colony of same taluka	53.6	46.4
3. Outside the taluka of same tribe	8.8	91.2
IV Status of women:		
1. Women should never be given equal rights	15.2	84.8
2. If equal opportunities are provided women are likely to improve	14.4	85.6
3. Equal rights must be granted	70.4	29.6
V Adult education:		
1. It is useful for all	52.0	48.0
2. Un-decided	27.2	71.8
3. It is not useful	20.8	79.2
Preference to attend		
1. Like to attend adult education classes	67.2	32.8
2. Do not like to attend any classes	32.8	67.2
VI Educational aspiration for their sons:		
1. Not interested in education	24.0	76.0
2. Upto 4th standard	4.0	96.0
3. Upto 7th standard	4.0	96.0
4. Upto 10th standard	24.0	76.0
5. Graduate level	44.0	56.0
Educational aspiration for their daughters:		
1. Not interested in education	13.6	86.4
2. Upto 4th standard	17.6	82.4
3. Upto 7th standard	32.8	67.2
4. Upto 10th standard	33.6	66.4
5. Graduate level	2.4	97.6

VII Occupational aspiration for their sons:

1. Agriculture	5.6	94.6
2. Minor forest produce collection	5.6	94.6
3. Business	1.6	98.4
4. Service (government)	86.4	13.6
5. Undecided	0.8	99.2

Occupational aspiration for their daughters:

1. Agriculture	41.6	58.4
2. Minor forest produce collection	35.2	64.8
3. Business	0.8	99.2
4. Service (government)	20.8	79.2
5. Undecided	1.6	98.4

Preference for family type

The majority of beneficiaries (76%) had opted for nuclear families. In all the tribal development programmes the family is considered as the unit to advance the benefits, and respondents might have opted for nuclear families.

Choices in marriages

The majority of respondents had opined that they were for marrying the children outside the colony. This may be attributed to the increased social contact of the Jenukurubas with the other colonies of the same tribe and improved transportation and communication facilities.

Status of the Women

The majority of beneficiaries (70.4%) opined that women must be given equal rights. That may be attributed to the changed pattern of their life in which both males and female members are engaged in agriculture and significant importance attached to the role played by the female member in the family.

Adult education

Nearly half of the respondents opined that adult education was useful for them, while the majority (67.2%) preferred to attend adult education

schools (Table 3). This suggests that of late the tribals are realizing the importance of functional literacy which is very much required for their increased transaction with the adjoining non-tribals and the contacts with the personnel of different development departments.

Educational Aspiration for sons and daughters

About 24% of the respondents showed lack of interest to educate their sons, while about 32.8% of the respondents had aspired their daughters to continue education upto 7th standard. The opening of schools close to their colonies, the efforts of the voluntary organizations in creating awareness among the tribals about education are important.

Occupational aspirations for sons and daughters

The majority of respondents (86.4%) aspired their sons to join some government service. This may be due to the increased man to land ratio among the tribals, and the uncertainty involved in agriculture due to poor resources. Further, the reservation of government posts to the scheduled tribes might have contributed for the above said phenomenon. Nearly 42% of the beneficiaries aspired their daughters to engage in agriculture, possibly because agriculture is a familiar occupation, and they can look after the lands which are situated close to their colonies. Some of the above results are in conformity with the findings of Dutta (1972) and Narayana (1985).

CONCLUSIONS

Majority of the beneficiaries had not participated fully in planning, followup and educational stages of the programme. In spite of various tribal development programmes launched to uplift them above the poverty line, their economic condition remains miserable. On majority of the programme components, the beneficiaries did not express favourable opinions. Hence, it is important to obtain the opinion of beneficiaries from time to time on the different programmes implemented, in order to evaluate the extent to which programme has benefitted the targeted groups and shortcomings in the scheme itself. This will help to monitor the programmes and to achieve the expected results by taking the opinions and aspirations of tribal farmers into cognizance.

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