

A Scale to Measure Social Development of the Rural Poor

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ABSTRACT. *In India, nearly 33.4% of the rural population live below the poverty line. Rural development implies both the economic growth and social transformation. Social development has been operationally defined as the level of progressive changes that have taken place in an individual in terms of mobility and media exposure, official and non-official contacts, normative patterns (family, organizational participation, training, education and occupation) and attitudinal changes from tradition of modernity. This study attempted to construct a suitable scale to measure social development of the rural beneficiaries of the poverty alleviation programmes. In construction of the social development scale, listing of the components and statements, obtaining the judges' rating and analysis for relevancy weightage were followed to finally select six components and 32 statements incorporating the components. The responses were obtained on four point continuum with weightages of 4, 3, 2 and 1. The summation score of all the 32 statements gives the total score of social development of a respondent. The scale was tested for its reliability and validity. This scale can be used to study the social development of the rural poor as it is proven to be an objective one.*

INTRODUCTION

Rural development implies both the economic betterment of people as well as greater social transformation. Increased participation of people in the rural development process, decentralization of planning, better enforcement of land reforms and greater access to credit and inputs go a long way in providing the rural people with better prospects for economic development. Improvements in health, education, drinking water, energy supply, sanitation and housing coupled with attitudinal changes facilitate their

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social development. In India, nearly 33.4% of the rural population live below the poverty line (Anonymous, 1992).

Social development has been operationally defined as the level of desirable progressive changes that have taken place in an individual in terms of mobility and media exposure, official and non-official contacts, normative patterns (family, organizational participation, training, education and occupation) and attitudinal change from tradition to modernity.

Gopalan (1985) hypothesized economic development and removal of poverty as basic pre-requisites for better nutrition and social development. EPW Research Foundation (1994) emphasized various types of linkages between the below mentioned three groups of factors determining social development: demographic factors (crude birth and death rates, child and maternal mortality rates, and family regulation achievements); literacy and educational attainments; income and other economic indicators.

India's social development is marked at a low level, besides the existence of an acute inter-regional and inter-state disparity in such development (EPW, 1994).

An instrument relating to the measurement of social development of rural poor was not available. Therefore, the objective of the study was to develop an instrument to measure the social development of beneficiaries under poverty alleviation programmes. The instrument was developed by following the procedure suggested by Davis (1962).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Listing of components and statements

Based on the available literature as well as discussions with scientists and extension professionals, seven items were considered as appropriate components of social development. They included mobility and media exposure, official and non-official contacts, participation in organizations and training, family norms, caste norms, education and occupation, and attitudinal change from tradition to modernity. Under each component item, five to seven statements were listed making a total of 45 statements to reflect the component items more precisely.

Judges' rating

The identified components and statements under each component, were subjected for judges' rating. The seven components with 45 statements were mailed to 125 experts (judges) including 28 Directors of Extension/Professors of Agricultural Extension/equivalent, 50 Associate Professors/equivalent, and 47 Assistant Professors/equivalent cadre working in Agricultural Universities, Research Institutes of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), National Academy of Agricultural Research Management (NAARM), Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) and National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD). The judgement sheets were prepared with suitable instructions, and the judges were requested to indicate their judgement on each of the components and statements on a two point category viz., 'Relevant' and 'Not-Relevant' with 'one' and 'zero' scores, respectively. They were also requested to suggest additional components if any, for inclusion in the list. Seventy seven responses were received from the experts and two were rejected being incomplete. Thus, the data furnished by 75 judges (60%) were taken into consideration in the selection of components and statements for the scale.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Selection of components and statements

Six components out of the seven, and 32 statements out of the 45 were selected, because >75% of the experts rated them as relevant. It means, all those components and statements which had 0.75 relevancy weightage score were selected to measure the 'Social Development' of beneficiaries. By this procedure, incidentally, one component on caste norms and its four statements and 9 statements under the remaining 6 components were totally eliminated. No new component/statement was found fit to include in the scale because only a negligible number of experts had suggested new components/statements. 'Relevancy weightage' is defined as the ratio of actual score obtained by an item to the maximum possible score of that item.

These statements were administered to respondents on a four point continuum as 'larger improvement', 'improvement', 'less improvement', and 'least improvement'; while the response categories for attitudinal statements were 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' with weightages of 4, 3, 2 and 1, respectively. The total score of all the statements formed the overall social development score for the individual respondent.

Reliability of the scale

The reliability of social development scale was determined by two methods, namely, test re-test method and split-half method.

Test re-test reliability

Responses were obtained from 40 beneficiaries of a developmental programme (Lab-to-Land Programme) who were considered to be rural poor. The second administration was done two weeks after the first administration. In conducting test re-test reliability, Pearson product moment coefficient of correlation was used for two sets of scores. The 'r' value of 0.9742 was found to be significant at 0.01 level of probability indicating high degree of evidence of reliability.

Split-half reliability

The scale was administered to 40 beneficiaries of a developmental programme (Lab-to-Land Programme) in a rural area. The scale administered to the 40 respondents was divided into two halves, based on odd and even numbers of statements. The two sets of scores were derived on half forms of scales for the same respondents and these scores were correlated. The Spearman Brown prophesy formula was employed to find out the split half reliability for the total length of the scale. The coefficient of correlation between two sets of scores was 0.9479. The reliability value was found to be significant at 0.01 level of probability indicating high reliability of the scale.

Validity of the scale

Content validity and/or construct validity are the methods generally followed to examine the validity of the scale.

Content validity

Content validity of the social development scale was established in two ways, first, the items selected for inclusion in the scale were based on extensive review of literature. Secondly, the opinion of the panel of judges

was obtained to find out whether the components and statements suggested were suitable for inclusion in the scale or not.

Criterion validity

Criterion validity was measured after establishing theoretical relationship by intuition between social development and two criteria namely, education and annual income.

Information on education was collected from a representative sample of 40 beneficiaries of Lab-to-Land Programme using a structured schedule in a rural area. The scores obtained for the variable 'education' were correlated with the social development score. The 'r' value was 0.8015.

The beneficiaries with a higher annual income were regarded to have developed better socially as observed in the study area. Therefore, correlation was worked out between them. The income levels were correlated with social development scores. The 'r' value was observed to be 0.6512.

Since, both the 'r' values were significant at 0.01 level of probability, the scale developed was considered as valid.

Pre - testing

The developed scale was pre-tested with three farmers in a rural area to know the suitability of the scale as well as to observe the difficulties of test administration. There was no difficulty or inadequacy in the test administration or in observing and recording the performance of the respondents. Further, the respondents were found to be enthusiastic to take the test.

Standardized scale on social development

The final format of the scale is presented below.

Note: Please indicate the level of progressive changes for the components of social development by putting a tick mark against each of the following statements under the appropriate response category.

Statements	Response categories			
	LI	I	Le.I	La.I
I. Mobility and media exposure				
1. Visit to nearest town/city.				
2. Reading daily news papers.				
3. Reading books/magazines/extension literature.				
4. Listening to radio programmes.				
5. Viewing telecast programmes.				
II. Official and non-official contacts				
6. Awareness about officials like BDO/AAO/AHO/Veterinary Doctor/PHC Doctor/AA.				
7. Awareness about non-officials like mandal panchayat members/pradhans/M.L.A./ P.L.D. Bank President/ Co-op. Society president/ M.P.				
8. Contacting officials for seeking guidance on agriculture/credit/health.				
9. Contacting non-officials for seeking guidance on agriculture/credit/health.				
10. Contact with officials was helpful.				
III. Participation in organizations & training				
11. Member of mandal panchayat/co-operative society/school committee / Yuvak-Yuvati Mandal.				
12. Contribution to developmental programmes in terms of cash/labour/ kind/ suggestions.				
13. Role played as a local leader in development process.				
14. Attending training programmes of occupational interest.				
15. Benefits derived from the training programmes attended.				
IV. Family norms				
16. Decisions on marriage are taken by parents in consultation with family members.				
17. Decisions on purchase or sale of land are taken by head in consultation with family members.				
18. Women are provided with equal opportunities (rights).				
19. Acceptance and practice of small family norms.				

20. Arranging marriage for boys and girls only after they attain the age of 21 and 18-years, respectively.

V. Education and occupation

21. Attending adult education classes/ programmes.
22. Aspiring to provide higher education to son(s).
23. Aspiring to provide higher education to daughter(s).
24. Encouraging son(s) to take up occupations like service/business/army/ agriculture.
25. Encouraging daughter(s) to take up occupations like teaching/lecturing/ service/agriculture.

VI. Attitudinal change from tradition to modernity.

SA A DA SDA

26. One should plan to meet future needs and take up individual responsibility.
27. One should prefer to take up treatment by modern medical system.
28. One should readily contact Govt. Officials for seeking Guidance/Assistance.
29. One should encourage giving equal status to women in taking family decisions.
30. One should encourage educating women equal to men.
31. One should not attach importance to caste hierarchy.
32. One should support to celebrate widow marriage.

L1 = Larger Improvement, I = Improvement, Le.I = Less Improvement, La.I = Least Improvement. SA = Strongly agree, A = Agree, DA = Dis-agree, SDA = Strongly Dis-agree.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The scale developed to measure the social development of beneficiaries of poverty alleviation programmes proved to be an objective one. Therefore, it can be used as a useful tool by researchers and field level workers conducting studies to understand the changes in social development of rural poor in general. It can be used extensively by further validating the scale.

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