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PERCEPTION OF TRIBAL FARMERS TOWARDS DEVELOPMENT IN MELGHAT REGION OF MAHARASHTRA, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

An attempt has been made in the present investigation to analyse the perception of tribal farmers towards development in Melghat region of Maharashtra. The study area was Chikhaldara and Dharani tehsil of Amravati district were purposively selected for the study because the highest concentration of tribal population. The data were collected through personal interview from tribal farmers with the help of pre tested interview schedule. A total sample of 200 tribal farmers was selected randomly from 10 villages of two tehsil during 2020-2021. Garrett's ranking technique was used to rank the factors considered by the tribal towards development after the response given by selected tribal farmers and 50 government officials from both tehsils. From each tehsil 25 government officials involved in tribal research were selected. The study revealed that the communication facilities were most important in Chikhaldara tehsil area. While Government officials suggested transportation facilities as most important factor. From Dharani tehsil, tribals suggested most important factor to irrigational facilities while Government officials suggested to educational facilities.

Key words : Tribal farmers, Education, Perception, Development.

Introduction

Tribe is a group of families or communities linked by social, economic, religion or blood ties and usually having a common culture and a recognised leader. The term tribe is used in many different contexts to refer to a category of human social group. The predominant usage of the term is in the discipline of anthropology. Like other societies, tribal society is also not static, rather is quite dynamic, but the rate of change in tribal society is very slow. That is why they have been backward and poor in comparison to other people. Since they have been materially backward and economically poor, attempts have been made by the Government to develop them. Today the Government of all places of the world is paying special attention towards the development of the tribal, *i.e.*, one finds the existence of induced or planned changes in tribal society.

Tribals of Melghat region

Melghat comprising the two tehsils that are Dharani and Chikhaldara, located on the northern part of Amravati district stretches across a vast expanse of forest and a tiger reserve. In the following decade, Melghat drew a lot of attention from the media as well as NGOs, activists, researchers, medical practitioners, and committees set up by courts to tackle malnutrition and child deaths in this region. This remote hilly region includes nearly 320 villages inhabited by the Korku tribe that represents 89.30 per cent of the region's total population. The tribal groups in the region, especially the Korkus, are the typical examples of deprivation and poverty. Although the practices and way of living are still traditional, shifts in the domain of livelihood and economic activity are prevalent among the Korkus. The backwardness in the spheres of socioeconomic and development domains

is evident among the Korkus. The Melghat region, where Korkus form a majority, is famous for the higher rate of malnutrition and child mortality. The empirical evidence attributes these as the result of the sociocultural and economic circumstances of the community. The complexity of the problem is underlined when the recent reports indicate that there are 6,000 deaths during the past 6 years, due to malnutrition and starvation. As they keep on wandering from one place to other, these tribes are in lack of education, which makes their survival difficult. So, they are forced to continue with this tradition of moving from place to place in search of work, which hurdles them to fit into the settled society. This does not allow them to fit into the settled society they are forced to continue with this tradition of moving from place to place in search of work. Thousands of families belonging to these tribes wander from place to place and stay in temporary structures.

Being the hilly area, it is very difficult to develop irrigation sources for the development of tribal agriculture. It is believed that the workers from tribal families remain unemployed for a considerable period during a year. As a result, the tribal economy remained stagnant due to inadequate employment and income opportunities. This has badly affected the consumption level in view of their poor economy to procure quality food. The facilities such as road, electricity, medical care and technical know-how for agriculture and employment opportunities are lacking in the region which can be fulfilled by the development schemes felt necessary for upliftment of tribal community.

The tribal expenditure is more on non-food items than the food. Among them health expenditure of the tribal people is a good sign but all other aspects like clothing, education and celebration have lot of inequality. The conditions of the tribal people are improved but still there is a need in the area of education especially which in terms provides income there by a scope to consumption.

Materials and Methods

Methodology and data source

The present study is an attempt to empirically analyse the perception of tribals towards development in Melghat region. The present study was undertaken in Melghat region of Amravati district as the Melghat is major tract of tribal population. Two tehsils of Amravati district namely Chikhaldara and Dharani were purposively selected for the study because the highest concentration of tribal population. From each tehsil five villages were selected randomly. In all total 200 tribal farmers and 50 Government officials were selected at randomly for the

Table 1 : Details of selected sample of Melghat region.

S. no.	Selected Districts	Name of Village	No. of sample	No. of Government official
1.	Chikhaldara	1. Bhutrum 2. Sumita 3. Simori 4. Domi 5. Karanjkheda	20 20 20 20 20	25
2.	Dharani	1. Talai 2. Takarkheda 3. Baspani 4. Diya 5. Tingrya	20 20 20 20 20	25
Total			200	50

present study. From each village 20 tribal farmers were randomly selected. The details of selected sample are given in Table 1.

The present investigation was based on the primary data. The data on various aspects of the study were collected from personal interviewed with the help of specially designed scheduled. The data pertains to the year 2020-21.

Perception of tribals towards development

Garrett's Ranking Technique

Garrett's ranking technique was used to rank the factors considered by the tribal towards development after the response given by selected tribal farmers and 50 government officials from both tehsil. From each tehsil 25 government officials involved in tribal research were selected.

Factors were identified as the major reasons contributing to development in the study area taking into consideration the opinions of the sample tribal and with regard to the various studies undertaken in the field of study. Each of the sample tribal was asked to rank the factors from rank 1 to rank 6. In this analysis, rank 1 meant most important factor and rank 6 meant least important factor. In the next stage, rank assigned to each factor by each individual was converted into per cent position using the following formula,

$$\text{Per cent position} = 100 \times (R_{ij} - 0.5) / N_j$$

Where,

R_{ij} stands rank given for the i th factor ($i = 1, 2, \dots, 6$) by the j th individual ($j = 1, 2, \dots, 100$)

N_j stands for number of factors ranked by j th individual.

Once the per cent position was found, score was

determined for each per cent position by referring Garrett's table. Then the scores for each factor was summed over the number of sample farmers who ranked that factor. In this way, total scores was arrived at for each of the factors and mean scores was calculated by dividing the total score by the number of respondents, who gave ranks. Finally, overall ranking of the factors was done by assigning rank 1, 2, 3,.....6 in the descending order of the mean scores.

Results and Discussion

Perception of tribals towards development

The perception of tribals and Government officials from both tehsils were studied. The feelings towards the development factors of tribals was noted after the responses given by the selected tribal farmers and 50 government officials (Teachers, Range Forest Officer, Doctors from PHC, Officer from tribal development department, Extension officer, Tehsildar, Agriculture officer) who worked in both tehsils presented by using Garrett scoring technique which is presented in the following tables.

Perception of tribals and Government officials towards priorities for development in Chikhaldara tehsil

Perception of tribals and government officials in Chikhaldara tehsil is presented in Table 2.

Factors towards the tribal development were ranked by Garrett scoring technique. It is observed from the Table 2, that the tribals of Chikhaldara tehsil ranked first for the communication facilities with average score of 60.60, electricity facilities ranked second with average score 59.26 and Medical facilities ranked third with average score 55.08. For remaining 6 factors, tribals ranked forth to marketing facilities with average score 53.36, transportation ranked fifth with average score 52.76, educational facilities ranked sixth with average score

51.06, banking facilities ranked seventh with average score 47.52, irrigational facilities ranked eighth with average score 37.24 and Drinking water Facilities ranked ninth with average score 33.60.

While, Government officials ranked first for transportation facilities with average score of 63.88 and second to electricity with average score of 62.44 followed by communication facilities ranked third with average score 56.88. For remaining 6 factors, officials ranked forth to educational facilities with average score 53.12, drinking water facilities ranked fifth with average score 51.88, medical facilities ranked sixth with average score 46.76, banking facilities ranked seventh with average score 42.68, irrigational facilities ranked eighth with average score 41.08 and marketing facilities ranked ninth with average score 31.28.

Perception of tribals and Government officials towards priorities for development in Dharani tehsil

Perception of tribals and government officials from Dharani tehsil is presented in Table 3.

Factors towards the tribal development were ranked by Garrett scoring technique. It is observed from the Table 3, that the tribals from Dharani tehsil ranked first for the irrigation facilities with average score of 67.48, medical facilities ranked second with average score 65.12 and educational facilities ranked third with average score 63.55. For remaining 6 factors, tribals ranked forth to electricity with average score 62.10, drinking water facilities ranked fifth with average score 55.24, communication facilities ranked sixth with average score 39.52, marketing facilities ranked seventh with average score 34.92, banking facilities ranked eighth with average score 33.60 and transportation ranked ninth with average score 29.32.

While, Government officials ranked first to educational facilities with average score of 64.60 and

Table 2 : Perception of tribals and Government officials towards priorities for development in Chikhaldara tehsil.

S. no.	Factors	Tribals		Government officials	
		Average Score	Rank	Average Score	Rank
1	Medical Facilities	55.08	3	46.76	6
2	Educational Facilities	51.06	6	53.12	4
3	Irrigational Facilities	37.24	8	41.08	8
4	Electricity	59.26	2	62.44	2
5	Communication Facilities	60.60	1	56.88	3
6	Banking Facilities	47.52	7	42.68	7
7	Transportation(Road, vehicles)	52.76	5	63.88	1
8	Marketing Facilities	53.36	4	31.28	9
9	Drinking water Facilities	33.60	9	51.88	5

Table 3 : Perception of tribals and Government officials towards priorities for development in Dharani tehsil.

S. no.	Factors	Tribals		Government officials	
		Average Score	Rank	Average Score	Rank
1	Medical Facilities	65.12	2	56.20	3
2	Educational Facilities	63.55	3	64.60	1
3	Irrigational Facilities	67.48	1	51.48	5
4	Electricity	62.10	4	60.28	2
5	Communication Facilities	39.52	6	42.84	7
6	Banking Facilities	33.60	8	35.08	9
7	Transportation (Road, vehicles)	29.32	9	49.44	6
8	Marketing Facilities	34.92	7	39.04	8
9	Drinking water Facilities	55.24	5	51.52	4

Table 4 : Opinion of tribals towards developmental activities in Chikhaldara tehsil.

(N=100)

S. no.	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
1	Medical facilities should be improved in tribal area	48(48.00)	36(36.00)	16(16.00)
2	Without creating education facilities development is not possible in tribal area	35(35.00)	21(21.00)	44(44.00)
3	There is need of irrigation facilities for development of agriculture in the tribal area	16(16.00)	16(16.00)	68(68.00)
4	Electricity facility is very important in tribal area	49(49.00)	43(43.00)	8(8.00)
5	Development of communication facilities are needed for access to improved agricultural technology	60(60.00)	28(28.00)	12(12.00)
6	Banking facilities are needed for faster development	12(12.00)	56(56.00)	32(32.00)
7	Good roads facilities should be made available	40(40.00)	40(40.00)	20(20.00)
8	For Economic gains development of marketing facilities should be there	32(32.00)	40(40.00)	28(28.00)
9	To reduce water borne diseases there is need to create drinking water facilities	12(12.00)	20(20.00)	68(68.00)

Figures in the parentheses indicate the percentage to the N.

second to electricity with average score of 60.28 followed by medical facilities ranked third with average score 56.20. For remaining 6 factors, officials ranked forth to drinking water facilities with average score 51.52, irrigational facilities ranked fifth with average score 51.48, transportation ranked sixth with average score 49.44, communication facilities ranked seventh with average score 42.84, marketing facilities ranked eighth with average score 39.04 and banking facilities ranked ninth with average score 35.08.

Opinion of tribals towards developmental activities in Chikhaldara tehsil

The perception of tribals from the Chikhadara tehsil towards development was worked out by using extension-based criteria and frequency percentile method which is given in Table 4.

From Table 4, it is revealed that 60 per cent sample

tribal farmers were strongly agreed for the development of communication facilities are needed for access to improved agricultural technology and 49 per cent tribal farmers were strongly agreed for electricity facilities. Similarly, 48 per cent tribal farmers were strongly agreed for medical facilities. The 43 per cent and 36 per cent tribal farmer were agreed for the creation of above both facilities. The 40 per cent tribal farmers were strongly agreed and agreed for development of road facilities in tribal area. The 35 and 21 per cent tribal farmers were strongly agree and agree for without creating educational facilities development is not possible in tribal area but for the same 44 per cent tribal farmer were disagree. The 32 per cent tribal farmers were strongly agreed and 40 per cent tribal farmers were agreed for creation of marketing facilities in tribal area.

Table 5 : Opinion of tribals towards tribal developmental activities in Dharani tehsil**(N=100)**

S. no.	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
1	Medical facilities should be improved in tribal area	76(76.00)	20(20.00)	4(4.00)
2	Without creating education facilities development is not possible in tribal area	58(58.00)	42(42.00)	0(0.00)
3	There is need of irrigation facilities for development of agriculture in the tribal area	80(80.00)	20(20.00)	0(0.00)
4	Electricity facility is very important in tribal area	55(55.00)	41(41.00)	4(4.00)
5	Development of communication facilities are needed for access to improved agricultural technology	0(0.00)	52(52.00)	48(48.00)
6	Banking facilities are needed for faster development	0(0.00)	28(28.00)	72(72.00)
7	Good roads facilities should be made available	8(8.00)	4(4.00)	88(88.00)
8	For Economic gains development of marketing facilities should be there	0(0.00)	20(20.00)	80(80.00)
9	To reduce water borne diseases there is need to create drinking water facilities	40(40.00)	56(56.00)	4(4.00)

Figures in the parentheses indicate the percentage to the N.

Opinion of tribals towards tribal developmental activities in Dharani tehsil

The perception of tribals from the Dharani tehsil towards development was worked out by using extension based criteria and frequency percentile method is presented in Table 5.

From Table 5, it is revealed that 80 per cent sample tribal farmers were strongly agreed for need of irrigation facilities for development of agriculture in the tribal area and 76 per cent tribal farmers were strongly agreed for medical facilities. Similarly, 55 per cent and 41 per cent tribal farmer were strongly agreed and agreed for electricity facility. The 58 and 42 per cent tribal farmers were strongly agree and agree for without creating educational facilities development is not possible in tribal area. The 40 per cent tribal farmers were strongly agreed and 56 per cent tribal farmers were agreed for creation of drinking water facilities.

Conclusion

As from the perception of tribals, it was concluded that communication facilities were most important in Chikhaldara tehsil area. While Government officials suggested transportation facilities as most important factor. From Dharani tehsil tribals suggested most important factor to irrigational facilities while Government officials suggested to educational facilities. Frequency percentile method was also used with extension based categories. Both results from different methodology were same and both supports each other. Inadequate communication facilities, inadequate transport facilities, inadequate

educational facilities and inadequate irrigational facilities are the major livelihood issues of tribal farmers as perceived by both tribal farmers and Government officials who are currently working in Melghat region. There exists a wide perceptual difference among the tribal farmers and Government officials about the livelihood issues of Melghat region. And it is reason for the slow social and economical development of tribal farmers in the Melghat region of Maharashtra. The tribal area need to be strengthened by providing infrastructure in term of communication, electrification, transportation, education, nutrition and health care for the development of tribals of Melghat region.

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