

Attitude of implementing officials towards Samagra

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ABSTRACT : Decentralized planning is strongly entrenched in the Kerala society since late 1990's. With experience spread over a decade and half in this regard, the Kerala state has to its credit many innovative projects in the agricultural sector which have left a lasting impact on the community. When it comes to sustainability and scaling up of such innovative projects, a large number of factors come into play. There has been some model projects such as the 'Samagra (comprehensive) Project' on Banana cultivation initiated by the Thiruvananthapuram District Panchayat with active participation of a host of institutional and individual stakeholders. The resounding success of the Project has paved the way for the further extension and expansion of the Project to benefit more 'Activity Groups' to be organised under the Kudumbashree Mission. The primary aim of this research study was developing a Likert's summated rating scale with which to measure farmers' attitude towards Samagra (Comprehensive banana project). The research was started by identifying 50 different statements based on review of literature and information obtained from various stakeholders and experts of the Samagra project. Out of these statements, 20 items were selected and ultimately only 6 consistent and reliable statements were retained for inclusion in a five point Likert's type scale. The 6 statements' scale was administered on 60 randomly selected sample farmers to measure their attitude towards Samagra. The result shows that 40 per cent of the beneficiaries had neutral attitude towards 'Samagra' and 60 per cent of the beneficiaries had favourable attitude towards Samagra'. None of them had unfavourable attitude towards Samagra'. This detailed study together with strict follow-up of data collection from the sample respondents has been extremely useful in developing a relatively consistent tool to measure farmers' attitude. Therefore, the 6 items five point Likert's scale can be applicable rest of the Indian states also.

Key words: Attitude, banana, item, samagra, scale

Kerala is a pioneering state in India in the matter of implementation of decentralized planning process. In the agricultural sector, many demand driven initiatives towards technology commercialization have been undertaken as a part of these Local Self Governments (LSGs). One among them is the promotion of scientific banana cultivation, taken up by the Thiruvananthapuram District Panchayat as the nodal agency. This Project entitled 'Samagra Banana Project' was implemented in the year 2007. Women are the backbone of agricultural workforce. 'Kudumbashree' is the women oriented programme. 'Kudumbashree' mission is a poverty eradication mission officially launched by the Government of Kerala with the objective of wiping out of poverty from the state. It plays a vital role in co-ordinating the activities of 'Samagra' Project. 'Samagra' Banana Project is for the establishment of market - oriented banana production and processing network by effectively utilizing organized 'Kudumbashree' units. Co-ordinated efforts of the State 'Kudumbashree' mission and the Thiruvananthapuram District Panchayat could effectively build up this kind of an innovative venture to improve banana cultivation

utilizing high end technologies and enabling steady market. The 'Samagra' (Comprehensive) Project on banana cultivation stands out in many ways. It is a multi-stakeholder participatory effort in agricultural development emphasising on 5 Ps-Public-Private-Panchayat-People Partnerships. The partners in the Project are the Thiruvananthapuram District Panchayat, Kudumbashree mission, the Agricultural Department, the Kerala Agricultural University, the State Horticultural Mission, the Nationalised Banks, and the private partner 'Prowins Agriculture system'. All the institutions are contributing to the various aspects of the 'Samagra' Project. Considering the significance of 'Samagra' project in agrarian relations, an effort was made to construct an attitude scale towards 'Samagra' project on banana cultivation. In general, attitude implies that the individual is no longer neutral toward the referent psychological object. The person would be positively inclined or negatively disposed in some degree towards the referents (Campbell, 1963; Allport, 1966; Newcomb, 1966; Zanden, 1977; Burr, 2000). Attitude in this comprehensive study refers to the degree of liking or disliking towards Samagra banana project.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

An attitude scale was constructed for the present study. Likert's (1932) method of summated rating was used for measuring attitude of implementing officials towards 'Samagra'. The first step is to collection of items were 50 items to be included in the attitude scale were obtained through review of literature related to Samagra and discussion with experts of the Kerala Agriculture University, College of Agriculture, Vellayani, and few implementing officials of Prowins Agriculture System. The second step is editing of the statements were 20 statements selected have been carefully edited in accordance with the criteria suggested by Edwards (1957) so as to indicate both favourable and unfavourable attitude towards Samagra. The third step is item analysis were 20 selected statements were later translated into Malayalam, the regional language of Kerala and administered to 60 implementing officials. The responses were collected on a five point continuum viz., 'Strongly Agree' 'Agree' 'Undecided' 'Disagree' and 'Strongly Disagree'. The fourth step is method of scoring were after obtaining the responses from the 60 implementing officials the scoring was done in the order of 5,4,3,2, and 1 for 'Strongly Agree' 'Agree' 'Undecided' 'Disagree' and 'Strongly Disagree' responses, respectively in the case of positive statements and the reverse in the case of negative statements. By summing up the scores obtained for each of the statements in the scale, the total score for each of the respondents was obtained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The computing 't' value is considering the total score of each respondent, they were arranged in the descending order. Twenty five percent of the subjects with the high score and twenty five percent of the subjects with low total scores were used for the selection items. The responses of the middle fifty per cent were not considered. To evaluate if each statement differentiate between high and low group 't' values were computed using the formula given by Edwards (1957). Research evidences indicate that the linkage between innovations and growth appears fairly straight forward (Joseph, 2010; Sunilmani, 2009). Innovation and sustainability are also reported to be positively related to development of farming sector (Hall, 2010).

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_H - \bar{X}_L}{\sqrt{\frac{SH^2}{nH} + \frac{SL^2}{nL}}}$$

Where,

\bar{X}_H = the mean score on a given statement for the high group

\bar{X}_L = the mean score on a given statement for the low group

SL^2 = the variance of the distribution of responses of the low groups to the statement

nH = the number of subjects in the high group

nL = the number of subjects in the low group

n = total number of respondents.

Thus the 't' values for each of the 20 statements were worked out and eight statements which had 't' values greater than 1.75 were selected and the remaining 12 were rejected. Out of the selected statements, 4 were positive and 4 were negative.

The validity of the scale is to ensure that the obtained test measured the variable it was supposed to, validity of the scale has to be established. Content validity and construct validity are the methods generally followed to know the validity of the scale. Content validity, according to Kerlinger (1973) is the representativeness or sampling adequacy of the contents, the substance, the matter and topics of a measuring instrument. In this study, the content validity of the attitude scale was established in two ways. First, the items selected for inclusion in scale were based on extensive review of literature. Secondly, the opinion of the panel of judges was obtained to find out whether the items suggested were suitable for inclusion in the scale or not.

The reliability of the scale to be reliable when it produces results with high degree of consistency when administered to the same respondents at different time. In this study, reliability of the scale was determined by split-half method. The scale administered to the 60 implementing officials was divided into two halves based on odd-even numbers of statements. The scores on the odd numbered items as well as the scores of the even numbered items of same respondents were correlated using the Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient. The coefficient of internal consistency was worked out using the following formula:

$$r_{oe} = \frac{N \sum XY - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{[N \sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][N \sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}}$$

Where, N = Number of respondents

X = value of odd numbered items score

Y = Value of even numbered items score

The r_{oe} value obtained was again correlated by using Spearman Brown formula and thus obtained the reliability. r_{tt} of the original test. The formula used was

Table 1: Attitude of implementing officials towards 'Samagra' Project

Sr. No.	Item	t-value
1.	I like 'Samagra' because it brings welfare to the poor.	1.782
2.	I like 'Samagra' because it produces quality banana.	2.318
3.	I do not like 'Samagra' because integration of 5Ps is not effectively achieved.	2.154
4.	I like 'Samagra' because there is full involvement of people.	1.753
5.	I do not like 'Samagra' because involvement of government agency is less.	2.284
6.	I like 'Samagra' because there is an improvement in the livelihood of people.	2.350
7.	I do not like 'Samagra' because other agricultural crops are affected.	1.829
8.	I do not like 'Samagra' because of high share of administrative cost.	1.761

Table 2: Distribution of the implementing officials based on their attitude towards Samagra (n = 60)

Category	Score	Frequency	Percentage
Unfavourable	Up to 12	0	0
Neutral	13 - 18	24	40
Favourable	19 and above	36	60
Total		60	100

$$r_{tt} = \frac{2 \text{ roe}}{1 + \text{ roe}}$$

The obtained r_{tt} value was 0.4300, which indicated a high reliability of the scale.

The administering the scale is to final scale with 4 positive and 4 negative statements was administered to 60 implementing officials and the responses were collected on a five point continuum viz., 'Strongly Agree' 'Agree' 'Undecided' 'Disagree' and 'Strongly Disagree' with the scoring 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively in the case of positive statements and the reverse in the case of negative statements (Table 1). The individual scores of each respondent were obtained by summing up the responses for all items. The maximum score possible was 40 and minimum 8.

A cursory view of the Table 2 shows that 40 per cent of the implementing officials had neutral attitude towards 'Samagra' and 60 per cent of the implementing officials had favourable attitude towards Samagra'. None of them had unfavourable attitude towards Samagra'. Since the implementing officials had better level cosmopolitanness, incentives, motivation to work they were very much interested to know about the new happenings and their good level of exposure to various information sources spearheaded them to know more about the 'Samagra' and this would have been the reason for the present findings. The identified innovative procedures, processes and institutions were new to the 'Samagra' implementing officials. Because, previously implemented projects were not having these types of innovation. It could one of the reasons for favourable attitude of implementing officials towards 'Samagra' Project.

CONCLUSION

The implementing officials' attitude towards Samagra Project is also excellent examples of Good Extension Practices which are a sine-quo-non for the sustainability of development projects in the decentralised planning process. Result showed that 60 per cent of the implementing officials had favourable attitude towards Samagra project. Its a positive signature for the agricultural developmental initiatives in the farming community. The case of the Samagra Project provides an insight to the Local Self Governments into the processes of empowering the local community to innovate in the assessment of needs, formulation of action plans, mobilisation of resources and institutions, implementation of development activities and evaluation of the results so as to ensure that the development process is truly a "hand up" rather than a "hand out".

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