

Factors Affecting Communication Competency of Farmers in Banka District of Bihar

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ABSTRACT

An attempt has been made to study the communication competency of farmers with special reference to dissemination of paddy cultivation technology. The study was conducted with a sample of 300 farmers drawn randomly from Banka & Rajaun blocks of Banka district of Bihar. The study revealed that the main factors determining the communication competency of farmers were presentation skill, sources of information utilization, innovation proneness and annual income. Among all the nine variables taken for the study, presentation skill emerged as the single most potent factor in determining the communication competency of farmers.

Key word: - Communication, competence, presentation, skill, technology, dissemination.

INTRODUCTION

Hymes (1972) and Spiltzberg and Cupach (1984) viewed that the communication competencies are message focussed and attempted to explain message behaviour. Communication competency in an interpersonal situation has been referred to as the ability to engage in appropriate and effective communication, the ability to convey accuracy in meaning, purposive, strategic, message formation, the ability to adopt messages appropriately to the interaction context *etc.* According to Hymes (1972), communication competence is an individual's ability and hence, extends beyond knowledge of language. It includes the ability to process information cognitively and the ability to explain and predict human behaviour. In other words, it is the ability to perform as well as the knowledge of how to perform.

Konsky and Murdock (1980) stated that competency has two dimensions - knowledge and skills. Knowledge includes our awareness and understanding of the numerous variables which affect human relationships. Skills involve the ability to pragmatically apply our knowledge. Spiltzberg and Cupach (1984), after a review of literatures on interpersonal communication competence concluded that a competent communicator is one who is motivated to communicate, has knowledge of how to communicate, possesses communication skills and is sensitive to the expectations of the context in which the communication occurs. Thus, communication competence has five major components for each individual namely motivation, knowledge, skill, context and outcome. In brief communication competency may be summarised as the efficiency of a communicator to

communicate. In the present study, communication competency has been defined as the ability of a communicator to plan and organise communication activities.

The present study was planned and conducted with the following objectives.

1. To study the communication competency level of farmers.
2. To study the association of different factors with communication competency of the farmers.
3. To study the contribution of different factors in predicting the communication competency of the farmers.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in purposively selected Banka district of Bihar. Out of 11 C.D. blocks, two blocks namely Banka and Rajaun were selected randomly. Thereafter, 25 per cent gram panchayats from both the C.D. blocks were selected randomly. On this basis, 4 gram panchayats (Dudhari, Danra, Lakrikola and Telia) from Banka block and five gram panchayats (Bhawanipur Kathaun, Dhauni Bamdev, Khaira, Morama Bangaon, Tilakpur) from Rajaun blocks were selected. Then, a sample of 25 per cent villages were selected randomly from selected gram panchayats. Subsequently, samples of 300 farmers (paddy growers) were selected randomly on the basis of probability proportionate sampling method. Data were collected with the help of structured interview schedule specially developed on standard scales in light

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of objectives. Keeping in view the objectives of study, nine variables were included namely socio- economic status, education, annual income, interpersonal interaction, innovation proneness, value orientation, knowledge of communication technique, presentation skill and sources of information utilization which are supposed to affect communication effectiveness of farmers.

Dependent variable, communication competence of farmers was measured with the scale developed by Sobhana (1990). Independent variables such as socio economic status and education was measured by socio-economic status scale developed by Trivedi (1963), annual income was quantified, interpersonal interaction was measured with the scale developed by Bhople (1985), innovation proneness was measured with the scale developed by Chaudhary (1973), value orientation was measured with the scale developed by Kittur (1976), knowledge of communication technique and presentation skill were measured with the scale developed by Sobhana (1990) and sources of information utilization was measured with the scale developed by Ramachandran (1974). The data were collected with the help of structured interview schedule in face to face situation. The data so collected were tabulated, classified and statistically processed to draw logical conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The ability of the communicator to engage in appropriate and effective communicative interaction is termed as his efficiency in communication. In other words this ability can be termed as communication competence as the terms efficiency and competence are synonymous. In present study, an effort has been made to find out the level of communication competence (dependent variable) of farmers and to find out the association of different independent variables with communication competence of farmers.

The communication competence level of farmers have been categorised as low, medium and high & the results are presented in table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of farmers on the basis of communication competence level.

Particular	n=300	
	Frequency	Percentage
Low, < (mean-S.D)	34.00	11.33
Medium, In between (mean ± S.D.)	238.00	79.33
High, > (mean + S.D)	28.00	9.34

Mean = 19.35, Highest score = 32, Range = 18, S.D. = 3.20, Lowest score = 14

The data presented in Table 1 clearly indicated that majority of the farmers *i.e.* 79.33 per cent were having medium level of communication competence followed by low level of communication competence possessed by 11.33 per cent farmers. Only 9.33 per cent farmers were having high level of communication competence. So it may be inferred that majority of the farmers belonged to medium to low communication competency level. This might be due to the fact that farmers may be lacking in planning and organising communication activities as well as they may be lacking in their presentation skills.

In order to examine the association between selected independent variables and communication competence, correlation co-efficient (r) was worked out between dependent and independent variables and the result so obtained is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlation between communication competence and selected independent variables.

n=300

Selected independent variables	Value of Correlation Coefficient (r)
Socio – economic status (X ₁)	0.482**
Education (X ₂)	0.403**
Annual income (X ₃)	0.292**
Interpersonal interaction (X ₄)	0.115*
Innovation proneness (X ₅)	0.105
Value orientation (X ₆)	0.188**
Knowledge of communication technique	0.632**
Presentation skill (X ₈)	0.703**
Sources of information utilization (X ₉)	0.573**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed)

The data presented in Table 2 reveals that all the independent variables except, innovation proneness were positively and significantly correlated with communication competence of a farmer. The variables like socio- economic status, education, annual income, value orientation, knowledge of communication technique, presentation skill and sources of information utilization were positively correlated with communication competence at 1 per cent level of significance whereas the variable interpersonal interaction was positively correlated with communication competence at 5 per cent level of significance. The correlation coefficient between communication competence and presentation skill was found to be highest (r = 0.703) indicating the strong association of this component. The next associated variable was regarded as knowledge of communication technique (r = 0.632) followed by sources of information utilization (r = 0.573). The variables like socio-economic status and education

were having consistent association with the dependent variable indicating their r values as 0.482 and 0.403 respectively. Annual income, value orientation, and interpersonal interaction showed declining trend of association having r values 0.292, 0.188 and 0.115 respectively. It is interesting to note here that there was no significant association of innovation proneness with communication competence.

One variable might be associated with or dependent upon several other variables at the same time and hence, the multiple regression analysis was carried out. The result of which are furnished in Table 3.

Table 3: Multiple regression analysis of the independent variables with the communication competence (dependent variable) of the farmers.

Selected independent variables	Regression Coefficient (r)	Std. Error of (b)	't'
Socio – economic status (X_1)	0.01541	0.015	1.031
Education (X_2)	0.02643	0.091	0.290
Annual income (X_3)	-0.000015	0.000	-2.294*
Interpersonal interaction (X_4)	-0.27	0.220	-1.230
Innovation proneness (X_5)	-0.315	0.117	-2.692**
Value orientation (X_6)	0.08750	0.089	0.985
Knowledge of communication technique	0.003780	0.052	0.073
Presentation skill (X_8)	0.139	0.19	7.347**
Sources of information utilization (X_9)	0.06356	0.013	4.771**

$R^2 = 0.563$, intercept constant (a) = 13.681

F = 41.469** d.f. = 9, 290

** Significant at the 0.01 level of probability.

* Significant at the 0.05 level of probability.

The data presented in Table 3 indicated that all the nine variables taken together explained to the extent of 56.30 per cent variation in the communication competence of farmers. The calculated 'F' value was 41.40 at 9 and 290 degrees of freedom which was significant at 0.01 level of significance. Thus, the result implied that all the nine independent variables taken together would account for a significant amount of variation in the communication competence of farmers.

Further, the 't' test of significance expressed that co-efficient of regression (b value) was found non-significant for socio-economic status, education, interpersonal interaction, value orientation, knowledge of communication technique, which means that these variables were not contributing significantly in predicting the communication competence of the farmers. On the other hand co-efficient of regression was found positively significant for presentation skill, sources of information utilization at 0.01 level of significance. It means that these variables were contributing significantly in predicting the

communication competence.

Sources of information utilization was found to be next most important variable affecting communication competence of a farmer. As the sources of information utilization increases, the communication competence also increases. It is quite obvious that recent developments in the means and techniques of communication have been utilized by agricultural agencies to influence farmers to accept certain recommendations.

The variables namely innovation proneness and annual income were negatively and significantly correlated at 0.01 and 0.05 level of significance meaning thereby that these two variables had inverse relationship with communication competence.

CONCLUSION

The study showed that the communication competence of a farmer specially with reference to transfer of technology largely depends on his presentation skill. Both the correlation co-efficient ($r = 0.703$) and regression co-efficient ($b = 7.347$) were found to be highest for this factor/variable amongst all the nine variables taken for the study.

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