

Indigenous Communication System in Kokana Tribes

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in tribal villages from Surgana tehsil of Nasik District of Maharashtra state. The data were collected from 120 respondents. Majority of the Kokana tribes belonged to the age group of 45 years and above. More than one-third (35.00 %) of the Kokana tribes were educated up to pre-primary level *i.e.* up to 4th standard. Maximum families of Kokana tribe's had agriculture as main occupation and having annual income between ₹ 50,001/- to ₹1.00,000/-. Most of them possessed medium size of land holding *i.e.* up to 1.01 to 2.00 ha. They had nuclear family type and medium sized family *i.e.* 5 to 6 members. They had medium level of participation in any social organisation. Regarding indigenous communication systems cent per cent Kokana tribes knew about their traditional Kokana dance, and performed during the marriage ceremony. Cent per cent of them sang their traditional spiritual songs during Dongerdev festival, Avasar festival and Navratra festival for community, personal health and personal aim (Navas). Most of the Kokana tribe knows about the government schemes like Paryavaran Santulan Yojana, Village water Supply Scheme, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Gaon Tanta Mukti Abhiyan, Jal Swaraj Prakalp, Watershed development programme, National Horticulture Mission, National Rural Health Mission and Zilla Parishad schemes which are running in the village.

Key words: Kokana tribe, tribal villages, indigenous communication system, social participation

INTRODUCTION

India has the largest concentration of the tribals in the world, which live with peculiar customs and leads an altogether different way of life. There are altogether 427 tribal communities all over India scattered in all the states except in Punjab, Haryana and Jammu Kashmir. There are 15 districts in the state which account for substantial population of the tribals namely, Nasik, Nandurbar, Dhule, Yavatmal, Akola, Amaravati, Ahmednagar, Jalgaon, Pune and Raigad. There are number of tribal communities in Maharashtra, who live either in dense forest or on mountains of the *Sahyadri* and the *Satpuda*. They are concentrated in three regions *viz.*, western, eastern and northern regions.

In Nasik district *Bhil*, *Padvi*, *Gavit*, *Bhoye*, and *Kokana* tribes are mainly found. The population of scheduled tribes in Surgana blocks is 1,42,764 (88.41 percent) (2001). Their habitat lies in hilly region and their population is distributed in small villages and 'Padas' of the upland, subsist mainly on agriculture and forest. Paddy, Nagali (finger millet), Bajra, Groundnut, Varian (Common Millet) are mainly grown by them. The average yields of these crops on their farms are very low due to small size of farm, fragmented and undulating land, religious beliefs, non-availability of irrigation, lack of communication, transport, marketing and storage facilities, lack of technological knowhow, lack of modern

inputs and capital. Their standard of living also still low, they cannot receive the benefits of various schemes implemented for their development. Tribals are still educationally and economically primitive. Keeping all the views in mind, the present study entitled "Indigenous communication system in *Kokana* tribes" has been taken for research.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in tribal villages from Surgana tehsil of Nasik District. From the Surgana tehsil, 10 villages were selected randomly. From every selected village, 12 tribal headmen were selected. Thus in all from 10 villages 120 respondents were selected for the study. Data was collected with the help of structured and semi-structured interview schedule, non participant observation and focus group discussion. Audio recorder and photography was also be used. Frequency, percentages were worked out for analysing and interpretation of data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Demographic characteristics of *Kokana* tribes

The data presented in Table 1 shows that three fifth (60.00%) of the *Kokana* tribes belonged to the old age group of 45 years. The average age of the *Kokana* tribe was noticed 46 year and more than one-third (35.00%) of

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the *Kokana* tribes were educated up to pre-primary level *i.e.* up to 4th standard and one-fourth (24.17%) of them were illiterate. While more than three fourth of the *Kokana* tribes had nuclear family and majority (70.83%) of the *Kokana* tribes belonged to medium sized family *i.e.* 5 to 6 members. Regarding land holding more than half (50.83%) of the *Kokana* tribes had medium land holding *i.e.* 1.01 to 2.00 ha.

Most (70.00%) of the families of *Kokana* tribes had their annual income ₹ 50,000/- to ₹ 1,00,000/-. More than three fourth (76.67%) of the *Kokana* tribes families main occupation was agriculture. More than three fourth (38.51%) of the *Kokana* tribes having up to 10 years experience in farming.

It is noticed that about two third (64.17%) of the families of *Kokana* tribe respondents had medium level of social participation.

The above findings are in conformity with the findings of Deshmukh (2000) and Suryawanshi (2002).

Table 1: Demographic characteristics

n=120		
Characteristics	Number	Per cent
Age		
a. Young Up to 22 years	4	3.33
b. Medium (23 to 44 years)	44	36.67
c. Old (45 years and above)	72	60.00
Education		
a. Illiterate	29	24.17
b. Pre primary (up to 4th Std)	42	35.00
c. Primary (5 to 7th Std)	6	5.00
d. Secondary (8th to 10th std)	13	10.83
e. Higher secondary (11th to 12th std)	16	13.33
f. Graduation and above	14	11.67
Type of family		
a. Joint	27	22.50
b. Nuclear	93	77.50
Size of family		
a. Small (up to 4 members)	23	19.17
b. Medium (5 to 6 members)	85	70.83
c. Large (7 and above Members)	12	10.00
Size of land holding		
Small (Up to 1.00 ha.)	41	34.17
Medium (1.01 to 2.00 ha.)	61	50.83
Large (2.01 ha. and above)	18	15.00
Annual Income (₹)		
a. Up to ₹ 50,000/-	21	17.50
b. ₹ 50,001/-To ₹ 1,00,000/-	84	70.00
c. ₹1,00,001 and above	15	12.50

Main Occupation

Agriculture	92	76.67
Agril. Labour	16	13.33
Service	12	10.00

Experience in farming

a) Up to 10 years	57	38.51
b) 11 to 20 years	50	33.78
c) 21 years and above	41	27.71

Level of social participation

Low (Up to 1 score)	40	33.33
Medium (2 to 4 score)	77	64.17
High (5 and above score)	3	2.50

B. Indigenous communication systems of tribal village

The data presented in Table 2 showed that cent per cent of the *Kokana* tribes convey the message for different functions and activities by giving invitation personally, home visit, special messenger or drummer by playing drum.

Table 2: Methods were used by the respondents for conveying message

Methods of conveying message
• Marriage invitation given by personally at home
• Invitation given on the occasion of New born naming ceremony by messenger
• At the time of death in a home the message conveyed by playing drum
• On the occasion of religious ceremony the message given by special messenger/ drummer

The data presented in Table 3 shows that cent per cent *Kokana* tribes participation in traditional *Kokana* dance, and all of them performed during the marriage ceremony (100.00%), followed by *Dongerdev* festival (76.67%) and *Avasar* Festival (74.17%). While, majority (80.00%) of them performing *lazeem* dance and also near about one-third (32.50%) of them organizing drama show during religious festivals *viz.*, *Dongerdev*, *Avasar* and *Navratra Utsav etc.*

The study further observed that cent per cent of the *Kokana* tribes telling story during religious festivals. They worship village god every year for social awakening (71.67) followed by meditation purpose (28.33%), while about two-third (64.17%) of them said that the community *Bhagat* establish the village god temple followed by senior persons of village (35.83%).

It was observed that cent per cent of the *Kokana* tribes celebrating *Waghbaras* festival during *Diwali* and *Navratra Utsav* to protect the village from wild animals (72.50%) followed by to avoid crop damage (27.50%). It is also revealed that about three fourth of the *Kokana*

tribes celebrating *Jagaran/ Gondhal* after marriage ceremony (90.83%) and during distress time (9.17%) for blessing to new married couple (74.17%) and for good health to family members (25.83%).

Majority (62.50%) of the *Kokana* tribes take a *Navas* according to own desire during distress time (44.17%) followed by village fair (24.17%) and natural calamities (21.66%). *Bhandara Utsav* is religious repertory mostly celebrated by whole community or Village for god's blessing (80.83%).

The above findings are in conformity with the findings of Ranghnath (1976) and Rau (1994).

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to cultural and traditional activities

n=120		
Cultural and Traditional activities	Number of activities	Percentage
Folk Media		
Traditional Dance		
Occasion of <i>Kokana</i> Dance		
Marriage ceremony	120	100.00
<i>Dongerdev</i> Festival	92	76.67
<i>Avasar</i> Festival	89	74.17
<i>Ganesh</i> festival	45	37.50
<i>Navratra Utsav</i>	35	29.17
Men and women participate in <i>Kokana</i> dance	120	100.00
Members participated in <i>Kokana</i> dance		
Up to 20 members	7	5.83
21 to 40 members	62	51.67
41 and above members	51	42.50
Lazeem Dance		
Performance of <i>Lazeem</i> Dance	96	80.00
Occasion of <i>Lazeem</i> dance		
Marriage ceremony	36	30.00
<i>Ganesh</i> festival	37	30.83
National festival	23	19.17
Drama		
Organising drama show	39	32.50
Occasion of drama show		
Religious festival	39	32.50
Stories telling	120	100.00
Religious Activities/Repertory		
<i>Dongerdev</i> festival		
Duration of <i>Dongerdev</i> festival		
3 Days	51	42.50
5 Days	33	27.50
7 Days	23	19.17
11 Days	13	10.83
Village God (<i>Gaondevi</i>)		
village god worshipping	120	100.00
Reason for Worshipping village god		
Social awakening	86	71.67
Meditation purpose	34	28.33
Person who established the village god		
Senior person of village	43	35.83
<i>Bhagat</i>	77	64.17

<i>Waghbaras (Waghdev)</i>		
Celebrating festival of <i>Waghbaras</i>	120	100.00
Reason for celebrating festival of <i>Waghbaras</i>		
Village protection from wild animals	87	72.50
Avoid crop damage	33	27.50
Time of celebrating <i>Waghbaras</i>		
<i>Diwali</i> festival	77	64.17
<i>Navratra utsav</i>	43	35.83
<i>Dharnimata (Land goddess)</i>		
Worshiping Land goddess	120	100.00
Reason for worship		
For getting good yield from crops	120	100.00
For blessing to home	120	100.00
Time of Worshipping Land goddess		
November	96	80.00
December	13	10.83
January	11	9.17
<i>Jagaran /Gondhal</i>		
Celebrating <i>Jagaran/Gondhal</i>	120	100.00
Reason of celebrating <i>Jagaran/Gondhal</i>		
Blessing to new married couple	89	74.17
For good health	31	25.83
Occasion of celebration		
After marriage ceremony	109	90.83
At distress time	11	9.17
Personal aim (<i>Navas</i>)		
<i>Navas</i> taken	120	100.00
Reason for ' <i>Navas</i> '		
Own desire	75	62.50
Family desire	31	25.83
Community desire	5	4.17
Villages desire	9	7.50
Time of taking ' <i>Navas</i> '		
At distress time	53	44.17
In religious festival	12	10.00
In village fair	29	24.17
At the time of natural calamities	26	21.66
<i>Bhandara Utsav</i>		
Celebrating <i>Bhandara Utsav</i>	120	100.00
Reason of celebrating <i>Bhandara</i>		
For god's blessing	97	80.83
For Celebrating religious festival	23	19.17

C. Interpersonal communication of Kokana tribes

The data presented in Table 4 shows that a majority (94.17%) of the *Kokana* tribes discusses on developmental activities and problems with one another in village meeting, sit at one place and enjoy the moment during cultural programmes (93.33%), also takes decision on the issues of development of village (80.00 %), while most (71.67%) of them solve their queries by village *panchayat* (old persons).

Study also observed that about three-fifth (59.17 per cent) of the *Kokana* tribes know the *Sarpancha* is the chief of village followed by village old person group (23.33 per cent) while, discussions were take place in a *Grampanchayat* (52.50 per cent) followed by community

hall (25.63%) and *Sarpancha's* house (21.67%). However the main discussion topics are on political issues (32.50%) followed by developmental programmes (20.00%) and village problems (11.67%). The above findings are in conformity with the findings of Macmillian, C.P. Joshi *et al.*

Table 4: Distribution of respondents according to participation in discussions, place of discussions and topics handling during discussions

n = 120		
Conversation/Contact Method	Number of respondents participation	percentage
People discuss on developmental activities and Problems sharing with one other in village meeting	113	94.17
Decision making on the issues of village development	96	80.00
During cultural programmes, people enjoy all programme sitting at one place	112	93.33
Queries of Villagers solved by Village panchayat members or Old Persons	86	71.67
Key person in settlement of conflicts		
Police Patil	21	17.50
<i>Sarpanch</i>	71	59.17
Village old person group	28	23.33
Discussion places		
Tea Shop	5	4.17
Grocery shop	9	7.50
House of <i>Sarpancha</i>	26	21.67
Gram panchayat	63	52.50
Community Hall	31	25.83
Topic discussed		
Political issues	39	32.50
Development Programmes	24	20.00
Village problems	21	17.50
Educational issues	14	11.67
Traditional issues	7	5.83
Future Planning	3	2.50
Health issues	4	3.33
Communication means	3	2.50
Transport facility	2	1.67
Agriculture developemnt	3	2.50

D. Local institutions

The data presented in Table 5 revealed that almost in all the villagers participations in *Bhajani mandal* (94.17%) followed by *Mahila Mandal* saving unit (90.00%), while about one-third of the villages participation in *Bharud* group. It is also observed that one-half (50.00%) of the villages having 3 to 5 self Help groups (SHG)

E. Handling of health situation

The data presented in Table 6 revealed that about one-third (71.67%) of the *Kokana* tribes carrying to the hospital for medical treatment followed by giving first aid at home and calling village Ayurved person or para medician for treatment

Table 5 Distribution respondents according to functional local institutes in a village

n=120		
Local Institutions	Number of respondents participation	percentage
<i>Bhajani Mandal</i>	113	94.17
<i>Bharud</i> Group	36	30.00
<i>Mahila Mandal</i> /Self Help Group (SHG)	108	90.00
No. of SHG's units running		
Up to 2 SHG's	3	30.00
3 to 5 SHG's	6	50.00
5 and above SHG's	1	10.00

Table 6: Distribution of respondents according to handling of health situation

n=120		
Handling of health situation	Number of respondents	Percentage
Curative measure taken for ill persons		
First aid at home	19	15.83
Call Village Ayurved person or Para medician	11	9.17
Carrying patient to the Hospital	86	71.67
Calling <i>Bhagat</i> for dignosis	4	3.33
Means of transport used for carrying patient from village to the hospital		
In bullock cart	9	7.50
On Motorcycle	86	71.67
By Bus/Jeep	25	20.83

F. Knowledge about village development activities

The data presented in Table 7 shows that for implementing any developmental programme/activity in village more than half (56.67%) of the *Kokana* tribe says that village meeting is most important body to make any decision.

More than half (52.50%) of the *Kokana* tribes knowing the watershed development programme followed by *Jal Swaraj Prakalp* (49.17%), *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* and *Zilla Parishad* scheme (40.83%) and *Gaon tanta Mukti abhiayan* (38.33%).

It is also revealed that cent per cent of the *Kokana* tribes know about the scheme Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NAREGA).

Table 7: Distribution respondents according to knowledge of village development activities**n=120**

Village Development activity	Number of respondents	Percentage
Decision making authority for Village Development		
<i>Sarpancha</i>	16	13.33
Members of Gram Panchayat	23	19.17
Senior Citizens	13	10.83
Village Meeting	68	56.67
Benefit received through Government schemes	120	100.00
Schemes implemented		
Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee (NAREGA) Programme	25	20.83
<i>Paryavaran Santulan Yojana</i>	36	30.00
Village water Supply Scheme	34	28.33
<i>Sarva ShikSha Abhiyan</i>	49	40.83
<i>Gaon Tanta Mukti Abhiyan</i>	46	38.33
<i>Jal Swaraj Prkalp</i>	59	49.17
Watershed Development programme	63	52.50
National Horticulture Mission	24	20.00
National Rural Health Mission	36	30.00
Zilla Parishad Scheme	49	40.83
Implementing of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee (NAREGA) Programme	120	100.00

CONCLUSION

Maximum families of *Kokana* tribes had agriculture as main occupation and having annual income between ₹ 50,001/- to ₹ 1,00,000/-. Most of them possesses medium size of land holding. They are having nuclear family type and medium sized family. They had medium level of participation in any social organisation. Regarding indigenous communication systems cent per cent *Kokana* tribes know about their traditional *Kokana* dance, and performed during the marriage ceremony. Cent per cent of them are singing their traditional spiritual songs during *Dongerdev* festival, *Avasar* festival and *Navratra* festival for community, personal health and personal aim (*Navas*). Most of the *Kokana* tribes knows about the government schemes like *Paryavaran Santulan Yojana*, Village water Supply Scheme, *Sarva ShikSha Abhiyan*, *Gaon Tanta Mukti Abhiyan*, *Jal Swaraj Prkalp*, Watershed development programme, National Horticulture Mission, National Rural Health Mission and Zilla Parishad schemes were running in the village.

The findings of the present study hold a great potential in the field of communication research as well as for planning of communication strategy based on local resources. Some of the implications of the present study have been given below.

Programme for welfare of villagers should be supported with a new technology in local language by the different types of printed literature in the village.

Drum player and *Kotwal* of the village source could be utilized for disseminating message of local importance by the development workers as it is very effective, highly credible and easily accessible source of information.

Village meeting should be utilized for disseminating information on health and family welfare as they are traditionally being utilized for such purposes.

Tribal festivals should be utilised for disseminating any agriculture information. Agriculture exhibitions could be organized for transfer of technology, it will be helpful and effective to the tribal farmers.

At the end of kharif season most of the *Kokana* tribes migrate to another place for employment, therefore, it is suggested to start National Rural Employment Guarantee Assurance programme (NAREGA) in these pockets for employment generation and develop the watersheds that will ultimately benefit the irrigation resources and drinking water facility.

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