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Comparative Analysis of Scale of Social capital formed in Kollam and Palakkad districts of Kerala as an Impact of a Pilot Extension Project (LEADS)

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ABSTRACT

Lead Farmer Centered Extension Advisory and Delivery Services (LEADS) is a pilot extension project revolving around lead farmer – satellite farmer concept on an Agro Ecological Zone basis within in a district. Presently LEADS Project is being implemented in four districts of Kerala, namely Kollam, Palakkad, Kannur and Wayanad. The present study was conducted in the Kollam and Palakkad districts of Kerala. The study aimed to compare Social capital formed in Kollam and Palakkad districts as an impact of LEADS project. From the study conducted, it was clear that the social capital formed was found to be more in Kollam than in Palakkad district.

Keywords: LEADS; Lead Farmer; Satellite farmer; Social capital; Kerala

Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA) is responsible for coordination and management of agricultural extension related work in the district level (Nair, 2013). But it has major shortfalls like poor farmer-to-farmer extension and lack of periodic field visit. This thought has led to the design and implementation of a pilot project by the Kerala State Planning board. Lead Farmer Centred Extension Advisory and Delivery Services (LEAD) was proposed for implementation in the state during 2010-11. LEADS Project was found to be successful enough in creating the social capital among the farmers (Sreedaya, 2016).

Social capital is an instantiated informal norm that promotes co-operation between

individuals (Francis, 2010). It is defined as trust, norms or networks existing in the social organization which by its coordinated actions, helps in improving the efficiency of the society (Putnam,1993). The study aimed to compare the scale of social capital formed among the farmers of Kollam and Palakkad districts through the LEADS project.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in five developmental blocks of Kollam and 5 blocks of Palakkad districts of Kerala with 90 respondents. Comparison of impact created by LEADS in Kollam and Palakkad districts in terms of scale of social capital formed was done by using SOCAT (Social Capital

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Assessment Tool) developed by World Bank in 2010 with slight modifications. SOCAT is designed to collect and gather social capital data at organizational or community levels (Revathy, 2015).

SOCAT includes the various data collection methods like questionnaires, pretested interview schedules and focus

group discussions. It employs both qualitative and quantitative analysis of data.

Here, impact in terms of social capital formation was ascertained by using quantitative method which involves the use of structured and pre tested questionnaire (Table 1) with the help of eight statements with slight modifications.

Table 1.
Statements to Ascertain Impact of LEADS Project

Sl. No	Statements	Yes	No
1	Does the group interact with other groups with different goals in the <i>Panchayat</i> ?		
2	Does the group interact with other groups with different goals outside the <i>Panchayat</i> ?		
3	Do you think this members of the group generally trust one another ?		
4	Do you think over the last few years the level of trust has between members increased?		
5	Do all the members of the group have similar economic status?		
6	In the past years you worked with your neighborhood for the benefit of the community		
7	Do you feel that you have the power to make important decisions in your life ?		
8	Do you think that feeling of togetherness in the group is very strong?		

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Scale of social capital formed was compared using the SOCAT tool. On the basis of the scale of social capital formed the farmers of both the districts were classified into three categories, namely low, medium and high.

In Kollam district, 68.89 per cent and in Palakkad district, 64.44 per cent of the

respondents belonged to the medium category of social capital formation. While, 24.44 % of the respondents of both Kollam and Palakkad districts showed a low level of social capital formation, 6.67 % respondents of Kollam and 11.12% of the respondents of Palakkad district showed a higher level of social capital formation. The data are presented in the Table 2.

Majority of the farmers in the districts had a neutral and stable perspective regarding the cooperation, mentality to help each other and volunteership. Farmer groups are promoted by LEADS, which created a wave in the farming community which might be the reason for the majority of respondents to be

in medium category and for a considerable deduction of farmers in low category. Similarly, the farmers of Kollam district had possessed higher level of perception regarding the effectiveness in implementation of LEADS, when compared to farmers of Palakkad district (Paul et al, 2018)

Table 2.

Distribution of Respondents Based on the Scale of Social Capital Formed

Sl. No.	KOLLAM (n= 45)			PALAKKAD (n= 45)		
	Category	Frequency	percent	Category	Frequency	percent
1.	<14 (low)	11	24.44	<11(low)	11	24.44
2.	14-15(medium)	31	68.89	11-14(medium)	29	64.44
3.	>15 (high)	3	6.67	>14(high)	5	11.12
	Total	45	100	Total	45	100

A comparative analysis on the Scale of social capital formed among the farmers through LEADS in Kollam and Palakkad districts was conducted and the results showed that among the farmers of Kollam district, there was a higher degree of social capital formation when compared to the farmers of Palakkad district.

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