

Neighbourhood Relations of the Telugu Speaking Immigrants of Rural Western Orissa

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ABSTRACT The paper is a study of neighbourhood relations of a group of Telugu speaking immigrants in rural Western Orissa. Following the construction of Hirakud Dam Irrigation Project in the year 1964, a large number of agriculturalists from East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh migrated to Attabira Block of Bargarh district (Orissa) in order to avail of various facilities provided under the project. With the passage of time, these immigrants erected a large number of settlements in this region for their dwelling purpose. Even today most of these immigrants remain within their ethnic enclave with a very little contact with the members of the host society. A neighbourliness index has been used to examine the nature of neighbourhood relations among the sample respondents. In order to verify some hypotheses, the degree of neighbourliness has been cross tabulated against a few selected socio-economic variables.

INTRODUCTION

Neighbourhood is a value loaded concept and is often used synonymously with community, particularly when the term is descriptive of a small, compact and relatively homogenous place. The important function of a neighbourhood is that the neighbours know one another, or that they may be mutually aware of each other's existence and behave accordingly. Neighbourhood has always been a primary social control area which sets the standards of behaviour which are expected and exerts pressure upon those who deviate from these norms. But in the present day community certain areas that might be called neighbourhood do not possess the primary group character, or possess it only to a limited degree. Anderson (1959) calls these as "neighbourhood of secondary participation". This controversy does not have much relevance in Indian context because neighbourhood "as unit of intimate relationship" is quite viable even

in large cities like Kanpur (Chandra, 1977). Therefore, Andersonian neighbourhood of extreme "secondary participation" has yet to emerge in India.

Punekar (1974) stated that neighbourhood is a social group characterized by proximity in space and primary face to face relationship. Some authors prefer to emphasize the latter aspect of the term. "In stead of area," wrote Queen and Carpenter (1953), "it is the social relations to which our attention is mainly directed. Specifically we have in mind those relations which sociologists call 'primary' meaning that lives of the people concerned touch at many points". However, in a neighbourhood, these primary relations are precisely the result of the proximity in living. Neighbours develop an intimate relationship because of their nearness to one another. Moreover, the degree of intimacy and the nature of relationship vary according to the type of the neighbourhood. Hence, we cannot ignore the aspect of locality from the connotation of neighbourhood.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Most of the research work on neighbourhood and neighbourly relations have been made in urban context. The spatial pattern of the cities, the multi-storeyed apartment buildings, the density and heterogeneity of the population, the continuous shift of residence are the characteristics that one normally associates with the city. These are hardly conducive to the intimate face to face aspects of neighbourhood life. Individual neighbourhoods are certainly a fact of life but this may be physical rather than a social fact. This is one of the crucial factors that arrests the attention of social researchers, and reinforces them to study this particular field. A few Indian

scholar like Raju (1989) and Rao (1981) have endeavoured to focus their attention on neighbourhood relations at the village level, where relationships are face to face, and residence is of permanent nature. Though neighbourhood relations in a village represent a general notion, the significance of the study lies in examining the role of neighbourhood relation of an immigrant community in the process of the social-cultural adjustment of its members in a host society. Is the age of the residential area, i.e. the length of the period of its establishment a crucial factor? Do the linguistic and cultural homogeneity of the population really matter? Are factors like the age, education and economic level of the people important as variables? Does the length of a person's stay in a neighbourhood count? These are some of the questions that a social scientist may particularly raise.

The study was conducted among the Telugu immigrants of Larasara Grampanchayat of Attabira block in the district of Bargarh of Western Orissa. Since geographical distances occupy an important role in definition of the term "neighbourhood", our study strictly restricts to the neighbourhood relations that are confined to the ethnic enclave. It is where our interest on the subject multiplied and that reinforces us to have an in depth study on the same. For the purpose of this paper the term "neighbourhood" will be used to refer to the Telugu immigrants residences that lie within the periphery of the villages under study.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Nair (1978) in his study on adjustment process of immigrants of Rastapeth in Pune is of the opinion that "an adjusted immigrant is likely to be happy to see the existing situation continue and, therefore, may not choose to live in another locality if he is given a chance to do so. More so, because the ethnic neighbourhood has an important role to play in the process of adjustment of the immigrants". His finding is that community satisfaction index is significantly associated with the immigrants' preference to live in the ethnic neighbourhood. The percentage of immigrants who prefer to live in the neighbourhood is high among those with high level of socio-economic status.

Raju (1989) in his study "the process of Developmental Migration among to the Out-migrants of a Village in The District of West-Godawari in the State of Andhra Pradesh" has stated that nearness to one's neighbour tends to develop common feelings, mutual interests, sympathy and readiness to help one another. Neighbourliness would, therefore, be a behaviour pattern helping adjustment.

Punekar (1974) in her study of assimilation in the neighbourhood has arrived at the conclusion that common bonds of language and customs in contrast to the rest of the population of the area, and the feeling of being away from their home town, immediately find them together.

Sanders (1938) was of the opinion that the very fact that the villagers live near one another means that they will tend to interact more with one another than those living on the otherside of the village. This is why the *mahala* becomes important in a sociological analysis; it locates an individual in a given environmental setting.

Burnley (1971) dealing with Italian peasant population in New Zealand, claims that migration has been the vehicle by which the peasant came to New Zealand. Chain migration and the various kinship forms of this movement is mainly responsible for nucleated ethnic neighbourhoods.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has the following objectives :

1. To analyze the nature of neighbourhood relation of Telugu immigrants in host society.
2. To find out whether linguistic and cultural homogeneity of the immigrant population really matter for their neighbourhood relations.
3. To examine the influence of some socio-economic variables like length of residence, age, education and economic level of the immigrants on the degree of their neighbourliness.

HYPOTHESES

The study was designed to verify the following hypotheses :

1. More the length of residence of the immigrants the higher is the degree of their neighbourliness.
2. Immigrants with better educational qualification

have relatively higher degree of neighbourly relations than that of the immigrants with lower level of education.

3. The level of income of the immigrants is directly proportional to the degree of their neighbourliness in the community.
4. The lower age group immigrants have relatively higher degree of neighbourliness than that of the immigrants from the higher age group.
5. Immigrants with higher degree of neighbourliness have relatively lesser tendency to move away from the locality than that of the immigrants with lower degree of neighbourliness.
6. More the length of residence the lesser is the tendency among the immigrants to move away from the locality.
7. Immigrants from higher income group have relatively lesser tendency to move away from the locality than that of immigrants from lower income group.
8. Immigrants from lower age group have relatively lesser tendency to move away from the locality than that of immigrants from higher age group.

BACKGROUND

Attabira block under Bargarh district of Western Orissa was the universe of our study. The block has an outstanding reputation in the sphere of agricultural economy of the state. It is located between Sambalpur and Bargarh on the side of the National Highway No. 6 (connecting Calcutta with Madras). The district headquarters of Bargarh is situated at a distance of 13 kms away from Attabira. This region has direct rail and road links with Andhra Pradesh, the immigrants' native place.

The "Hirakud Dam Irrigation Project" was launched in the year 1964. The new irrigation channel started supplying the left out water of the electric turbines perennially to the agricultural fields of the region. Under various schemes of the project, subsidies were given by the government to the agriculturists of the region for purchasing HYV seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, etc.

The response of the local agriculturists was surprisingly very poor in terms of availing of the aforesaid facilities. The poor response of illiterate local agriculturists could be mainly attrib-

uted to the spread of a peculiar rumor that after production of electricity the water loses its essence and, therefore, is of no use for agricultural purposes. It got propagated like wild fire. The local agriculturists due to their low level of education and inadequate exposure to the outer world believed the rumor and thus did not avail of various facilities under the irrigation project.

Such a situation forced the then Chief Minister of the state to give a paper advertisement throwing invitation to the agriculturists of the neighbouring states to come forward and accept the various facilities provided under the irrigation project. This information came to the notice of a few Telugu speaking agriculturists mostly from East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh. Telugu speaking agriculturists from lower and middle economic strata who had uneconomic holdings started showing a kind of interest for the Hirakud Dam Irrigation Project. Within a small span of time many of them came and started availing of the facilities of the new project.

The chain migration continued with large scale of entry of wives and children. Within a decade, wives, children, relatives, village-mates, service castes, etc. arrived here inaugurating population explosion of Telugu speaking people in Attabira. Now the concentration of Telugu speaking immigrants in this region is so high that it is described as "Little Andhra in Orissa". Most of these immigrants remain within their ethnic enclave with a very little interaction with the members of the host society.

METHODOLOGY

Data for the study were collected from Attabira block of Bargarh district of Western Orissa. The population of this study comprised of Telugu immigrants from East Godavari District of Andhra Pradesh. As many as 300 heads of the households, covering 10 per cent of the universe, were interviewed for the study.

To minimize our error most of the questions of our interview schedule were of objective type with some predetermined response categories. Observation and case study methods were also used for data collection. Secondary data were collected from various official records and reports.

A neighbourliness index was constructed by taking into consideration (1) neighbours' frequency of visit to respondents' house (2) respondents frequency of visit to neighbours' house, (3) frequency of exchanging cooked food and eatables with neighbours by the respondents, (4) frequency of exchanging cooked food and eatables with the respondents by their neighbours, (5) likeness for living in the neighbourhood. Thus respondents' responses "never", "occasionally" and "frequently" - for the first four items and "disliked" "undecided" and "liked" for the last item is graded with a score value of 1-3 and the terms used for the gradation are "high", "moderate" and "low" degree of neighbourliness respectively. Thus, those who have a high neighbourliness, i.e. visit frequently to neighbour's house and vice versa, exchange cooked food and eatables with neighbour and vice versa and like the neighbourhood very much. Thus, respondents with a score range of 11-15 are considered to be members of high neighbourliness group. Respondents with an average score 6-10 assumed to be members of moderate neighbourliness group. Those respondents who have a score value of 1-5 come under low neighbourliness group.

ANALYSIS

Our data on length of stay and neighbourliness of the respondents show that these two variables are significantly associated. It is significant to note that not even a single respondent has low degree of neighbourliness. Having stayed in the ethnic enclave for a long time, they have either moderate or high degree of neighbourliness. However, it is interesting to note that relatively higher percentage of respondents who have lived here less than 15 years have moderate degree of neighbourliness in comparison to respondents who have lived here for more than 15 years. On the other hand, it was found that 90 per cent, 90.85 per cent and 89.33 per cent respondents from the length of stay categories 15-19 years, 20-24 years and 25 years and above respectively have high degree of neighbourliness. Chi-square test also corroborates our finding that length of stay and neighbourliness are significantly related (Table 1). Therefore, our first hypothesis that "more the length of resi-

dence of the immigrants the higher is the degree of their neighbourliness" was found to correct.

Table 1 : Respondents' Degree of Neighbourliness in terms of their Length of Stay [N=300]

Length of Stay	Degree of Neighbourliness			Total
	Low	Moderate	High	
Less than 10 years	00 (00.00)	13 (36.11)	23 (68.89)	36 (100.0)
10 to 14 years	00 (00.00)	11 (40.74)	16 (59.26)	27 (100.0)
15 to 19 years	00 (00.00)	04 (10.00)	36 (90.00)	40 (100.0)
20 to 24 years	00 (00.00)	18 (19.14)	76 (80.85)	94 (100.0)
25 years and above	00 (00.00)	11 (10.67)	92 (89.33)	103 (100.0)
Total	00 (00.00)	57 (19.00)	243 (81.00)	300 (100.0)

$$\chi^2 = 21.88 \quad \text{D.F.} = 8 \quad P < 0.05\%$$

Education standard of the respondents was not seen to have any effect on the degree of their neighbourliness. Thus, 24.14 per cent and 75.86 per cent of illiterate respondents have moderate and high degree of neighbourliness respectively, whereas 18.52 per cent and 81.48 per cent respondents from literate without formal education group have moderate and high degree of neighbourliness respectively. More or less the same trend is also found in case of our respondents from all other educational groups. Since chi-square test also reveals that there is no significant association between the education standard and degree of neighbourliness of the respondents (Table 2) our second hypothesis that "immigrants with better educational qualification have relatively higher degree of neighbourly relations than

Table 2 : Respondents' Degree of Neighbourliness in terms of their Educational Standard [N=300]

Level of Education	Degree of Neighbourliness			Total
	Low	Moderate	High	
Illiterate	00 (00.00)	35 (24.14)	110 (75.86)	145 (100.0)
Literate without formal education	00 (00.00)	05 (18.52)	22 (81.48)	27 (100.0)
Literate (U.P. and M.E.)	00 (00.00)	13 (12.77)	81 (86.17)	94 (100.0)
Matriculate and above	00 (00.00)	04 (11.76)	40 (88.24)	34 (100.0)
Total	00 (00.0)	57 (19.00)	243 (81.00)	300 (100.0)

$$\chi^2 = 0.527 \quad \text{D.F.} = 6 \quad P < 0.05\%$$

that of the immigrants with lower level of education"; was found to be wrong.

Our data on degree of neighbourliness by income standard reveal that of the 143 respondents from low income group, 39 (27.27 per cent) have moderate degree of neighbourliness whereas 104 (72.23 per cent) have high degree of neighbourliness. But of the 44 respondents from high income group, 2 (4.55 per cent) have moderate degree of neighbourliness whereas 42 (95.45 per cent) have high degree of neighbourliness. This difference is statistically significant. Chi-square value also corroborates our findings that economic condition of the sample respondents have significant association with the degree of their neighbourliness relation (Table 3). Therefore, our hypothesis that the level of income of the immigrant respondents is directly proportional to their degree of neighbourliness in the community" was found to be correct.

Table 3 : Respondents' Degree of Neighbourliness in terms of their Level of Family Income [N=300]

Level of Income	Degree of Neighbourliness			Total
	Low	Moderate	High	
Low	00 (00.00)	39 (27.27)	104 (72.23)	143 (100.0)
Medium	00 (00.00)	16 (14.16)	97 (85.84)	113 (100.0)
High	00 (00.00)	02 (04.55)	42 (95.45)	44 (100.0)
Total	00 (00.00)	57 (19.00)	243 (81.00)	300 (100.0)

$\chi^2 = 14.04$ D.F. - 4 P < 0.05%

An attempt is made to know if age of a respondent affects his degree of neighbourliness. Our data show that cent per cent respondents from the age group below 20 have high degree of neighbourliness, whereas the corresponding figure for the age group 20-39 is 84.72 per cent. Of the 144 sample respondents from the age group 40-59, 28 (24.56 per cent) have moderate degree of neighbourliness. Chi-square test also shows that the age of a respondent has a significant bearing on his degree of neighbourliness (Table 4). Hence our hypothesis that "the lower age group immigrants have relatively higher degree of neighbourly relations than that of the immigrants from the higher age group" was found to be true.

Table 4 : Respondents' Degree of Neighbourliness in terms of their Age Groups [N=300]

Age Group	Degree of Neighbourliness			Total
	Low	Moderate	High	
Below 20	00 (00.00)	00 (00.00)	02 (100.0)	02 (100.0)
20-39	00 (00.00)	22 (15.28)	122 (84.72)	144 (100.0)
40-49	00 (00.00)	28 (28.56)	86 (75.44)	114 (100.0)
50 and above	00 (00.00)	07 (17.50)	33 (82.50)	40 (100.0)
Total	00 (00.00)	57 (19.00)	243 (81.00)	300 (100.0)

$\chi^2 = 143.64$ D.F. - 6 P < 0.05%

Life in ethnic community is functional to immigrant adjustment. Therefore, preference for ethnic community can further be assessed by studying the attitude of immigrants towards moving out of the ethnic neighbourhood. Thus, the following question was put to respondents : Have you thought of moving away from the ethnic neighbourhood ? The answers of this questions were cross tabulated against variables of socio-economic status index, as well as age, length of residence of the respondents.

Our data on degree of neighbourliness and the desire to move away from the locality by the respondents are significantly related. Data show that to the question "Have you thought of moving away from the locality ?" 70.18 per cent respondents from moderate degree of neighbourliness and 93.42 per cent from high degree of neighbourliness answered in negative. Only 19.29 per cent from moderate degree of neighbourliness group and 4.12 per cent from high degree of neighbourliness agreed to move away from the locality. Since chi-square value also corroborates the findings that there is a significant relation between these two variables (Table 5) our hypothesis that "immigrants with high degree of neighbourliness have relatively lesser tendency to move away from the locality than that of the immigrants with lower degree of neighbourliness" was found to be concept.

Data on length of residence and decision to settle in Attabira show that more than 90 per cent of respondents having stayed here for 15 years or more stated "no" to the question "Have you thought of moving away from the locality?" Percentage of respondents who are indecisive about

Table 5 : Respondents' Decision to Settle in Larasara in terms of their Degree of Neighbourliness [N=300]

Degree of Neighbourliness	Thought of Moving away from Larasara			Total
	No	Undecided	Yes	
Low	00 (00.00)	00 (00.00)	00 (00.00)	00 (00.00)
Medium	40 (70.18)	06 (10.53)	11 (19.29)	57 (100.0)
High	227 (93.42)	06 (02.46)	10 (04.12)	243 (100.0)
Total	267 (89.00)	12 (04.00)	21 (07.00)	300 (100.0)
$\chi^2 = 10.30$ D.F. - 4 P < 0.05%				

their planning to settle in Attabira shows an uneven distribution. For instance, 2.78 per cent and 2.91 per cent respondents who have stayed here less than 10 years and 25 years or above respectively, are indecisive about their settling in Attabira. Not a single respondents from 15-19 years length of residence category is indecisive about his stay in Attabira. Since chi-square test also corroborates the findings that immigrants length of stay and decision to move away from the locality do not have any significant association (Table 6) our hypothesis that "more the length of residence the lesser is the tendency among the immigrants to move away from the locality", was found to be wrong.

Table 6 : Respondents' Decision to Settle in Larasara in terms of their Length of Stay [N=300]

Length of Stay	Thought of Moving away from Larasara			Total
	No	Undecided	Yes	
Less than 10	30 (83.33)	01 (02.78)	05 (13.89)	36 (100.0)
10-14	21 (77.78)	04 (14.81)	02 (07.41)	27 (100.0)
15-19	37 (92.50)	00 (00.00)	03 (07.50)	40 (100.0)
20-24	84 (89.36)	04 (04.26)	06 (06.38)	94 (100.0)
25 years and above	95 (92.23)	023 (1.95)	05 (5.82)	103 (100.0)
Total	267 (89.00)	12 (4.00)	21 (7.00)	300 (100)
$\chi^2 = 13.77$ D.F. - 8 P < 0.05%				

Our data on decision to move away by family income of the respondents reveal that economic factor does play an important role in im-

migrants' decision to leave the locality. It is found that highest percent of respondents from low income group are either indecisive about their stay at Attabira or have already decided to leave Attabira. Only 1 (2.33 per cent) respondent from high income group has decided to leave Attabira and the remaining 42 (97.68 per cent) respondents are confident enough to live permanently in Attabira. Chi-square value establishes the significance of the relation between income of the respondents and their desire to move (Table 7). Therefore, our hypothesis that "immigrants from higher income group have relatively lesser tendency to move away from the locality than that of the immigrants from lower income group", was found to be correct.

Table 7 : Respondents' Decision to Settle in Larasara in terms of their Family Income [N=300]

Level of Income	Thought of Moving away from Larasara			Total
	No	Undecided	Yes	
Low	120 (83.92)	07 (04.90)	16 (11.19)	143 (100.0)
Medium	105 (92.11)	05 (04.39)	04 (03.51)	114 (100.0)
High	42 (97.68)	00 (00.00)	01 (02.33)	43 (100.0)
Total	267 (89.00)	12 (04.00)	21 (07.00)	300 (100.0)
$\chi^2 = 10.83$ D.F. - 4 P < 0.05%				

Sample respondents from the age group 20-39 years secured highest percentage apropos "no" to the question "Have you thought of leaving this locality?" However, respondents from the age group 40-59 and 60 years or above show a slight difference in their percentage apropos their indecisiveness to the same question. Highest percentage of respondents from age group 40-59 made up their mind to leave the locality. Since chi-square value does not establish the significance of the relation between age of the immigrants and their decision to move away from the locality (Table 8) our hypothesis that "immigrants from lower age groups have relatively lesser tendency to move away from the locality than that of immigrants from higher age group", was found to be incorrect.

CONCLUSION

Our analysis shows that socio-economic

Table 8 : Respondents' Decision to Settle in Larasara in terms of their Age Groups [N=300]

Age Group	Thought of Moving away from Larasara			Total
	No	Undecided	Yes	
Below 20	02 (100.0)	00 (00.00)	00 (00.00)	02 (100.0)
20-39	134 (92.41)	04 (02.76)	07 (04.83)	145 (100.0)
40-59	96 (84.96)	06 (05.31)	11 (09.73)	113 (100.0)
60 and above	35 (87.50)	02 (05.00)	03 (07.50)	40 (100.0)
Total	267 (89.00)	12 (04.00)	21 (07.00)	300 (100.0)
$\chi^2 = 03.99$	D.F. - 6		P < 0.05%	

variables like the length of residence, income and age of the respondents have significant degree of association with the degree of their neighbourliness. However, neighbourliness seems to be quite independent of educational standard of the respondents.

One of the major findings of this paper is that desire to move away by the respondents and the degree of their neighbourliness are signifi-

cantly related. However, length of residence and age of the respondents are not functional to immigrants settling permanently in Attabira, whereas level of income does play an important role in their decision to settle permanently in Attabira.

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