



Research Article

PERSONAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF WOMEN MEMBER OF PANCHAYAT RAJ INSTITUTIONS (PRIs)

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Abstract: The study was conducted in Ratnagiri district. In all, 112 PRI woman members were selected from four Panchayat Samities, five Gram panchayats from each selected Panchayat Samiti and Ratnagiri Zilla Parishad on the basis of maximum number of woman members. The personal and socio-economic characteristics namely age, education, land holding, annual income, major occupation, official position, tenure of work, cosmopolitaness, extension contact, organizational participation, interest in public work and political awareness of the respondents were considered as the independent variables. They were interviewed with the help of a specially designed interview schedule. An interview schedule was prepared in Marathi to collect the information in line with the objective of the study. Collected data were processed and tabulated by using simple frequency, and the parameters like percentage, mean and standard deviation, as well as, the correlation and regression coefficient were used. It was observed that majority of the respondents were from 'middle' age group with educational level of 10th standard, had 'marginal' land holding, 'medium' annual income, 'farming' as their major family occupation. Majority were 'member' of PRI with 'medium' tenure of work, cosmopolitaness, extension contact and organizational participation. Majority of the respondents had 'high' interest in public work and 'medium' political awareness.

Keywords: Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs), Socio economic profile

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Introduction

After seventy-two years of independence, rural women are still ignorant about many activities of their day to day life. As per the 73rd constitutional amendment, 33 percent seats are reserved for women in Panchayat Raj Institution. The Ashoka Mehta Committee Report (1978) stressed the importance of role of women in decision making in development. In fact, for the first time, the Committee with all the women member of the Zilla Parishad represented on it, so as to enable the women to make the decisions themselves on priorities and choices in welfare and development programmes meant for women and children. Many developmental programmes are being launched by government and non-government organization for rural people. Hence, there is an urgent need to diffuse the useful technical know-how among PRIs woman members to improve socio-economic status and increase their knowledge level. Members elected to the various PRIs are important, not only because they are politically influential, but also because they are direct carriers of knowledge of various agricultural and rural development programmes and modern agricultural techniques to rural community. Any community has a tendency to follow their leaders. At grass root level, the three-tier system of Panchayat Raj Institution is the foremost system of our republic government from gram panchayat at village level, panchayat samiti at taluka level and Zilla Parishad at district level. The persons elected as members of these institutions play a very important role in the process of rural development.

Statement of The Problem

The Panchayat Raj has come into existence with the sole aim of decentralization of governmental power for the welfare of the rural people. After independence, the Panchayat Raj has become a back-bone of Indian democracy. Indian women were often 'physically visible' but conceptually 'invisible' and were remained

marginalized. But now a days, situation is changing; they are coming in each sector with men and thus in administration also. Union Cabinet of Government of India on 27 August 2009, approved 50 percent reservation for women in PRIs. The Indian states those have already implemented 50 percent reservation are Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh. Also, on 25 of November 2011, the states of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan and Tripura are also having 50 percent reservation for women in Panchayat Raj. The women Panchayat Chairpersons in many places are doing well, there is only need to disseminate information regarding various aspects of rural development. This can be only possible with help of communication media.

Objective of study

To know socio-economic profile of woman members of PRIs

Material and Methods

The study was restricted to limited aspects. Also, the data were collected from one Zilla Parishad, four Panchayat Samities and five Grampanchayats from each selected tahsils in Ratnagiri district. Hence, findings cannot be generalized beyond the limits of the area of the study. However, the findings may become applicable in the areas where similar conditions exist.

Area of Study

The study was conducted in the Ratnagiri district of Konkan region having geographical area 8,208 sq.km. There are nine tahsils, in the district. The study was carried out in four tahsils namely, Ratnagiri, Chiplun, Khed and Dapoli.

Tools and Techniques of Data Collection

An interview schedule was prepared in Marathi to collect the information in line with the objectives of the study.

Statistical Analysis

The data were processed and tabulated by using simple frequency, and the parameters like percentage, mean and standard deviation, as well as, the correlation and regression coefficient were used.

Result and Discussion

Majority (61.60 percent) of the respondents belonged to 'middle' age category, while 20.54 percent and 17.86 percent of the respondents were in 'young' age and 'old' age category, respectively. The average age of the respondents was 39 years. It can be said that majority of woman members of PRIs were having middle age. It means, adequately matured women were represented in different PRIs.

Respondents in the category of 'pre-primary' education were 7.00 percent, while 26.00 percent respondents were in the category of 'primary' education. More than one-third of the respondents i.e. 38.4 percent were in the category of 'secondary' education, while 12.50 percent and 16.10 percent respondents had 'higher secondary' and 'college' level education. The average education of the respondents was 10th std. indicating secondary education. Inference can be drawn from these findings that the woman members of the PRIs had fairly satisfactory level of formal education.

About three-fourth (72.32 percent) of the respondents had 'marginal' land holding, followed by 19.64 percent 'landless' respondents. The respondents having 'small' land holding were 7.14 percent, while only 0.9 percent respondents were having 'semi-medium' land holding.

Majority (77.68 percent) of the respondents were having 'medium' annual income, while 12.50 percent and 9.82 percent of the respondents had 'high' and 'low' annual income, respectively. The average annual income of respondent's family was Rs. 1,18,607.14/- indicating fair annual income.

Maximum number i.e. 41.96 percent of the respondents had 'farming' as major occupation of family, while 28.57 percent of the respondents had 'service' as major occupation. Among the other respondents, 22.32 percent were having 'business' as major occupation and remaining 4.47 percent were 'labour' and 2.68 percent had 'caste occupation' as major occupation of their family. Farming ranked first major occupation means still today villagers are dependent on agriculture and allied activities. Big majority (91.07 percent) of the respondents had only 'membership' in the institutions, while 6.25 percent and 2.68 percent had 'head' and 'deputy head' as an official position. This implies that still today leadership of the woman is not being explored in desired extent in India which is badly needed for better development.

More than three fourth (79.47 percent) of the respondents were having 'medium' tenure of work, while 16.07 percent respondents had 'low' and 4.46 percent had 'high' tenure of work. The average tenure of work of respondents was 40.68 months indicating medium tenure.

Majority of respondents (70.54 percent) had 'medium' cosmopolitanness. It is also seen that 19.64 percent and 9.82 percent of respondents had 'low' and 'high' cosmopolitanness, respectively. The average score of respondents was 3.13 indicating medium cosmopolitanness. It can be said that Indian rural women are still restricting themselves in home and household activities. The women need to change this psychology for improving their performance.

Majority (51.79 percent) of the respondents were having 'medium' extension contact, while 29.46 percent of them had 'low' and 18.75 percent had 'high' extension contact. The average score of extension contact of the respondents was 4.80 indicating medium contact. Thus, it can be said that three out of ten respondents were having low extension contact which needs to be improved upon by the concerned agencies.

About 43.75 percent of respondents had 'medium' organizational participation, while 33.04 percent and 23.21 percent respondents had 'low' and 'high' organizational participation, respectively. The average organizational participation score was 5.41 indicating medium organizational participation. Findings reveal a burning need to improve participation of women in various social and

developmental organizations. More than half that is, 51.79 percent respondents had 'high' interest in public work. Remaining 26.79 percent and 21.42 percent had 'low' and 'medium' interest in public work, respectively. The average score of interest in public work was 37.58 indicating medium interest in public work. The findings imply better inclination of women in work for public as PRI itself is an important rural institution and that is why the majority of respondent were having 'high' interest in public work. It is good for their role in rural development.

SN	Independent Variable	Respondents (N=112)	
1	Age (years)	Number	Percentage
	Young (upto 31)	23	20.54
	Middle (32 and 45)	69	61.6
	Old (46 and above)	20	17.86
	Average (38.76)	Total	112
2	Education (std.)	Number	Percentage
	Pre – primary	8	7
	Primary	29	26
	Secondary	43	38.4
	Higher secondary	14	12.5
	College	18	16.1
	Average (standard) 9.66	Total	112
3	Land holding (ha.)	Number	Percentage
	Landless (0 ha)	22	19.64
	Marginal (upto 1.00 ha.)	81	72.32
	Small (1.01 to 2.00 ha.)	8	7.14
	Semi-medium (2.01 to 4.00 ha.)	1	0.9
	Average (0.43 ha.)	Total	112
4	Annual income (Rs.)	Number	Percentage
	Low (upto Rs.21,398/-)	11	9.82
	Medium (Rs.21,399/- to Rs. 2,15,815/-)	87	77.68
	High (Rs.2,15,816/- and above)	14	12.5
	Average (Rs.1,18,607.14/-)	Total	112
5	Major Occupation	Number	Percentage
	Labour	5	4.47
	Caste occupation	3	2.68
	Business	25	22.32
	Farming	47	41.96
	Service	32	28.57
	Total	112	100
6	Official position (score)	Number	Percentage
	Head (3)	7	6.25
	Deputy head (2)	3	2.68
	Member (1)	102	91.07
	Total	112	100
7	Tenure of work (months)	Number	Percentage
	Low (upto 16 months)	18	16.07
	Medium (17 to 64 months)	89	79.47
	High (65 months and above)	5	4.46
	Average(40.68 months)	Total	112
8	Cosmopoliteness (score)	Number	Percentage
	Low (upto 2)	22	19.64
	Medium (3 to 4)	79	70.54
	High (5 and above)	11	9.82
	Average (3.13)	Total	112
9	Extension contact (score)	Numbers	Percentage
	Low (upto 3)	33	29.46
	Medium (4 to 6)	58	51.79
	High (7 and above)	21	18.75
	Average (4.80)	Total	112
10	Organizational participation (score)	Number	Percentage
	Low (upto 3)	37	33.04
	Medium (4 to 6)	49	43.75
	High (7 and above)	26	23.21
	Average (5.41)	Total	112
11	Interest in public work (score)	Number	Percentage
	Low (upto 36)	30	26.79
	Medium (37 to 38)	24	21.42
	High (39 and above)	58	51.79
	Average (37.58)	Total	112
12	Political awareness (score)	Number	Percentage
	Low (upto 8)	24	21.43
	Medium (9 to 12)	67	59.82
	High (13 and above)	21	18.75
	Average (10.40)	Total	112

Majority (59.82 percent) of the respondents had 'medium' political awareness, while 21.43 percent and 18.75 percent respondents had 'low' and 'high' political awareness, respectively. The average political awareness score was 10.40 indicating medium political awareness. It reveals the scope for increasing awareness among rural women regarding various issues of politics.

Application of research: The study analysed some important personal and socio-economic characteristics of the woman members of Grampanchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad. These findings could be used for identifying the prospective peoples' representative in these institutions.

Research Category: Rural development, Agricultural Extension

Abbreviations: PRI-Panchayat Raj Institutions

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Cultivar / Variety / Breed name: Nil

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