



Knowledge Level and Constraints Faced by the Elected Women Representatives of Panchayat Raj Institutions in Prakasam, Andhra Pradesh, India

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh to study the women empowerment through Panchayat raj institutions. A total number of 120 respondents were selected purposively from 5 blocks of the district. The data was recorded by personal interview method by using a pre-structured interview schedule. The study revealed that majority of the respondents are having the knowledge about their tenure, age of contesting in elections and how they are getting financial resources to their gram panchayat. Mostly 45.83% of the respondents are having the medium level of knowledge about GramPanchayat, 27.5% of the respondents are having low level of knowledge and 26.67% of the respondents are having high level of knowledge. And majority (80.83%) of the respondents are facing constraints lack of communication skills, 64.17% of the respondents are lack of self confidence, 53.33% of the respondents are lack of sufficient educational knowledge.

Keywords: Women empowerment; Panchayat Raj Institutions; knowledge; constraints.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The representation of women in the village administration has brought about a tactical shift in the functioning of grassroots democracy. The changing situation in power structures has created opportunities for the Indian woman to take active part in Panchayati raj. Now, women are not restricted to home and hearth, but are entering into various fields and proving their capabilities. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 that grants 33% reservation for women in the Panchayati raj have encouraged women to participate in their village development and plan for the future of their villages Sanjay Kumar Pradhan And Geetanjali Dutta, [1].

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Study of women Empowerment through Panchayat Raj institutions.

To study and understand the role of elected women representatives in Panchayat raj and their challenges, and to evaluate their knowledge about the Panchayat raj system. This study was conducted to know about the knowledge level of elected women representatives, and to evaluate how they are having awareness about their duties and responsibilities. The commencement of the reservation system in the Panchayati raj institutions empowers women and elevates women's economic, social, and political status in society. It enables liberalization from the traditionally male-dominated society and brings in a fresher perspective in good governance.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the knowledge of elected women representatives and perspectives of the members of panchayat regarding the role of women representatives in panchayat Raj institutions.
2. To find out the constraints faced by the women in panchayat Raj institutions and seek their solutions.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh to study the women empowerment through panchayat raj institutions. Descriptive research design was adopted for the study as it describes the characteristics or phenomenon that are being studied. A total number of 120 respondents were selected purposively from 5 blocks of the Prakasam

district. The blocks are yerragondpalem, pullalacheruvu, thripuranthakam, peddaaraveedu, dornala. To study the perspectives of the members of Panchayat regarding the role of women representatives in Panchayat Raj institutions and constraints faced by the women in panchayat Raj institutions and seek their suggestions. The data was collected by personal interview method by using pre – structured interview schedule and latter appropriate statistical analysis (i.e. Frequency, Percentage, correlation etc..) was done to logical conclusion.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

From the above table it can be observed that among the respondents, majority of the respondents (100%) have agreed that they know about the tenure of the members is 5 years. 77.5% of the respondents have agreed that they know that the age of contest in election is 21 years. 76.67% of the respondents have agreed that they know about that GP has got the capacity to raise the resources through tax collection. 67.5% of the respondents having knowledge about that vice-president becomes president in absence of president. 62.5% of the respondents are having knowledge that every 2500 population or 4-5 villages must be one gram panchayat. Majority 51.67% of the respondents are partially knowledge about that 33% of seats reserved for women in panchayat raj system. 34.17% of the respondents are having partial knowledge about source funds for GP being central, state, tax and schemes. 30.83% of the respondents are having partial knowledge about that the GP needs to conduct regular meetings once in two months. 30% of the respondents are partially known about that every 2500 population or 4-5 villages must have a gram panchayat. 29.17% of the respondents are partially aware or partially knowledge about that the GP elections are conducted on non-party basis. 20.83% some of the respondents are they don't have knowledge about that the GP elections are conducted on non party basis. 18.33% of the respondents they don't know about that an elected member of GP represents for every 400. 17.5% of the respondents they don't have knowledge about that 33% of seats are reserved for the women in panchayat raj system. 14.17% of the respondents are not known that vice-president should be acted as president in absence of president. 12.5% of the respondents they don't know about GP needs to conduct regular meetings once in two months.

Table 1. Knowledge of the respondent regarding gram panchayat: structure, reservation of seats, tenure of membership and sources of funds

S.No	Knowledge on grampanchayat structure, reservation of seats, tenure of membership and sources of funds	Frequency	Agree Percentage	Undecided Frequency	Percentage	Disagree Frequency	Percentage
1.	For population of 2500 or 4-5 villages there must be one GP	75	62.5	36	30	9	7.5
2.	An elected member of GP represents every 400 people	65	54.17	33	27.5	22	18.33
3.	Reservation seats for women in GP is 33%	37	38.83	62	51.67	21	17.5
4.	Age of contest in election is 21 years	93	77.5	17	14.17	10	8.33
5.	GP elections were conducted on non-party basis	60	50	35	29.17	25	20.83
6.	The tenure of membership in GP is 5 years	120	100	0	0	0	0
7.	GP needs to conduct regular meetings once in two months	68	56.67	37	30.83	15	12.5
8.	Vice president becomes president in absence of president	81	67.5	22	18.33	17	14.17
9.	Source of funds for GP being central, state, tax, and schemes	72	60	41	34.17	7	5.83
10.	GP has got the capacity to raise the resources through tax collection	92	76.67	15	12.5	13	10.83

Table 2. Distribution of the respondents based on over all knowledge of Panchayat raj system

S. No	Knowledge	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Low (13-20)	33	27.5%
2.	Medium (21-28)	55	45.83%
3.	High (29-36)	32	26.67%
4.	Total	120	100

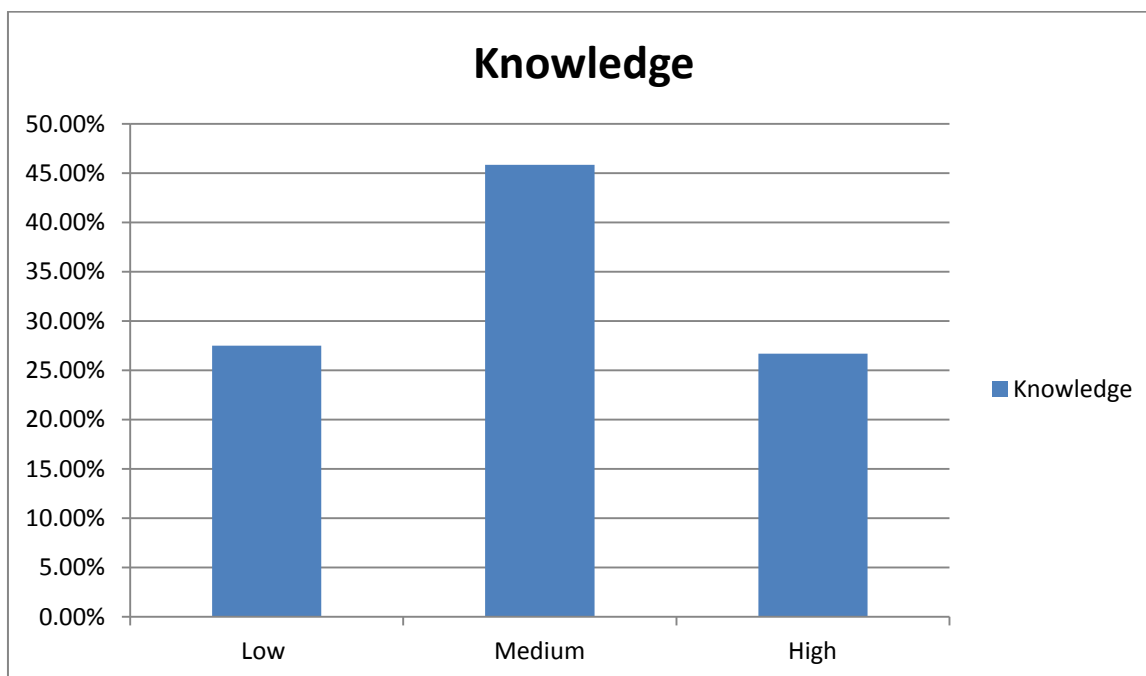


Fig. 1. Distribution of the respondents based on over all knowledge of Panchayat raj system

It was clearly shown that most (45.83%) of the elected women respondents are had medium level of knowledge about panchayat raj system, 26.67% of the EWR's having high level of the knowledge and 27.5% of the respondents are having low level of the knowledge. Similar findings are also reported by Payal patel and R.M. Naik [2].

From the above table we can observe that among the respondents, majority 69.17% of the respondents have agreed that just to show off male members said yes for al demands made by women regarding developmental works without following it up. 59.17% of the respondents are agreed that members kept silent while discussion is going on. 56.67% of the respondents have agreed that male members silencing he women who participating in discussions by saying that they cannot understand anything. Mostly 48.33% of the respondents have agreed that male members opposed everything spoken by them. And 45.83% of the respondents agreed that male

members are reacted with jealousy. Most 35.83% of the respondents partially agreed that male members reacted with jealousy. 35%of the respondents are partially agreed that the male members silencing the women who participating in discussions by saying that they cannot understand anything. 33.33% of the respondents are partially agreed that sometimes suggestions were accepted by male members. 30.83% of the respondents are partially agreed that male members supported women's demands and followed it up. 30% of the respondents partially agreed that male members opposed everything spoken by them. 30.83% of the respondents disagree that sometimes suggestions were accepted by male members. 30% of the respondents are not agreed that male members supported women's demands and followed it up. 21.37% of the respondents are not agreed that male members opposed everything spoken by them. 18.33% of the respondents disagree that male members reacted with jealousy. 12.5% of the respondents are disagree that men members kept silent.

Table 3. Perception of the members of Panchayat regarding the role of women representatives in Panchayat Raj institutions

S.NO	Male members reaction to women members participation in discussions	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Just to show off male members said yes for all demands made by women regarding developmental works without following it up	83	69.17	22	22.5	10	8.33
2.	Men members kept silent	71	59.17	34	28.33	15	12.5
3.	Silencing the women who participating in discussions by saying that they cannot understand anything	68	56.67	42	35	10	8.33
4.	Male members opposed everything spoken by them	58	48.33	36	30	26	21.37
5.	Reacted with jealousy	55	45.83	43	35.83	22	18.33
6.	Supported women's demands and followed it up	47	39.17	37	30.83	36	30
7.	Sometimes suggestions were accepted	43	35.83	40	33.33	37	30.83

Table 4. Distribution of the respondents based on over all perception of male members regarding EWRs in Panchayat raj system

S. no	Perception	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Low (10-15)	32	26.67%
2.	Medium (16-21)	72	60%
3.	High (22-27)	16	13.33%
4.	Total	120	100

It was clearly stated that the majority (60%) of the elected women representatives are moderately facing perception from the male members of the panchayat, 13.33% of the EWR's are feeling high and 26.67% of the respondents are feeling low perception.

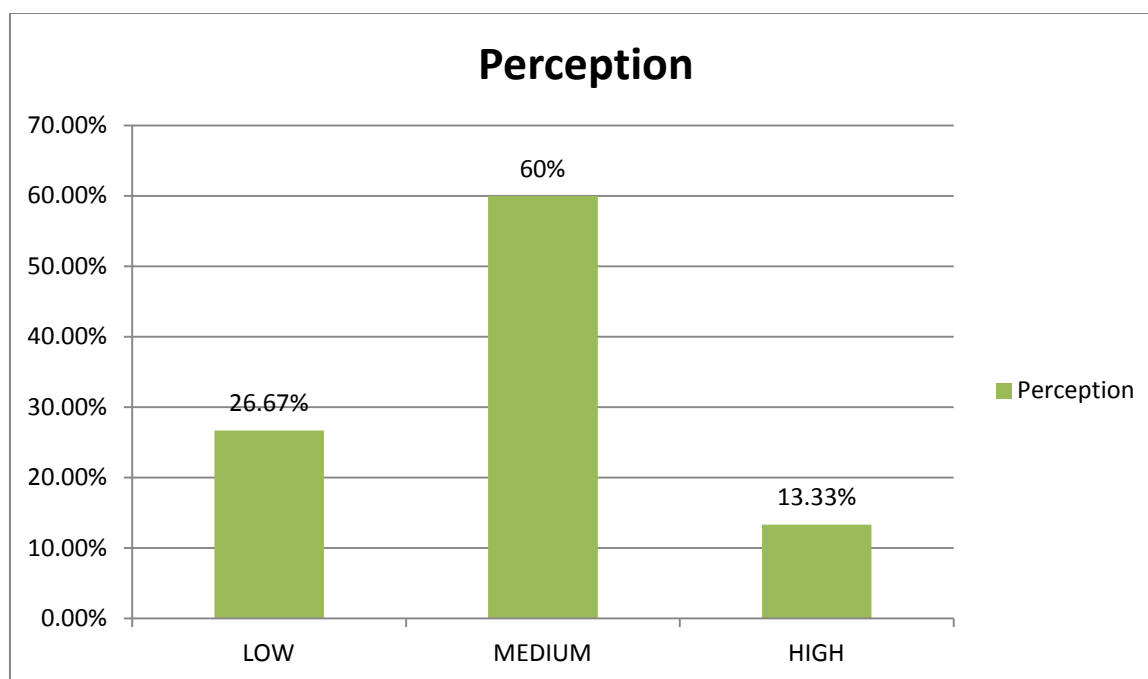


Fig. 2. Distribution of the respondents based on over all perception of male members regarding EWRs in Panchayat raj system

Constraints :

Table 5. Family and other constraints faced by the EWRs of GP in their work

S.no	Family and other constraints faced by the EWRs of GP in their work	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1.	Lack of communication skills	97	80.83	I.
2.	Gender discrimination	85	70.83	II.
3.	Lack of self confidence	77	64.17	III.
4.	Lack of leadership qualities	72	60	IV.
5.	Lack of educational knowledge	64	53.33	V.
6.	Misuse of funds by secretary and vice-president	23	19.17	VI.
7.	Non- cooperation from male members	19	15.83	VII.
8.	Non- cooperation from vice-president	10	8.33	VIII.
9.	Lack of information flow from the secretary	8	6.67	IX.
10.	Lack of family support	3	2.5	X.

Table 6. Suggestions

S.no	Suggestions	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1.	Conduct more interactive sessions with officials and ex- EWRs	93	77.5	I.
2.	Gender sensitization program for males	86	71.67	II.
3.	Self motivation training programs	73	60.83	III.
4.	Training and capacity building programs	70	58.33	IV.
5.	Make them aware about importance of education	62	51.67	V.
6.	Training in legal and financial aspects related to their work so that the sarpanch can take proper and independent decisions	20	16.67	VI.
7.	Give counseling to male members	16	13.33	VII.
8.	Give counseling and departmental actions against secretaries	9	7.5	VIII.
9.	Maintain regular contact with secretary	6	5	IX.
10.	Need motivation to family members	2	1.67	X.

It could be seen from the above table constraints faced by the respondents that the majority 80.83% of the respondents are given their feedback that they are not having good communication skills. 70.83% of the of the respondents are facing gender discrimination from the other members or from the people of panchayat, 64.17% of the respondents are facing lack of self- confidence, 60% of the respondents are having lack of leadership qualities, 53.33% of the respondents are facing problem from lack of sufficient educational knowledge, 19.17% of the respondents are facing problem from misuse of funds by secretary and vice president, 15.83% of the respondents are facing non-cooperation from male members, 8.33% of the respondents are facing non- cooperation from vice-president, 6.67% of the respondents are having lack of information flow from the secretary, and 2.5% of the respondents are facing lack of family support.

From the above table we could understand that the respondents given their suggestions to the constraints faced by the elected women representatives. That they are majority 77.5% of the respondents are said that conduct more interactive sessions with the officials and with Ex-EWR's, gender sensitization programs for males, self motivation training programs [3-5]. Training and capacity building programs, make them aware about importance of education, training in legal and financial aspects related to their work so that the Sarpanch can take proper and independent decisions [6-9]. And give counseling to the male members of the GP and secretary, maintain regular contacts with secretary and need motivation to the family members.

6. CONCLUSION

The present study concluded that majority of the respondents are under middle age group and belongs to Hindu religion. Most of the respondents are under general category (caste). Most of the respondents under high school and intermediate level of education. Most of the respondents are having farming & Agriculture labourer as their occupation. Majority of the respondents are having farm size at medium level (2-4ha). Most of the respondents are having medium (3-6LPA) level of annual income. Majority of the respondents are having e-literacy at low level. Majority of the respondents are having medium level of mass media exposure. Majority of the respondents are having high level of social participation. Majority of the respondents having low level of political experience. Majority of the respondents are having medium level of extension contacts. Most of the respondents are having knowledge regarding Panchayat raj system at medium level. Majority of the respondents based on overall perception of male members regarding EWR's in Panchayat raj system at medium level. It was found that independent variables religion, e-literacy and social participation has negative and significantly correlation and rest of all independent variables are positive and significantly correlated with knowledge of Panchayat raj system [10-12]. Therefore null hypothesis is rejected. It was found that independent variables social participation was non-significant rest of all independent variables are significantly correlated. Therefore null-hypothesis is accepted for social participation and rejected for the remaining independent

variables. Majority of the respondents are having lack of communication skills followed by facing gender discrimination, lack of self confidence, lack of leadership qualities, lack of educational knowledge. Majority of the respondents are suggested that conduct more interactive sessions with officials and ex-EWR's followed by gender sensitization program for male members, self-motivation training programs, training and capacity building programs etc. The government is giving more importance to women not only in Panchayat raj system but also in nominated posts, though the government is pushing women towards empowerment both male and female should change their attitude towards social participation and active political participation.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, respondents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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