

KNOWLEDGE OF BACKWARD AND FORWARD SECTION MEMBERS ABOUT FUNCTIONING OF GRAMPANCHAYAT

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ABSTRACT

The present study was undertaken in the Latur and Ausa Block of Latur district and Ambejogai and Dharur block of Beed district of Marathwada region, to know the knowledge of Grampanchayat members and its relation with their profile. Keeping the above objective in mind 20 villages from above mentioned blocks were selected for the study. Then 6 Grampanchayat members (3 from backward and 3 from forward section) were selected randomly from each village by positional approach method. Thus the sample of 120 Gram Panchayat members were selected for the study. Pretesting of knowledge of the Grampanchayat members was carried out by using the test developed by Maulik (1965) with suitable modifications. Data were collected by personal interviewing the respondents with the help of specially designed and pretested interview schedule. The statistical method such as coefficient of correlation, multiple regression and 'Z' test for comparison were used for analysis of data. From the study, it was found that majority of Grampanchayat members belonging to backward and forward section had medium level of knowledge about functioning of Grampanchayat. The 'Z' test showed the significant difference in knowledge level of forward and backward section members. Regarding relational analysis it was observed that out of twelve selected characteristics of Gram Panchayat members of both the section near about eight to ten were positively and significantly related with knowledge level, while caste, training received and leadership background showed no relation with knowledge. Multiple regression showed that mass media exposure significantly contributed in attending variation in knowledge of backward section while education and mass media exposure significantly contributed to determine the knowledge of forward section.

Key words : Grampanchayat, Members, Knowledge function, Backward, Forward

The Panchayat Raj came into existence with the prime aim of decentralization of power for the welfare of rural people. After independence, the Panchayat Raj has become backbone of Indian democracy. In the three-tier system of Panchayat Raj, the non-officials are playing an important role of establishing linkages between the officials and the beneficiaries. Agriculture being the major occupation of the rural people, the local self-government institutions are expected to plan and implement the programmes for developing the agriculture and allied sectors. Therefore, it is expected that knowledge of modern agricultural technology and programme of village development should infiltrate through non-officials who are nearer and dearer to a farmer, who is at the grass-root level of community development. Members elected to the various PRIs are, therefore, very important not because they are politically influential, but they are direct carriers of knowledge of various developmental programmes, as well as modern agricultural technology to the villagers. Further, no development can take place

unless there is active participation of the people. Every member of the Panchayat Raj Institution is responsible for involving common people in the process of development. Officials are catalytic agents only. They are important, no doubt, but more important are people's representatives.

On the backdrop of the foregoing discussion, it becomes clear that the elected members of the Panchayat Raj Institutes could play a significant role in overall development and progress of a village. However, their success and efficiency depends upon the knowledge possessed by them about developmental activities and performance of the expected role by Panchayat in agricultural and society developmental fields.

This aspects has not been studied, in much details, especially in Marathwada region. Hence, the present study on comparative study of role performance of Gram Panchayat members belonging to backward and forward sections of Marathwada region, is undertaken with the following specific objectives.

- To assess the knowledge of Gram Panchayat members about functioning of Gram Panchayat
- To delineate the relationship of personal and socio-