

Study on level of awareness regarding Panchayati Raj system among Government officials and elected representatives

■ Anant Kumar, Indu¹, Brij Vikash, Narendra Kumar² and R.P. Srivastava³

Krishi Vigyan Kendra, AURAIYA (U.P.) INDIA

¹Krishi Vigyan Kendra, GEKU, UPPER SIANG (ARUNACHAL PRADESH) INDIA

²Krishi Vigyan Kendra, CHANGLANG (ARUNACHAL PRADESH) INDIA

³K.A.P.G. College, ALLAHABAD (U.P.) INDIA

ARTICLE INFO :

Article history :

Received : 24.01.2012
Sent for revision : 05.02.2012
Accepted : 20.04.2012

Key words :

Panchayati Raj system, Level of awareness, Independent variables, Correlation, Level of significance

How to cite this Article :

Kumar, Anant, Indu, Vikash, Brij, Kumar, Narendra and Srivastava, R.P. (2012). Study on level of awareness regarding Panchayati Raj system among Government officials and elected representatives, *Adv. Res. J. Soc. Sci.*, 3 (1) : 33 - 35.

ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted in Allahabad district of Uttar Pradesh to assess the level of awareness about Panchayati Raj System among the two categories of respondents, viz., Government officials and Elected representatives and from each group 50 respondents were selected at random as the study sample. Interview schedule was used for data collection. Findings of the study revealed that majority (72%) of the Governmental officials had medium level of awareness followed by high (14.6 %) and low (13.3 %) level of awareness. However, in case of elected representatives around 77 per cent had medium level of awareness followed by high (14.6 %) and low (8 %) level of awareness. Statistical analyses of the findings depicted that the level of awareness of Government officials had positive correlation with occupation ($r = 3.00^{**}$), material possession ($r = 0.319^{**}$) and social participation ($r = 0.330^{*}$) at 5 and 1 per cent level of significance, respectively. However, level of awareness about Panchayati Raj was found to be significantly and negatively correlated with family size and material possession but positively correlated with age of the respondents ($r = 0.277^{*}$) at 5 per cent level of significance in case of elected representatives. Conclusively it may be said that score obtained by Government officials and elected representatives were approximately similar, but the former had better association between level of awareness and selected socio-economic variables in comparison with the later one.

INTRODUCTION

The concept behind the Panchayat is local governance of the people, by the people and for the people. Panchayati Raj has the objective of placing more powers in the hand of rural people, enhancing their capabilities to involve themselves in the process of decision making, preparation and implementation of programme for economic development and social justice.

Panchayati Raj has made excellent progress in India. It covers almost 98-99 per cent of rural population as a whole in India. The Panchayati Raj System has been launched in India since 1959 and Uttar Pradesh implemented it in 1947. Uttar

Pradesh has the fortune to firstly buildup and passed the "U.P. Panchayati Raj Act 1947" on 7th Dec. 1947 and the whole.

Islam *et al.* (1987) observed that, all officials were not properly aware of their duties and responsibilities. Through appropriate training and assigning responsibilities, from time to time, they may be made aware of their duties, responsibilities and obligations. If not regular pay, some kind of monetary incentives may be given to them on their basis of their achievements.

Balaramulu and Rao (1995) reported that, most of the respondents who were working under Panchayati Raj System, were aware of only the broad objectives of the Panchayat bodies *i.e.* socio-economic and political development. Most of the

respondents have opinion to they have joined the Panchayat bodies to serve the people and improving their SES but considerable number (40 per cent) of the respondents have opinion that they have joined PR to capturing the political power.

Mishra *et al.* (1996) reported that, as far as awareness level of Government officials working in Panchayati Raj System was concerned, approximately 67 per cent of them had the vivid knowledge of democratic decentralization. To them, democratic decentralization meant, the devolution of power to the grass root level and participation of rural people in governmental process. However, most of them failed to answer about the B.R. Mehta Committee and Ashok Mehta Committee and their recommendations.

Dutta (2001) reported that, most of the women had contested elections of Panchayat bodies under pressure from the different quarters. Sixty per cent of them were not aware about Panchayat mission. A little more than one fourth were ignorant about their duties, role and responsibilities and assumed that their duty was to attend meetings when the Sarpanch summons them.

Saini and Singh (2001) found that, awareness of PRIs members regarding their functions, powers and duties was very low.

Singh (2004) concluded that the awareness level about every detail of PRIs like general awareness, its constitutional status, structure and functions were found more among the elected representatives than government officials concerned with Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).

In view of 73rd constitution Amendment Act (1992) of Panchayati Raj, it is found important to study the actual relation between Panchayati Raj and Rural Development. The present study was planned to study the level of awareness regarding Panchayati Raj system among Government Officials and Elected Representatives with the following objectives : to assess the level of awareness about Panchayati Raj among Government Officials and Elected representatives and to assess association of selected independent variables with level of awareness of the two groups of respondents.

METHODS

From the two C.D Blocks, namely Shankar Garh and Zarsa of Bara Tahsil of Allahabad district, 10 village panchayats were purposively selected as the locale of the study. Stratified random sampling was used for the selection of two categories of respondents' viz., Government officials and elected representatives, each group comprised of 50 persons. A pre-tested and pre-coded structured interview schedule was used for data collection. Data were collected by using person to person contact method to assess the level of awareness of the respondents regarding Panchayati Raj System.

Correlation co-efficient was computed to assess the association of selected independent variables with the level of awareness of the respondents (Gupta, 1995).

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

It is evident from Table 1, that respondents were ranked into low, medium and high level of their awareness regarding Panchayati raj system. It was observed that majority of the government officials (72%) were having medium level of awareness accompanied by high (14.6%) and low (13.3%) level of awareness. However, in case of elected representatives around 77 per cent had medium level of awareness followed by high (14.6 %) and low (8%) level of awareness.

Table 1 : Distribution of respondents on the basis of level of awareness

Sr. No.	Level of awareness	Government officials	Elected representatives
1.	Below 15 (Low)	10 (13.3)	6(8.0)
2.	15-42 (Medium)	54 (72.0)	58(77.4)
3.	Above 42 (High)	11(14.6)	11(14.6)

Mean± S.D 28.68±13.38 25.65±12.59

Note : Figures in parentheses represent percentages

Statistical analysis of the findings (Table 2) clearly highlighted that the level of awareness of the Government officials had positive correlation with their occupation, material possession and social participation, whereas the level of awareness was found to be positively correlated with age of their counterparts. Table 2, also revealed that family size and material possessions were negatively correlated with the level of awareness of elected representatives.

Table 2 : Association between selected independent variables and level of awareness

Sr. No.	Independent variables	Government officials	Elected representatives
		(r' values)	
1.	Age	-0.143	0.277*
2.	Education	-.064	0.15
3.	Caste	0.072	-0.002
4.	Occupation	0.300**	-0.014
5.	Family type	00	0.114
6.	Family size	00	-0.286*
7.	House	0.014	0.106
8.	Material possession	0.319**	-0.243*
9.	Land possession	0.168	-0.054
10.	Farm power	.152	0.128
11.	Social participation	0.330*	-0.038

* and ** indicate significance of values at P=0.01 and 0.05, respectively

Conclusively it may be said that score obtained by Government officials and elected representatives were approximately similar, but the former had better association between level of awareness and selected socio-economic variables in comparison with the later one.

REFERENCES

- Balaramulu, C.H. and Rao, R. (1995). Political leadership in Panchayati Raj : A study of Mandal Praja Parishad leadership in Andhra Pradesh, *Administrative Change*, **22** (2): 168-76.
- Dutta, P. (2001). Women in Panchayats, *Kurukshetra*, **50** (2) : 30-33.
- Gupta, S.P. (1995). *Correlation analysis, Statistical Methods*. Sultan Chand & Sons, E-10.1 – 10.61.
- Islam, M., Depositario, W.C. and Valero, J.B. (1987). Factors of job performance of the Barangay Council (B.C.) Officers of Laguna Province Phillipines, *IJEE*, **23** (3 & 4) : 7-17.
- Mishra, S.N., Kumar, L. and Pal, C. (1996). *New Panchayati Raj in Action*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 222 pp.
- Saini, G.S. and Singh, M. (2001). Panchayati Raj : A micro view, *Kurukshetra*, **49** (7) : 28-29.
- Singh, V.K. (2004). Role of Panchayati Raj in development – A study of Deoria district U.P. Ph.D. Thesis. Department of Ext. Edu., Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, VARANASI, U.P. (India).

