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-

economic characteristics of Gram Panchayat members with their knowledge.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was undertaken in the Latur and Ausa blocks of Latur district and Ambejogai and Dahrur blocks of Beed district of Marathwada region. Both the districts and blocks were selected randomly.Before finalizing the interview schedule pretesting of knowledge of the Grampanchayat members was carried out by using the test developed by Maulik (1965) with suitable modifications. The selected moderate questions were asked i.e. questions neither too easy not too difficult were included in final interview schedule. Twenty villages were selected for the study, five from each blocks. The list of Grampanchayats and their members were collected from Block Development Officers of respective blocks. Then six (6) Grampanchayat members were selected randomly from each of the villages (3 from backward section and 3 from forward section) for the study by positional approach method. Thus the sample of 120 Gram Panchayat members from 20 villages were selected for the study.

Data were collected by personally interviewing the respondents with the help of specially designed and pretested interview schedule. The statistical methods such as mean, standard deviation, coefficient of correlation, multiple regression and 'Z' test for comparison were used for analysis of data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Knowledge of gram panchayat members about functioning of gram panchayat :

A close persuit of Table 1 clearly indicates that about half (51.67 per cent) of the respondents from backward class were having medium knowledge regarding Panchayat Raj system followed by 26.67 per cent and 21.66 per cent having low and high level of knowledge of functioning of Gram Panchayat, respectively.

Further, 60.00 per cent members from forward section were having medium level of knowledge, whereas 21.67 per cent having high knowledge and 18.33 per cent having low knowledge of functioning of Gram Panchayat.

It is also evident from the Table 1 that 55.83 per cent of the Gram Panchayat members from total members had medium knowledge level, followed by 22.50 per cent and 21.67 per cent having low and high level of knowledge regarding Panchayat Raj system, respectively. This finding is in the line with findings of Wankhede (1994), Mahadik (1995), Bhosale (1997), Shanta Sheela (2002), Mankar (2003) and Bhosale (2005).

The mean knowledge score of respondents in backward class was 19.26 which was significantly less than mean knowledge score of forward section (20.85) as the calculated Z value 3.00 was significant at 0.01 level of probability.

Relationship between the personal characteristics of the members and knowledge
Backward section :

Table 2 depicts that the independent variables i.e. education (0.595), occupation (0.338), social participation (0.334), achievement motivation (0.428), mass media exposure (0.721), cosmopoliteness (0.348) and leadership experience (0.336) were positively and significantly related with knowledge whereas age (-0.098), caste (-0.002), annual income (0.158), training received (0.162) and leadership (-0.013) background were found not to be related to knowledge of the backward section members of Gram Panchayat.

Forward section :

The data in Table 2 reveals that education (0.524), annual income (0.356), social participation (0.433), achievement motivation (0.565), mass media exposure (0.770), cosmopolitneess (0.586), training received (0.286), leadership background (0.305) and leadership experience (0.398) were positively and significantly

Table 1 : Distribution of the respondents according to their knowledge

S.No.	Category	Backward (n=60)		Forward (n=60)		Total respondents (n=120)		'Z' value
		Frequency	Perce-ntage	Frequency	Perce-ntage	Frequency	Perce-ntage	
1.	Low	16	26.67	11	18.33	27	22.50	3.00**
2.	Medium	31	51.67	36	60.00	67	55.83	
3.	High	13	21.66	13	21.67	26	21.67	
	Total	60	100.00	60	100.00	120	100.00	
	Mean	19.26		20.85				
	SD	3.75		3.16				

**Significant at 0.01 % level

Table 2 : Relationship between the independent and dependent variable

S. No.	Variables	Backward section Correlation coefficient (r)	Forward section Correlation coefficient (r)
1	Age	-0.098	0.217
2	Education	0.595**	0.524**
3	Caste	-0.002	0.035
4	Occupation	0.338**	0.138
5	Annual income	0.158	0.356**
6	Social participation	0.334**	0.433**
7	Achievement motivation	0.428**	0.565**
8	Mass media exposure	0.721**	0.770**
9	Cosmopoliteness	0.348**	0.586**
10	Training received	0.162	0.286*
11	Leadership background	-0.013	0.305**
12	Leadership experience	0.336**	0.398**

* significant at 0.05 level of probability ** significant at 0.01 level of probability

related with knowledge of respondents. On the other hand age (0.217), caste (0.035) and occupation (0.138) were not related with knowledge of members belonging to forward section.

Multiple regression between the personal characteristics of the Gram Panchayat members and their knowledge about Panchayat Raj
Backward section members:

As shown in Table 3, 'F' value (7.35) was found to be significant at 0.01 level of probability. The Table 3 depicts that the selected 12 variables explained the variation in the knowledge to the extent of 65.30 per cent. The unexplained variation (34.70 per cent) may be due to the factors not included in the study.

The value of 't' showed that in the multiple regression analysis the knowledge was significantly related with mass media exposure. The regression coefficient for this variable was 0.594 which indicated that one unit change in the variable i.e. mass media exposure would effect of 0.597 unit change in knowledge.

Forward section members :

From Table 3 it is revealed that 'F' value (12.01)

Table 3 : Multiple regression analysis of knowledge with independent variables of backward and forward section members

S.No.	Variables	Backward section			Forward section		
		B(i)	S.E.	't' value	B(i)	S.E.	't' value
1	Age	-0.00126	0.0506	0.0249	0.295	0.0280	1.333
2	Education	0.454	0.505	0.898	0.603	0.282	2.137*
3	Caste	-0.514	0.271	-1.891	0.499	0.292	1.706
4	Occupation	0.118	0.177	0.668	0.0281	0.223	0.125
5	Annual income	0.00115	0.00404	0.286	-0.000198	0.00232	-0.0856
6	Social participation	0.195	0.268	0.729	0.0240	0.0211	1.136
7	Achievement motivation	0.0854	0.138	0.617	-0.00403	0.137	-0.0294
8	Mass media exposure	0.594	0.183	3.242**	0.511	0.144	3.551**
9	Cosmopoliteness	-0.406	0.525	-0.772	0.605	0.283	2.131*
10	Training received	0.408	0.246	1.658	0.370	0.195	1.896
11	Leadership background	-0.982	0.801	-1.225	-0.146	0.319	-0.458
12	Leadership experience	-0.0773	0.771	-0.285	0.0339	0.0748	0.453

Bo = 12.20 'F' value = 7.35 R^2 = 0.653   Bo = 2.54 'F' value = 12.01 R^2 = 0.754

* significant at 0.05 level of probability ** significant at 0.01 level of probability

was significant at 0.01 level of probability indicating significant contribution of set of variables. Twelve variables explained 75.40 per cent variation in knowledge. The unexplained variation of 24.60 per cent may be due to the factors not covered under present study. It is also revealed that out of 12 variables under study two variables i.e. education and mass media exposure had significant effect on knowledge of the Gram Panchayat members belonging to forward section.

The 't' values for education 2.137 and mass media exposure 3.351 were significant at 0.01 and 0.05 per cent level of significance, respectively. Regression coefficient indicated that one unit change in education and mass media exposure would effect 0.603 and 0.511 units change in knowledge, respectively.

CONCLUSION

From the study, it is concluded 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.

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