

FACTORS AFFECTING ROLE PERFORMANCE OF PANCHAYAT WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

Reservation of seats in panchayats Raj Bodies has provided an opportunity to rural women for their involvement in the decision making processes at grassroots level in rural India. The participation of the respondents in panchayat bodies enabled them to emerge as a leaders as most of them played effective roles in panchayats. Present paper analyzed that respondents possessing higher educational level, higher caste and possessing higher panchayat posts were observed playing better roles than their men counter parts in panchayats. Though they felt continuous domination by the male panchayat members in taking important the decisions in panchayats yet they proved their worth in the panchayats. So, it proved that women are no longer to be led because they have capability to lead and men too, need to be socialized to accept women in their new roles.

KEYWORDS:- Factors, Role performance, Panchayat, Women

INTRODUCTION

The sense of efficacy develops with opportunities of participation. Democratic system provides opportunities for people's participation. Effective participation of the people is an indicator of true democracy. Thus institutional set up along with family, peer group, membership of various associations and political parties help in developing the sense of efficacy. As women's entry in the field is relatively new, so they demand more help in developing their personal efficacy not only at the Panchayat but also at their home.

Present study was conducted on panchayat women to find out their role performance and obstacles they faced during playing their roles of panchayat women. The study is descriptive one and based on women elected for the local governance of Dugadda block, Pauri district in Uttarakhand State. 180 panchayat women were selected by random stratified sampling for the present study. The socio-economic background was assessed in terms of caste, age, marital status, education, family occupation, number of children etc. Majority of women (58.33%) belonged to age group of

36-45 years and 40% of women were either illiterate or educated upto primary classes. 35.5% were educated upto intermediate and 44.5% were graduate or post-graduates.

In the present study, data are collected with respect to cooperation they received for adjusting their two major roles. As workings at Panchayat is very responsible and time consuming process, women member definitely require assistance in her works. Respondents were asked that whether they feel that after their election in Panchayats, their family was affected due to change in their role pattern.

Table - 1. Family affected due to their outside works of panchayat.

Family affected	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	104	57.78
No	76	42.22
Total	180	100.00

As the Table-1 reflects, 57.78% of the respondents accepted while 42.22% of the respondents refused saying that their family was not affected by their out side work of Panchayats. It was due to the fact that respondents were having their own family members' support in looking after their family. So, respondents were asked that which of their family members cooperate them in their household activities.

Table -2. Distribution of the respondents according to the cooperation they received from their family members

Family Members	No. of Respondents	Percentage
In Laws	12	6.67
Husband	116	64.44
Children	28	15.56
None	24	13.33
Total	180	100.00

As the Table -2 presents, 64.44% of the respondents cooperated by their husbands. While 15.56% of the respondents helped by their grown up children and 6.67% of respondents were supported by their in-laws or parents and other members of the family.

As every women panchayat member, has to perform her dual responsibilities of panchayat as well as of their home, they have to neglect some of the works of the one for the sake of another. So, women members were asked which of the two role they give more importance. The Table-3 indicates that 20% of the respondents told that they gave more importance to their Panchayat work than their house work. While 13.33% of the respondents preferred to do their household duties first. 66.67% of the respondents told that they treated both the roles of Panchayats and that of their household equally important.

Table -3-Distribution of the respondents according to their preference given to their household and Panchayat works.

Give importance to	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Panchayat work	36	20.00
Household work	24	13.33
Both	120	66.67
Total	180	100

Respondents were further asked that whether Panchayat officers or other employee of the Panchayat cooperated themselves, while their working at panchayat. 77.11% of the respondents answered in affirmative while 28.89% of the respondents refused saying that they did not get full cooperation of these employees and officers (Table - 4).

Table - 4. Distribution of the respondents according to support they got from panchayat officials.

Supported by Panchayat officials	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Yes	128	71.11
No.	52	28.89
Total	180	100.00

As most of women member were elected for Panchayat first time, they were supported to be guided or supported by their near ones for their effective role performance. So, respondents were asked that which of the family members of their house cooperated them most in their Panchayat workings.

Table- 5.Distribution of the respondents according to cooperation they got for Panchayat works.

Family Members	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Husband/Father/Brother	92	51.11
Parents and In laws	04	2.22
Colleagues	76	42.22
Other	08	4.45
Total	180	100.00

So, as the Table - 5 shows, 51.11% of the respondents told that they were helped by their male members of the families mostly by their husbands. 42.22% of them were cooperated by their and colleagues. 4.45% of the respondents got the support of others mostly by the village people while only 2.22% of the respondents were supported by their in laws or parents. So, all of the respondents were guided and supported by the male members of their house or the villages.

Further, respondents were asked that whether they know that government has banned the entry of 'Pradhanpatis' in the meeting and official proceedings of the Panchayats, 15.56% of the respondents denied that they did not know, while others 84.44% answered in positive. They were further asked whether they were agreed with these decisions of the government. 95.46% of the respondents said that they were agreed with this decisions while 4.45% of them did not like it, as all of them were illiterates and could not work without their helping hands. But except few illiterate respondents, none of the educated respondents was observed as being 'rubber stamp' of the male family members of her house. Even at one of the BDC meeting attended by the investigator at the block headquarter, women members were effectively and confidently putting and discussing their problems. So, in this regard present study disapproved the thinking of general people as well as of the intellectuals that women candidates are used as '*proxy candidates*' or as a '*rubber stamps*'.

Respondents were further asked about their performance at the Panchayats. Majority of the respondents (77.78%) accepted that they had performed their panchayat duties effectively, while 22.22% of the respondents denied it. This percentage of the respondents included all the Panchs. They were further asked the reasons for which could not perform well in the panchayat. As the table 6.0 reveals. 50% of the total respondents could not perform their panchayat role well due to lack of awareness about various development schemes under Panchayat system. While 40% of them did not show interest due to prevalence of corruption in that system. While 10% of them told that they could not work effectively because they were women.

Table-6. Distribution of the respondents according to reasons that affect the role performance of the respondents.

Reasons	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Being Women	4	10
Lack of Awareness	20	50
Dominance of males	-	-
Corruption	40	100
Total	40	100

Respondents were further asked that whether male Panchayat members tried to dominate them or tried to thrust their own decisions over them. As the table -7 reflects, 31.11% of the respondents accepted that dominance of the male members still persist in the Panchayats, while 22.22% respondents found themselves occasionally dominated by the male members in the panchayat. 20.56% of the respondents denied males dominance. So majority of the respondents (53.33%) were frequently or occasionally dominated by the male Panchayat members or had to follow their decisions. There were 26.11% of the respondents who did not say anything in this respect.

Table-7. Distribution of the respondents according to their views towards dominance by males.

Dominated by Males	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Frequently	56	31.11
Occasionally	40	22.22
No	37	20.56
No reply	47	26.11
Total	180	100.00

Further analysis of the data reveals that the respondents occupying higher post felt more domination of the male members in decision making process. As the table-8 reflects, 87.50% women Pradhan were found themselves frequently dominated by male members while 72.72% of the women BDC members were occasionally dominated by them. While the panchs, the lower post bearers were having mixed reaction towards it.

Table - 8. Distribution of the respondents post wise and their dominance by males.

Dominated by males	Pradhan	B.D.C. members	Panchs	Total members	Did you oppose it ?
Yes	14 (87.50%)	2 (18.18%)	40 (26.14%)	56 (31.11%)	84 (46.67%)
Occasionally	-	8 (72.72%)	32 (20.92%)	40 (22.22%)	-
No	2 (12.50%)	1 (9.10%)	34 (22.22%)	37 (20.56%)	17 (9.44%)
No reply	-	-	47 (30.72%)	47 (26.11%)	79 (43.89%)
Total	16 (100%)	11 (100%)	153 (100%)	180 (100%)	180 (100%)

The respondents who felt domination by the males were asked whether they tried to oppose it or not. 46.67% of them told that they opposed the domination of the male members at the Panchayat while remaining 53.33% of the respondents refused or kept silence of it. The respondents, who did not oppose it, were 'Panchs' belonged to lower castes.

Analysis of the data revealed that the domination of the male increased with the increasing level of education of the respondents. So, the table 8.9 indicates, graduates and postgraduates respondents were frequently or occasionally dominated by the males in compare to lower qualified respondents. It may be due to the fact that, higher qualified persons have higher rate of participation in the decision-making processes due to their knowledge and awareness about various activities. So it was also the reason that due to their better knowledge all the educated respondents who felt male domination also dared to oppose it.

Table 9.0 – Distribution of dominated Respondents according to their education

Dominated by males	Educational Qualification				Total
	Illiterates	Upto Primary	High School/ Intermediate	B.A./M.A.	
Yes	3(10.71%)	13(29.55%)	22(34.37%)	18(40.91%)	56(31.11%)
Occasionally	5(17.86%)	5(11.36%)	12(18.75%)	18(40.91%)	40(22.22%)
No	8(28.57%)	9(20.45%)	12(18.75%)	8(18.18%)	37(20.56%)
No Reply	12(42.86%)	17(38.64%)	18(28.13%)	-	47(26.11%)
Total	28(100%)	44(100%)	64(100%)	44(100%)	180(100%)

So, as it evident from tables 8 and 9, respondents who were more educated and occupying higher posts i.e. of Pradhan and BDCs members realized their dominance. It is a fact that an act domination can be realized and opposed only by an effective and knowledgeable person. While others who do not have that much knowledge, talents and capability to work independently, have to follow other's decisions and instructions. So it can be said that the majority of the respondents were having their say in the decision-making bodies of grassroots level. Though male tried to dominate themselves but they were having logic to oppose it.

CONCLUSION

The study proved that women in panchayats did their best as majority of women (66.67%) tried to give equal importance to the works of home as well as to panchayat by taking support of panchayat officials and their family members. They were found fully aware about the ban of pradhanpatis in panchayats and yet 77.78% women found themselves fully satisfied to perform well in panchayat. But their were 22.22 % of women mostly illiterate who could not perform well in panchayat due to lack of awareness and corruption. While 53.33 % of educated women were found themselves dominated by their male counterparts in panchayats. Definitely it hindered their performance in panchayats.

So, there found various unhealthy trends in the grassroots politics which kept women out and women found themselves unable to play that kind of competitive politics and join in the power struggle in the same way as male politicians did. Other handicaps are the absence of economies independence, sufficient financial resources and family support.¹

The need is hence, to develop not only participatory mechanisms of empowerment, but also the means to overcome the structural inequalities of social power. Reservation together with education has the potentials to transform the lives of women, but this will take considerable time in male dominated society. More to be done in the female literacy and change in the family and society for women to fully participate in the public sphere.² And along with these, men too, need to be socialized to accept women in their new roles.

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