

Original Research Article

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Organizational Characteristics of Panchayat Leaders and their Attitude towards Panchayati Raj Institutions

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ABSTRACT

A resource model of extension as suggested by Salmon (1980), puts farmers and researchers as equally important contributors. The function of the extension is to transfer and nurture this pool of knowledge within the rural system. The concept of leadership has undergone considerable change as research in this area of study progressed. The valuation of those who exercise power in respect of the existing communal state of affairs, technological and non-technological changes, and opportunities for such development and change, is of considerably more significance than the assessment of those who do not have power in society. The 73rd Amendment offers for an intricate system of establishing panchayats as units of self-government. For the first time in the constitutional history of India, the constitution of the panchayat, the duration of their term, their membership, the constitution of Finance Commission to review their financial situation is detailed. In this study, Ex-post-facto research design has been used. In all (9 + 54 + 200) 263 panchayat leaders were considered as respondents for the study. The basic method used in gathering the primary data for the instant study was a field survey. The interview schedule was used as an instrument for collecting the raw data from the panchayat leaders. A note worthy majority of the gram panchayat leaders and the majority of the janpad and jila panchayat leaders had medium time allocation for panchayat activities. The gram panchayat leaders dedicated 3.73 hours per day on an average for panchayat activities whereas janpad and jila panchayat leaders devoted 5.33 hours per day on an average for panchayat activities. It may be concluded that just above three-fifth of the gram panchayat leaders were inexperienced whereas around four-fifth of the janpad and jila panchayat leaders were knowledgeable. The majority of both the gram panchayat leaders and the janpad and jila panchayat leaders had medium training requirements with respect to panchayat activities. An inference may be drawn that two-fifth of the gram panchayat leaders and just less than three-fifth of the janpad and jila panchayat leaders had moderately favourable attitude towards panchayati raj establishments.

Keywords

Organizational and other Characteristics, Panchayati Raj Institutions and Panchayat Leaders

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Introduction

The Transfer of Technology model normally puts the researcher in the role of generating all new technologies and the farmer staying in the receiving end. According to Davies (1988), this is not the exact case at all. Communication of technology is conceived as occurring through a network of relatively complex nature. A resource model of extension as suggested by Salmon (1980), puts farmers and researchers as equally important contributors. The function of the extension is to transfer and nurture this pool of knowledge within the rural system. Thus extension embraces all those who contribute knowledge or transfer it to farmers. Choice of leadership in rural areas tends to be more on the basis of known personal qualities of the individual than in urban areas, mainly because of far greater face-to-face contacts and more intimate knowledge of individuals than is possible in urban areas. Patterns of influence involving power structure and leadership are the networks of influence that weave through society, urban or rural, and radiate from individuals and groups influential in decision making. The concept of leadership has undergone considerable change as research in this area of study progressed. Leadership was considered at one time to be a set of traits handed down chiefly through heredity from one person to another. Thus, positions of leadership were restricted to individuals belonging to certain strata of society commonly deemed worthy and suitable as leaders – leadership usually being determined by birth in the right family. It was discovered, however, as social and economic barriers disappeared, that leaders began to emerge from hitherto “restricted” strata of society and that leadership was not the monopoly of a few favoured familial groups or social strata. The type of political leadership and individuals in power influences the rate and direction of change. The assessment of those who wield

power in respect of the existing social situation, technological and non-technological changes, and opportunities for such development and change, is of considerably more significance than the assessment of those who do not have power in society. In some societies the political leadership controls the economy; significant influence is exercised by them in the direction and rate at which changes take place in society. The 73rd Amendment provides for an elaborate system of establishing panchayats as units of self-government. For the first time in the constitutional history of India, the constitution of the panchayat, the duration of their term, their membership, the constitution of the Finance Commission to review their financial position is detailed. It also adds a new schedule to the Constitution the Eleventh Schedule, which lists 29 subjects, which are to be handled by the panchayats. With this Amendment, Panchayati Raj institutions are as much a part of the structure of constitutional government in India as the Lok Sabha

Materials and Methods

In this study, Ex-post-facto research design has been used. Out of the eighteen districts of Chhattisgarh, Rajnandgaon district was purposively selected keeping in mind the resources at hand. Rajnandgaon district is situated in the western part of Chhattisgarh State. About 81 per cent of the population of this district still resides in rural areas and 36.55 percent of the population belongs to scheduled tribes and scheduled castes. The literacy level of the district is 77.2 percent out of which the male literacy rate is 87.5 percent and the female literacy rate is 67.6 percent. Jila Panchayat Rajnandgaon was the first tier panchayat purposively considered for the study. There are nine Janpad Panchayats in Rajnandgaon district and all the nine blocks constituting the respective Janpad Panchayats at the second-tier were purposively chosen for

the study. Out of the total village panchayat under each janpad approximately seven percent were randomly selected for the investigation. Out of 696 village panchayats, 50 village panchayats were ultimately chosen for the study. Out of total of 21 members of the Jila Panchayat including the president, 9 members who presided over the different standing committees were purposively selected as respondents from the first tier panchayat. Similarly, out of the total 182 members of the 9 janpad panchayats, 6 members from each janpad ($9 \times 6 = 54$) presiding over the standing committees were purposively selected as respondents from second tier panchayats. In all there are 696 gram panchayats in 9 blocks/janpads of Rajnandgaon district. Approximately seven per cent gram panchayats were randomly selected from each janpad and four members presiding over the standing committees from each selected gram panchayat ($50 \times 4 = 200$), were purposively chosen as respondents from the third tier panchayats. Thus in all ($9 + 54 + 200$) 263 panchayat leaders were considered as respondents for the study. The basic Method used in collecting the primary data for the instant study was a field survey. The interview schedule was used as a tool for collecting the raw information from the panchayat leaders.

Results and Discussion

Organisational characteristics

Time allocation for panchayat activities

Time allocation for panchayat activities is believed to be an important factor contributing towards the role performance of the panchayat leaders and it also plays an important role in the attitude formation of the panchayat leaders. Table 1 represents the data pertaining to the time allocation of panchayat leaders for panchayat activities. The data reveals that a

significant majority of the gram panchayat leaders (83.00%) had medium time allocation for panchayat activities followed by 10.50 and 6.50 percent of them who had high time allocation and low time allocation respectively for panchayat activities (Fig. 1).

So far as the janpad and jila panchayat leaders are concerned it was found that the majority of them (61.90%) had medium time allocation for panchayat activities followed by 19.05 percent each who had high time allocation and low time allocation respectively for panchayat activities.

It may be concluded that a significant majority of the gram panchayat leaders and the majority of the janpad and jila panchayat leaders had medium time allocation for panchayat activities.

The gram panchayat leaders devoted 3.73 hours per day on an average for panchayat activities whereas janpad and jila panchayat leaders devoted 5.33 hours per day average for panchayat activities. On comparing the data of high time allocation it can be conclusively stated that more janpad and jila panchayat leaders devoted higher time for panchayat activities as compared to their gram panchayat counterparts.

Experience

The data pertaining to the experience of panchayat leaders is presented in table 2. It is revealed that the majority of the gram panchayat leaders (62.00%) were inexperienced whereas the remaining 38.00 percent of them were experienced. In contrast, the majority of the janpad and jila panchayat leaders (79.37%) were experienced while 20.63 percent of them were inexperienced. It may be concluded that just above three-fifth of the gram panchayat leaders were inexperienced whereas around four-fifth of the

janpad and jila panchayat leaders were experienced. An inference may be drawn that majority of the janpad and jila panchayat leaders had previous working experience in panchayati raj activities and other rural organizations like co-operative societies, school management committee, agricultural produce market, etc. On the other hand majority of the gram panchayat leaders surveyed were found to be inexperienced.

Thus it may be propounded that experienced persons are commonly preferred by rural people for holding leadership positions at the middle and upper-level panchayati raj institutions, but at the gram panchayat level, even novices are getting elected on leadership positions (Fig. 2).

The above finding is in agreement with the finding of Salunkhe (1972), Thombre (1976) and, Shrivastava (2003).

Training need

Table 3 gives the distribution of panchayat leaders according to their training needs. It was found that a considerable majority of the gram panchayat leaders (71.50%) had medium training needs followed by 17.00 percent of them who had high training needs whereas 11.50 percent had low training needs pertaining to the Panchayati raj activities.

As regards the training needs of janpad and jila panchayat leaders it was observed that a significant majority (73.02%) of them had medium training needs followed by 14.29 and 12.69 percent of them who had low training needs and high training needs respectively.

A conclusion may therefore be drawn that majority of both the gram panchayat leaders and the janpad and jila panchayat leaders had medium training needs with respect to panchayat activities (Fig. 3).

Attitude of panchayat leaders towards Panchayati Raj Institutions

The data pertaining to attitude of panchayat leaders towards panchayati raj institutions is represented in table 4. It is observed that most of the gram panchayat leaders (40.00%) had moderately favourable attitude towards panchayati raj institutions, followed by 32.00 percent of them who had highly favourable attitude whereas 28.00 percent of the gram panchayat leaders had less favourable attitude towards panchayati raj institutions.

As regards attitude of janpad and jila panchayat leaders it was found that majority of them (58.73%) had moderately favourable attitude towards panchayati raj institutions, followed by 26.98 percent of them who had highly favourable attitude whereas 14.29 percent of the janpad and jila panchayat leaders had less favourable attitude towards panchayati raj institutions (Fig. 4).

An inference may be drawn that two fifth of the gram panchayat leaders and just less than three fifth of the janpad and jila panchayat leaders had moderately favourable attitude towards panchayati raj institutions.

Similar findings have been reported by Shrivastava (1999), Rathi (2004) and Thakur (2006).

More than four fifth of the gram panchayat leaders (83.00%) and about three fifth of the janpad and jila panchayat leaders (61.90%) had medium time allocation for panchayat activities.

The gram panchayat leaders devoted 3.73 hours per day on an average for panchayat activities whereas the janpad and jila panchayat leaders devoted 5.33 hours per day on an average for panchayat activities.

Table.1 Distribution of panchayat leaders according to their time allocation for panchayat activities

S. No .	Time allocation	Gram Panchayat Leaders (n ₁ =200)		Janpad&Jila Panchayat Leaders (n ₂ =63)	
		Frequenc y	Percent	Frequenc y	Percent
1	Low time allocation	13	6.50	12	19.05
2	Medium time allocation	166	83.00	39	61.90
3	High time allocation	21	10.50	12	19.05
	Total	200	100.00	63	100.00
		Mean : 3.73		Mean : 5.33	
		S.D. : 2.38		S.D. : 3.14	

Table.2 Distribution of panchayat leaders according to their experience

S. No .	Experience	Gram Panchayat Leaders (n ₁ =200)		Janpad&Jila Panchayat Leaders (n ₂ =63)	
		Frequenc y	Percent	Frequenc y	Percent
1	Experienced	76	38.00	50	79.37
2	In-experienced	124	62.00	13	20.63
	Total	200	100.00	63	100.00
		Mean : 2.41		Mean : 6.68	
		S.D. : 3.18		S.D. : 6.69	

Table.3 Distribution of panchayat leaders according to their training need

S. No .	Training need	Gram Panchayat Leaders (n ₁ =200)		Janpad&Jila Panchayat Leaders (n ₂ =63)	
		Frequenc y	Percent	Frequenc y	Percent
1	Low training need	23	11.50	9	14.29
2	Medium training need	143	71.50	46	73.02
3	High training need	34	17.00	8	12.69
	Total	200	100.00	63	100.00
		Mean : 54.34		Mean : 56.06	
		S.D. : 7.14		S.D. : 7.56	

Table.4 Distribution of panchayat leaders according to their attitude towards panchayati raj institutions

S. No.	Attitude	Gram Panchayat Leaders (n ₁ =200)		Janpad&Jila Panchayat Leaders (n ₂ =63)	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Less favourable attitude	56	28.00	9	14.29
2	Moderately favourable attitude	80	40.00	37	58.73
3	Highly favourable attitude	64	32.00	17	26.98
	Total	200	100.00	63	100.00
		Mean : 35.35		Mean : 40.33	
		S.D. : 9.72		S.D. : 87.76	

Fig.1

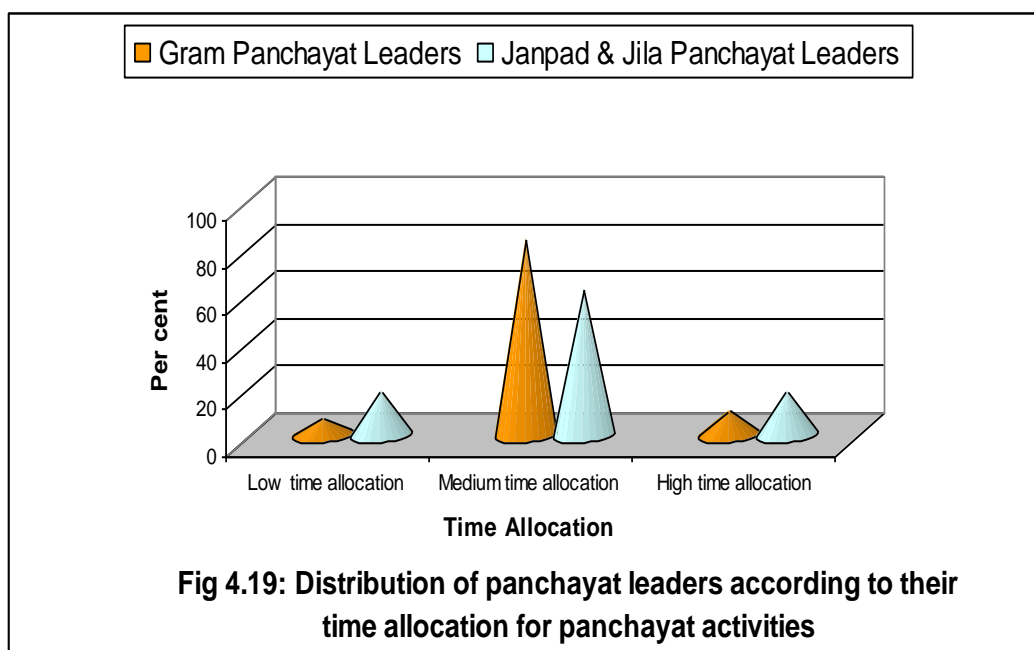


Fig.2

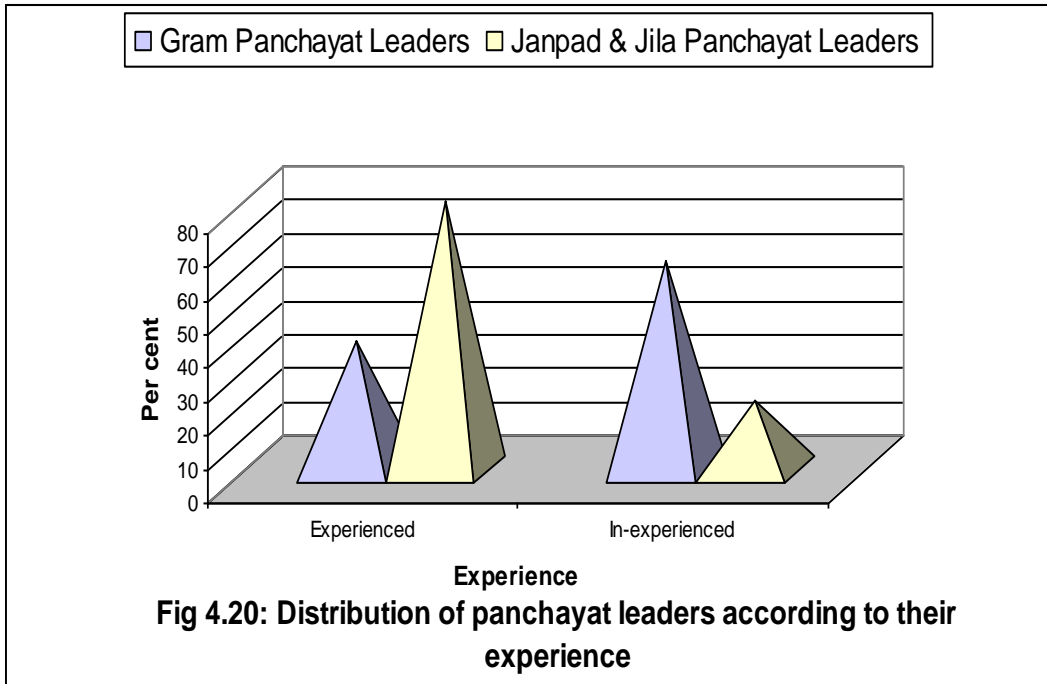


Fig.3

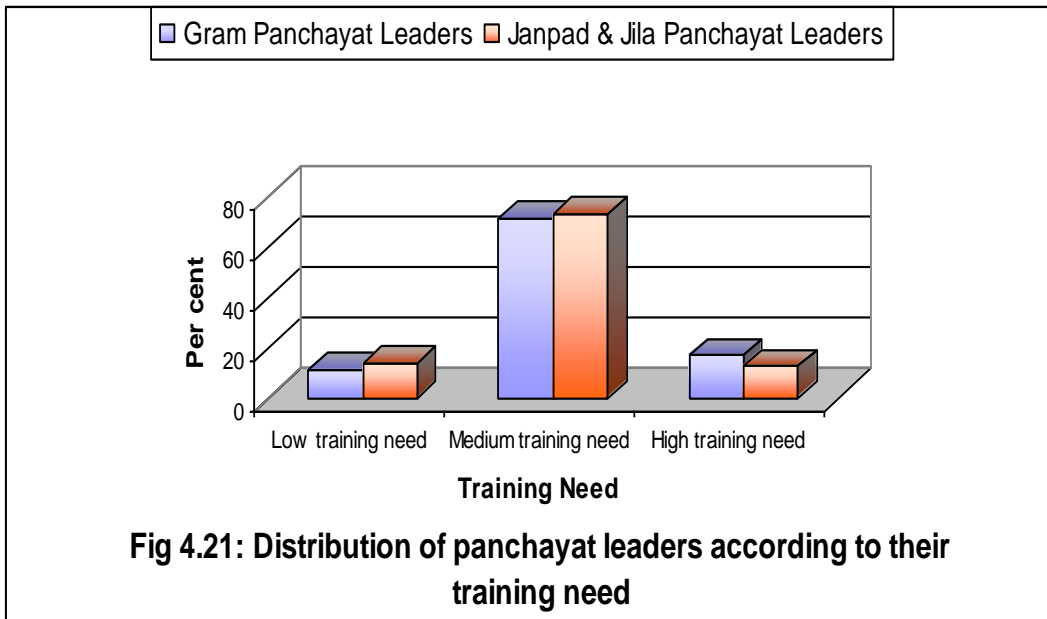
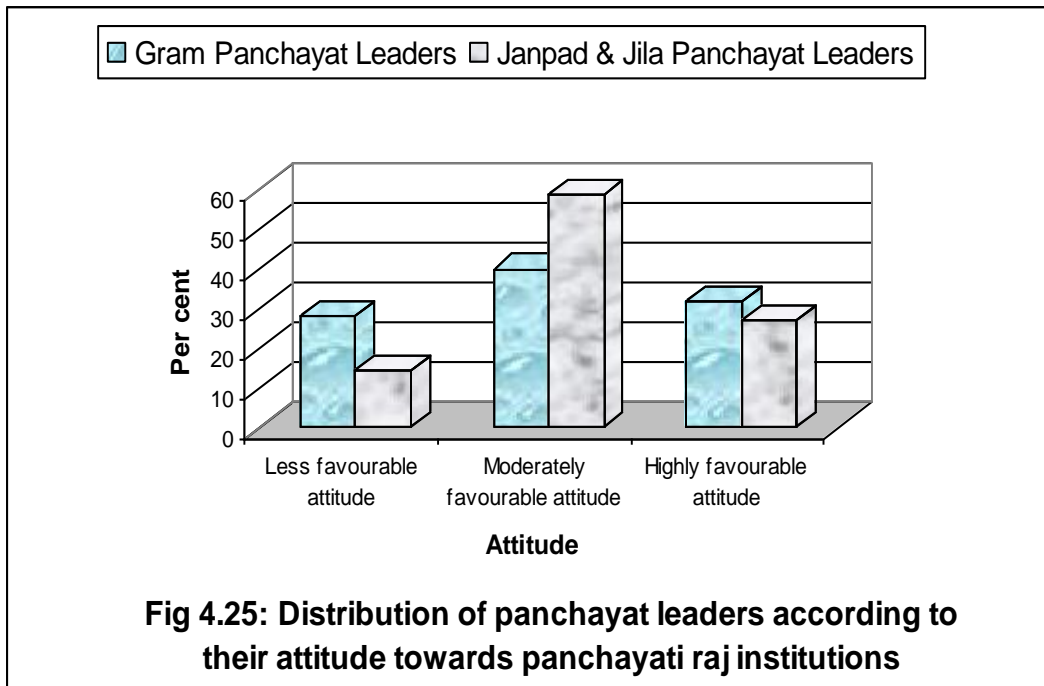


Fig.4



Around three fifth of the gram panchayat leaders (62.00%) were inexperienced whereas around four fifth of the janpad and jila panchayat leaders (79.37%) were experienced.

A majority of the gram panchayat leaders (71.50%) as well as the janpad and jila panchayat leaders (73.20%) had medium training needs with respect to panchayat activities.

Two fifth of the gram panchayat leaders (40.00%) and slightly less than three fifth (58.73%) of the janpad and jila panchayat leaders had moderately favourable attitude towards panchayati raj institutions.

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