

## Evaluating the Role Performance of Elected Women Members in Panchayati Raj Institution

Anuradha Ranjan Kumari<sup>1</sup> and Neeraj Singh<sup>2</sup>

1. I/c Programme Coordinator, KVK (IIVR), Malhana, Deoria UP., 2. Principal Scientist, IIVR Varanasi

Corresponding author e-mail: anuradha\_rau@rediffmail.com

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### ABSTRACT

*The present study was an effort to know the extent of Role performance of elected women Panchayat members in Panchayati Raj Institution. A total 75 women representative's were randomly selected from Pusa & Kalyanpur Block of Samastipur district in Bihar. In which 40 villages were selected from the two selected block. A schedule was used to collect the data by personal interview method. In order to determine the condition governing the extent of role performance of elected women member the data were subjected to frequency, percentage, multiple correlation, regression and Path analysis. Role performance was taken as dependent variable. The findings revealed that maximum member of elected women members of Gram Panchayats (78.64%) could perform only a little if their position was seen in totality and against the responsibilities. The association of role performance with interaction style, participation, empowerment, family education and family income was positive and highly significant at 1 per cent level of probability. The partial regression coefficients are highly significant in case of interaction style and personal education. There was substantial direct effect of participation, family education, family income, House type, Social linkage, marital status, family type and age.*

**Key words:** Role performance, village Panchayat, elected women, Panchayati Raj Institution.

Panchayati Raj is not a new phenomenon in the country. Its illustration in history goes back to more than a 1000 years. It has its roots in Ancient Indian Institutions when the villages were little republics governed by their Panchayats. During this period, it was not that women could not join politics, but the fact was that they did not take interest in it due to a patriarchal set up. The British through their ruthless method of revenue collection and the introduction of zamindari land tenure system almost destroyed these ancient republics and as well the involvement of women in politics. The British were of the view that "Vote of Women" would be premature in the Indian Society and continued to enforce purdah and prohibition against women's education. (Bhagat, 2005).

Women empowerment has been recognized as a central issue in determining the status of women. Empowerment covers aspects such as women's control over material and intellectual resources. Empowerment is a process, not an event, which challenges traditional

power equations and relations. Abolition of gender-based discrimination in all institutions and structures of the society and participation of women in policy and decision making process at domestic and public levels are few dimensions of women empowerment. In India, the most deep rooted forms of inequality built into the structure of traditional society are those based on caste and gender. A number of research findings indicated that the women were the disadvantaged gender in both rural and urban areas of the country (Agarwal, 1994, 2001). Giving special attention to women, article 14, confers equal rights and opportunities to men and women in the political, economic and social spheres. Article 15(3) empowers the state to make affirmative discrimination in favor of women. However, according to Human Development report (2001), India ranked 105 in Gender related Development Index (GDI) and 95 in Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM). GEM measures relative empowerment of women and men in political

and economical spheres of activity-power over economic resources based on earned income, professional, technical, administrative and managerial positions held and access to political opportunities and participation in political decision making.

The question of women's participation in Panchayat in India had merited attention of the committee on the status of women in *India (1974)*. The *National Perspective Plan for Women (1988)* had argued that political power and access to decision making authority are critical prerequisites and pleaded for women in all rural local self governing bodies at all levels. The work participation rate of women has steadily raised from 14.22 per cent in 1971 to 19.6 per cent a meager 14.1 per cent of women are employed in organized sector, but the majority find jobs in the informal unorganized private sector, mainly in the low paid household activities (*Thakur, 2010*). With the passage of *73rd Amendment Act, 1992*, India is at a crucial structure in the evaluation of Panchayati Raj institution the Indian brand of rural local self government. It has envisioned people's participation in the process of planning decision making, implementation and delivery system. The Panchayat Acts of state governments has subsequently been amended to incorporate the stipulations of the central Acts thus the constitutional mandate has heralded uniform pattern throughout Indian states. The 73rd constitutional amendment mandated a minimum of one third reservation for women in the membership as well as in the position of chairpersons of Panchayat at all three levels, namely the village, district and intermediate levels. All the states without exception have adopted this reservation policy since then. In this context the present study was undertaken to following objectives-

- i. To find the degree of satisfaction of elected village Panchayat Members in performance of various roles in gram Panchayats.
- ii. To know the extent of Role performance of elected women Panchayat members in Panchayati Raj Institution.
- iii. Relationship of role performance by elected women village Panchayat members.

## METHODOLOGY

The study was undertaken in purposively selected Samastipur district of Bihar state for case in data collection. Out of twenty blocks of Samastipur district

two blocks namely Pusa and Kalyanpur were selected to represent the whole district. Forty villages in the total were drawn randomly from the two selected blocks (20 villages from each block). For selection of respondent's multistage sampling procedure was used. 75 women representatives were randomly selected from all the gram panchayats of these two blocks. A Schedule was used to collect the data by personal interview method. In order to determine the conditions governing the empowerment of women the data were subjected to frequency, percentage, correlation, multiple regression and path analysis. Role performance was taken as dependent variable.

*Role performance:* It was operationally defined as degree to which Panchayati Raj Institution performed their assigned role as perceived by the women representatives of Panchayati Raj Institution. The roles of Gram Panchayats are well defined. 73rd Amendment Act, 1993 empowered the Panchayati Raj Institution with a responsibility list consisting of 29 developmental items by adding the eleventh schedule in the constitution. However, for the purpose of creating singularity of role were bifurcated. Therefore, the final list contained 33 role items. The role performance of the women Panchayat representatives was studied against these items.

These roles items arranged on a four point scale. The four response categories were "almost always doing", "frequently doing", "occasionally doing" and "rarely doing" representing the extent of performance of different roles to the tune of above 75 per cent, 50 to 75 per cent, 25 to 50 per cent and 0 – 25 per cent respectively. The respondents were to record their response in respect of each of the role items in any of the four categories. The role performance index (RPI) of each respondent was calculated in terms of percentage as per the formula given below

$$RPI = \frac{\text{Scores obtained}}{\text{Maximum possible Scores}} \times 100$$

Frequency distribution of the respondents was worked out on the basis of extent of performance of the above roles in their respective Panchayats. This was done separately for the elected women representative as well as the beneficiaries. A rank order correlation was carried to test whether the ranks indicated by the frequency of the respondents of different categories were same or different and whether the differences were or not.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*Role performance of elected women Panchayat members:* There are 29 roles embarked for gram Panchayats, These covered almost all the areas of rural development including sanitation health transportation, economic and social activates and various aspects of agricultural improvements. In the list of roles there were at least two areas which could be explicitly decided into two separate roles. Thus, with a purpose of convenience in securing response from the respondents against the independent items, the respondents against the independent items, the final list contained as many as 33 statements of areas of developments. This has been described in the chapter of methodology. The women members were requested to offer their opinion as to what extent did they perform these roles individually as the respective to the gram Panchayats. The observations are recorded in table 1.

It is revealed from the Table 1 that the selection of candidates from amongst the eligible for *Indira Awas Yojana* and deciding strategy and allotment of resources under *Sunischit Rojgar Yojana* were performed by more than twenty four per cent of respondents. As many as 58.66 per cent members were found to attend to the job of selection of beneficiaries for Indira Awas Yojana. Their role performance was recorded to be high intensity. However, only 4.0 per cent respondents were found to perform this job with very high satisfaction. The rest 37.33 per cent EWVPMs had medium to low levels of satisfaction in performance of even this role. Similarly, the same percentage of women members drew maximum satisfaction from their role performance with respect to programme of *Sunischit Rajgar Yojna*. The majority however expressed medium to low satisfaction only with respect to performance of other 29 activities of gram Panchayats, Surprisingly, Certain jobs did not involve the members at all and naturally, therefore in those cases the members indicated least Satisfaction from their role.

For Example the works arranging farming on barren lands and construction of Agarbati center building were reported to be the roles of low Satisfaction by all the respondents, Similarly more than 90.0 per cent EWVPMs expressed low satisfaction in terms of performance of 6 roles of gram Panchayats i.e. Preparation of need based budget for production and supply of water for village, Determination of minimum

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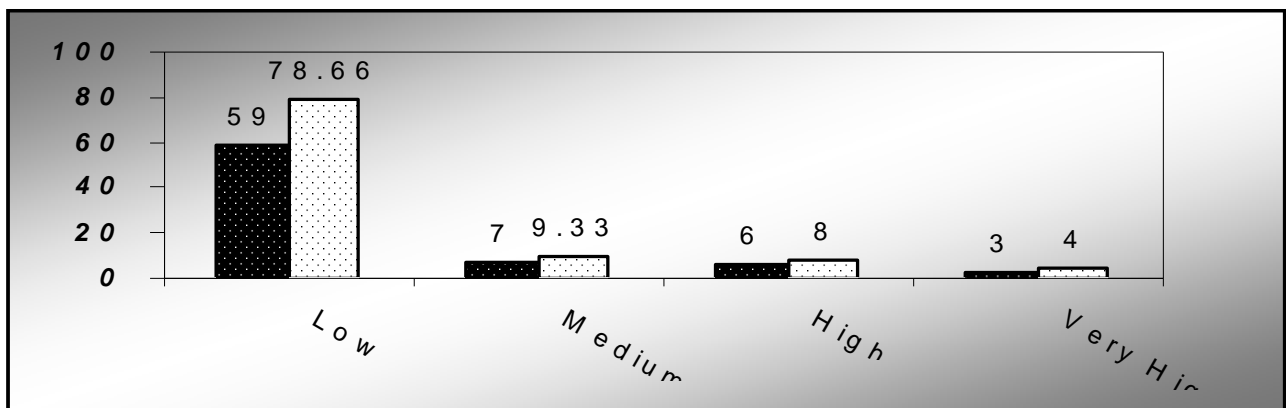
limit of Agriculture production with an aim to increase production, Selection of beneficiaries under *Annapurna Yojana* and *Antyodaya Anna Yojana*, Establishment and registration of small scale industries, Co-ordination with Khadi Gramodyog and Construction of ICDS office cum Godawn. It may be interesting to know that there were only six items i.e. Selection of candidates as beneficiaries of *Indira Awas Yojana*, Construction and Maintenance of roads, Distribution of food arrangement of medical checkup and other works, Supervision/distribution of medicine through R.H.C. location, Policy work related with primary education and Selection of new beneficiaries under *Annapurna Yojana* and *Antyodaya Anna Yojana*. Which registered minimum respondents (24.0%), (24.0%), (24.0%), (22.66%), (21.33%) and (20.00%), respectively expressing low satisfaction from their performance.

Thus, it is revealed that performance of roles by the members as expressed by the respondents were not to the extent of high satisfaction for them with respect to most of the activities the low performance by the members indicated that works on them were still awaited to be taken up by our gram Panchayats, since only a few jobs were being handled at present by the gram Panchayats, Chances of participation of the members in the activities of Gram Panchayat was quite limited. This lead to low satisfaction of the members at mass level from their performance as representatives to the gram Panchayats. *Kuraria et.al. (1997)* also reported that majority of respondents had low performance. In order to visualize the degree of role performance clearly, in totality, the data were subjected to further analysis to obtain role performance index scores of each respondent. These score were divided into four groups of low, medium, high and very high performance. The findings are presented in Fig-1.

It is perused from Fig-1 that a maximum number of elected women members of gram Panchayats (78.64%) could perform only a little if their position was seen in totality and against the possibility. The role performance index of less than 10.0 per cent was the minimum level one would have expected against otherwise a big opportunity and possible severe engagement in developmental works in villages in gram Panchayats. The situation therefore is so for alarming and needed appropriate measures to be taken to fill up voids. Non-performance would hardly lead the society anywhere.

**Table 1. Degree of satisfaction of elected village Panchayat Members in performance of various roles in gram Panchayats (N=75)**

Roles in gram panchayats	Degree of satisfaction in role performance			
	Low (<25%)	Medium (25-50%)	High (50-75%)	Very High (>75%)
Medical checkup and health related other works	63(84.0)	6(8.0)	2(2.66)	4(5.34)
Cleanliness	65(86.66)	4(5.34)	4(5.34)	2(2.66)
Supervision /distribution of medicine through R.H.C. location.	17(22.66)	48(64.0)	10(13.33)	0(0.0)
Water supply and conservation	64(85.33)	11(14.66)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Accounting of data as per govt. requirement	20(26.66)	49(65.33)	4(5.34)	2(2.66)
Removal of encroachments	53(70.66)	16(21.33)	6(8.0)	0(0.0)
Growth in Agriculture Production	65(86.66)	10(10.33)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Facing through / dacoity fire fighting	58(77.33)	5(6.66)	3(4.0)	9(12.0)
Maintenance of building / property of Gram Panchayat	30(40.0)	18(24.0)	25(33.33)	2(2.66)
Settlement of Panchayat land.	65(86.66)	8(10.66)	2(2.66)	0(0.0)
Planning for and supervision of veterinary hospital	66(88.0)	5(6.66)	4(5.34)	0(0.0)
Planning for and supervision of cattle breeding	64(85.33)	11(14.66)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Planning for an supervision of Cattle immunization	63(84.0)	10(13.33)	2(2.0)	0(0.0)
Maintenance of water supply and irrigation related works and preservation and development.	51(68.0)	18(24.0)	6(8.0)	0(0.0)
Preparation of need based budget for production and supply . of water for village	68(90.66)	4(5.34)	3(4.0)	0(0.0)
Determination of minimum limit of Agriculture production with an aim to increase production	72(96.0)	3(4.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Conversion of Barren land into agriculture land.	75(100.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Selection of beneficiaries under Annapurna Yojana and Antyodaya Anna Yojana.	72(96.0)	3(4.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Organizing self labour for community work.	63(84.0)	5(6.66)	4(5.34)	3(4.0)
Establishment and registration of small scale industries.	73(97.33)	2(2.66)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Co-ordination with Khadi Gramodyog.	71(94.66)	4(5.34)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Implementation of J.R.Y. works/Planning.	55(73.33)	12(6.0)	4(5.34)	4(5.34)
Implementation of Swarn Jayanti Self employment schemes.	60(80.0)	10(13.33)	5(6.66)	0(0.0)
Selection of candidates as beneficiaries of Indira Awas Yojana.	18(24.0)	10(13.33)	44(58.66)	3(4.0)
Selection of beneficiaries under P.M. Gramodyog Yojana.	48(64.0)	10(13.33)	7(9.33)	10(13.33)
Strategy planning and allocation of means in Sunishchit Rojgar Yojna	28(37.33)	6(8.0)	38(50.66)	3(4.0)



**Fig. 1. Extent of role performance by elected women members in Gram Panchayat**

Instead, it would help enhance meaningless conflicts and social problems. It at all the Panchayati Raj system is to become viable in solving problems of unemployment, poverty, infrastructural development, betterment in standard of living etc. There are hardly other than inducing dynamism in undertaking various roles delegated to the Gram Panchayats. The low performance by the majority needed to be changed to high and very high performance by them over all as well as with respect to each of the 33 activities of gram Panchayats. *Kuraria et.al. (1997) Deshpande et. al. (2013)* also reported that majority of respondents had low role performance.

*Relationship of role performance by elected women village Panchayat members with other Variables:* In this section an attempt has been made to elucidate the association of selected Socio-economic and Psychological variables of EWVPMs coefficient with the role performance. The correlation co-efficient between role performance and all other factors i.e. 16 independent and two dependent variables included in this analysis as x- variables and presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. The coefficient of correlation (r) between role performance and Socio-economic and Psychological variables of elected women members of gram Panchayats**

Independent Variables	(r)
Age	-0.263*
Caste	0.243*
Marital status	0.148 <sup>NS</sup>
Personal Education	0.242*
Family Education	0.594**
Family type	0.077 <sup>NS</sup>
Family Size	0.094 <sup>NS</sup>
Occupation	0.004 <sup>NS</sup>
Size of land holding	-0.170 <sup>NS</sup>
Family income	0.505**
Material possession	-0.049 <sup>NS</sup>
House type	-0.058 <sup>NS</sup>
Social linkage	-0.023 <sup>NS</sup>
Knowledge	0.202 <sup>NS</sup>
Development constraints	0.019 <sup>NS</sup>
Interaction Style	0.867**
Participation	0.377**
Empowerment	0.323**

\*Significant at 5% level of probability

\*\*Significant at 1% level of probability, NS - Non-significant

A perusal of Table 2 reveals that participation played the single most vital role in the role performance of the elected women members of gram panchayats. The association of role performance with interaction style was positive and highly significant ( $r = 0.867$ ,  $p > 0.01$ ), Participation ( $r = 0.377$ ,  $p > 0.01$ ), Empowerment ( $p = 0.323$ ,  $p > 0.01$ ), Caste ( $r = 0.243$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) and Personal Education ( $r = 0.242$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) and other independent variables in positive and significant association were Family Education ( $r = 0.594$ ,  $p > 0.01$ ), Family Income ( $r = 0.505$ ,  $p > 0.01$ ).

The negative but significant correlation co-efficient were observed against Age ( $r = -0.263$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), other variables were not associated significantly. However, the association of role performance with Marital Status, Family Type, Family Size, Occupation, Knowledge and Development Constraints were positive whereas it was negative with Size of Land Holding, Material Possession, House Type and Social Linkage. *Saiyad et al. (2004)* and *Suradkar (2005)* reported that the correlates of role perception and role performance of women Sarpanch as Panchayati Raj Institution.

**Table 3. Multiple regressions between role performance and Socio-economic and Psychological variables of elected women members of gram Panchayats**

Characters	LR	SE	T-value	$\beta$
Age	-3.702	0.031	-1.174	-0.077
Caste	-7.102	0.319	-0.221	-0.016
Marital-status	-0.312	1.518	-0.206	-0.012
Personal Education	0.578	0.255	2.264	0.149
Family Education	-4.302	0.248	-0.173	-0.013
Family type	-0.326	0.382	-0.855	-0.051
Family Size	-0.286	0.247	-1.157	-0.075
Occupation	-0.235	0.181	-1.298	-0.075
Size of land holding	-0.299	0.281	-1.067	-0.061
Family income	0.444	0.222	1.999	0.137
Material possession	3.203	0.261	0.012	0.001
House type	-1.602	0.242	-0.068	-0.004
Social linkage	0.143	0.402	0.357	0.020
Knowledge	1.473	0.008	1.744	0.113
Development constraints	-1.102	0.008	-1.290	-0.075
Interaction Style	3.396	0.345	9.842**	0.760
Participation	2.568	0.016	1.641	0.123
Empowerment	4.855	0.008	0.594	0.041

$R^2 = 0.851$ , \*Significant at 5% level of probability,

$F = 17.728$ , \*\*Significant at 1% level of probability

LR=Linear Regression

**Table 4. Direct and indirect effect of independent variables with role performance of elected women members of gram panchayats**

Characteristics	Direct effect	Total indirect effect	Maximum indirect effect	Though
Age	0.1318	0.3721	-0.1283	Participation
Caste	-0.0173	0.3827	0.2284	Participation
Marital status	-0.1371	0.1424	0.3251	Material possession
Personal Edu.	-0.0587	-0.2014	-0.0620	Family education
Family Edu.	0.4421	0.3651	-0.1534	Education
Family type	0.1321	-0.0111	-0.1409	Family education
Family Size	-0.0722	0.1072	0.7112	Family education
Occupation	0.1213	-0.0055	0.1321	material possession
Size of holding	-0.0822	-0.2321	-0.1421	Material possession
Family income	-0.2571	0.1716	0.1509	Family education
Material possession	0.0251	0.1882	0.1234	Family education
House type	0.2312	-0.0044	0.1172	Participation
Social linkage	0.1652	-0.2122	0.3221	Participation
Knowledge	0.1121	0.1729	-0.1213	Participation
Development constraints	0.0127	-0.2321	0.0721	Family education
Interaction Style	-0.0417	-0.2117	-0.1532	Family education
Participation	0.7321	-0.0342	0.0216	Family size
Empowerment	0.0020	0.2812	0.2121	Participation

These observations clearly indicated that interaction style alone virtually ruled in the factor of role performance. The ‘t’ values recorded in the above table were found to be higher significant only in case of interaction style ( $t = 9.842, p > 0.01$ ) at 1 per cent level of probability. The t - value of personal education was significant at 5 per cent level of probability ( $t = 2.264, p > 0.05$ ). In terms of standardized regression co-efficient these two variables indicated that in case of interaction style, a unit gain is capable of affecting a change in the role performance to the tune of 3.396 units. Similarly, in case of personal education, a unit of decline is capable of reducing the role performance of elected women members in gram panchayats to the extent of 0.578 units in the role performance provided rest of the variables were kept constant. The results of path analysis with role performance of elected women members at Gram Panahyat are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 indicates that there was substantial direct effect of Participation (0.7321), Family Education (0.4421), Family Income (-0.2571), House Type (0.2312), Social Linkage (0.1652), Marital Status

(-0.1317), Family Type (0.1321) and Age (0.1318). The variables having substantially low direct-effect were Empowerment (0.0020), Size of land holding (-0.0822), Personal Education (-0.0587), Interaction Style (-0.04117), Material Possession (0.0251), Caste (-0.0173) and Development Constraints (-0.0127). Among these Empowerment, Development Constraints and Family Education exercised substantial effect indirectly. Other variables causing indirect effect in a greater magnitude were Caste (0.3827) and Age (0.3721). Certain variables caused maximum indirect effect through one or two companion variables. To illustrate a few materials possession was found to extend maximum indirect effect through marital status (0.3251). Similarly, caste, social linkage and empowerment worked indirectly maximum through participation.

**CONCLUSION**

In Indian Constitution, there are provisions for equal rights for all citizens irrespective of their social and economic status. It was only role

performance by the elected women members that was not directly influenced substantially by caste or personal education or family size or family type or house type or even empowerment. In fact it was the degree of participation which acted as deciding factor in performance by the elected women members in gram Panchayat. Participation played the single most vital role in the role performance of elected women members of Gram Panchayats. In association of role performance with Interaction Style, Participation, Empowerment, Family Education and Family Income was positive and highly significant other independent variables i.e. Caste and Personal Education were positive and significant at 5 per cent level of probability. The partial regression coefficients are highly significant in case of interaction style and personal education. There was substantial direct effect of Participation, Family education, Family Income, House type, Social linkage, Marital Status, Family type and Age. The variables having substantially low direct effect were empowerment, size of land holding, caste, personal education, interaction style, material possession and development constraints.

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