

PARTICIPATION OF WOMAN GRAM PANCHAYAT MEMBERS IN VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in Ratnagiri and Raigad districts of the Konkan region. From each district, two tehsils and from each tehsil, five Gram panchayats were randomly selected. In all, 58 woman members were personally interviewed to collect the information on aspects under study. Majority of them had participated in village development programmes, followed by religious and cultural programmes. Further, their participation was more in motivation, followed by planning, implementation and fund management of these programmes. However, majority of them were unaware about agricultural development programmes. Lack of time due to other work; lack of knowledge required for participation and male members interest being centered or in economic issues, were the major constraints faced by them.

INTRODUCTION

Panchayat Raj Institutions are not only the foundations of democracy in the country, but also help decentralize the governmental power. Panchayat Raj is mainly expected to promote economic, political and social development in rural India. In the three tier system of Panchayati Raj, the non-officials are playing an important role of establishing linkage between the officials and rural people. Members elected to the various Panchayati Raj Institutions are therefore, very important not because they are politically influential, but because they are direct carriers of various developmental programmes. People are convinced to a greater extent by them.

Gram Panchayat is the third and important tier of Panchayat Raj System at village level. In all the Gram Panchayats, one-third seats are reserved for women. So, the role of women in village development is very crucial. Their participation in various activities of village development will certainly decide the speed and success of rural development programmes implemented by State and Central government. On this background, the present study was conducted with following specific objectives.

1. To study the participation of women Gram Panchayat members in village development programmes.

2. To identify the constraints experienced by the women Gram Panchayat members in their participation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in two districts namely Ratnagiri and Raigad of the Konkan region. From each district, two tehsils and from each tehsil, five Gram Panchayats were selected randomly. All the woman members of these Gram Panchayats were selected as respondents. Thus, 58 woman members from 20 Gram Panchayats were interviewed. Out of selected 20 Gram Panchayats, 11 were independent Gram Panchayats and nine were group Gram Panchayats. The data were collected by personally interviewing the respondents with the help of structured interview schedule. Appropriate statistical tools were used for analysis of data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study are presented here under.

Participation of woman members of Gram Panchayat in village development programmes

The data with regard to participation of woman members of Grampanchayat in village development programme are presented in the Table 1.

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Table 1: Participation in village development programmes

Sl. No.	Village Development Programme	Not Applicable	Motivate people for participation	Help in planning of program	Help in raising fund and allocation of funds	Help in implementation of program	No participation
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Construction, maintenance and repairs of Gram Panchayat building	-	17 (29.13)	20 (34.48)	10 (17.24)	12 (20.69)	21 (36.21)
2.	Construction, maintenance and repairs of roads	1 (1.72)	25 (43.10)	15 (25.86)	8 (13.79)	21 (36.21)	23 (39.66)
3.	Construction, maintenance and repairs of drainage channels	1 (1.72)	12 (20.69)	9 (15.52)	14 (24.14)	9 (15.52)	29 (50.00)
4.	Digging, maintenance and repairs of well / borewell for drinking water	4 (6.90)	39 (67.24)	29 (50.00)	10 (17.24)	21 (36.21)	17 (29.13)
5.	Maintenance and repairs of water taps	9 (15.52)	36 (62.07)	12 (20.69)	8 (13.79)	17 (29.13)	8 (13.79)
6.	Construction, maintenance and repairs of school buildings	28 (48.28)	19 (32.76)	14 (24.14)	18 (31.03)	12 (20.69)	14 (24.14)
7.	Construction, maintenance and repairs of library building	20 (34.48)	12 (20.69)	18 (31.03)	10 (17.24)	18 (31.03)	9 (15.52)
8.	Construction, maintenance and repairs of PHC	29 (50.00)	9 (15.52)	8 (13.79)	1 (1.72)	10 (17.24)	20 (34.48)
9.	Construction, maintenance and repairs of service cooperative society's building	34 (58.62)	11 (18.97)	12 (20.69)	2 (3.45)	6 (10.34)	10 (17.24)
10.	Construction, maintenance and repairs of charitable rest house	9 (15.52)	20 (34.48)	27 (46.55)	9 (15.52)	9 (15.52)	19 (32.76)
11.	Street lights and their maintenance	7 (12.07)	22 (37.93)	24 (41.38)	19 (32.76)	28 (48.27)	14 (24.14)
12.	Establishing / running the library.	20 (34.48)	17 (29.13)	10 (17.24)	4 (6.90)	12 (20.69)	17 (29.13)
13.	Forming / running women's club	2 (3.45)	26 (44.83)	19 (32.76)	16 (27.59)	23 (39.66)	20 (34.48)
14.	Forming / running youth club	20 (34.48)	25 (43.10)	12 (20.69)	8 (13.79)	13 (22.41)	13 (22.41)
15.	Planting and conserving trees	1 (1.72)	39 (67.24)	26 (44.83)	10 (17.24)	18 (31.03)	15 (25.86)
16.	Implementing village cleaning campaign	2 (3.45)	45 (77.59)	43 (74.14)	21 (36.21)	36 (62.07)	12 (20.69)
17.	Organizing parents- teachers meet	13 (22.41)	16 (27.59)	14 (22.14)	6 (10.34)	12 (20.69)	19 (32.76)
18.	Organizing Gramsabha	-	21 (36.21)	11 (18.97)	5 (8.62)	19 (32.76)	12 (20.10)
19.	Organizing disease diagnosis and treatment camps	8 (13.79)	18 (31.03)	7 (12.07)	2 (3.45)	14 (24.14)	20 (34.48)
20.	Forming the SHGs	4 (6.90)	37 (63.79)	11 (18.97)	8 (13.79)	18 (31.03)	12 (20.69)
21.	Making efforts to provide self employment to unemployed youth boys and girls	15 (25.86)	8 (13.79)	9 (15.52)	2 (3.45)	9 (15.52)	23 (39.66)
22.	Making efforts for rehabilitation of destitute	6 (10.34)	12 (20.68)	18 (31.03)	9 (15.52)	19 (32.76)	21 (36.21)
23.	Making efforts to maintain unity and equity in village	6 (10.34)	23 (39.66)	21 (36.21)	7 (12.07)	13 (22.41)	18 (31.03)
24.	Removal of superstitions	9	15	11	-	13	24

It is observed from Table 1 that majority of woman members of Gram Panchayat motivated the people for participation in implementation of village cleaning programme (77.59 per cent) followed by 'digging, maintenance and repairs of bore well for drinking water' (67.24 per cent), 'planting and conserving tree' (67.24 per cent), forming SHGs (63.79 per cent) and 'quarrel emancipation programme' (62.07 per cent).

Majority of the woman members of Gram Panchayat helped in planning the programme like 'village cleaning programme' and 'digging maintenance and repairs of bore well for drinking water'.

Nearly one-third of the woman members of Gram Panchayat helped in raising fund and allocation of funds for village development programme namely, 'village cleaning programme' (36.21 per cent), 'street light and their maintenance facilities' (32.76 per cent) and 'construction, maintenance and repairs of school building' (31.03 per cent).

More than three fifth (62.07 per cent) of the woman members of Gram Panchayat helped in implementation of village cleaning programme, followed by 'street light and their maintenance' (48.27 per cent), 'family

welfare programme' (43.10 per cent) and 'forming/running women club' (39.66 per cent).

Half of the woman members of Gram Panchayat had not participated in village development programme like 'construction, maintenance and repairs of nala', 'adult education and literacy mission', 'quarrel emancipation programme', followed by 'removal of superstitions' (41.38 per cent), 'construction, maintenance and repairs of road' (39.66 per cent), 'making efforts to provide self-employment to unemployed young boys' and girls'. (39.66 per cent).

It was surprising to note that all the woman members of Gram Panchayat reported that the village development programme namely 'group marriage' was not applicable to them, followed by 'construction, care and repairs of service society building' (58.62 per cent), 'construction, maintenance and repairs of PHC building' (50.00 per cent).

Participation in religious and cultural programmes

The information regarding the participation of woman members of Gram Panchayat in religious and cultural programme is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Participation in religious and cultural programmes

Sl. No.	Religious and cultural programmes	Not Applicable	Motivate people for participation	Help in planning of program	Help in raising fund and allocation of funds	Help in implementation of program	No participation
1.	Organization of fairs	-	10 (12.24)	23 (39.66)	11 (18.97)	5 (8.62)	9 (15.52)
2.	Celebration of national days	-	24 (41.38)	16 (27.59)	1 (1.72)	12 (20.69)	5 (8.62)
3.	Celebration of cultural festivals	-	17 (29.31)	7 (12.07)	1 (91.72)	12 (20.69)	21 (36.21)
4.	Celebration of religious ceremonies	-	34 (58.62)	24 (41.38)	12 (20.69)	32 (55.17)	9 (15.52)
5.	Removal of untouchability	4 (6.90)	5 (8.62)	2 (3.45)	1 (91.72)	4 (6.90)	42 (72.41)
6.	Organization of sports and cultural competitions	23 (39.66)	15 (25.86)	10 (17.24)	5 (98.62)	12 (20.69)	24 (41.38)
7.	Construction of temple, care and repair.	13 (22.41)	13 (22.41)	12 (20.69)	6 (10.34)	9 (15.22)	28 (48.28)

(Figures in the parentheses indicates percentages)

The data presented in Table 2 revealed that majority (58.62 per cent) of the woman members of

Gram Panchayat motivated the people for participation in 'celebration of religious ceremonies', followed by 'celebration of national festivals' (Republic day, Independence day etc.). Maximum number of woman

Table 3: Participation in agricultural development programmes

Sl. No.	Agricultural development programmes	Not Applicable	Motivate people for participation	Help in planning of program	Help in raising fund and allocation of funds	Help in implementation of program	No participation
1.	Implementation of IPM / crop protection campaign	11 (18.76)	10 (17.24)	9 (15.52)	3 (5.17)	3 (5.17)	22 (37.93)
2	Watershed Development Programme	8 (13.79)	20 (34.48)	11 (18.97)	2 (3.45)	12 (20.69)	10 (17.24)
3.	Development of irrigation facilities	17 (29.31)	19 (32.76)	12 (20.69)	-	8 (13.79)	6 (10.34)
4.	Establishing dairy/ cooperative dairy society	33 (56.90)	9 (15.52)	3 (5.17)	2 (3.45)	4 (6.90)	9 (15.52)
5	Nala bunding/ land leveling programme	32 (55.17)	20 (34.48)	11 (18.97)	6 (10.34)	12 (20.68)	17 (29.31)
6	Organizing farmers rally / seminar	19 (32.76)	11 (18.97)	8 (13.79)	3 (5.17)	9 (15.52)	8 (13.79)
7.	Organizing field day	34 (58.62)	11 (18.97)	5 (8.62)	1 (1.72)	2 (3.45)	13 (22.41)
8.	Organizing farmers tour	13 (22.41)	7 (12.07)	15 (25.86)	9 (15.52)	9 (15.52)	10 (17.24)
9.	Organizing field trips	12 (20.69)	12 (20.69)	7 (12.07)	5 (8.62)	13 (22.41)	9 (15.52)
10.	Organizing farmers' training	22 (37.93)	9 (15.52)	5 (8.62)	1 (1.72)	5 (8.62)	16 (27.59)
11.	Forming farmers' club	58 (100.00)	-	-	-	-	-
12.	Organizing rally for loan proposals	58 (100.00)	-	-	-	-	-
13.	Organizing animal disease diagnosis camp	22 (37.93)	8 (13.79)	8 (13.79)	3 (5.17)	10 (17.24)	11 (18.97)
14.	Organizing artificial insemination programme	12 (20.69)	6 (10.34)	3 (5.17)	-	2 (3.45)	35 (60.35)
15.	Constructing Godowns and ware houses	58 (100.00)	-	-	-	-	-
16.	Establishing farm produce marketing association	58 (100.00)	-	-	-	-	-
17.	Implementing seed village scheme	58 (100.00)	-	-	-	-	-
18.	Establishing farm radio club	58 (100.00)	-	-	-	-	-
19.	Organizing farm television club	58 (100.00)	-	-	-	-	-
20.	Organizing farmers' group discussion	9 (15.32)	11 (18.97)	12 (20.69)	6 (10.34)	6 (10.34)	14 (24.14)
21.	Vermicompost production	58 (100.00)	-	-	-	-	-
22.	Goat keeping	14 (24.14)	11 (18.97)	9 (15.52)	2 (3.45)	4 (6.90)	18 (31.03)

(Figures in the parentheses indicates percentages)

members of Gram Panchayat helped in planning the programme namely 'celebration of religious ceremonies' (41.38 per cent) and 'or Yatra'.

Nearly one fifth of the woman members of Gram Panchayat helped in raising fund and allocation of funds to the programmes namely 'celebrating religious ceremonies' (20.68 per cent) and 'organizing fairs' (18.97 per cent). More than half (55.17 per cent) of the woman members of Gram Panchayat helped in implementation of 'celebration of religious ceremonies'.

Majority (72.41 per cent) of the woman members of Gram Panchayat had not participated in imple-

mentation of 'anti-untouchability programme', followed by 'construction, maintenance and repairs of temple' (48.28 per cent) and 'holding sports and cultural competitions' (41.38 per cent). Nearly two-fifth (39.66 per cent) of the woman members of Gram Panchayat reported that 'holding sports and cultural competitions' was not applicable to them followed by 'construction, maintenance and repairs of temple' (22.41 per cent).

Participation in agricultural development programmes

The data regarding participation of the woman members of Gram Panchayat in agricultural development programmes are presented in Table 3.

Table 4: Participation in daily working of Gram Panchayat

(n=58)

Sl. No.	Daily activities of Gram Panchayat	Respondents Number	Percentage
1.	Gram Panchayat meeting		
a.	Attendance to meeting		
1.	Never	-	-
2.	Sometimes	10	17.24
3.	Always	48	82.76
b.	Participation in discussion		
1.	No participation	-	-
2.	Talk if requested	7	12.08
3.	Respond only as Yes / No	18	31.03
4.	Talk as much needed	35	60.34
5.	Offer suggestions	42	72.41
6.	My suggestions accepted.	39	67.24
7.	My suggestions are not only accepted but are treated as most important.	14	24.13
2.	Gramsabha meeting		
a.	Attendance to Gramsabha meeting		
1.	Never	-	-
2.	Sometimes	5	8.62
3.	Always	53	91.38
b.	Participation in discussion		
1.	No participation	7	12.07
2.	Talk if requested	9	15.52
3.	Respond only as Yes / No	12	20.69
4.	Talk as much needed	31	53.45
5.	Offer suggestions	39	67.24
6.	My suggestions accepted.	37	63.79
7.	My suggestions are not only accepted but are treated as most important.	11	18.97

It is revealed from Table 3 that more than one third of the woman members of Gram Panchayat motivated people for participation in 'watershed development programme' (34.48 per cent), 'nala bunding/land leveling programme' (34.48 per cent) and 'development of irrigation facilities' (32.76 per cent). One fourth (25.86 per cent) of the woman members of Gram Panchayat helped in planning the 'farmers' tour', followed by 'development of irrigation facilities' (20.69 per cent) and 'organizing farmers' group discussion' (20.69 per cent).

It was further observed that 15.52 per cent of woman members of Gram Panchayat helped in raising and allocation of funds for 'organization of farmers' tours', followed by 'nala bunding/land leveling programme' (10.34 per cent) and 'organizing farmers' group discussion' (10.34 per cent). Less than one fourth of the woman members of Gram Panchayat helped in implementation of 'field trips' (22.41 per cent), 'nala bunding/land leveling programme' (20.69 per cent) and 'watershed development programme' (20.69 per cent). More than three fifth (60.35 per cent) of the woman members of Gram Panchayat had not participated 'organization of artificial insemination programme', followed by 'implementation of IPM/crop protection campaign' (37.93 per cent), 'goat

keeping' (31.03 per cent), 'nala bunding/land leveling programme' (29.31 per cent), 'organizing farmers' training programme' (27.59 per cent) and 'organization of farmers' group discussion' (24.14 per cent).

It is surprising to note that all the woman members of Gram Panchayat reported that different agricultural programmes namely 'forming farmers' club', 'organizing rally for loan proposals', 'construction of godowns and ware houses', 'establishing farm produce marketing association', 'implementing seed village scheme', 'organizing farm radio clubs', 'organizing farm television club', and 'vermicompost production' were not applicable to them as far as their participation in these activities was concerned.

Participation in daily working of Gram Panchayat

The information regarding the participation of woman members of Gram Panchayat in daily working of Gram Panchayat is given in Table 4. It is revealed that Table 4 that majority (82.76 per cent) of the woman members 'always' attended the Gram Panchayat meetings, while 17.24 per cent of them attended the meetings 'sometimes'. As far as their participation in discussion is concerned, majority (72.41 per cent) of them 'offered suggestions', 67.24 per cent stated that their suggestions were accepted', while 60.34 per cent of them 'talked as much needed'.

Table 5: Constraints experienced by the woman Gram Panchayat members in their participation (n=58)

Sl. No.	Constraints	Respondents Number	Percentage
1.	Lack of time due to other work	29	50.00
2.	Lack of knowledge required for participation	22	37.94
3.	Male members interested only in economic issues.	21	36.21
4.	GP office is far away from home	17	29.31
5.	Poor financial position.	16	27.59
6.	Lack of confidence	14	24.14
7.	Less knowledge about agricultural schemes	14	24.14
8.	No interest in GP work	11	18.97
9.	Secondary status in GP being woman member	11	18.97
10.	Lack of co-operation from panchayat members	10	17.24
11.	Illiteracy is main drawback	10	17.24
12.	Belongs to backward class.	4	6.90
13.	Members do not consider suggestions	4	6.90
14.	Lack of finance in GP	3	5.17
15.	Opposition from family members	2	3.45

The Table further revealed that 91.38 per cent woman members 'always' attended Gram Sabha meetings, while 8.62 per cent of them attended Gram Sabha 'sometimes'. Majority (67.24 per cent) of the woman members offered suggestions in Gram Sabha, while 63.79 per cent stated that their suggestions were accepted and 53.45 per cent of them reported that they talked as much needed during discussion.

Constraints experienced by the woman Gram Panchayat members in their participation

The information regarding constraints experienced by the woman members of Gram Panchayat is given in Table 5.

It is revealed from Table 6 that half of the woman members of Gram Panchayat faced the constraint namely, 'lack of time due to other work' (50.00 per cent), followed by 'lack of knowledge required for participation' (37.94 per cent), male members interested only in economic issues' (36.21 per cent), 'GP office is far away from home' (29.31 per cent), 'poor financial position' (27.59 per cent) and 'lack of confidence' and 'less knowledge about agricultural schemes' (24.14 per cent each).

CONCLUSION

It was observed that the participation of woman Gram Panchayat members in village development programmes was highest, followed by religious and cultural programmes and agricultural development programmes. Further, their participation was higher at motivational level, followed by planning, implementation and fund management. It is, therefore, suggested that the woman Gram Panchayat members need to be made aware about various developmental activities/ programmes and they need to be trained in the techniques of motivating people, planning and implementing the programmes and fund management. The low participation of woman Gram

Panchayat members in agricultural development programmes is a point of concern. Moreover, their total ignorance about eight agricultural development activities makes the situation more serious. This calls for immediate attention of the concerned authorities towards sensitization of woman Gram Panchayat members with regard to various agricultural development programmes and the need to motivate them to participate in the agricultural development programmes. The study further pointed out that, by and large, the participation of woman members of Gram Panchayat was maximum in the programmes for which the prizes / incentives were given by the Government. Recognizing the role of women in agriculture and the role of elected woman Panchayat members in agricultural development, it is suggested that the Government may think of launching a competitive campaign for agricultural development in the State. This would promote the spirit of competition among the people's representatives, as well as, the villagers to work for agricultural development.

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