

Constraints Experienced by Elected Representative of Gram Panchayats in Haryana

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This paper reveals the constraints experienced by elected representatives of Gram Panchayats for six villages. Almost all the leaders reported lack of knowledge about their duties, rights and even rules of PRT's and attitude of bureaucracy as major constraints. Ninety two presents leaders reported that corruption is all pervasive in all official dealings. Eighty percent leaders said that lack of funds / resources is a major constraint in undertaking various developmental works. Factionalism in the village was another constraint reported by 77 percent leaders. Sixty nine percent leaders reported that female representatives were not allowed to go to attend meetings of Gram Panchayats. Forty six percent leaders reported that they faced a lot of problems while removing encroachments.

Keywords: Gram Panchayats, Constraints, 73rd Amendment.

Introduction: The 73rd Amendment Act was passed in December 1992 and it comes into effect from April 24, 1993. This amendment makes a major step forward in the establishment of new PRTs in India by making elections mandatory. It enables the state government to devolve powers, responsibilities and finances to the panchayats and ensure one third reservation of the total seats for women and SCs and STs. A peeping in to the working of grass roots democracy after the passing of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, one cannot write the success story of the functioning of

Gram Panchayats. However, some progress have been noted. The socio-cultural set up of society and belief in traditional value system continue to perpetrate the hierarchical, unjust and exploitative social way of life even today in country side. The outcome is illiteracy, ignorance, extreme poverty and exploitative situations and the leadership it produces has been hardly interested in changing the age old social system. The multiparty system which has emerged in the past independence era, produced pyramid like rent seeking structures of political parties, the command and the control system

of the bureaucracy and the organized class caste interests. To examine the situation afresh after decades of the constitutional amendments the researcher thought it proper to examine constraints from various perspectives i.e. research studies, filed observations, leaders opinions etc.

Research Methodology- To investigate constraints responsible for poor performance of Gram Panchayats the present study was conducted in Haryana state. The Bhiwani district and Karnal district were selected purposively from the dry zone and the wet zone respectively. Three villages Phurlak, Dinger Majra, Raipur Jatan were selected purposively from Gharunda block of Karnal

district comprising of general, women and scheduled caste categories respectively. On the other hand Bigowa, Sarupgarh and Dhani Phogat from Panchayats were selected from Dadri –I block of the Bhiwani district thereby representing general, women and scheduled caste sarpanches respectively. All formal leaders represented by sarpanches and panches constituted respondents for the study. For gathering primary data a structured interview schedule was developed. Personal interview technique was used by the researcher to collect data. The data so collected were coded, tabulated and suitably analyzed by calculating percentages.

Results and Discussions: Table 1 details constraints as reported by the elected representatives of the PRIs.

Table 1: Constraints Experienced By Elected Representatives

Sr. No	Constraints	Experienced		
		Yes (%)	No(%)	Total
1	Ignorance of the Rules	87(100)	0(0)	87(100)
2	Bureaucratic obstructions	87(100)	0(0)	87(100)
3	All pervasive corruption	80(92)	7(8)	87(100)
4	Lack of funds/ resources	70(80)	17(20)	87(100)
5	Factionalism among villagers	67(77)	20(23)	87(100)
6	Caste considerations / biasness	60(69)	27(31)	87(100)
7	Gender biasness in Panchyats working	53(61)	34(39)	87(100)

8	Lack of cooperation in removing encroachment	40(46)	47(54)	87(100)
9	Authoritarian outlook of Sarpanches	1(1)	86(99)	87(100)

Almost all the leaders reported that lack of knowledge about their duties, rights and even rules of the PRIS\'. This has been further enhanced by massive illiteracy amongst the rural people and more so amongst women and the scheduled caste people. Singh et al 1995 also noted similar situation in their studies on PRIs.

All the leaders reported that attitude of the bureaucracy as major constraint in pursuing developmental activities. There seems to be no political will to monitor the bureaucracy by the rulers. They put up obstructions rather than settle problems at the elected PR representatives. Ninety two percent leaders reported that corruption is all pervasive in all official dealings. It discourses and demoralizes the rural leaders to take development work with zeal.

To implement development works, lot of funds/ resources are required. According to the data presented in table 1 80 percent leaders said that lack of funds/ resources is a major constraint in undertaken various developmental works. Vithal 1996,

Sharma and Khan 1997 also highlighted financial constraints in the process of rural development projects by Gram Panchyats.

Factionalism in the village was another constraint reported by 77 percent leaders. Gowda (1998) also revealed that factionalism as a major constraint in promoting developmental activities at the grass roots.

An appraisal of data reveals that 69 percent leaders reported that the female representatives of the GPs were not allowed to go to attend meetings of Gram Panchyat as well of the Gram Sabha which is contravention of the Act. These elected females were represented by their husbands / sons in these meetings in most of the cases.

Forty six percent leaders reported that they faced a lot of problems while removing encroachment on village common land. Mor (2004) reported that cultivable and non-cultivable village common lands in Haryana are substantial and most of it is encroached by the villagers.

It was noted that a small population (1%) leaders reported that Sarpanches behaved in all authoritarian manner. He did not even inform Gram Panchayat members about meetings etc. well in time, which is a naked violation of the Act.

The researcher noted that Gram Sabha meetings were not organized properly by the Gram Panchayats. The role of Gram Sachives was also reported as un-desirable by the formal leaders. In fact they misguide and force the Sarpanch to do undesirable acts against their curiosity most of the time.

The study also reveals that panchayats were involved mainly in construction works and give negligence importance to other development activities related to socio economic and cultural development of villages.

To avoid constraints training is suggested as the most important tool for capacity building of Panchayats representatives. Mass-media also can lay a vital role in awareness generation regarding panchayats. Punctuality, sincerity to duty and honest ought to be ensured by offices and the political bosses for effective panchayat working. Mobilization of own financial resources is essential to avoid constraint of

resources. Friendly contests, common village interests and well being should be made ideal in the working of PRIs. To promote women's participation a lot of encouragement and support is required in a male dominated society like Haryana. To promote effective functioning of Gram Panchayats it is suggested that the state government should take strict measures, legal and otherwise to remove such encroachments. The sure way to change the social character of the Gram Sabha and Panchayats at all level is to concentrate on education and awareness building (Political education)

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