

## ROLES PERFORMED BY THE MEN AND WOMEN GRAM PANCHAYAT MEMBERS

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### ABSTRACT

*Panchayati Raj is also called a three tier democratic local self-government functioning at village, taluka and district level. The scheme of Panchayati Raj was advocated by Mahatma Gandhi. The 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 provided Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) a constitutional status and also reservation of one third seats in panchayats for women, schedule caste and schedule tribes. The village panchayat is a basic and grass root institution for the all round development of the village people. The roles of gram panchayat members become very important in helping the members of the community to develop village on social, economical and political dimensions. The success of any group or institution largely depends on the understanding the role of leadership. Leadership roles are varying from situation to situation and in accordance with the nature and type of the job to be performed.*

**Keywords :** gram panchayat members, role

### INTRODUCTION

The constitutional 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment act 1992 for Panchayati Raj institution was passed by the parliament on 24<sup>th</sup> April 1993. This act provided Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) a constitutional status, making Panchayati Raj election a regular phenomenon after an interval of every five years. It makes the provision for reservation of seats for SCs/STs, OBCs and women for different levels.

Village communities have been in existence in India for over centuries and panchayat has been an intimate part of Indian culture since ancient time. The word 'panch' literary means the group of five persons. The whole village had confidence in panch and always believed that whatever panch does is always in the interest of the village. Therefore, we have a proverb "*Voice of panch is the voice of god*". Then in 1958 to encourage democratic decentralisation the Panchayati Raj system was evolved. This system was operated in three levels; in village level the gram panchayat, in block or taluka level there is taluka panchayat and in district level there is district panchayat. Gram panchayats are supposed to do numbers of functions like creating drinking water facilities

for village people as well as animals, scavenging of roads in the villages, maintenance of government properties, lighting arrangement in villages, spread of education including primary education in villages, planning of rural development, supervision of crops in the outskirts of village, planning for agricultural reforms, agricultural development in villages, activities on removing religious differences among village people, etc. Thus, village panchayat is responsible for the harmonious development of its territory by undertaking such functions and activities.

The gram panchayat became pivotal for the development in the village level and the members of the gram panchayat act like a group leader to facilitate the development. Gram panchayat members help people in crisis management. One important role which a formal leader has to play in community is that of initiator. Gram panchayat members also act as reference individuals in acceptance of new innovation and technique of development. Similarly he also acts as a promoter, mainly in remoulding the whole social chariot and group building activities by followers. Gram panchayat members also play an important role in promotion and protection of group values, serve as mediator

in managing conflict among the member, they create a pleasant group atmosphere and help individual member to adjust with the group. By and large, they are the interpreters of their follower's wishes, opinions, feelings and well beings.

With an increase concern of gender equality the women are encouraged to participate in the activities of gram panchayat. This effort was boosted with the enactment of constitution 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act of 1992. The women constitute about half of Indian population. Despite this, women have been subjected to discrimination of the gender- bias in the social outlook and social practices resulting in equality of status and opportunities in social economic and political spheres. This study was designed with a view to comparative assessment of the role performance by the men and women gram panchayat. The objectives of the investigation were to study the roles performed by the men and women gram panchayat members and to find out the association of selected profile characteristics of the respondents with their role performance.

**OBJECTIVE**

To know the roles performed by the men and women gram panchayat members

**METHODOLOGY**

Ex-post facto research design was used for the study. The study was carried out in Banaskantha district of Gujarat state. The district has highest number of talukas as well as gram panchayats in North Gujarat. The district has 14 talukas and 828 gram panchayats. From 14 talukas, Palanpur, Deesa, Kankrej and Vadgam were purposively selected for the study as these talukas had more number of village panchayats. From the selected talukas five gram panchayats

having highest number of gram panchayat members were selected purposively. From each selected gram panchayat three men members and three women members were selected randomly. Thus, 60 men members and 60 women members were selected for the study.

To collect data from the gram panchayat members a structure schedule was developed. A scale developed by Saiyad and Patel (2000) was used with slight modification to measure the role performance of men and women gram panchayat members. In the scale total 44 statements were there reflecting eight major roles performed by the gram panchayat member. Among the statements 37 were positive and 7 statements were negative and weighed in following manner, on three point continuum: for positive statement, strongly agree=3, agree=2, disagree=1 and the scoring was reverse for the negative statement. The total score of each respondent was calculated for each role. The score obtained by all the respondents for all roles performed by the gram panchayat members were summed up and the respondents were categorized into three groups viz., Low performance, medium performance and high performance group.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The profile characteristics of the respondents of the study are presented in the following table. The table clearly indicates that the most of the respondents were from middle age group, however there was considerable number of young aged women members in the selected village panchayat. Most of the respondents were educated upto secondary level of education, had 5 to 10 years of experiences, medium to high level of annual income, medium level of mass media exposure and cosmopolitaness, medium level of political contact and medium to high level of self confidence.

**Table 1: The profile characteristics of the respondents of the study**

**n=120**

Sr. No.	Independent variable	Category	Men members (n=60)	Women members (n=60)
1	Age	Young age (Up to 35 years)	6 (10.00)	19 (31.67)
		Middle age (36 to 50 years)	31 (51.67)	23 (38.33)
		Old age (Above 50 years)	23 (38.33)	18 (30.00)
2	Education	Illiterate	01 (1.67)	05 (8.33)
		Primary education (Up to 7 <sup>th</sup> std.)	16 (26.66)	18 (30.00)
		Secondary education (8 <sup>th</sup> to 10 <sup>th</sup> std.)	24 (40.00)	21 (35.00)
		Higher secondary education (11 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> std.)	7 (11.67)	11 (18.34)
		College education	12 (20.00)	5 (8.33)

3	Experience as leader	Low (Upto 5 years)	09 (15.00)	08 (13.33)
		Medium (Between 5 to 10 years)	41 (68.33)	43 (71.67)
		High (Above 10 years)	10 (16.67)	09 (15.00)
4	Annual income	Low (Up to Rs. 50,000)	09 (15.00)	10 (16.67)
		Medium (Rs. 50,001 to Rs. 1,00,000)	26 (43.33)	33 (55.00)
		High (Above Rs. 1,00,000)	25 (41.67)	17 (28.33)
5	Mass media exposure	Low (Upto 7 score)	07 (11.67)	09 (15.00)
		Medium (in between 8 to 11 score)	45 (75.00)	47 (78.33)
		High (Above 11 score)	08 (13.33)	4 (6.67)
6	Cosmopolitaness	Low (Upto 11 score)	07 (11.67)	09 (15.00)
		Medium (In between 12 to 18 score)	45 (75.00)	47 (78.33)
		High (Above 18 score)	08 (13.33)	04 (6.67)
7	Political contact	Low (Upto 8 score)	05 (8.33)	08 (13.33)
		Medium (In between 9 to 12 score)	48 (80.00)	46 (76.67)
		High (Above 12 score)	07 (11.67)	06 (10.00)
8	Self confidence	Low (Upto 26 score)	09 (15.00)	07 (11.67)
		Medium (In between 27 to 50 score)	41 (68.33)	40 (66.67)
		High (Above 50 score)	10 (16.67)	13 (21.66)

The role performance of the gram panchayat member was measured with the help of scale developed by Saiyad and Patel (2000), which had been appropriately modified for the present study. The result in this regard is presented in table 2.

**Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to their overall role performance**

**n=120**

Sr. No.	Category	Men members (n=60)		Women members (n=60)	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
		1	Low (Upto 73 score)	13	21.66
2	Medium (In between 73 to 105 score)	28	46.67	40	66.67
3	High (Above 105 score)	19	31.67	12	20.00
	Mean	88.98		88.45	
	SD	16.38		15.97	

'Z' Value : 3.78

Significant at 1 % level

It is evident from the data presented in Table 2 that 46.67 per cent of men gram panchayat members had medium level of overall role performance, followed by 31.67 per cent and 21.66 per cent of them had high and low level of role performance, respectively. In case of women gram panchayat members, majority (66.67 per cent) of them had medium level of overall role performance, followed by 20.00 per cent and 13.33 per cent of them had high and low level of role performance, respectively.

Thus, it can be concluded that most (66.67 per cent) of the women gram panchayat member and considerable portion (46.67 per cent) of men gram panchayat members had medium level of overall role performance. To assess the difference between two groups 'Z' test was applied and the calculated 'Z' value when compared with the table value at 1 per cent level of significance it showed a significant difference, which means there was significant difference in role performance by the men and women gram panchayat members in the selected gram panchayats. This finding is in line with the finding of Saiyad and Patel (2004), Rathi (2005), Diwan (2007), Mistry (2009) and Kher (2014).

To find out the association between the selected profile characteristics of the respondents with their overall role performance correlation coefficient was calculated and the data are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Association between profile characteristics of the men and women gram panchayat members and their role performance n=120**

Sr. No.	Variables	Correlation-coefficient (r-value)	
		Men members (n=60)	Women members (n=60)
X <sub>1</sub>	Age	0.264 *	0.315 *
X <sub>2</sub>	Education	0.297 *	0.314 *
X <sub>3</sub>	Experience as leader	0.259 *	0.276 *
X <sub>4</sub>	Annual income	0.053 NS	0.061 NS
X <sub>5</sub>	Mass media exposure	0.254 *	0.309 *
X <sub>6</sub>	Cosmopolite	0.192 NS	0.092 NS
X <sub>7</sub>	Political contact	0.362**	0.260 *
X <sub>8</sub>	Self confidence	0.259 *	0.331 **

\*\* 0.01 level of Significance \* 0.05 level of Significance

From the above table it can be clearly concluded that that political contact of the men members and the self confidence of the women members had significant association with their role performance. All the other selected

variables except annual income and the cosmopolitaness were significantly associated with the role performance of the members. The annual income and the cosmopolitaness were not significantly related with role performance. All the selected variables were positively correlated with role performance but the level of association varied.

## CONCLUSION

The result of this study indicates that the women gram panchayat members perform better than the male gram panchayat members. In case of both members attributes, such as, age, education, experience as leader, mass media exposure, political contact and self confidence had positive and significant relationship with role performance but the annual income and cosmopolitaness had positive but non-significant relationship with role performance.

The results, particularly the relationship between profile characteristics of the men and women gram panchayat members with their role performance would help the extension workers, planners, policy makers and scientists to concentrate their efforts for the development programmes in appropriate way.

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