

PANCHAYAT DYNAMICS: COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF MEMBER'S PROFILE AND THEIR ROLE PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in the Chhotaudepr district of Gujarat state and involved 120 Gram panchayat members as respondent. Ex-post facto research design was used in the study. The results indicated that 65.83 per cent of the residents were in the middle age group, while 50.83 per cent had a primary level of school education. Furthermore, 65.83 per cent of the gra panchayat members had medium size of families with five to eight members, and 58.33 per cent of them had up to 5 years of experience as gram panchayat member. Hence, 89.16 per cent of gram panchayat members belonged to scheduled Tribe category and 47.50 per cent of them had membership in one organization. In case of political contact, it was observed that 97.50 per cent, 80.00 per cent and 58.30 per cent of the gram panchayat members had no any contact with minister, MP and MLA respectively. In terms of annual income, 47.50 per cent of the respondents had annual income up to Rs. 1,00,000/- and 48.33 per cent of them were engaged in agriculture + animal husbandry as occupation. 45.00 per cent of the gram panchayat members had high level of knowledge about gram panchayat work, while 42.50 per cent of them had high level of co-ordination ability. Additionally, 47.50 per cent of the gram panchayat members had high level of communication ability. The independent variables viz. knowledge about gram panchayat work, co-ordination ability and communication ability had positive and highly significant correlation with the role performance of gram panchayat members, whereas age, education, size of family, experience as gram panchayat member, caste, social participation, political contact, annual income and occupation failed to show any significant correlation with their role performance.

Keywords: cotton, farmers, integrated pest management

INTRODUCTION

The Panchayati Raj system is an ancient concept of local self-government in India. The term "Raj" means "rule," and "Panchayat" means "assembly" of five. The system is based on the idea that all members of a village community have faith in the Panchayat, which comprises five members elected by the villagers. The Panchayat is considered to be the voice of God in the village, and its decisions are believed to be in the best interest of the community. Village communities have existed in India for centuries, and the Panchayat has been an integral part of Indian culture since ancient times. However, during British rule, these traditions were abolished, and new rules were created to control local bodies for tax collection purposes. After India gained independence, the Constitution was framed, and Mahatma Gandhi advocated for the Panchayati Raj system to be the foundation of India's political system.

In 1957, the Government of India appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Balwant Rai Mehta to review the impact of Community Development and

National Extension Service programs. The committee found that these programs failed to achieve their objectives due to the lack of involvement and active participation of rural people. As a result, the committee recommended establishing a system of local self-government to maximize people's involvement and participation. In 1958, the Panchayati Raj system was introduced for the first time as per the Bombay Gram Panchayat Act, 1958. The state of Rajasthan was the first to adopt the system and introduced it in Nagaur district. The system comprises a three-tier structure of self-government, with a Gram Panchayat at the village level, a Panchayat Samiti at the block level, and a Zilla Parishad at the district level. This system aims to empower local communities and enable them to participate in the decision-making process for their development.

Thus, the Panchayati Raj system is an ancient concept of local self-government in India, which has been revived after independence. The system aims to empower local communities by giving them a voice in decision-making processes for their development. Keeping this factor preset investigation carried out with following objective.

OBJECTIVES

- (1) To study the profile of gram panchayat members of tribal areas
- (2) To study the relationship between the profile of gram panchayat members and their role performance

METHODOLOGY

The present investigation was conducted in the Chhotaudepur district of Gujarat state, India, which falls under the jurisdiction of Anand Agricultural University, Anand, Gujarat. The study was conducted in two tribal-dominated talukas, Chhotaudepur and Pavi-Jetpur, out of the total six talukas in the district. A purposive sampling

technique was used to select the two talukas, and a random sampling technique was used to select 12 villages from each taluka. A total of 120 gram panchayat members were randomly selected from the 24 villages (5 from each village) for the study. An ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study, which involved collecting data after the event has occurred (Kerlinger, F. N., 1976). To collect data, an interview schedule was developed based on the objectives of the study, and the respondents were personally interviewed. The responses were recorded and transferred to a master sheet, which was compiled, scored, tabulated, and analyzed statistically. The data were interpreted using frequency, percentage, and Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation to provide answers to the specific research objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**Profile of the farmers**

Table 1: Distribution of gram panchayat members according to their personal, socio-economical, communicational and psychological characteristics (n = 120)

| Sr. No | Category | Frequency | Per cent |
|--|---|-----------|----------|
| (I) Personal Characteristics | | | |
| 1 | Age | | |
| | Young age (Up to 35 years) | 14 | 11.67 |
| | Middle age (36 to 50 years) | 79 | 65.83 |
| | Old age (Above 50 years) | 27 | 22.50 |
| 2 | Education | | |
| | College education | 04 | 03.00 |
| | Higher school (11 th and 12 th) | 11 | 09.17 |
| | Secondary school (9 th and 10 th std) | 28 | 23.33 |
| | Primary school (upto 8 th std) | 61 | 50.83 |
| | Illiterate | 16 | 13.34 |
| 3 | Family size | | |
| | Small size (Up to 4 members) | 24 | 20.00 |
| | Medium size (5 to 8 members) | 79 | 65.83 |
| | Large size (Above 8 members) | 17 | 14.17 |
| 4 | Experience as gram panchayat member | | |
| | Up to 5 years | 70 | 58.33 |
| | 6 to 10 years | 44 | 36.67 |
| | 11 to 15 years | 06 | 05.00 |
| | Above 15 years | 00 | 00.00 |
| (II) Socio-economical Characteristics | | | |
| 5 | Caste | | |
| | General (non-reserved) | 00 | 00.00 |
| | Other backward caste (OBC) | 04 | 03.33 |
| | Scheduled caste (SC) | 09 | 07.50 |
| | Scheduled tribe (ST) | 107 | 89.16 |
| 6 | Social participation | | |
| | No membership | 05 | 04.16 |
| | Membership in one organization | 57 | 47.50 |
| | Membership in more than one organizations | 44 | 36.67 |
| | Membership along with position holding in the organization | 14 | 11.67 |

| Sr. No | Category | Frequency | Per cent |
|---|--|-----------|----------|
| 8 | Annual income | | |
| | Up to ₹ 1,00,000/- | 57 | 47.50 |
| | ₹ 1, 00,001/- to ₹ 2,00,000/- | 43 | 35.83 |
| | ₹ 2,00,001/- to ₹ 3,00,000/- | 20 | 16.67 |
| | Above ₹ 3,00,000/- | 00 | 00.00 |
| 9 | Occupation | | |
| | Agriculture | 24 | 20.00 |
| | Agriculture + Animal husbandry | 58 | 48.33 |
| | Agriculture + Animal husbandry + Business | 18 | 15.00 |
| | Agriculture + Animal husbandry + Service | 05 | 04.17 |
| | Animal husbandry + Business | 07 | 05.83 |
| | Agriculture + Business | 08 | 06.67 |
| (III) Psychological Characteristic | | | |
| 10 | Knowledge about gram panchayat work | | |
| | Very low (Up to 4 score) | 00 | 00.00 |
| | Low (5 to 8 score) | 03 | 02.50 |
| | Medium (9 to 12 score) | 43 | 35.83 |
| | High (13 to 16 score) | 54 | 45.00 |
| | Very high (17 to 20 score) | 20 | 16.67 |
| 11 | Co-ordination ability | | |
| | Very low (Up to 10 score) | 01 | 00.83 |
| | Low (11 to 13 score) | 05 | 04.17 |
| | Medium (14 to 18 score) | 46 | 38.33 |
| | High (19 to 21 score) | 51 | 52.50 |
| | Very high (Above 22 score) | 17 | 14.17 |
| 12 | Communication ability | | |
| | Very low (Up to 13 score) | 02 | 01.67 |
| | Low (14 to 19 score) | 09 | 07.50 |
| | Medium (20 to 28 score) | 39 | 32.50 |
| | High (29 to 34 score) | 57 | 47.50 |
| | Very high (35 to 40 score) | 13 | 10.83 |

(I) Personal characteristics**(1) Age**

Age is an important demographic characteristic that has a significant impact on an individual's physical and psychological development, interests, needs, and work capacity. For effective role performance of gram panchayat members, it is crucial to consider their age. Therefore, data were collected on the age of the respondents, and the findings are presented in Table 1. The results indicate that 65.83 per cent of the gram panchayat members belonged to the middle age group, followed by 22.50 per cent and 11.67 per cent who belonged to the old and young age groups, respectively. The predominance of the middle age group may be attributed to the fact that this is a stage in life when individuals have

to bear greater social and economic responsibilities. This finding is consistent with the results reported by Jadhav *et al.* (2011) and Singh *et al.* (2016).

(2) Education

Education is a crucial factor that can bring about positive changes in human behavior. It enhances an individual's mental abilities, improves their decision-making skills, and enables them to perform their roles more effectively. In this study, the formal education level of gram panchayat members was assessed, and the data are presented in Table 1 indicate that 50.83 per cent of the respondents had primary level of education, followed by 23.33 per cent with secondary level of education. 13.34 per cent were illiterate, and 09.17 per cent had higher secondary level of education.

Only 03.33 per cent had a college level of education. These findings suggest that nearly three-fourths (74.16 per cent) of the respondents had education levels ranging from primary to secondary. This may be due to the availability of educational facilities up to the secondary school level either in their own village or in a nearby village. These findings are in line with the results reported by Singh *et al.* (2016).

(3) Family size

The influence of family size on the role performance of gram panchayat members was examined as it is well known that an individual's thoughts and actions are influenced by their family as a single entity. The data collected and presented in Table 1 indicate that a majority (65.83 per cent) of the respondents had a medium-sized family, while 20.00 and 14.17 per cent of the respondents had small and large family sizes, respectively. This suggests that the availability of time for panchayat work might be affected by family size, particularly in the case of large families. The results also suggest that the village people in Chhotaudepur district may still adhere to traditional joint family systems, which could explain the prevalence of medium-sized families among gram panchayat members. This finding is consistent with the findings of Singh *et al.* (2019).

(4) Experience as gram panchayat member

Experience is an essential characteristic that allows an individual to acquire knowledge and skills, and guides them towards achieving perfection. The experience of serving as a gram panchayat member can have a significant impact on an individual's behavior and their ability to navigate specific situations. In light of this, data was gathered on the respondents' experiences, and the results, as presented in Table 1 indicate that slightly over half of the gram panchayat members surveyed had served for up to five years, while 36.67 per cent and 05.00 per cent had served for 6-10 years and 11-15 years, respectively. None had served for over 15 years. Therefore, it can be inferred that the majority of respondents (58.33 per cent) were first-time gram panchayat members, while the remaining respondents had served one or two terms. This finding aligns with those reported by Chaudhary (2013).

(II) Socio-economical characteristics

(5) Caste

A person's behavior may be influenced by their inherited attributes based on the caste they are born into. To examine the influence of caste on gram panchayat members'

behavioral aspects, the members were categorized into four groups based on the government's caste-based reservation system: scheduled caste, scheduled tribe, other backward caste, and non-reserved (general) category. The data presented in Table 1 reveal that the majority (89.16 per cent) of gram panchayat members surveyed belonged to the scheduled tribe category, while only 07.50 per cent and 03.33 per cent belonged to the scheduled caste and other backward caste categories, respectively. None of the respondents belonged to the general category. This result can be attributed to the fact that the Chhotaudepur district is a tribal area, and the majority of the population, particularly in the selected talukas, belongs to the Rathava community, which falls under the scheduled tribe category.

(6) Social participation

The term "social participation" in this study refers to the involvement of gram panchayat members in local formal or informal organizations. Active social participation can facilitate gram panchayat members in staying updated with community affairs and gaining exposure to useful ideas and methods, thereby improving their role performance. With this perspective in mind, data on the social participation of gram panchayat members was collected and presented in Table 1. The data indicates that slightly less than half (47.50 per cent) of gram panchayat members had membership in one organization, while 36.67 per cent were members of more than one organization. Only 04.16 per cent of gram panchayat members were observed to have no membership in any other organization. Additionally, 11.66 per cent of gram panchayat members held positions in these organizations. As a result, it can be concluded that a significant majority (95.84 per cent) of gram panchayat members had membership in at least one organization other than the gram panchayat. The presence of various cooperatives in the villages provides opportunities for gram panchayat members to be part of such organizations, which may explain these results. This finding is consistent with findings reported by Chaudhary (2013), and Jadhav *et al.* (2011).

(7) Political contact

The political communication between the members of the gram panchayat and higher-ranking officials, such as Ministers, MLAs, MPs, District and Taluka Presidents, can positively impact their ability to address issues within their communities. This interaction appears to have an influence on the role performance of the gram panchayat members. Detailed information regarding the political contact of the respondents can be found in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of gram panchayat members according to their political contact

(n=120)

| Sr. No. | Contact with | Level of contact | | | | | | | |
|---------|-------------------------------------|------------------|-------|------------------|-------|-----------------|-------|------------|-------|
| | | Intimate contact | | Moderate contact | | Primary contact | | No contact | |
| | | F | P | F | P | F | P | F | P |
| 1 | Minister | 00 | 00.00 | 00 | 00.00 | 03 | 02.50 | 117 | 97.50 |
| 2 | MP | 00 | 00.00 | 00 | 00.00 | 24 | 20.00 | 96 | 80.00 |
| 3 | MLA | 00 | 00.00 | 08 | 06.67 | 42 | 35.00 | 70 | 58.33 |
| 4 | District/Taluka panchayat president | 06 | 05.00 | 22 | 18.33 | 48 | 40.00 | 44 | 36.67 |

A thorough examination of Table 2 reveals that a significant majority (97.50 per cent) of gram panchayat members had no contact whatsoever with ministers, while only a small 2.50 per cent had primary contact with ministers. In the case of political contact with MPs, it was observed that 80.00 per cent of gram panchayat members had no contact with MPs, while only 20.00 per cent had primary contact with them. Furthermore, in terms of political contact with MLAs, more than half (58.33 per cent) reported having no contact, whereas 35.00 per cent had primary contact. Only 06.67 per cent of gram panchayat members had moderate contact with MLAs. None of them were found to have intimate contact with ministers, MPs, or MLAs. In terms of their political contact with District/Taluka panchayat president, it was observed that 40.00 per cent of gram panchayat members had primary contact, followed by 36.67 per cent who reported having no contact with them. Furthermore, 18.33 per cent and 05.00 per cent of gram panchayat members had moderate and intimate contact with the District/Taluka panchayat president, respectively.

Thus, it can be concluded that a significant proportion of gram panchayat members had low levels of contact with ministers, MPs, or MLAs, ranging from half to a majority, while their level of contact with District/Taluka panchayat president was comparatively better. The level of contact followed an increasing order from ministers to District/Taluka panchayat president, which is logically consistent. This finding is similar to that reported by Chaudhary (2013).

(8) Annual income

Annual income is the total income earned by the gram panchayat members through all the sources annually, which is one of the parameters of the socio economic status of the gram panchayat members. According to the level of annual income, the respondents were classified into four categories as shown in Table 1. As it is observed from the data depicted in Table 9, less than half (47.50 per cent) of the respondents had annual income up to ₹ 1,00,000/- followed by 35.83 per cent of them with annual income in the range of ₹ 1,00,001/- to ₹ 2,00,000/-. Only 16.66 per cent of the respondents had

annual income in the range of ₹ 2,00,001/- to ₹ 3,00,000/-, while none was found in the category of above 3,00,000/- of annual income. Thus, it can be concluded that gram panchayat members in majority (83.33 per cent) had up to ₹ 2,00,000/- income. As revealed through discussion with them, low annual income could be attributed to their low land holding which was the major source of income for them. This finding is more or less similar to the findings reported by Chaudhary (2013).

(9) Occupation

The term “occupation” in this study refers to the various activities that respondents engage in to earn income and sustain their families. The type of occupation that gram panchayat members are involved in may also impact the amount of time they can allocate to gram panchayat work, which in turn can affect their role performance. Considering this, data on the occupation of respondents were collected and the results are presented in Table 1. The data presented in Table 1 indicate that nearly half of the members (48.33 per cent) reported agriculture + animal husbandry as their occupation, followed by agriculture (20.00 per cent), agriculture + animal husbandry + business (15.00 per cent), agriculture + business (06.67 per cent), animal husbandry + business (05.83 per cent), and agriculture + animal husbandry + service (04.17 per cent). Thus, it can be concluded that agriculture and animal husbandry, either jointly or individually, were the major occupations reported by most of the respondents. This finding is partially supported by the findings reported by Singh *et al.* (2019).

(III) Psychological characteristic

(10) Knowledge about gram panchayat work

The term “knowledge” in this investigation refers to the cognitive behavior of an individual, specifically their understanding of gram panchayat work. It is believed that a higher level of knowledge about gram panchayat work is essential for better role perception and improved role performance of gram panchayat members. The data in Table 1 indicate that less than half (45.00 per cent) of the gram

panchayat members had a high level of knowledge about gram panchayat work, while 35.83 per cent and 16.67 per cent had a medium and very high level of knowledge, respectively. Only 02.50 per cent of the gram panchayat members were found to have a low level of knowledge, and none were found to have a very low level of knowledge. In conclusion, the majority of the respondents had a high to medium level of knowledge about gram panchayat work, which could be attributed to their moderate level of education. This finding is consistent with the findings reported by Chaudhary (2013).

(11) Co-ordination ability

The concept of co-ordination ability in this investigation refers to the ability of gram panchayat members to work in a cooperative manner with other members and village people, while maintaining harmonious relationships, in order to achieve the objectives of the gram panchayat. It is believed that co-ordination ability has an impact on their role performance. The data presented in Table 1 reveal that less than half (42.50 per cent) of the gram panchayat members had a high level of co-ordination ability, followed by 38.33 per cent and 14.17 per cent with medium and very high level of co-ordination ability, respectively. Only 4.17 per cent and 00.83 per cent of the gram panchayat members had low and very low level of co-ordination ability, respectively. In summary, the majority (80.83 per cent) of the gram panchayat members demonstrated high to medium level of co-ordination ability, indicating their understanding of the importance of co-ordination and cooperation for effective village development. This finding is partially supported by the findings reported by Chaudhary (2013).

(12) Communication ability

Effective communication ability is considered a strength, especially when working with others. In the context of gram panchayat members, good communication ability is crucial for effective role performance. The data presented in Table 1 reveal that slightly less than half (47.50 per cent) of the gram panchayat members had a high level of communication ability, while 32.50 per cent and 10.83 per cent had medium and very high level of communication ability, respectively. Only 07.50 per cent and 01.67 per cent of the respondents were categorized as having low and very low level of communication ability, respectively. It can be inferred that a majority (80.00 per cent) of the gram panchayat members had high to medium level of communication ability, indicating that they were capable of expressing their ideas clearly, listening to the ideas of others, understanding them properly, and avoiding misunderstandings in communication. It is possible that their moderate level of education and high to medium level of knowledge about their roles might have

contributed to their development of good communication ability. This finding is partially supported by the findings reported by Chaudhary (2013).

Table 3: Relationship between personal, socio-economic and psychological characteristics of the gram panchayat members and their role performance

(n=180)

| Sr. No. | Independent Variables | (' r 'value) |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| X ₁ | Age | 0.102 |
| X ₂ | Education | 0.054 |
| X ₃ | Size of family | 0.022 |
| X ₄ | Experience as gram panchayat member | 0.134 |
| X ₅ | Caste | 0.071 |
| X ₆ | Social participation | 0.118 |
| X ₇ | Political contact | 0.150 |
| X ₈ | Annual income | 0.114 |
| X ₉ | Occupation | 0.034 |
| X ₁₀ | Knowledge about gram panchayat work | 0.245** |
| X ₁₁ | Co-ordination ability | 0.414** |
| X ₁₂ | Communication ability | 0.421** |

* = Significant at 0.05 level

** = Significant at 0.01 level

(1) Age and role performance

The data presented in Table 3 reveal that there was a positive but non-significant relationship ($r=0.102$) between the age of gram panchayat members and their role performance. As a result, the null hypothesis stating that "there is no relationship between age of gram panchayat members and their role performance" is accepted, leading to the conclusion that the age of gram panchayat members did not have a significant influence on their role performance. This finding is similar with the findings of Rathi (2005).

(2) Education and role performance

The data presented in Table 3 indicate that there was a positive but non-significant relationship ($r=0.054$) between the education level of gram panchayat members and their role performance. Consequently, the null hypothesis stating that "there is no relationship between education of gram panchayat members and their role performance" is accepted. In other words, it can be concluded that the formal education attained by the gram panchayat members did not have a significant influence on their role performance. This finding is partially inconsistent with the findings reported by Deshpande *et al.* (2016).

(3) Size of family and role performance

The data presented in Table 3 reveal that there was a positive but non-significant relationship ($r=0.022$) between the family size of gram panchayat members and their role performance. Consequently, the null hypothesis stating that “there is no relationship between family size of gram panchayat members and their role performance” is accepted. This implies that the role performance of gram panchayat members was not affected by changes in their family size, whether it increased or decreased. This finding is consistent with the finding reported by Kumari and Singh (2015) in their respective study.

(4) Experience as gram panchayat member and role performance

Based on the data presented in Table 3, it is evident that there was a positive but non-significant relationship ($r = 0.134$) between the experience of gram panchayat members and their role performance. This supports the acceptance of the null hypothesis that “there is no relationship between experience as gram panchayat members and their role performance”. Thus, it can be concluded that the experience of being a gram panchayat member did not exert any significant influence on their role performance. One possible explanation for this result could be that the majority of gram panchayat members were elected for the first time and had similar years of experience in gram panchayat work. This finding is consistent with the findings reported by Chaudhary (2013) in their respective study.

(5) Caste and role performance

Upon examining Table 3, it is evident that there was a positive but non-significant relationship ($r=0.071$) between the caste of gram panchayat members and their role performance. This leads to the acceptance of the null hypothesis that “there is no relationship between caste of gram panchayat members and their role performance”. It can be inferred that caste did not have any influence on the role performance of gram panchayat members. In other words, a person’s caste did not affect their ability to perform their role effectively, as long as they possessed the necessary traits for effective leadership. This finding is consistent with the findings reported by Diwan (2007) and Rathi (2005) in their respective studies, highlighting that caste should not be a determinant factor in assessing the role performance of gram panchayat members.

(6) Social participation and role performance

From Table 3, it is evident that there was a positive but non-significant correlation ($r=0.118$) between the

social participation of gram panchayat members and their role performance. This leads to the acceptance of the null hypothesis that “there is no relationship between social participation of gram panchayat members and their role performance”. The conclusion drawn from this finding is that social participation did not have any significant influence on the role performance of gram panchayat members. This finding indicating that social participation may not be a determinant factor in assessing the role performance of gram panchayat members. Further research may be required to explore other potential factors that could impact the role performance of gram panchayat members more significantly.

(7) Political contact and role performance

Upon thorough analysis of the data presented in Table 3, it is evident that there was a positive but non-significant correlation ($r=0.150$) between political contact of the gram panchayat members and their role performance. However, this correlation did not reach a level of statistical significance. Thus, based on this finding, the null hypothesis that “there is no relationship between political contact of gram panchayat members and their role performance” is accepted. This suggests that political contact, as measured in this study, did not have a significant influence on the role performance of gram panchayat members. Further research may be warranted to investigate other potential factors that may impact the role performance of gram panchayat members more significantly. It is important to consider that various contextual and situational factors may influence the relationship between political contact and role performance, and further investigation may be required to fully understand this relationship in the specific context of the study. This finding is contrary to the findings reported by Bhabhor (2012).

(8) Annual income and role performance

Analysis of the data presented in Table 3 reveals a positive but non-significant correlation ($r=0.114$) between annual income of the respondents and their role performance. Based on this finding, the null hypothesis that “there is no relationship between annual income of gram panchayat members and their role performance” is accepted, suggesting that annual income did not exert any significant influence on the role performance of gram panchayat members.

(9) Occupation and role performance

The analysis of data presented in Table 3 reveals that there was a positive but non-significant correlation ($r=0.034$) between the occupation of the respondents and their role performance. Based on this finding, the null hypothesis that “there is no relationship between occupation of gram

panchayat members and their role performance” is accepted, indicating that the occupation of gram panchayat members did not significantly influence their role performance. This finding is consistent with previous research conducted by Singh *et al.* (2019) and Kumari and Singh (2016).

(10) Knowledge about gram panchayat work and role performance

Upon analyzing the data presented in Table 3, it becomes evident that there was a significant positive correlation ($r=0.245^{**}$) between the level of knowledge about gram panchayat work possessed by gram panchayat members and their role performance. This suggests that as the knowledge about gram panchayat work increased, the role performance of gram panchayat members also improved. As a result, the null hypothesis that “there is no relationship between knowledge about gram panchayat work and role performance of gram panchayat members” was rejected. The findings indicate that knowledge played a crucial role in enhancing the role performance of gram panchayat members. Possessing a broader understanding of gram panchayat work may have expanded their mental horizons, leading to improved analytical thinking and better ways to fulfill their roles effectively. Thus, higher knowledge levels about gram panchayat work likely aided gram panchayat members in accomplishing their objectives. This conclusion is supported by previous research conducted by Chaudhary (2013).

(11) Co-ordinating ability and role performance

It is apparent from the data presented in Table 3 that positive and highly significant correlation ($r =0.414^{**}$) existed between co-ordination ability of the gram panchayat members and their role performance. This provides sufficient ground to reject the null hypothesis that “there is no relationship between coordination ability of gram panchayat members and their role performance”. Conclusively it can be said that coordination ability of respondents is an important variable which influenced their role performance. With increase in coordination ability, the gram panchayat members would have been enabled to work with other members and people harmoniously which might have resulted in better role performance. This finding is fully in agreement with the findings reported by Chaudhary (2013).

(12) Communication ability and role performance

The data presented in Table 3 clearly show that communication ability of the gram panchayat members had positive and highly significant correlation ($r =0.421^{**}$) with their role performance. It means with increased communication ability, the role performance of gram panchayat members also increased. Therefore, the null hypothesis that “there

is no relationship between communication ability of gram panchayat members and their role performance” was rejected. Good communication skills are crucial for individuals, especially when working with others. Those who excel in communication can express their ideas clearly and ensure others understand their message. Effective listening is also a key aspect of communication. Therefore, strong communication skills can aid in resolving disagreements and conflicts when collaborating with others. It is likely that gram panchayat members with strong communication abilities have demonstrated better performance in their roles. This finding is similar with the findings of Chaudhary (2013).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study findings reveal that a majority of gram panchayat members surveyed were in the middle age group, had primary level of school education, belonged to scheduled Tribe category, had medium-sized families, and had up to 5 years of experience as gram panchayat members. The majority of them had no political contact with ministers, MPs, or MLAs, had annual income up to Rs. 1,00,000/-, and were engaged in agriculture + animal husbandry as their occupation. Furthermore, a significant portion of gram panchayat members had high levels of knowledge about gram panchayat work, coordination ability, and communication ability. Gram panchayat members who have higher levels of knowledge about gram panchayat work, coordination ability, and communication ability tend to have better role performance. On the other hand, factors such as age, education, family size, experience, caste, social participation, political contact, annual income, and occupation do not seem to have a significant influence on the role performance of gram panchayat members.

POLICY IMPLICATION

Enhance Training and Development Programs: Since a significant portion of gram panchayat members demonstrated high levels of knowledge about gram panchayat work, coordination ability, and communication ability, it would be beneficial to invest in training and development programs to further enhance their skills. This could include providing regular training sessions on governance practices, leadership skills, and communication techniques to improve their role performance.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors of the paper declare no conflict of interest.

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