

## ***Need and Relevance of Training for Panchayati Raj Women Representatives***

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*Study was conducted to know the need, level and type of training panchayati raj women representatives in Haryana. The Researcher had selected and interviewed 320 women PRI representatives comprising 242 Panches, 53 Sarpanch, 20 Panchayat Samiti members and 5 Zila Parishad members from different levels. If we provide training to Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) women representatives, it will not only help for holistic development but they shall also understand the concept of rural development in a systematic way to achieve Mahatma Gandhi's dream of GRAM SWARAJYA. Women in village will work as change agent and facilitator for maximum utilization of government schemes, policies and programmes.*

**[Keywords :** Panchayati Raj, political participation of women, Empowerment, Scheduled Caste women representatives, Training]

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## **1. Introduction**

Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) can not function properly in the absence of specialized knowledge, understanding, and skills. The 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment of the Indian Constitution stressed on the need on imparting training to the elected representative of PRI. Sociologist has also recommended the need for capacity building of the elected representative. (Montgomery, 1980). The 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act, 1992 and 11<sup>th</sup> schedule in the constitution emphasized on the responsibility of the PRIs to formulate and implement all the plans and schemes on 29 subjects. For the sustainable development of the rural areas, it is the prerequisite to empower the PRI with necessary skills and training.

In a study by Mor (2004), elected women in PRI and specifically scheduled caste, scheduled tribe and other backward classes were found to be illiterate and having no knowledge regarding the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI). He strongly recommended the requirement of capacity building training for the elected women representative in Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI). The trained and skilled women representative would contribute towards the socio-economic development of the rural communities. In fact, a sound training is the need of every functionary of the Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI). The capacity building training is the need of the hour so that the elected women representatives can perform their role well and can shoulder their responsibilities effectively and efficiently. The training would help the women representatives to plan and implement the schemes and programmes for the socio-economic development as provided in Article 243-G of the constitution.

Community Development Programme launched on October 2, 1952, the birthday of Gandhiji, was the first programme of rural development in the history of free India. Community development approach was integrated and holistic in nature. The late Prime Minister, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, had emphasized the need for the training of these officials and non-officials for successful implementation of Community Development Programme. In the words of Pt. Nehru, "We require very good people for the success of this great programme and there is still more necessity of good people in large number at the village. We have to train thousands of rural leaders who may feel proud of their work and may be able to take initiatives."

Training for PR functionaries has been advocated by Balwant Rai Mehta Committee (1957), Ashok Mehta Committee (1978) and L. M. Singhvi Committee (1986). They emphasized that training input to PR functionaries will help in their performance and ultimately strengthen Panchayati Raj System.

In Haryana, the Haryana Institute of Rural Development, the State Community Development Training Centre, conducts the training on rural development for the block development officers and functionaries of the Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI). Haryana Institute of Public Administration (HIPA), PRIA-Society for Participatory Research in Asia and many such organisation impart capacity building training to the elected representatives of PRI. (Mor, 2004).

In order to provide training to the elected women representative of Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI), a training module was designed by the National Commission for Women, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Panchayati Raj and Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS). The module comprises the important guidelines, topics to be covered, system of monitoring and evaluation to work in the rural communities towards rural development. The impetus was also given on connecting the women sarpanches with the social media so that they can display their work and connect with each other for the betterment of the rural communities (*Business Standard*, 2017).

## **2. Objectives**

The objectives of the study were :

1. To explore the kind of training/orientation women representatives have received by the government or voluntary agencies before and after assuming their responsibilities in Panchayati Raj system.
2. To examine the extent of freedom women representatives of Panchayati Raj institution (PRI) enjoy at different level of their training, and experiences while attending training sessions.
3. To suggest some more effective and experienced measures to the government and social workers for improving the conditions and allowing women PRI leaders to enjoy freedom and independence in their role functioning.

### 3. Methodology

The state was divided into four divisions (on the basis of census of India 1991, Government of India) namely, Ambala, Rohtak, Gurgaon and Hisar, study was conducted in four selected districts, *i.e.* one from each division. Which were chosen by keeping in mind the socio-economic conditions of the study area. The study comprised of 320 women PRI representatives including 242 Panches, 53 Sarpanches, 20 Panchayat Samiti members and five Zila Parishad members selected from these districts for this study with the help of stratified random sampling technique. They were administered an interview schedule.

### 4. Result and Discussion

#### 4.1 Training of PRI Leader

73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act provides to women a better and historical opportunity/facility for political participation through the grass root level. But it is not enough to give rights to women, there is vital need to give training to women especially rural women who are supposed to be last developed. Training programmes created self-confidence and communication skill. The Table-1 below elaborates the data on training of Scheduled Caste women PRI leader :

**Table-1 : Classification of SC Women Leader based on their Training Programme (N=78)**

Responses on training programme	Gram Panchayat		Panchayat Samiti Member	Zila Parishad Member	Total
	Panch	Sarpanch			
Invited for training programme	34 (91.9)	17 (80.96)	7 (58.34)	5 (62.5)	63 (80.77)
Also Attended	3 (8.1)	4 (19.04)	5 (41.66)	3 (37.5)	15 (19.23)
<b>Total</b>	<b>37 (100)</b>	<b>21 (100)</b>	<b>12 (100)</b>	<b>8 (100)</b>	<b>78 (100)</b>

Figures in brackets show percentage.

On the basis of the findings of Table-1, we may conclude that only 19.23 percent women leaders attended the training programmes. At the Gram Panchayat level, 8.10 percent panches, and 19.04 percent of sarpanch had attended the training programme. Similarly at the Panchayat Samiti level, 41.66 percent members and further at

Zila Parishad level 37.5 percent women leaders had attended the training programme.

#### 4.2 Need for Training desired by Women Leaders

As PRI training is compulsory part of learning the roles/ responsibility and functions of Panchayati Raj Institution. The respondents were asked to describe their need of any training programme and on the basis of their response we have classified the perceived need into 'Yes' and 'No'. Total 271 PRI SC women leaders were interested to attend training programme. Among 84.69 percent of total SC PRI leaders, 84.72 percent of total panches, 90.57 percent SC women sarpanch, 70 percent of Panchayat Samiti members and 80 percent of Zila Parishad member were in favour of training programme. They considered that through these training they will come to know about the role and responsibility and the skill acquired to fulfill the respective roles. It was found that 15.31 percent of total SC women leaders did not want to attend any of training programme because it was believed by them they could not interact easily in meeting due to socio system of their village. Among them 15.31 percent SC women leaders were those respondents who do not need training at all because all of their work done by their panchayat member, spouse and family member on the behalf of them. 10.31 percent of SC women leaders told that they just contested the election because it was reserved for SC women and they do not want to know anything beyond that they were elected for the PRI post.

#### 4.3 Duration, Number and Venue of Training Programme Desired by SC Women PRI Leaders

Among the total 271 SC women leaders, there were different opinion about the duration, number and venue of training programme which has been depicted in the following table :

**Table-2 : Duration of Training Programme Preferred by SC Women Leaders (N=271)**

Duration	Gram Panchayat		Panchayat Samiti Member	Zila Parishad Member	Total
	Panch	Sarpanch			
2-3 hours	44 (21.46)	17 (35.42)	-	-	61 (22.50)
1 day	15 (7.32)	8 (16.67)	7 (50.0)	2 (50.0)	32 (11.21)
2 days	5 (2.43)	2 (4.16)	5 (35.72)	1 (25)	13 (4.8)

More than 2 days	-	-	2 (14.28)	1 (25)	3 (1.11)
No Reply	141 (68.79)	21 (43.75)	-	-	162 (59.78)
<b>Total</b>	<b>205 (100)</b>	<b>48 (100)</b>	<b>14 (100)</b>	<b>4 (100)</b>	<b>271 (100)</b>

Figures in brackets show percentage.

The Table-2 revealed that majority 59.78 percent did not give any response about the duration of training programme followed by 22.50 percent respondents who preferred 2-3 hours for training. 11.81 percent respondents opined for one day training, 4.80 percent respondents opined for two days training while rest of 1.11 percent SC women leaders preferred for more than two days training. Majority 68.79 percent panch and 43.75 percent Sarpanch didn't respond about the duration of training programme, 21.46 percent panch and 35.42 percent Sarpanch opined for training for 2-3 hours followed by 7.32 percent panch and 16.67 percent Sarpanch who preferred for one day training and remaining 2.43 percent panch and 4.16 percent Sarpanch wanted two days training programme. Majority 50 percent of Panchayat Samiti members were in favour of one day training programme followed by 35.72 percent PS member who believed for 2 days training programme. At Zila Parishad level, 50 percent members opined for one day training programme followed by 50 percent members each in favour of two days and more than two days training programmes.

**Table-3 : Number of Training Programme Desired by SC Women Leaders (N-271)**

No. of Training Programme	Gram Panchayat		Panchayat Samiti Member	Zila Parishad Member	Total
	Panch	Sarpanch			
Once in a month	90 (43.90)	6 (12.5)	1 (7.14)	1 (25)	98 (36.16)
Once in a year	32 (15.6)	4 (8.34)	1 (7.14)	2 (50)	39 (14.39)
Once in a tenure	44 (21.47)	20 (41.66)	8 (57.14)	1 (25)	73 (26.95)
No Reply	39 (19.03)	18 (38.5)	4 (28.58)	-	61 (22.50)
<b>Total</b>	<b>205 (100)</b>	<b>48 (100)</b>	<b>14 (100)</b>	<b>4 (100)</b>	<b>271 (100)</b>

Figures in brackets show percentage

The above table clearly indicated that majority 36.16 percent of women leaders were in favour of monthly training programme, followed by 26.95 percent SC women leaders who wanted training

once in the tenure (5 yrs.). 22.50 percent women leader gave no response or they did not prefer any training followed by 14.39 percent SC women leaders who wanted training once in a year. Similarly, at Gram Panchayat level majority 43.90 percent of panch wanted training once in a month, 21.47 percent panch wanted training once in five years, 19.03 percent panch didn't respond any number of Training Programme followed by 15.60 percent panch who opined one training in a year. At the same level maximum 41.66 percent of Sarpanch wanted training once in their tenure while minimum 8.34 percent Sarpanch wanted one training every year. At the Panchayat Samiti level majority 57.14 percent members also wanted training once in their tenure. While each of 7.14 percent PS member favoured training once in month and year, maximum 50 percent Zila Parishad members wanted a training every year.

The following table depicts a picture about the preference of venue if they have to get any of training in future :

**Table-4 : Venue Preferred by SC women PRI Leader**

(N=271)

Preferred Venue	Gram Panchayat		Panchayat Samiti Member	Zila Parishad Member	Total
	Panch	Sarpanch			
Village	167 (80)	40 (83.33)	9 (64.29)	-	213 (78.59)
District	-	3 (6.25)	1 (7.15)	3 (75)	7 (2.59)
Block	-	-	2 (14.28)	1 (25)	3 (1.1)
No Reply	41 (20)	5 (10.42)	2 (14.28)	-	48 (17.72)
<b>Total</b>	<b>205 (100)</b>	<b>48 (100)</b>	<b>14 (100)</b>	<b>4 (100)</b>	<b>271 (100)</b>

Figures in brackets show percentage

Table above indicated that majority 78.59 percent of SC women leader interested training in their own respective villages while next maximum 17.72 percent did not give any of venue preference. Similarly, at Gram Panchayat level majority 80 percent panch and 83.33 percent Sarpanch and 64.29 percent Panchayat Samiti member favoured to get any training in their own villages. Majority 75 percent of Zila Parishad members wanted training in their own district. On the basis of above analysis we observed that majority of SC women leader do not want to move to other village or district, if they were able to get any of training in future.



#### 4.4 Need of Companion desired by SC Women Leader

SC women leaders needed the company of their spouse/family members/relatives and Mahila Mandal members while attending the training programmes. For the purpose of present study, 271 respondents were asked about their companion if they would be able to attend any of training programme. The following table presents the data in an elaborated form :

**Table-5 : Need of Companion Desired by SC women Leaders during Training Programme (N=271)**

Need for a companion	Gram Panchayat		Panchayat Samiti Member	Zila Parishad Member	Total
	Panch	Sarpanch			
Spouse	76 (37.07)	22 (45.83)	8 (57.14)	2 (50)	108 (34.85)
Family member	55 (26.83)	14 (29.16)	13 (21.43)	1 (25)	73 (26.93)
Friends/ Relatives	46 (22.44)	4 (8.34)	-	-	50 (18.45)
Other women	19 (9.27)	3 (6.25)	3 (21.43)	-	25 (9.23)
Not required company	9 (4.39)	5 (10.42)	-	1 (25)	15 (5.51)
<b>Total</b>	<b>205 (100)</b>	<b>48 (100)</b>	<b>14 (100)</b>	<b>4 (100)</b>	<b>271 (100)</b>

Figures in brackets show percentage

As for present study is concerned, out of total 271 respondents majority 39.85 percent showed the companionship of their spouse if they would be able to attend training programme. It was because of the fact that spouse of women leader participated directly or indirectly in PRI functioning. 26.93 percent SC women PRI leader wanted the help of their family member followed by 18.45 percent respondents who could not go in training without the company of their friends/ relatives. While 9.23 percent out of 271 respondents needed the company of other women representatives in training programmes and rest of 5.54 percent of SC women leader who would not require any company when they would be able to attend any training programme. That was because of experience and confidence gained through working independently in PRIs. Majority 37.07 percent panch and 45.83 percent Sarpanch, 57.14 percent Panchayat Samiti members and 50 percent Zila Parishad member wanted the company of their spouse while attending training programme.



Further there were only 4.39 percent panch and 25 percent Zila Parishad members who were self-sufficient and wouldn't like any companion. Women Sarpanch 6.25 percent would like the company of other women PRI representative.

#### 4.5 Opinion of SC Women Leaders regarding Satisfaction on Training Programme

The Table below presented the information regarding the fruitfulness of training programme which the 15 SC women leaders attended :

**Table-6 : Classification of SC Women regarding Extent of Satisfaction on Training (N=15)**

Satisfaction level	Gram Panchayat		Panchayat Samiti Member	Zila Parishad Member	Total
	Panch	Sarpanch			
Fully Satisfied	3 (100)	4 (100)	-	-	7 (46.66)
Partially Satisfied	-	-	5 (100)	3 (100)	8 (53.34)
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 (100)</b>	<b>4 (100)</b>	<b>5 (100)</b>	<b>3 (100)</b>	<b>15 (100)</b>

Figures in bracket show percentage

Data gathered from the total fifteen SC women leaders, which constituted 3 women panch, 4 SC women sarpanch, 5 Panchayat Samiti members, 3 Zila parishad members. They responded positively as far the training programme was concerned which they attended. All the 3 panch and 4 sarpanch were satisfied by their training programmes because Panchayat Secretary in their area did not give any information regarding their role performance. 5 Panchayat Samiti members and 3 Zila Parishad members were partially satisfied because as such no concrete responsibility was not allocated to them in PRI meetings mainly dominated by Panchayat male and literate women members. All the 15 PRI leaders suggested the improvement in training programme for which they want to have traveling expenses or vehicle to take them to training place. Secondly, they wanted that training should be separated from males because they can not interact freely in the presence of male members of their villages because of observing purdah system. On the basis of this, it was concluded that more than half of total 15 members were partially satisfied from training programmes.

## 5. Conclusion

Maximum number of Panch (84.29 percent), Sarpanch (73.58 percent), Panchayat Samiti members (80 percent) and Zila Parishad members (80 percent) opined that a PRI leader should have knowledge of different socio-economics schemes and political matters and they should be resourceful person and good rapport builder. Training was attended by only 3 Panch, 4 Sarpanch, 5 Panchayat Samiti members and 3 Zila Parishad members. But 84.72 percent Panch, 90.57 percent Sarpanch, 70 percent Panchayat Samiti members and 80 percent Zila Parishad members have expressed the need of further training because they are facing problem in proper functioning and decision making.

Maximum number of Panchayat Samiti members *i.e.* 57.14 percent want training once in a tenure while 50 percent Zila Parishad want training once in a year.

Majority of Panch (80 percent), Sarpanch (83.33 percent), Panchayat Samiti members (64.19 percent) are interested to attend training in their own villages while 75 percent Zila Parishad members want training in their own district. At the Gram Panchayat level, 63.90 percent Panch, 74.99 percent Sarpanch, 78.57 percent Panchayat Samiti members and 75 percent Zila Parishad members expressed the need the company of spouse/family member during training programme.

## 6. Suggestions

The foremost work before us to promote and initiate the literacy among rural women which will definitely help to evolve better leadership and decision making in the meeting. The state government should provide training information through media TV, Radio, street-plays, speeches and different NGOs.

It is suggested that an election training should be imparted to rural leaders before and after the election. Training programme should be comprehensive and as per suitability and requirement of PRI women.

The subject matter and content of training should be carefully designed and efficiently implemented. During training women should be encouraged to discuss their problems and difficulties.

The women who do not perceive, the need of training should be encouraged and aware about training. It is suggested to provide

TA/conveyance and boarding and lodging to PRI leaders for attending training.

## **7. Suggestions for Further Study**

It is suggested to have an extensive study in India after 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act. Accordingly, a comparative study on training of Scheduled Caste and non-Scheduled Caste women in India will enhance participation and skills women in Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Training programs will help to understand upon issues related to rural development and functioning of PRIs so there is an urgent need to conduct sessions.

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