

## **CONSTRAINTS ENCOUNTERED BY WOMEN PANCHAYAT MEMBERS OF PANCHAYATI RAJ SYSTEM IN SIKAR DISTRICT OF RAJASTHAN**

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### **Abstract**

The participation of women in the panchayati Raj is considered essential not only for ensuring political participation in the democratic process but also for rising development goals for women. The Indian parliament had passed 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendment in 1993 to provide for reservation of 33 per cent of elected seats for women at different levels of local governance. At present more than 10 lakh women have been holding the offices of the members and chairpersons at different tiers of the panchayats. Rajasthan is the pioneer state in the country where panchayati raj system was introduced on October 2, 1959. At present there are 3058 women Sarpanch and 27000 women Panch in the Panchayati Raj Institutes of Rajasthan. So there is a great need to have deep understanding about Constraints being faced by Women Panchayat Members in Panchayati Raj Institutes. Therefore the present study entitled "Constraints Encountered by Women Panchayat Members of Panchayati Raj System in Sikar District of Rajasthan" was conducted in Sikar district of Rajasthan. The results of the study showed that the Main constraints encountered by women in panchayat were illiteracy, male dominated politics, lack of knowledge about panchayat functions, not economically independent, and lack of communication among gram panchayat members. It was also found that majority of the women panchayat members perceived personal and social constraints as most important constraints.

### **INTRODUCTION**

**T**HE participation of women in the panchayati Raj is considered essential not only for ensuring political participation in the democratic

process but also for rising development goals for women. The Indian parliament had passed 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendment in 1993 to provide for reservation of 33 per cent of elected seats for women at different levels of local governance. At present more than 10 lakh women have been holding the offices of the members and chairpersons at different tiers of the panchayats

Rajasthan is the pioneer state in the country where panchayati raj system was introduced on October 2, 1959. At present there are 3058 women Sarpanch and 27000 women Panch in the Panchayati Raj Institutes of Rajasthan. So there is a great need to have deep understanding about Constraints being faced by Women Panchayat Members in Panchayati Raj Institutes. Keeping these facts in view the study entitled "Constraints Encountered by Women Panchayat Members of Panchayati Raj System in Sikar District of Rajasthan" was undertaken with following specific objective.

- 1 To study the constraints being faced by women panchayat members of panchayati raj system in the study area.

### Methodology

The present study was conducted in purposively selected Sikar district of Rajasthan. Sikar district comprised of eight blocks, out of which Neemkathana and Fatehpur blocks were selected purposively for the study because of maximum numbers of women panchayat members. There are twenty six villages in the Neemkathana block and thirteen in Fatehpur block where women sarpanches are elected. Near about fifty per cent villages were selected randomly from each identified block. Thus total twenty villages, (13 from Neemkathana and 7 from Fatehpur ) were identified for the study. For selection of respondents, twenty women Sarpanches one from each selected village and eighty women Panches, four from each selected village *i.e.* 52 women Panches from Neemkathana and 28 from Fatehpur. Thus, total 100 respondents constituted the sample of the study. Thereafter relevant information was collected from the respondents with the help of interview schedule developed for this study through face to face contact method. Thereafter data were analysed, tabulated and results were interpreted in the light of specific objectives.

### Results and Discussion

Constraints for the present study have been operationalized as the problems faced in performing panchayat duties by women panchayat

members. To identify the constraints as faced by women panchayat members were categorized into personal, social, technical, economic and administrative constraints.

#### Personal Constraints

Table 1 shows that among the various personal and family constraints encountered by women, illiteracy was perceived as most important constraint by the women in panchayat, as evident by high mean score (4.52). Second most important constraint was lack of awareness, motivation, confidence and expression power (M.S. 4.24). I of support from family members ranked third important constraint

Table 1  
Constraints encountered by women panchayat members

S.No.	Constraints	Mean score
<b>Personal</b>		
1	Illiteracy as a handicap	4.52
2	Lack of awareness, motivation, confidence and expression power	4.24
3	Pressure of household work	2.59
4	Lack of money power	2.80
5	Lack of support from family member	3.87
<b>Social</b>		
1	Male members not ready to accept women as the chairpersons of panchayat	4.0
2	Family members do not appreciate attending meetings	3.15
3	Husband want to work on her behalf	3.55
<b>Technical</b>		
1	Lack of adequate training	3.0
2	Lack of knowledge about panchayat functions, duties and finance	3.85
3	Lack of monitoring and evaluation of work	3.55
4	Lack of knowledge about records and their maintenance	2.80
<b>Economic constraints</b>		
1	Inadequate financial help given to panchayat members	2.85
2	Inadequate resources of panchayats	3.0
3	Economically dependent on husband or family members	3.75
<b>Administrative</b>		
1	Lack of communication among Gram Panchayat members	4.0
2	No proper supervision of Gram Panchayat work	3.85
3	Less construction of panchayat ghar and community centre	2.25
4	Fixing of target is not proper	3.15

the respondents (M.S. 3.87). The fourth rank was assigned to lack of money power (M.S. 2.80). The last rank was assigned to pressure of household work with mean score (2.59).

The findings are in conformity with the Subrahmanyan (2002) who reported that low level of literacy and awareness, ignorance and imposed inferiority complex resulting from the prevailing social purdah system, and lack of exposure and experience of the elected women members and chairpersons of the village panchayats are important constraints in decision making about panchayat functions.

**Social Constraints**

Among the social constraints faced by women, male members were not ready to accept women as the chairpersons of panchayat was observed as the very important constraint as it gained first rank with mean score (4.0). Husband want to work on her behalf was ranked second by women (3.55). The third rank was assigned to family member do not appreciate to attending the meeting (M.S. 3.15). The similar results were reported by Chandrasekhar *et al.* (1991).

**Technical Constraints**

Among the technical constraints encountered by the respondents, lack of knowledge about panchayat functions, duties and finances was observed as very important constraint as it gained first rank (M.S. 3.85). Lack of monitoring and evaluation of work was ranked second by members (M.S. 3.55). The third was assigned to the lack of adequate training (M.S. 3.0). The last rank was assigned to lack of knowledge about records and their maintenance (M.S. 2.80). The findings are supported with Gupta and Zadoo (1996).

**Economic Constraints**

Economically depended on husband or on family members was appeared as first constraint (M.S. 3.75) followed by the inadequate resource of panchayats. Inadequate financial help given to panchayat members was appeared as lowest important constraint (M.S. 2.85). The results are in line of Sharma (1995) who highlighted lack of the money as most important constraint .

**Administrative Constraints**

First rank was given to the lack of communication among Gram panchayat

member (M.S. 4.0). Followed by the proper supervision of Gram Panch work. (M.S. 3.85) and fixing of target is not proper (M.S. 3.15). The rank was assigned to less construction of panchayat ghar and community centre (M.S. 2.25).

**Overall Constraints Faced by Women Panchayat Members**

To get an overview about overall constraints being faced by women panchayat members, the weightage mean score of each category constraints was calculated and rank was assigned accordingly.

The table 2 visualizes that personal constraints were perceived as important constraints by women panchayat members with mean score 3.60 and ranked first by them. The social constraints were assigned second rank (3.56M.S.) by them whereas administrative constraints were placed on third rank (3.45M.S.) by elected panchayat members. The fourth rank was accorded to technical constraints (3.30M.S.) and last rank (3.20) was assigned to economic constraints faced by women panchayat members. The highest rank to the social constraints may be due to the fact that women are generally illiterate and still follows traditions like purdah. The similar findings were reported by Verma (2004).

Table 2  
Overall constraints faced by women panchayat members

S.No.	Constraints	Mean Score	Rank
1	Personal	3.60	I
2	Social	3.56	II
3	Technical	3.30	III
4	Economic	3.20	IV
5	Administrative	3.31	V

**Conclusion**

On the basis of the result obtained from the study it can be concluded that main constraints encountered by women in panchayat were illiteracy as a handicap (M.S. 4.52), male members are not ready to accept women as the chairpersons of panchayat (M.S. 4.0), lack of knowledge about panchayat functions, duties and finance (M.S. 3.85), economically dependent upon husband and family members (M.S. 3.75) and lack of communication among gram panchayat members (M.S. 4.0). It is also concluded that majority of the women panchayat members perceived personal and administrative constraints as most important constraints.

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