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Leadership behaviour of women sarpanch under Panchayati Raj System

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Abstract

This study investigates the leadership behaviour of women sarpanch under Panchayati Raj System in Achalpur, Daryapur, and Nandgaon Khandeshwar block/tahsils of Amravati district of Vidarbha region of Maharashtra. Total 132 women sarpanch were selected purposively on the basis of more number of women sarpanch are actually working in gram panchayat of three panchayati samiti. It was found that out of twelve independent variables, ten variables had positive and significant correlation with their leadership behaviour. But age had negative and significant while, caste of women sarpanch failed to show any significant relationship with their leadership behaviour. The study focused on exploring leadership behaviour that led to improving the behaviour of women, who are the foundations of local governance and our country's future prospects. The study analyses their leadership styles, achievements, challenges, and the socio-political dynamics affecting their performance.

Keywords: Women sarpanch, leadership behaviour, Panchayati Raj System, correlation

Introduction

The best feature for women's seat reservations is provided by the Panchayat Raj Act of 1992. Article 243-D states that "one-third of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in each panchayat will be reserved for women, and such seats can be allotted by rotation to different constituencies during a panchayat." The Indian state has created possibilities for underprivileged groups to redefine their identity through constitutional safeguards and reservation processes (Deshpande: 2004, Mohanthi: 1996, Roy: 1996) [11, 12, 15]. Giving women the chance to participate in regime administration is the foundation of the one-third reservation for women in panchayat raj institutions, which aims to empower women in all spheres of life, including political, social, and economic. For a long time, these panchayats have existed in rural India. The institutional, state-guided, and structural coherence of the new panchayats is an improvement over the earlier ones.

"India lives in her villages, India sovereignty must begin at the bottom, so make every village a republic or panchayat with complete powers," according to Mahatma Gandhi. He maintained that the people of each village must work from below to establish true democracy, which cannot be accomplished by twenty people seated in the center. As a result of these fantasies, Article 40 was added to the Indian Constitution's Directive Principles of State Policy. In 1993, nearly fifty years after independence, the Indian government made a bold move by introducing the Panchayati Raj

System into the Constitution. The most important experiment in enhancing Indian administration from a participatory democratic decentralized perspective was the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, which established the constitutionally required panchayat system.

In addition to giving panchayats a constitutional mandate, the 73rd Amendment to the Indian Constitution provides them with the stability and legal framework they require to operate efficiently. A lack of political will and supporting constitutional provisions caused earlier attempts to institutionalize panchayats to fail and be ill-conceived. The 73rd amendment, which upholds the idea of authority and decentralization to individuals, represents a radical overhaul of the nation's executive and governing structure. The new panchayat rule establishments have the power to usher in a new era of development, adapt to the demands and goals of the populace, and restore a severely damaged democratic system.

"It is impossible for twenty men sitting on the ground to work in true democracy. It must be worked from bottom by the people of every village." This statement illustrates how the panchayati raj system begins with women's mindsets by altering their beliefs about their own abilities, rights, and potential. Leadership behaviour of women as women sarpanch are dummy leaders and there is always hidden control structure behind them to take decision and real decisions are taken by her husband and other family members, but these factors reinforce the need for the study

rather than to lower its relevance (Chandravadia *et al.*, 2019) ^[10]. Therefore, it was thought necessary to examine the leadership traits that influence leadership behavior and the various leadership styles of women sarpanches under the panchayati raj system.

Objective

To study the leadership behaviour of women sarpanch

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in Amravati district of Maharashtra State. Out of 14 talukas of Amravati district namely, Achalpur, Daryapur and Nandgaon khandeshwar talukas were purposively selected for the study. Total 132 women sarpanch were selected purposively on the basis of more number of women sarpanch actually working in a gram panchayat of three panchayati samiti. The exploratory research design was used for the study. The data were collected in face-to-face situation by the personal interview method with the help of structured interview schedule containing the questions on leadership behaviour of women sarpanch. The data were analyzed, and the results were interpreted on Table 1 and Table 2.

Results and Discussion

The findings of the study had been presented under the following headings.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to their overall leadership behaviour of women sarpanch

Sr. No.	Leadership behaviour of women sarpanch	Respondents (n = 132)	
		Frequency	Percentage
1	Very low (Up to 20)	00	00.00
2	Low (21 to 40)	26	19.70
3	Medium (41 to 60)	85	64.39
4	High (61 to 80)	19	14.39
5	Very high (Above 81)	02	01.52
	Total	132	100.00
Mean per cent = 55.09			

The result stated in the Table 1, indicated that more than three fifth (64.39%) of the women sarpanch had medium level of leadership behaviour, followed by 19.70 per cent and 14.39 per cent of them had low and high level of leadership behaviour. Almost meager 01.52 per cent of the women sarpanch had very high level of leadership behaviour.

Thus, the vast majority of women sarpanch demonstrated medium to low level of leadership behavior. This may be because the majority of women sarpanch were middle-aged, had a medium level of annual income, and had an emotional bond with the people. Social norms and the male dominated society also hindered their education. Women sarpanch, who look for information from a variety of sources, have a great potential to actively participate in the process of learning new information, which raises their standing in the community. Given their medium level of achievement motivation, communication skills, and information behavior, women sarpanchs are most suited for transformational leadership behaviors. These findings are in line with those reported by Belli (2008) ^[9], Patil (2018) ^[14].

Correlation analysis between independent and dependent variables of leadership behaviour of women sarpanch

Table 2: Relationship between selected characteristics of women sarpanch and their leadership behaviour

Sr. No.	Variables	Respondents (n = 132)
		"r" Values
1	Age	-0.5951**
2	Education	0.5148**
3	Caste	0.0916NS
4	Institution linkage	0.4402**
5	Political contact	0.2193*
6	Social participation	0.2873**
7	Annual income	0.3719**
8	Occupation	0.1790*
9	Sources of information	0.3342**
10	Cosmopolite ness	0.1781*
11	Achievement motivation	0.1912*
12	Attitude towards women reservation	0.4428**

* Significant at 0.05 per cent level of probability

** Significant at 0.01 per cent level of probability

NS - Non-Significant

The result revealed in the Table 2, indicated that amongst the twelve selected variables of the of women sarpanch in the study, ten variables had established positive, and one variable had negative and significantly correlated with their leadership behaviour. Those independent variables that had exerted positive and significant relationship were education, institution linkages, political contact, social participation, annual income, occupation, sources of information, cosmopolite ness, achievement motivation, attitude towards women reservation, and age of women sarpanch was found to be negatively and significantly correlated. Rest variables viz. caste of women sarpanch failed to show any significant relationship with their leadership behaviour.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that out of twelve independent variables, ten variables had positive and significant correlation with their leadership behaviour. But age had negative and significant while, caste of women sarpanch failed to show any significant relationship with their leadership behaviour.

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