

AWARENESS OF POLITICS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES AMONG WOMEN IN SALEM DISTRICT

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Abstract

Women comprise nearly half of the national population of a country. The Government of India launches a large number of rural development programmes to promote rural poor areas, particularly for women and at the same time the government to reservation of seats for women at 33 percent level encourages to participate in local self governance like 73rd Constitution Amendment Act 1992. Nevertheless, planned developments in India have not achieved much for women, especially rural women. The present paper focuses on the awareness of politics and rural development programmes among rural women. Therefore, the present paper contains an introduction, literature review, objectives, methodology, women, politics and rural development programmes in general and awareness of rural women at field level.

Keywords: *Awareness of Women, Politics, Rural Development Programmes, Local Self Governance*

Introduction

Democracy implies to equality for all human beings, males and females. In India, a woman comprises nearly 48 percent of the population. The Government of India launches a large number of rural development programmes for rural poor areas. At that place was more concentration to promote rural education, health; environment; infrastructure facilities, and so forth, particularly for women empowerment. In 1992, the Government of India initiated 73rd Constitution Amendment Act for Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs). Especially, the reservation of seats for women encourages to participation at local level.

In 2013, women occupied only 12 out of 78 Ministerial positions in the Central Council of Ministers. There were 2 women judges out of 26 judges in the Supreme Court and there were only 52 women judges out of 614 judges in different High Courts. In the age group of 15-19 years, 46 percent of women are not involved in any kind of decision making. In the rural sector, 23.4 percent females are not involved in any decision-making while, in the urban sector, only 13.9 percent of urban resident women are not involved in any decision making. It is found that 32.7 percent illiterate women, 21.6 percent unemployed women are not involved in any decision making. There were 342.2 million female electors in the Fifteenth General Elections in 2009 out of which 55.8 percent exercised their voting rights. There were 374.7 million male electors and 60.3 percent exercised their voting rights (CSO, 2013).

Review of Literature

Stephen and Relton (2013) analysed that the impact of women participation in Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) from three district of Tamil Nadu like Tiruppur, Tiruchirappalli and Ramanathapuram districts. Further they state that, there is no denying of the fact that though the provision of reservation of seats for women has been manipulated by their male counterparts - mostly their husbands - it has certainly empowered the women to some extent. They are increasingly becoming aware of their rights and responsibilities and are asserting themselves in certain cases.

Ashappa and Sedamkar (2011) stated that the awareness and knowledge of rural women on these women empowerment, employment and rural development policies. Finally, concluded that voluntary organizations and non-government organization have to increase awareness among the rural women about the government policies.

Bishnoi and Singh (2007) explored that the awareness of rural women regarding the Development of Women and Children in Rural Area (DWCRA) programme. A total of 324 beneficiaries from 27 villages of Chiragaon block in Varanasi district were selected randomly.

Data was collected by the self-structured schedule cum interview method. Analysis of the data revealed that 63 percent of women over 30 years of age were well aware of the activities of the DWCRA scheme while only 37 percent of beneficiaries of less than thirty years had any knowledge about DWRA. Another important finding was that lower caste women were more aware than middle and higher caste women. Hence, an attempt has been made to study the awareness of politics and rural development programmes among sample respondents.

Methodology

Both primary and secondary source were collected. This study is largely based on primary sources. The primary data was collected with the help of interview schedule in three different blocks randomly selected in Salem district, 70 samples (women) conveniently collected from Ayothiyappatinam, Kadayampatti and Omalur, The main reasons for selecting Ayothiyappatinam is that it is a backward area at large and comprises of different villages, Sukkampatti, Minnampalli and Valasiyur. The people from most backward class live in Kadayampatti and hence two village's viz., Dharapuram and Kanjanakkenpatti. Omalur is a developing area. Two backward areas namely Thekkampatti (Anna Nagar) and Saminaickenpatti (AD Colony) have been randomly selected 10 samples from each village. Secondary data collected from published source, Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) report 2013.

Socio-Economic Status of Sample Respondents

The following table - 1 denotes that the socioeconomic status of sample respondents it contains viz., age, religion, community, educational status, marital status, occupation, family type, number of children, family size and monthly income of the sample respondents.

Table 1
Socio-Economic Status of Sample Respondents

Particulars	Sample Respondents
Sex (Female)	70 (100)
Age (25 - 35 Years)	47 (67.14)
Religion (Hindu)	66 (94.28)
Community (MBC)	63 (90)
Educational Status (SSLC)	54 (77.14)
Marital status (Married)	60 (85.71)
Occupation (Agriculture Labour)	36 (51.42)
Family type (Nuclear)	39 (55.71)
Number of Children (3)	41 (58.57)
Family Size (5)	44 (62.85)
Monthly income (Below Rs. 5,000)	38 (54.28)

Source: Primary data, **Note:** Figures in parentheses indicate percentages.

The above Table 1 depict socioeconomic status of sample respondents. 67.14 percent of the sample respondents are age within 25 to 35 years. Religion is one of the important social variables, from the responses, 94.28 percent belongs to Hindu religion. This shows that, the whole Indian economy consists of Hindu people. Followed by this, an attempt has been made to study the community where 90 of the sample respondents are Most Backward Class. Next to this, seven tenths (77.14 percent) were in SSLC level education. Eight tenths (85.71 percent) respondents are married and notably five tenths (51.42 percent) are occupied as an agriculture labour. More than five tenth (55.71 percent) of the respondents are nuclear family type and also 58.57 percent of the respondents had 3 children. Maximum 5 members of the sample respondents are six tenths (62.85 percent) and five tenths (54.28 percent) were getting income below Rs. 5,000. The following table - 2 shows that the awareness of politics among sample respondents.

Table 2
Awareness of Politics among Sample Respondents

Particulars	Aware	Some	Not aware
73 rd Constitution Amendment Act	8 (11.42)	4 (5.71)	58 (82.85)
Right to Vote	45 (64.28)	20 (28.57)	5 (7.14)
Reservation of Seats for Women (PRIs)	9 (12.85)	9 (12.85)	52 (74.28)
Panchayat Power	-	3 (4.28)	67 (95.72)
Member of Parliament	6 (8.57)	1 (1.42)	63 (90)
Member of Legislative Assembly	8 (11.42)	20 (28.57)	42 (60)
Duration of Panchayat Election	37 (52.85)	20 (28.57)	13 (18.57)
Panchayat President	59 (84.28)	6 (8.57)	5 (7.14)
Ward members	20 (28.57)	21 (30)	29 (41.43)

Source: Primary data, Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages.

The above Table 2 demonstrate that the awareness of politics among sample respondents. Maximum 82 percent of the sample respondents not aware of the 73rd constitution amendment act and also notable that above 60 percent of the sample respondents are not aware of the reservation of seats for women; Panchayat power; member of parliament; member of the legislative assembly. From the field level observation some positive information from above 50 percent of sample respondents are aware of the right to vote; duration of panchayat election and panchayat president. It is observed from the above table, the sample respondents are not mindful of politics basically. They are not interested to participate in political activities for main reason is family structure, cultural habits, lack of consciousness, lack of sufficient knowledge etc. The next table - 3 exhibits that awareness of major rural development programmes among sample respondents.

Table 3
Awareness of Major Rural Development Programmes among Sample Respondents

Particulars	Aware	Some	Not aware
State Sponsored Schemes			
Tamil Nadu Village Habitation Improvement Scheme (TNVHIS)	10 (14.28)	9 (12.85)	51 (72.85)
Chief Minister Solar Powered Green House Scheme (CMSPGHS)	2 (2.85)	19 (27.14)	49 (70)
Member of Legislative Assembly Constituency Development Scheme (MLACDS)	6 (8.57)	2 (2.85)	62 (88.57)
Clean Village Campaign (CVC)	20 (28.57)	3 (4.28)	47 (67.14)
Centrally Sponsored Schemes			
Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)	59 (84.28)	1 (1.42)	10 (14.28)
National Policy for Women Empowerment (NPWE)	20 (28.57)	8 (11.43)	42 (60)
Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS)	30 (42.85)	3 (4.28)	37 (52.85)
Swarnjayanthi Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SJGSY)	64 (91.52)	4 (5.71)	2 (2.85)
Other Schemes			
Cardle Baby Schemes (CBS)	58 (82.85)	2 (2.85)	10 (14.28)
Chief Minister Comprehensive Health Insurance Schemes (CMCHIS)	50 (71.42)	7 (10)	13 (18.57)

Source: Primary data, **Note:** Figures in parentheses indicate percentages.

The above Table 3 reveals that the awareness of rural development programmes among sample respondents. More than 50 percent of the sample respondents are not aware of the major rural development programmes contains viz., TNVHIS, CMSPGHS, MLACDS, CVC, NPWE and MPLADS. At that same time, above 70 percent of the sample respondents were aware of some programmes like SJGSY, MGNREGS, CBS and CMCHIS. The above table finally concluded that the field level observations from the sample respondents are not aware of rural development programme and not proper guidance from the government side, thus they are not willing to know related information for rural development schemes.

General Observation and Conclusion

It is observed from the field level information, sample respondents are lack of political awareness like 73rd constitution amendment act; reservation of seats for women; Panchayat power; Member of Parliament and Member of the Legislative Assembly except from aware of the right to vote; duration of panchayat election and panchayat president. In

the case of major rural development programmes, they are not aware contains viz., TNVHIS, CMSPGHS, MLACDS, CVC, NPWE and MPLADS. At the same time, some programmes like SJGSY, MGNREGS, CBS and CMCHIS are aware of the sample respondents. It at last concluded that need proper direction for rural women to make consciousness of politics and rural development programmes. Non-government organization and Voluntary organization have to increase awareness of politics and rural development programmes among women like to arrange conferences, weekly conduct meeting and distribute advertisement about government policies.

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