

A CASE STUDY ANALYSIS OF IRUKKUR VILLAGE PANCHAYAT IN KABILARMALAI BLOCK (WITH REFERENCE TO NAMAKKAL DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU STATE)

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Abstract

The majority of the Population is found in the rural area in India. Panchayatraj plays a proficient role in the grassroot governance. So if importance is given to grassroots governance, the substructure of the nation will become very strong and rapidly India will find a place among the developed nations in the world. The women sector in India is not considered in all the aspects. As many years rolled and changes are found from traditional to modern society, still the male supremacy and dissimilarity proceed in the community. So Government has framed many welfare measures and reservation policies for the women to find a place in the Political sector. Yet ignorant and educated women are not aware of these programmes. In this background it is necessary to study the women leadership in Irukkur Village Panchayat at kabilarmalai block in Namakkal District of Tamil Nadu State. In this research paper the author concentrates on the Irukkur Village Panchayat of kabilarmalai block in Namakkal District. This is a case study based on Primary data collected from the Panchayat President of Irukkur Village Panchayat of kabilarmalai block in Namakkal District. Structured interview questions were prepared and the selected woman Panchayat President was interviewed. The researcher reveals that even after 70 years of independence some of the women leaders are functioning as name sake leaders and in fact they are being dictated or ruled by their men counterpart. If the ability of all the women leaders and women in general are utilized on the whole, India will definitely march towards a developed nation.

Introduction

The majority of the Population is found in the rural area in India. Panchayatraj plays an efficient role in the grassroot governance. So if significance is given to grassroot governance, the base of the nation will become very strong and soon India can find a place among the developed nations. The women sector in India is not considered in all the aspects. As many years rolled and changes are found from traditional to modern society, still the male domination and inequality proceed in the community. So Government has framed many welfare measures and reservation policies for the women to get into Politics. Yet illiterate and literate women are not aware of these programmes. In this background it is necessary to study the women leadership in Irukkur Village Panchayat at kabilarmalai block in Namakkal District of Tamil Nadu State. In this research paper the author concentrates on the Irukkur Village Panchayat of kabilarmalai block in Namakkal District. This is a case study based on Primary data collected from the Panchayat President of Irukkur Village Panchayat of kabilarmalai block in Namakkal District.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the Personal, Social and Political background of the rural women leaders in the grassroot governance.
2. To know the awareness and service delivery of the elected Women Panchayat President of Irukkur Village Panchayat of kabilarmalai block in Namakkal District.

Methodology of the study

- It is a case study analysis. Structured interview questions were prepared and the selected women Panchayat Presidents were interviewed. The Literature review and the case study of the Panchayat President were composed. Based on the Literature review and case study analysis the findings, suggestions and conclusion were given.

Brief History of Namakkal District

Namakkal District is a newly formed district from Salem District. It is functioning from 01-01-1997. It consists of 7 Taluks namely Namakkal, Rasipuram, Tiruchengode, Paramathi Velur, Kollihills, Sendamangalam and Komarapalayam. The district is bounded by Salem on the north, Karur on the south, Trichy and Salem on the east and Erode on the West. The Geographical area of the district is 3363, 35 K.m, which lies between 11.00 and 11.360 North Latitude and 77.280 and 78.300 East Longitude. For the Administrative purpose the district has been divided into 2 Revenue Divisions, 7 Taluks, 30 Revenue firkas. For local arrangements, the district has been divided into 5 Municipalities, 15 Panchayats Unions, 19 Town Panchayats and 322 Village Panchayats. The Rock Fort in Namakkal is a Special feature of the town. The Garden of Namakkal District is Kollihills which is governed by Panchayat union. Namakkal finds a place of importance in the map of India because of its Lorry body building industry, a unique feature of the town. There are Lorries, Trailors and L.P.G. Tanker Lorries in Namakkal district. Therefore it is called as 'Transport City'. Namakkal is the major producer of Egg in the Southern Region. Hence, it is called as 'Egg City'. The famous Tamil Poet "Namakkal Kavingnar Ramalingam Pillai" was born in this district. In memory of the poet the state government has established an arts and science college for women. One of the most famous Government Veterinary Colleges is also situated near by Namakkal Town. The Anjaneyaswami statue which has its height of 6.7 Mts. was built in 996 AD. The Narasimma Samy Temple along with Amman Temple is situated behind the west of the Rock Fort in the Heart of the town. The famous Cauvery River flows in Paramathi Taluk in Namakkal District. 1

Table 1 Distribution of the Panchayat Presidents in Namakkal District, Tamil Nadu state

Number of General Women Panchayat Presidents	Number of SC Women Panchayat Presidents	Number of ST Women Panchayat Presidents	Total Number of Women Panchayat Presidents
74	32	6	112

There are 112 Women Panchayat Presidents in Namakkal District. Out of them 74 are General Women Panchayat Presidents, 32 are Scheduled Caste Women Panchayat Presidents and 6 are Scheduled Tribe Women Panchayat Presidents.

Table 2

Number of General Men Panchayat Presidents	Number of SC Men Panchayat Presidents	Number of ST Men Panchayat Presidents	Total Number of Men Panchayat Presidents
161	36	13	210

There are 210 Men Panchayat Presidents in Namakkal District. Out of them 161 are General Men Panchayat Presidents, 36 are Scheduled Caste Men Panchayat Presidents and 13 are Scheduled Tribe Men Panchayat Presidents. 2

Review of Literature and Journals

Of the total 322 village panchayats in the district, all the houses in 61 villages have individual household latrines. The villages have been declared as open defecation-free by the village panchayats. 3

As per the TN Panchayats (Amendment) Act, 2016, 50 per cent reservation for women is being fixed in Panchayati Raj institutions. In fact, reservation for women has been enhanced from one-third to one-half in the total number of seats. The Seats in wards of village panchayats, panchayat union councils and district panchayats are being reserved in proportion to the 2011 population of SC/STs as per the provisions of the Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act and Tamil Nadu Panchayats (reservation of seats and rotation of reserved seats) Rules. 4Bhawana Jharta (1998), entitled "Women and Politics in India", investigates the impact of family and education on women political activists. She succeeds in her endeavour to pinpoint that the family and education are the two major determinants which influence the women's participation in policies. Gender discrimination has completely been banned by the Constitution suggesting that all men and

women enjoy equal opportunities for their multidimensional growth. The lack of women's participation in politics can be attributed to various socio economic constraints under our traditional socio set - up. The 73rd and 74th constitutional Amendment, Act of 1992 provide for effective participation of women in panchayat Raj institutions and municipalities respectively by making special reservations for them. This book analysis and evaluates the role and impact of family and education of women's participation in politics. This is a micro - level empirical study confined to the women in segment of the political realm of the state of Himachal Pradesh.⁵

Dr.K.Subha and Dr.B.S.Bhargava (2001) in their work entitled "Panchayati Raj system and political empowerment of women", highlights the participation of women in local government. Gandhiji' wrote repeatedly on 'the need to improve the status of women'. The dawn of India's political Independence brought to women the promise of adult franchise and equality of opportunity in social, economic and political activities. Equality in all sphere is inseparable from active political participation. The globe also was generating awareness about the problems of women in all spheres of life. The Government appointed a Committee on the status of women in India in 1977 to undertake a "comprehensive examination of all the question relating to the rights and status of women". Further, it is at the grassroots level that women should participate more because, the decision of the local government have profound effect on the problems that concern women about the quality of life. Empowerment gives women the capacity to influence decision-making process. The passing of the Seventy-Third and Seventy-Fourth Amendments can be considered as the greatest event for women's empowerment as one - third of the seats are reserved for women in the local bodies. Women will not get equal participation in politics without undertaking major efforts themselves. The gram panchayat offers possibilities for the training of women in social participation and leadership. Women representation aim at involving women in decision making.⁶

Dr.Dilip Kumar Sarkar (2004), in his "Research study on women's empowerment, Good - governance and Decentralization: Assuring women's participation in panchayats of two backward districts of Northern part of west Bengal", focuses on the participation of women in panchayat. The role performance, role awareness and role perception of the elected woman panchayats have been explored to understand the impact of socio-economic variable and legal impetus on electoral participation and the impact of such variables on attitudinal variables on political participation. Nearly 500 elected women representatives of different tiers of two selected districts have been interviewed to understand the ground realities. The study does not claim to cover all aspects of women's political life. It has examined some of the major aspects of women political participation at the grassroot level.⁷

Case Study Analysis

Personal Profile of Irukkur village Panchayat

Irukkur is a village panchayat of kabilarmalai block in Namakkal District. Mrs. B. Jayanthi was the Panchayat President of Irrukar village from 2011 to 2014. She died due to snake bite. Her mother-in-law Mrs. Shakunthala became the panchayat president of this village. She is a one time elected candidate. She belongs to BC community. It is a General Panchayat. She is 40 years old. She belongs to Kongu Vellalar Caste. Majority of the people are of kongu Vellalar Community. She is a Hindu. Majority of the religion is Hinduism in this region. She has completed an under graduation degree in Arts. . She was a home maker, before becoming the Panchayat President. She is married. She is from a joint family. It is a large family. They reside within the panchayat area. Her husband is the head of the family. He is a Diploma holder. The monthly Income of the family is Rs. 20,000/- He is a business man. He is running a travels of his own. He owns a house. It is a tiled house electrified with toilet facilities and tap connection. There were 4 contestants

while she stood in the election. She has secured 1350 votes out of 1700 votes. There were 800 votes difference in the election polling.

Social Background

The Panchayat President does not participate in any of the organization in the society. She did not face any problems while involving in Public service.

Political Background

The Panchayat President became aware of politics when she was 25 year old. She entered politics when she was 35 years. Her family is the source of inspiration for her political interest. She belongs to ADMK party. Being a member of the political party, she can achieve the work of the panchayat scheme. She has no position in the political party. Her husband also belongs to ADMK party. He too has no position in the party. She has been elected only once for the same position. She visited this area 2 times before being elected. She has 15 years of experience in political field. All the Ward members do not belong to her political party. There are 9 ward members. Among the ward members, 3 are women and the other 6 members are men. 7 ward members belong to ADMK party and the other 2 members are of DMK party.

Awareness and service delivery with regard to the 29 subjects in the village panchayat

The Panchayat President is aware of the agriculture and agriculture extension scheme. Seeds were distributed to the farmers. Sufficient water is provided to the fields. Loans were sanctioned to the farmers and Bio-fertilizer were distributed to them. People were encouraged to use bio-fertilizers. The Land improvement and soil conservation scheme are in practice. To preserve the land, green plantation has been done. More than 750 tree saplings were planted within this panchayat area. The saplings were of different varieties such as Neem tree. Poovarasu, groosbery etc. Thus steps were taken to conserve soil in this region. The practice of minor irrigation, water management and water shed development scheme were found in this territory. Pools, canals, and wells were constructed for the storage of water in this area. The Panchayat President is aware of the Animal husbandry, dairying and poultry schemes. They protect the cattles and poultry as per the rules of state government. Special care is given to the cattles during reproduction period. Further the cattles are injected to protect them from epidemic diseases. The enrolment of cattle population is maintained in the register by the panchayat secretary. The cattle population is also recorded in the veterinary hospitals. The social forestry and Farm forestry scheme are found in this region. They pave way for the development of social forestry in the rural area. Awareness programmes are conducted with regard to this scheme. The forest is maintained as natural resources. There are no minor forest products. The people are encouraged to grow more trees. In this village there is small scale Industry, and food processing industries. Khadi Village and Cottage Industries are functioning in this area. Women and children of school drop are benefited in the industrial schemes. She knew about the rural housing scheme. 18 Green houses were distributed to the poor people below the poverty line. Likewise 10 IAY houses were distributed to the needy. Good drinking water facilities are found in this region. People are motivated to drink safe drinking water. There are 55 water taps, 2 storage taps of different capacity, 80 public taps, 2 hand pumps 13 open wells and 21 bores were constructed. There is no industrial tap connection in this area. Efforts are made in order to harvest rain water in this village panchayat. Water bodies are also maintained. People are insisted to boil and drink the water. Chlorine is applied for the purification of water. There is awareness about the food and fodder schemes in this village. It is used to improve the economy of the village panchayat. People are encouraged to use Biogas plants. There are good transportation facilities. Road culverts, bridges, ferries, waterways and other means of communication are well developed. Road facilities are made in this region. The panchayat road covers an area of 26 km. The mud road is about 2 km distance, the metal road covers 4 km distance, The black topper is about 12 km

distance and the cement concert road covers 8 km distance of the village panchayat. There is one computer centre; there is no internet browsing centre, TV centre and cinema theatres. The Panchayat President is aware of the rural electrification and distribution of electricity schemes. These are 216 Street lights and 3 solar lights. There are no non-conventional energy sources. The poverty alleviation programmes are in practice. The list of people below poverty level is traced. Skilled training is given to these people, free of cost. The education schemes are in practice. There are 3 Balwadis in this region. 60 students study in these Balwadis, among them 25 are boys and 35 are girl students. There are 4 primary schools in this region. There is no higher secondary school. Students have to travel around 3 km to go to high school and higher secondary school. The panchayat president involves herself in the maintenance of primary school. There are 7 noon meal canters in the village. People are aware of the Technical training and Vocational education scheme. There is no technical training centre. But there is one vocational education centre. There is no job scheme for the youth. In the vocational education, Tailoring class, Handworks are taught for the students and adults who attend these classes. Further adult and non formal education scheme are available. Adult people are taught basic education. They are trained to read and write. There is one library. The working hours of the Library is from 8.30 am to 5, 00 pm. In the beginning 25 people visited the library. But now this library is closed. Since there is no one to open their Library. Cultural Activities are organized. Local festivals, Street play, Villu pattu, Temple festivals etc are organized in this village during many occasions. There is no market and fairs in this village. The market facilities created by the panchayat president provide income.

Health and Sanitation, Hospitals Primary Health Centre and Dispensaries

This village Panchayat President is aware of the Health and sanitation scheme. There is drainage facility in the street. All the houses are not provided with toilet facilities. 900 houses are provided toilet facilities out of 998 houses. Toilet construction is in process for the houses without toilets. In 153 houses there are no toilets. The Panchayat President has given an assurance that by December 31, 2016 toilets will be built to all the houses which have no toilet facilities.

The schools are provided with toilet facilities. The children are trained to utilize the baby toilets. The open sanitation of toilet affects the people by causing diseases like Malaria, Cholera, etc. The people are motivated to avoid open defecation. The public is encouraged to construct sanitary latrine. The Panchayat President has met the people to talk about the sanitation and hygienic condition of the territory, other than the grama sabha meeting. The Panchayat President has attended training programmes in order to improve the sanitary condition of the village. She gets the fund for building the toilets for the individual houses from the government grants. The public approach the panchayat president for getting the sanitation facilities. Awareness programmes are conducted for the health and sanitation facilities. The village people are monitored in order to check the tidiness of the public toilets by the panchayat president. The village panchayat is aware of the NPS scheme. 'The president knows about the complete details of this project. This scheme has reached the students and children in this area. 100% of this scheme has reached the public. Even the old people, disabled people and visually challenged people are aware of this scheme. Effort is made to control pollution in the village panchayat. The garbages are regularly cleaned in their primary area. The people are insisted to avoid the usage of plastics. Pits and pathways are dug in order to avoid the stagnated water in the street. Family planning is done for the street dogs, if they increase in number. Mosquito menace is prevented by spraying pesticides and creating awareness programmes. In order to eradicate the house fly, the surroundings are kept clean and the garbages are burnt now and then. 35% of the sanctioned fund is used for health and sanitation scheme. The president is aware of the family welfare scheme. Women and child awareness programmes are created. Village health nurse visits the individual houses to check the health of pregnant women and born babies. Family planning is also insisted under the welfare scheme. In addition, antibiotic injections are given for child and women.

Government's monetary assistance is provided for the women's marriage. Monthly check up is done for the women and children.

Many welfare schemes are rendered in the past five years. Water problems are solved. Houses are constructed for the poor people. Nursery is built. Noon meal building is constructed. Street lights are fitted. There are programmes available for the welfare of the weaker sections and in particular for the schedule caste and schedule Tribes. To mention a few: Health awareness programmes, Reservation for SC and ST in government jobs, Age relaxation for SC/ST categories, awards are given to the candidates who perform well in academic and other social activities. The Panchayat President is aware of all the subjects in the panchayat schemes. During her tenure she has built some extra toilets and graveyards for the public apart from the welfare services mentioned above.

The beneficiaries of rural development programmes are selected based on the poverty level of the individual. The people have provisions for public distribution system and ration shop. The president monitors the functioning of the ration shop Green Colour and white colour cards are issued in the ration shop. The variation in the cards occurs according to the salary of the individuals. The Panchayat President does not involve in the maintenance of community assets. The village expenditure is managed with the help of the government grants, taxation, MLA fund and MPs fund. The taxes like house tax and professional tax are collected by the panchayat. The tax collections would be around 3½ lakhs per year. The president has no power of fixing and varying the tax rates. There is no problem in the collections of taxes in this area. In order to increase the revenue of the panchayat, shops are built for rent and forest woods are sold. Rs. 30 lakhs extra fund is provided by the government for special programmes like Thaaai thittam. Approximately Rs 55,000 grants are received from the government for the other programmes. The budget available is allocated to different activities, based on the priority of the people needs.

Powers and Resource for the Functioning of the Panchayat Raj Institution

The devolution of powers, resources, decision making etc., as per the 73rd amendment Act of 1993 is not sufficient. The authority has the responsibility of implementing only the schemes as instructed by state Government. The Panchayat President is empowered to participate in and implement the government schemes based on the felt needs of the people. The money sanctioned is insufficient.

Training for the Functionaries of the Panchayat Raj Institutions

The Panchayat President has attended many training programmes. She has attended the training programmes at Chennai and many other places within Namakkal District. The duration of the training programmes is for two days. The training programmes are very useful. The president says that by attending the training programmes, she has come to know about the various schemes of panchayat, methods to approach the people and ways to solve the administrative problems.

Needs Assessment and Fulfillment

The Panchayat President was able to understand the people's expectations. The basic expectations of the people are food, housing and job opportunity. She was able to list out the expectations of the public. The expectations of the people are fulfilled.

Obstacles Faced and ways of solving them

The Panchayat President had faced many obstacles while implementing the welfare schemes. The major problems in this village are Caste fight and insufficient fund. She was able to solve it with the help of her husband and the higher officials.

Role of Grama Sabha in Panchayat Raj System

The Panchayat meeting is communicated to the public through notice board and oral announcement. Around 200 people attend the grama sabha meetings. The grama sabha meetings are conducted four times in a year. This meeting is regularly attended by the board members, ward members, panchayat president the public and the village officer. The time duration of the Grama sabha meeting varies according to the discussion of the content. It may be till 2 hour or more than that. The people often arise questions in the meeting. The minutes of the meeting are documented and maintained in a register. The female gender formed the majority strength in the gram sabha meeting. The major functions of the grama sabha meeting are information delivery to the public, sanction approval for the schemes and discussion about the local governance.

An agenda is prepared for Grama sabha meeting. The government officials prepare the agenda of the grama sabha meeting. They bring the agenda from the government department. The panchayat body also frames the agenda with the 29 subjects. The panchayat president has attended all the meetings. The average attendance of the grama sabha meetings is 25% of the population in the village. The grama sabha does not possess any fund of its own. It meets its expenditure by getting the government fund, MLA and MPs fund. The Grama Sabha enjoys popular participation from all sections of people. It has brought some achievements like constructing roads and toilets for the public. According to the Panchayat President, for the effective functioning of Grama sabha there should be 100% attendance, separate fund should be maintained, all the policies should be verified, the implementation of plans should be checked along with the government officials, effective planning should be done and budget has to be framed.

Administrative Issues

The Panchayat President gets the co-operation of the ward members. The Vice-president helps her in all the ways and means in the administration. She consults the ward members before taking any decision. She accepts the decision of both the gender. If the funds are not sufficient she manages with the available fund, taxation and other means of revenue collected out of self effort. Approximately Rs. 50,000/- is received from the Central and State Government for welfare measures. This is recorded in the panchayat office register, by the secretary. The panchayat president has visited other panchayat area to observe the attitude of the people. The purpose of visiting the other panchayat area is to make the administration effective and to know the methodology to solve the public needs. The caste has no specific role in this panchayat. Everyone co-operates in the important issues. Being women, she is dominated by the male members. Her functions are performed by the male counterpart. The political parties play effective role in this village panchayat. They get things done by their influence. It is easy to extract fund for the panchayat by these political parties. The panchayat president does not have any association to protest her interest. Whenever she implemented new scheme, she had fear and insufficient fund. She has smooth and straight forward relationship with the government officials. The NGO's has played a vital role in the civil societies. They have done social service. They have organized awareness programmes for AIDS, Job scheme for youth, eradication of epidemic diseases etc.

Significance of the Study

The space for women in Politics is very less. Women try to compete with men counterpart and implement the welfare programmes for the benefit of the society. Even though women work very hard in the Political field they are not given much importance. Their performance is not brought to light in comparison with the performance of Men Leaders in the grassroot governance. Hence the researcher has given importance in studying the role performance of elected rural women leaders in the grass root governance.

Delimitations of the Study

The study is confined in exploring the Panchayat Presidents in Tamil Nadu with reference to Namakkal district. This study focus on analyzing the Irukkur Village Panchayat of kabilarmalai block in Namakkal District The other villages are not considered for analysis in this study. Further the other areas of women development, welfare programmes for women and men Panchayat Presidents are not focused in this study.

Findings from the study area

1. Women leaders are capable of doing miracle in the society.
2. They can equally competent with their men counterpart.
3. Women can contribute a lot to the social, political and economic development of the nation in general.

Suggestions

1. The central and the state government should concentrate in giving effective training programmes for the rural women leaders.
2. The venue for the meeting may be arranged in the nearby places, so that the safety of the women leaders can be safeguarded.
3. The rural women leaders can be motivated to take part in the challenging programmes of the state and central government.

Conclusion

Thus the rural women leaders take much pain in implementing the welfare programmes of the central and the state government. The researcher reveals that even after 70 years of independence some of the women leaders are functioning as name sake leaders and in fact they are being dictated or ruled by their men counterpart. So women should come forward to equip themselves in leadership skill, technical education, communication and develop their self confidence in the society. If the ability of all the women leaders and women in general are utilized on the whole, India will definitely march towards a developed nation.

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