

KNOWLEDGE LEVEL OF PRI MEMBERS REGARDING SELECTED SCHEMES

ABSTRACT

Panchayati Raj Institution is known as the backbone of the country and hence expected to perform their roles effectively in implementation and monitoring of the development schemes. PRI works at different levels and starts from village to district level. Each tier has its roles regarding MGNREGA, IAY and NRLM schemes. So it is necessary to ascertain the level of knowledge of PRI members about the schemes and roles of PRI regarding selected schemes. Further, the actual role performance of different tiers of PRI was also assessed in implementing and monitoring of development schemes. The descriptive research design was used for the present study. Four districts of Punjab state were selected purposively which were further represented by two blocks each. Random selection of three villages from each of the selected block was done. Forty elected *Zilla Parishad* members, forty-eight *Panchayat Samiti* members, and ninety-six *Gram Panchayat* members were selected. The self-structured interview schedule was prepared to collect the data. The collected data were analyzed by using frequency and percentage. It can be concluded that majority of *Gram Panchayat* and *Panchayat Samiti* members had a low level of knowledge about the schemes and no knowledge about the roles of PRI in selected schemes. Half of the *Zila Parishad* members were having a high level of knowledge about the selected schemes and the parts of PRI in different systems. Majority of *Gram Panchayat* and *Panchayat Samiti* members were not performing their roles in implementation and monitoring of development schemes. Only *Zila Parishad* members were performing their roles at a high level in implementation and monitoring of development schemes.

Key words: MGNREGA, IAY, NRLM, Knowledge, Role performance, Actual role performance

Abbreviations:

MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
IAY	Indira Awaas Yojana
NRLM	National Rural Livelihood Mission
BPL	Below Poverty Line
DRDAs	District Rural Development Agencies
JRY	Jawahar Rozgar Yojana
SGSY	Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana
UTC	Union Territories
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations

SHGs	Self Help Groups
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institution
ICT	Information and Communication Technology

Introduction

The major responsibility of the *Panchayati Raj* Institutions is to accelerate the pace of development and to involve the local people in this process so that their felt needs and development aspirations can be fulfilled. The decentralized planning is a multi-level planning process. It starts from the lower level (*Gram Panchayat*), intermediate level (*Panchayat Samiti*) and higher level (*Zila Parishad*). Now it has been strongly felt that an effective *Panchayati Raj* System can bring rapid and integrated development through people's participation. There are some anti-poverty programmes under the implementation of *Panchayati Raj*. In the changing scenario, *Panchayats* are expected to play an important role in the planning and implementation of these programmes. (Reddy 2015)

The PRI implemented selected development programmes are discussed below.

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is an employment guarantee scheme enacted by legislation on August 25, 2005. It is a social security employment act, which guarantees employment to the rural poor in India. MGNREGA provides a right to a rural Indian citizen for unskilled manual work for at least 100 days in a year if he/she is willing to do the work. The work is provided to him/her by the authorities in his own residential area and also within a given time frame (within 15 days) otherwise state government pays unemployment allowance. Only labour-intensive tasks are preferred in the scheme. The main implementing empowered agency is *Gram Panchayat* and it has accountability towards *Gram Sabah*. *Gram Panchayats* also have powers to make plans by suggestions of *Gram Sabah*. Job cards are also issued by *Gram Panchayats* and wages are deposited to the bank accounts of employees. One significant and unique fact about MGNREGA is that it provides a fair opportunity to rural people to earn their own income without any discrimination of caste, gender and sex. Most remarkable feature is that it pays equal wages to women as well as men. (Pandey 2017)

Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY)

The Government of India implemented IAY since the year 1985-86 to provide assistance for construction / upgradation of dwelling units to BPL rural households belonging to the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and freed bonded labourers categories. IAY was de-linked from JRY and made an independent scheme with effect from 1 January 1996. Upgradation of houses necessarily includes a provision of sanitary toilets and smokeless *chullahs*. The layout, type and design of the house depend on the local condition and the preference of the beneficiary. Contractors are not allowed in construction of house. The scheme is funded on cost-sharing basis between the Government of India and the State Governments in the ratio of 75:25. In case of Union Territories,

the entire funds are provided by the Government of India. The programme is implemented through the *Zilla Parishads*/DRDAs. *Gram Sabha* selects the beneficiaries from the list of eligible BPL households on the basis of target and sent list to *Zilla Parishads*/ DRDAs and Block Development Offices. The house is allotted to the name of the female member or name of both (husband and wife) of the household. *Zilla Parishads*/DRDAs help the beneficiaries in acquiring raw material on control rates as per their desire or request. A committee can also be formed to coordinate the work. (Bhanj *et al* 2008)

National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM)

After restructuring SGSY, the government of India started National Rural Livelihoods Mission in 2010. Government of India again changed its name as “*Aajeevika*” to implement the new strategy of poverty alleviation for women in 2011. It is a centrally sponsored scheme, implemented in all the states and UTs except Delhi and Chandigarh. The financing of the scheme is to be shared between the Centre and the States/UTs based on the incidence of poverty there. The NGOs, banks and financial institutions are involved. Its focus is to eradicate the poverty among the poor households by providing them employment opportunities so that they can enhance their sustainable livelihoods by creating grass root institutions for them. Targeted beneficiaries of NRLM are SHGs of the poor, their federations, women, small and marginal farmers, scheduled castes and tribes and other marginalized and vulnerable sections of the society. NRLM trains interested rural BPL youths with skills and finance in accordance with the job requirements. The eligible SHGs are to be provided with revolving fund, capital subsidy fund and subsidy on interest rate. NRLM ensures that at least one member from each identified rural poor household is brought under the Self Help Group network in a time-bound manner. (Mahak and Kumar 2016)

Panchayati Raj Institutions are expected to play an important role in planning and implementing various developmental programmes. Adequate provision has been developed for the implementation of development programmes like MGNREGA, IAY and NRLM through the *Panchayati Raj* institutions. Thus, it is necessary to ascertain the knowledge level of different PRI members regarding selected development schemes and roles of PRIs. Further the actual performance of different tiers of PRI was assessed in implementing and monitoring of development schemes.

Methodology

The descriptive research design was used for the present study. Four districts of Punjab state were selected purposively which were further represented by two blocks each. Random selection of three villages from each of the selected block was done. Forty elected *Zilla Parishad* members (ten from each district), forty-eight *Panchayat Samiti members* (six from each block) and ninety-six *Gram Panchayat* members (four from each village) were selected. The self-structured interview schedule was prepared to collect the data regarding the knowledge level of the PRI members on different aspects of selected schemes and the roles of PRI. One score was assigned to each correct answer. Further, the actual role performance of PRI members was assessed from the different PRI members.

Actual role performance was assessed regarding always, sometimes and never and was scored as 3,2,1. The level of knowledge was ranged by using the normal distribution formula. The collected data were analyzed by using frequency and percentage.

Results and Discussion

Level of knowledge of different tiers of PRI regarding selected schemes

The data shown in the table 1 reveals that majority of *Gram Panchayat* (62.50%, 77.08% & 68.75%) and *Panchayat Samiti* (62.50%, 62.50% & 62.50%) members were having a low level of knowledge regarding MGNREGA, IAY, and NRLM schemes.

Table 1. Distribution of different tiers of PRI according to their level of knowledge regarding the selected scheme

Categories	Gram Panchayat (n ₁ =96)		Panchayat Samiti (n ₂ =48)		Zila Parishad (n ₃ =40)	
	F	%	F	%	f	%
MGNREGA						
Low (1-25)	60	62.50	30	62.50	16	40.00
Medium (26-50)	18	18.75	0	0	4	10.00
High (51-75)	18	18.75	18	37.50	20	50.00
IAY						
Low (1-22)	74	77.08	30	62.50	16	40.00
Medium (23-44)	12	12.50	2	4.17	4	10.00
High (45-66)	10	10.42	16	33.33	20	50.00
NRLM						
Low (1-24)	66	68.75	30	62.50	16	40.00
Medium (25-48)	18	18.75	0	0	4	10.00
High (49-72)	12	12.50	18	37.50	20	50.00

However, in case of *Zila Parishad* half of the respondents were having a high level of knowledge in the selected development schemes (MGNREGA, IAY, and NRLM) respectively. However, Kumar (2012) conducted his study in Jammu and Kashmir and found awareness among all the elected women members regarding MGNREGA and IAY scheme followed by half of the SGSY scheme.

Level of knowledge of different tiers of PRI regarding roles of PRI in selected development schemes

The data given in the table shows that majority of *Gram Panchayat* (60.42%, 77.08% & 60.42%) and *Panchayat Samiti* (62.50%, 66.67% & 62.50%) members were not knowledgeable about the roles of PRI and had no knowledge regarding MGNREGA, IAY, and NRLM schemes.

Table 2. Distribution of PRI members according to their level of knowledge regarding roles of PRI in selected development schemes

Level of knowledge	Gram Panchayat (n ₁ =96)		Panchayat Samiti (n ₂ =48)		Zila Parishad (n ₃ =40)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
MGNREGA						
No knowledge (0)	58	60.42	30	62.50	16	40.00
Low (1-7)	8	8.33	0	0	0	0
Medium (8-14)	4	6.25	0	0	2	5.00
High (15-21)	26	27.08	18	37.50	22	55.00
IAY						
No knowledge (0)	74	77.08	32	66.67	16	40.00
Low (1-7)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Medium (8-14)	2	2.08	0	0	0	0
High (15-21)	20	20.83	16	33.33	24	60.00
NRLM						
No knowledge (0)	58	60.42	30	62.50	16	40.00
Low (1-3)	6	6.25	0	0	0	0
Medium (4-6)	8	8.33	0	0	0	0
High (7-9)	24	25.00	18	37.50	24	60.00

However, the majority of *Zila Parishad* members had a high level of knowledge in MGNREGA (55.0%), IAY (60.0%) and NRLM (60.0%), schemes. Similarly, Dhaka and Dhaka (2004) conducted their study on SC women of PRI in Haryana and found no awareness among them regarding roles and responsibilities of PRIs. It may be due to illiteracy, lack of leadership quality, *purdah* system and representation by male members in *Panchayat* meetings.

Level of the actual performance of PRI members in MGNREGA scheme

The distribution of PRI members according to their level of actual performance under MGNREGA scheme has been discussed in table 3. Majority of the members at *Gram Panchayat* (60.42%) and *Panchayat Samiti* (62.50%) level were not performing any role in MGNREGA scheme respectively. Similarly, Ashok (2014) found a low level of awareness among *Gram Panchayat* members across the country.

Table 3. Distribution of PRI members according to their level of actual performance in MGNREGA scheme

Level of actual role performance	Frequency	Percentage
Gram Panchayat members (n₁=96)		
No role performance (0)	58	60.42
Low (1-15)	14	14.58
Medium (16-30)	12	12.50
High (31-45)	12	12.50
Panchayat Samiti (n₂=48)		
No role performance (0)	30	62.50
Low (1-2)	2	4.17

Medium (3-4)	4	8.33
High (5-6)	12	25.00
Zila Parishad (n₃=40)		
No role performance (0)	18	45.00
Low (1-3)	2	5.00
Medium (4-6)	2	5.00
High (7-9)	18	45.00

In case of *Zilla Parishad*, 45.0 per cent reported no performance and the same percentage were found to perform their role to the higher level. One forth of *Panchayat Samiti* members was also found to have a high level of actual performance. Similarly, Kumar (2012) found negligible role performance in Jammu and Kashmir among women *Panchayat* members.

Level of the actual performance of PRI members in IAY scheme

The actual level of role performance of PRI members was very low in IAY scheme as it was found that majority of *Gram Panchayat* (77.08%) and *Panchayat Samiti* (66.67%) members were not performing their roles in the scheme respectively. Similar results were found by Kumari and Singh (2015) and low found level of role performance among *Gram Panchayat* members.

Table 4. Distribution of PRI members according to their level of actual performance in IAY scheme

Level of actual role performance	Frequency	Percentage
Gram Panchayat (n₁=96)		
No role performance (0)	74	77.08
Low (1-7)	4	4.17
Medium (8-14)	10	10.42
High (15-21)	8	8.33
Panchayat Samiti (n₂=48)		
No role performance (0)	32	66.67
Low (1-6)	4	8.33
Medium (7-12)	2	4.17
High (13-18)	10	20.83
Zila Parishad (n₃=40)		
No role performance (0)	16	40.00
Low (1-9)	4	10.00
Medium (10-18)	6	15.00
High (19-27)	14	35.00

Even 40.0 per cent of *Zila Parishad* members were found to perform no role, but their percentage was somewhat more than the other tiers (35.0%) in the high category. One-fifth (20.83%) of the *Panchayat Samiti* members were also placed in the high-performance category.

Level of the actual performance of PRI members in NRLM scheme

The level of actual role performance in NRLM as shown in table 5 reveals that very high percentage of the members at all levels were not performing any role under the scheme (62.50%, 62.50%, and 40.0%) respectively. Similarly, Siga (2015) found in his study conducted in Arunachal Pradesh that very few *Panchayat* members were performing their roles.

Table 5. Distribution of PRI members according to their level of actual performance in NRLM scheme

Level of actual role performance	Frequency	Percentage
Gram Panchayat (n₁=96)		
No role performance (0)	60	62.50
Low (1-4)	16	16.67
Medium (5-8)	10	10.42
High (9-12)	10	10.42
Panchayat Samiti (n₂=48)		
No role performance (0)	30	62.50
Low (1-3)	6	12.50
Medium (4-6)	4	8.33
High (7-9)	8	16.67
Zila Parishad (n₃=40)		
No role performance (0)	16	40.00
Low (1-3)	4	10.00
Medium (4-6)	2	5.00
High (7-9)	18	45.00

It was only *Zila Parishad* members (45.00%) who were performing their role and were placed in the high-level category.

Conclusions

It can be concluded that majority of *Gram Panchayat* and *Panchayat Samiti* members had a low level of knowledge about the selected schemes and no knowledge about the roles of PRI in selected schemes. Majority of *Zila Parishad* members were having the high level of knowledge about the selected development schemes and the roles of PRI in different schemes. Majority of *Gram Panchayat* and *Panchayat Samiti* members were not actually performing their roles in implementation and monitoring of development schemes. Only *Zila Parishad* members were actually performing their roles at a high level in implementation and monitoring of development schemes.

Recommendations

- Regular capacity building exercises for the PRI members should be conducted to increase the level of knowledge regarding the schemes and to enhance the involvement of all members in the implementation and monitoring of the schemes.
- Integrated training/workshops involving all stakeholders and the members of all PRI should be planned and conducted together to enhance interaction with each other. This can be

182 beneficial in increased interaction and understanding of ones 'own role and that of the other
183 level.

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