

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Panchayat Presidents in Relation to their Participation in Planning and Execution of Agricultural Production Programmes*

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ABSTRACT

The study revealed that out of six socio-economic variables such as age, education, caste status, social participation, economic status and mode of election of the panchayat presidents, the age alone had shown relationship with their levels of participation in the planning and execution of agricultural production programmes.

INTRODUCTION

At village level the panchayat presidents' co-operation and direct involvement are needed for successful implementation of the agricultural programmes in villages. It is their responsibility to plan and execute the programmes with the guidance of extension workers. Panchayat presidents differ in the extent of participation among themselves. A study was initiated to know whether or not the differential participation relates to their socio-personal characteristics.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This investigation was taken up with a sample of 100 panchayat presidents from the two Community Development blocks of Chingleput agricul-

tural division. Particulars were obtained with the help of structured interview schedule. Six characteristics *viz.*, age, education, caste, social participation, economic status and mode of election were considered. Participation in this study meant the presidents' involvement in planning as well as execution of three agricultural production programmes *viz.*, implements programme, fruit plants programme and hybrid cumbu programme. The respondents were categorised into three categories namely low, medium and high on the basis of the level of participation. The procedure was as follows. There were 27 steps in the three programmes, participation in a step was assigned a score value of one. If one president had participated in all steps he could get the maximum score of 27. Arranging the respondents in the ascending order of the partici-

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pation score attained. cumulative frequency was calculated with a view to have three levels of participation and it was divided by three to locate the three score ranges. As a result, respondents with a score range of 0-14 were placed under 'low level of participation', those with 15-19 scores under 'medium level of participation', and others with 20 and above under 'high level',

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Age in relation to participation

The respondents were classified into three age groups for the purpose of comparing with their levels of participation.

Among the young age group panchayat presidents it was noted that majority of them (66.67 per cent) belonged to the 'low participation category, whereas a greater proportion of the old aged presidents (52.95 per cent) came under 'high' or medium level category. Age is thus found to be significantly related to the extent of participation. (Table 1).

Table 1. Age in relation of panchayat presidents in agricultural production programmes

Age	Levels of participation		
	Low	Medium	High
Young (Up to 25 years)	66.67	33.33	0.00
Middle (26 to 45 years)	50.88	22.81	26.31
Old (46 years and above)	47.05	47.05	5.90

Chi-square value 17.618. Significant at 1 per cent level

Education in relation to participation

There were no illiterate as well as college educated, panchayat presidents. The respondents were classified with three different categories for the purpose of comparison.

Table 2. Educational level in relation to participation of panchayat presidents in agricultural production programme

Education	Levels of participation		
	Low (per cent)	Medium (per cent)	High (per cent)
Primary school	39.29	46.43	14.28
Middle school	54.55	27.27	18.18
High school	25.00	25.00	17.86

Chi-square value 4.227. Not significant at 5 per cent level

Among the presidents with primary education the participation of majority of them (86.72 per cent) was either low or medium. The same trend was found with middle school as well as high school educated presidents. The percentage of presidents with high level of participation in each of the three educational levels was almost equal ranging from 14.28 to 18.18. Hence educational status does not seem to be significantly associated with the extent of participation.

Caste in relation to participation

The cast wise distribution of respondents according to the different levels of participation is furnished in (Table 3).

In ganarel a majority of presidents in each caste came under either low or medium level of participation. Caste-wise percentages in different levels of participation were almost close to one another. It can therefore be inferred

Table 3. Caste in relation to participation of presidents in agricultural development programmes.

Caste	Levels of participation		
	Low per cent	Medium per cent	High per cent
Scheduled caste	53.33	33.33	13.34
Backward caste	46.00	34.00	20.00
Forward caste	57.14	28.57	14.29

Chi-square value 1.372. Not significant at 5 per cent level

that caste status had no significant influence on the participation of presidents in planning and execution of programmes (Table 3). Brar (1966) also found that there was no association of caste and contribution relating planning.

Social participation in relation to participation

The distribution of panchayat presidents by their participation in social organisations is presented in Table 4.

There is no significant relationship between social participation of the presidents and the extent of their participation in programmes. Participation

Table 4. Social participation in relation to participation of panchayat presidents in agricultural production programmes.

Extent of social participation	Levels of participation		
	Low (per cent)	Medium (per cent)	High (per cent)
Member in one organisation	60.87	26.09	13.04
Member in more than one organisation	43.64	38.18	18.18
Office bearer in any organisation	59.09	22.73	18.18

Chi-square value 3.226. Not significant at 5 per cent level

of a greater proportion of presidents was invariably low or medium, no matter whether they were holding one membership or more than one membership as revealed by almost similar percentages in the different participation (Table 4).

Economic status in relation to participation

The respondents were classified according to their economic status based on Pareek and Trivedi (1964) scale, with slight modifications.

It is observed that there is no significant relationship between economic status and their contribution in planning and execution of agricultural production programmes. Among the presidents with low or medium level of participation in the programmes more or less

Table 5. Economic status in relation to participation of panchayat presidents in agricultural production programmes

Economic status	Level of participation		
	Low (per cent)	Medium (per cent)	High (per cent)
Low	50.00	35.41	14.59
Medium	41.37	41.37	17.26
High	65.22	13.05	21.73

Chi-square value 5.468. Not significant at 5 per cent level

equal percentages are found against the different economic status group (Table 5).

Mode of election in relation to participation

It was proposed to find out whether the panchayat presidents who were elected unanimously, differed from those elected through contest in the extent of contribution to the programmes.

There is no significant relationship between mode of election of panchayat

Table 6. Mode of election in relation to participation of panchayat presidents in agricultural production programmes

Mode of election	Levels of Participation		
	(Low per cent)	Medium (per cent)	High (per cent)
Unopposed	54.83	25.81	19.36
Contest	49.28	34.78	15.94

Chi-square value 0.760. Not significant at 5 per cent level

president and their levels of participation in programmes (Table 6).

Presidents elected unopposed got elected by virtue of caste or wealth or traditional leadership factor. As such they might not have much interest in the programme as they have no opposition to question them in villages. Thus the peculiar situation prevalent in two blocks involved in the studies neutralises the difference between the levels of participation of presidents elected unopposed and by contest. The study implies that in involving panchayat presidents in planning and execution of programmes, their personal characteristics may not be the main contributing factors.

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