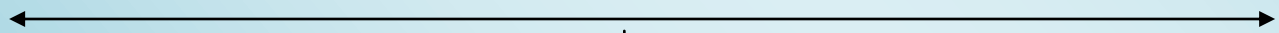


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**Email: [nairjc5@gmail.com](mailto:nairjc5@gmail.com) , [nairjc@nairjc.com](mailto:nairjc@nairjc.com) , [info@nairjc.com](mailto:info@nairjc.com) Website: [www.nairjc.com](http://www.nairjc.com)**

## EXPERIENCES AND CONSTRAINTS FACED BY MALE AND FEMALE PRI REPRESENTATIVES IN ANANTHAPURAMU DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

**DR. A. KESAVA REDDY\***

\*Former Research Scholar, Dept. of Political Science and Public Administration, Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Ananthapuramu.

### ABSTRACT

*Since very ancient times the village has been the pivot of administration and the real centre of social life around which the entire structure of local self-government revolved with facility and ease. The manifold functions of the PRI institutions comprised not only the normal civic duties but also embraced all conceivable kinds of public affairs-industrial and commercial, social and religious, administrative judicial and legislative. Their chief social obligations were education, health, through fare, sanitation, water supply, maintenance of public institutions and many emergency measures during the time of famine. Each of these functions was exercised in accordance with definite rules and regulations issued by government from time to time. The effective functioning of PRI institutions depends upon the efficiency of people heading these bodies. The present paper makes an attempt to highlight the experiences and problems facing by the PRI representatives.*

**Keywords:** PRI Representatives, Ananthapuramu, Andhra Pradesh.

### INTRODUCTION

In 1953, the pattern of local self government in Andhra State had been modeled on the thing which had been already operated in Madras State. The Madras District Municipalities Act, 1920, the Madras District Boards Act, 1920, and Madras Village Panchayats Act, 1950, encircled all the regulations for the local bodies. In 1953, three types of rural local self government institutions were existed in the State namely District Boards, Taluk Boards and Village Panchayats.

Responsibility for all developmental activities at the village level has been given to the Panchayat. Functions of the Panchayat are mentioned, they are promotion and development of elementary education, cottage industries, promotion of agriculture, organization of collective forming and co-operative management of lands,

establishment and maintenance of maternity and child welfare centres, developing wards, assisting for implementation of land reforms measures and forming programmes of production for the village. At present the PRI bodies in the State is functioning according to Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act-1994.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the changes made by the Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act-1994 in the functioning of PRIs in the State
2. To evaluate the experiences of sample PRI representatives as the heads of PRI bodies in Ananthapuramu district of Andhra Pradesh

## SAMPLING

For the present study 60 male and 60 female representatives were selected by simple random sampling method in Ananthapuramu district.

## PANCHAYAT RAJ ACT-1994

The State Government amended the existing laws governing the Panchayat (which discussed in the previous chapter) Raj Institutions in the light of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment. According to it the Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Raj Bill was passed by the State Legislative Assembly on March 30, 1994. The new Act called the Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act, 1994 came into force on May 30 1994, by replacing the earlier Acts. In accordance with the provisions of the Act a three tier structure comprising of Zilla Parishad at the district level, Mandal Praja Parishad at the intermediate level and Gram Panchayat at the village level was set up constituted in the State. The Act has been amended from time to time during the last ten years of its operation to make it more effective.

## Main Characteristics of A.P. Panchayat Raj Act of 1994

The following are the important features of A.P. Panchayat Raj Act, 1994. They are;

1. Provision of organic linkage among the three tiers which enables the Sarpanches of the Gram Panchayats to attend the General Body meeting of the Mandal Parishad. Similarly, the Presidents of the Mandal Parishad are entitled to attend the General Body meetings of the Zilla Parishad without the right to vote.

2. Provision of the norm of two children, whereby a candidate with more than two children will be disqualified to contest in the elections or to continue as a member in any one of the Panchayat Raj bodies.
3. A member who is absent for three meetings consecutively is deemed to be disqualified thereby to ensure the regularity of the members of the functioning of Panchayats.
4. Joint cheque power for the operation of Gram Panchayat fund is provided to the sarpanch of the Gram Panchayat along with any one member purposively selected by the Gram Panchayat.
5. The scheme of selection of Gram Panchayats is another unique feature in the State. Committees have been formed at the State, District and Mandal level for the selection of best Gram Panchayat and inducements are provided to stimulate the Panchayats.
6. The Power to call for information from the Village Development Officer (VDO) has been entrusted to the Gram Panchayats.
7. Co-option to minorities given to provide representation to all sections including the community in the village, and
8. Provision for bringing no-confidence motion against the heads of PRIS only once in their five year term, not in the first two years after the holding of the office.

### Use of Power

Perceptions of the sample PRI representatives about their “Role” are judged putting one probing question that, “How do you want to use your power”? Answers to this question have been presented through the Table 1.

**Table – 1**

**Usage of Power by the Sample Respondent PRI Representatives**

Sl. No.	Particulars	Female Representatives	Male Representatives	Total
1	Nothing	4.74	2.41	4.32
2	Development work	19.47	9.64	17.71
3	Social Development	37.37	16.87	33.69
4	Women Development	12.89	49.4	19.44
5	Supply Basic needs	15.53	13.25	15.12
6	Economic Development	10	8.43	9.72
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field Data

Table 1 denotes that 95.68 per cent of PRI representatives want to use their power in positive direction. Some of them want to do developmental work or Social development. They also want to use their power in supplying basic minimum needs for the poor and also in Economic development of the women. Majority (33.69 per cent) of the representatives have exposed their wish to use their power for social development i.e. working for Education, Health etc. Remaining 4.32 per cent of female members told that they don't want to use their power. They told that "Usage of Power" depends on the actor and the organization in which she belongs to.

### Awareness on the Programmes regarding Women & Child development

To judge their sense of responsibility PRI representatives are also asked "Do you know the programmes regarding Women & Child development"? Answer to this question is presented in table 2.

**Table – 2**

#### Awareness of Sample PRI Representatives about the Programmes of "Women and Child Development

Sl. No.	Responses	Female Representatives	Male Representatives	Total
1	Yes	56.32	83.13	61.12
2	No	43.68	16.87	38.88
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data

As per table 2 nearly 61.12 per cent of PRI representatives know the programmes regarding women and child development and remaining 38.88 per cent members do not know the programmes. Here, male PRI representatives are more knowledgeable on women and child development programmes than their counter parts.

### Communication

The sample PRI representatives were further asked that "How do you communicate with the people in your locality"? Their answers have been reflected in table 3.

Table –3

## Sample PRI Representatives Mode of Communications with Public

Sl. No.	Mode of Communication	Female Representatives	Male Representatives	Total
1	Do not Communicate	3.68	2.41	3.46
2	Talking with Each Household	20.79	22.89	21.17
3	At Weekly Meeting	7.63	18.07	9.5
4	At Gram Sabha	24.74	32.53	26.13
5	Through Party worker	31.58	16.87	28.94
6	Through Husband or Any family members	11.58	7.23	10.80
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data

From the above table we find that 21.17 per cent of sample PRI representatives told that they communicate with the people talking with each household. About 28.94 per cent of sample PRI representatives confessed that they communicate with the village people through party workers. Nearly 26.13 per cent of PRI representatives informed that they communicate the people through participation in Gram Sabha. Some PRI representatives (10.80 per cent) confessed that they communicate with the people through husband or any family member.

### Participation in meetings

The PRI representatives will become enlightens about the activities of Panchayat Raj institutions, only when they attend the meeting regularly. As such during field survey the sample PRI representatives were asked about their regularity of attending the meetings and the same is presented in table 4.

Table – 4

## Regularity of Attending PRI Meetings by Sample Representatives

Sl. No.	Particulars	Female Representatives	Male Representatives	Total
1	Not Regular	41.05	21.69	37.58
2	Regular	58.95	78.31	62.42
<b>Total</b>		<b>-100</b>	<b>-100</b>	<b>-100</b>

Source: Field Data

Most of the members informed the researcher that they always try to attend general meeting and other meeting called by respective PRI bodies but it becomes very difficult for them due to their personal works. Time is another factor. A large number of female members also told that as there are transport cost and other cost of refreshment, they can't attend the meeting regularly. Some of them (who are daily labour) informed that if they come regularly in the meeting then they would be deprived of daily wages. Some of the female members have shown the interference of Party as the cause for not attending meeting.

## Supports

What supports have you got after being elected? The answer for this question has been reflected in the following table 5.

**Table – 5**  
**Various Supports Systems Received by Sample PRI Representatives**

Sl. No.	Support Systems	Female Representatives	Male Representatives	Total
1	No Support	1.84	2.41	1.94
2	Training by Government	4.47	3.61	4.32
3	Training by NGO	8.95	6.02	8.42
4	Training by Party	15.53	8.43	14.25
5	Guidance by Ex Member	3.95	6.02	4.32
6	Reading Materials	23.16	21.69	22.89
7	Field Visit	8.16	10.84	8.64
8	Support by Husband/Family	10.26	14.46	11.02
9	Support by Secretary	4.21	4.82	4.32
10	Support by Party to perform the work	3.42	6.02	3.89
11	Support by Caste leader to perform the work	5	2.41	4.54
12	Support from Villagers	1.58	2.41	1.73
13	Support from Officers	9.47	10.84	9.72
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	

**Source:** Field Data

From the above table it is clear that 1.94 per cent of PRI representatives have not got any support and remaining 98.06 per cent of sample PRI representatives considered that they have got the supports. According to them they have got supports like training by govt., training by NGO, training by party, Guidance by Ex-member,



Reading materials, field visit, support by husband/family, support by secretary, support by party to perform the work, support by caste leader to perform the work, support from villagers, support from officers etc.

Around 26.99 per cent of PRI representatives have got the training either government or party or NGO. And remaining 73.01 per cent have not got training. This denotes that a significant number of PRI representatives are uncovered by the knowledge and skill support. But surprisingly 22.89 per cent of PRI representatives have got the reading materials. In the time of field survey it is informed that members are not happy with the quality of Training and they demand for timely and regular training. Most of the members also admitted that the quality of training by government is not up to the mark.

### Structural Constraints

The structural constraints faced by sample PRI representatives are given in table 6.

**Table-6**  
**Structural Constraints Faced By Sample PRI Representatives**

Structural Constraints	Female Representatives		Male Representatives		Total		Grand Total
	Mentioned	Not Mentioned	Mentioned	Not Mentioned	Mentioned	Not Mentioned	
Age	33.68	66.32	16.87	83.13	30.67	69.33	100
Sex	16.05	83.95	13.25	86.75	15.55	84.45	100
Caste	26.58	73.42	15.66	84.34	24.62	75.38	100
Land Holdings	16.58	83.42	9.64	90.36	15.33	84.67	100
Occupation	14.74	85.26	22.89	77.11	16.2	83.8	100

**Source:** Field Data

It is clear from table 6 that the structural constraints faced by sample PRI representatives are minimal. Among the various structural constraints age is considered as an important constraint by 30.67 per cent of total sample. Here, female representatives are ahead with 33.68 per cent and it sharply reduced to 16.87 per cent in case of male representatives. The second important structural constraint is caste, which is reported by 24.62 per cent of the sample. Gender as a structural constraint is recognised by 15.55 per cent of the sample. Occupation is identified as one of structural constraint by 16.20 per cent of the sample. Only 15.33 per cent of the sample recognised landholdings possessed by a family as one of structural constraint.

## Other Constraints

The question, “What are the other constraints faced by you in performing your work?” was put to the sample PRI representatives to know their feelings towards important hindrances. Table 7 depicts their responses.

**Table – 7**

**Other Constraints faced by the Sample PRI Representatives**

Sl. No.	Constraints	Male Representatives	Female Representatives	Total
1	Distant Location and Lack of Communication	4.74	4.82	4.75
2	Low level of Education & Knowledge	7.11	14.46	8.42
3	Male Intervention	12.63	26.51	15.12
4	Party Intervention	12.37	25.3	14.69
5	No Monitoring & Supervision	18.16	13.25	17.28
6	Inadequate Financial Allocations	35.79	10.84	31.32
7	Party Conflict	9.21	4.82	8.42
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field Data

It is clear from the table that inadequate financial allocations are the main problem as told by maximum respondents (31.32 per cent). Lack of monitoring and supervision is reported by 17.28 per cent of the sample PRI representatives. Male intervention is reported by 15.12 per cent of sample PRI representatives. On the other hand, nearly 14.69 per cent PRI representatives reported party intervention is the major constraint in discharging their duties properly. Equal per cent i.e. 8.42 of sample male and female PRI representatives reported party conflict and low level of education and knowledge as major constraints. Distant location and lack of communication is reported by 4.75 per cent of PRI representatives.

## CONCLUSION

The study covers the issues like use of power for the development works, awareness on the programmes regarding women & child development, mode of communications with public, regularity of attending Panchayat raj institutions meetings, various support systems for the respondents, structural and other constraints faced by the PRI representatives etc.

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