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Path Analysis of Characteristics of Panchayat Leaders and its Impact on their Attitude

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ABSTRACT

A good deal of work in establishing closer linkage between research and extension has been done in the last few years. Communication of technology is conceived as occurring through a network of relatively complex nature. A local leader who has adopted improved practices extends the same to others. The common man has much faith in the local leaders. Opinion leadership is the degree to which an individual is able to influence other individuals' attitudes or overt behaviour informally in a desired way with relative frequency. Conceptually, panchayats are elected rural local bodies responsible for local government functions. A study was conducted in the purposively selected Rajnandgaon district of Chhattisgarh on 263 purposively selected panchayat leaders. A structured interview schedule was used as a tool for data collection and primary data was collected by personally interviewing the selected respondents. The attitude was measured by Likert type scale suggested by Ray and Mondal (1999). To know the direct and indirect effects of various independent variables on the dependent variable (Attitude), the method of path coefficient analysis (Wrights, 1921) was employed. It was observed that most of the gram panchayat leaders (40.00%) had moderately favourable attitude towards panchayati raj institutions while as regards attitude of Janpad and Jila panchayat leaders it was found that majority of them (58.73%) had moderately favourable attitude towards panchayati raj institutions. The variable material possession had maximum positive direct effect (0.5033) and the variable socio economic status had highest positive total indirect effect while the variable role performance had highest positive substantial indirect effect (0.4284) through role performance itself on attitude of gram panchayat leaders towards panchayati raj institutions. The independent variable socio economic status had maximum positive direct effect on the attitude of Janpad and Jila panchayat leaders towards panchayati raj institutions with path coefficient value of 2.6285 and the independent variable material possession had highest positive total indirect effect (2.8028) on the attitude of Janpad and Jila panchayat leaders towards panchayati raj institutions while the independent variable socio economic status showed maximum positive substantial indirect effect (2.6285) through socio economic status on the attitude of Janpad and Jila panchayat leaders towards panchayati raj institutions.

Keywords

Path analysis,
Characteristics of
Panchayat leaders
and Attitude

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Introduction

A good deal of work in establishing closer linkage between research and extension has been done in the last few years. The result of painstaking efforts of research scientists have been carried to the farmers by an army of more than 70,000 village extension workers in the major states where professional agricultural extension system is functioning. In all major states T&V system of extension has been a chief vehicle in promoting several agricultural development programmes which increased the income of small scale rain fed farmers with minimal investment and which also raised significantly the productivity of farmer's who have moderately high level of investment.

The Transfer of Technology model normally puts the researcher in the role of generating all new technologies and the farmer staying in the receiving end. According to Davies (1988) this is not the exact case at all. Communication of technology is conceived as occurring through a network of relatively complex nature. A resource model of extension as suggested by Salmon (1980) put farmers and researchers as equally important contributors. The function of extension is to transfer and nurture this pool of knowledge within the rural system. Thus extension embraces all those who contribute knowledge or transfer it to farmers.

It is difficult for any country to provide enough number of extension workers to reach each and every family for its social welfare programme. With the awareness on the part of the people and the beginning of the process of modernisation, the need for intensive contact becomes more and more prominent. But, at the same time, it is very difficult to provide a large number of paid officials to do this job. It is rather more difficult for the developing countries where the resources are scarce. It is,

therefore, not possible to have face to face contact with each and every individual living in the villages. This problem can be solved to some extent through the use of local leaders. A local leader who has adopted improved practices extends the same to others. The common man has much faith in the local leaders. A villager would like to hear and imitate his own neighbour as compared to accepting the advice of an outside change-agent.

Opinion leadership is the degree to which an individual is able to influence other individuals' attitudes or overt behaviour informally in a desired way with relative frequency. This informal leadership is earned and maintained by the individuals' technical competence, social accessibility and conformity to the systems norms. Through their conformity to the systems norms, opinion leaders serve as a model for the innovation behaviour of their followers. Opinion leaders thus exemplify and express the systems structure. There is all likelihood that many of the elected panchayat leaders can successfully play the role of opinion leadership and serve as a vital link in the extension system for dissemination of latest agricultural innovations to the farming community.

Conceptually, panchayats are elected rural local bodies responsible for local government functions. But the Balwantrai Mehta Committee has given them a substantially development programme delivery orientation. While this has given them access to rural development programme funds, it has also simultaneously made them vulnerable and obsessed with these funds and their use. Their basic civil and municipal functions of sanitation, regulation, maintenance of community assets, public utilities, basic services and citizen grievances have occupied a back seat.

With the above points of reference in view a research was planned with the following specific objectives:

1. To ascertain the attitude of panchayat leaders towards the Panchayati Raj Institutions.
2. To predict the variation in attitude of panchayat leaders caused by independent variables.

Materials and Methods

Research methodology is a detailed action plan of investigation. It describes and clarifies methods used for measuring dependent and independent variables as well as techniques followed for the collection and analysis of data. A study was conducted in the purposively selected Rajnandgaon district of Chhattisgarh to ascertain the attitude of panchayat leaders towards the Panchayati Raj Institutions. Out of total 21 members of the Jila Panchayat including the president, 9 members who presided over the different standing committees were purposively selected as respondents from the first tier panchayat. Similarly out of the total 182 members of the 9 Janpad panchayats, 6 members from each Janpad ($9 \times 6 = 54$) presiding over the standing committees were purposively selected as respondents from second tier panchayats (Fig. 1).

In all there are 696 gram panchayats in 9 blocks/Janpads of Rajnandgaon district. Approximately seven per cent gram

panchayats were randomly selected from each Janpad and four members presiding over the standing committees from each selected gram panchayat ($50 \times 4 = 200$) were purposively chosen as respondents from the third tier panchayats. Thus in all ($9 + 54 + 200$) 263 panchayat leaders were considered as respondents for the study. An interview schedule was used as a tool for collecting primary data from the respondent panchayat leaders and all the 263 respondents were personally interviewed for collecting the raw information. Attitude is a learned pre disposition to react consistently in a given manner (either positively or negatively) to certain persons, objects or concepts. Thurstone (1946) defined attitude as the degree of positive or negative affect (feeling) associated with some psychological object like symbol, phrase, slogan, person, institution, ideal or ideas towards which people can differ in varying degrees. The psychological object for the present study has been conceptualised as the panchayati raj institutions. Hence the attitude in the present study refers to the positive and/or negative reaction of the panchayat leaders towards the panchayati raj institutions. The attitude was measured by Likert type scale suggested by Ray and Mondal (1999). The scale consisted of 10 statements of which 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 10 were positive statements and 3, 7, 8 and 9 were negative statements. Responses were obtained from the panchayat leaders on 5 point continuum and the scores were assigned as follows:

Statement	Fully agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Fully Disagree
Positive statement	5	4	3	2	1
Negative statement	1	2	3	4	5

The scores for all the ten statements were summed up to obtain the total score for each panchayat leader which was used for

statistical analysis and the panchayat leaders were classified into three categories by using the following formula:

$$A.I. = \bar{X} \pm S.D.$$

Categories

Less favourable attitude less than mean – standard deviation

Moderately favourable attitude in between mean – standard deviation and mean + standard deviation

Highly favourable attitude more than mean + standard deviation

To know the direct and indirect effects of various independent variables on the dependent variable (Attitude), the method of path coefficient analysis (Wrights, 1921) was employed. Path coefficient technique is an extension of the technique of standard and partial regression coefficient. Path effects were obtained by solving the simultaneous equations set up for the purpose using the correlation matrix. Considering x_1 independent variable to be influencing the dependent variable y_1 the simultaneous equation would be:

$$ryx_i = P_{yx_i} \sum_{i,j=1}^n rx_i x_j \times P_{yx_i}$$

Where,

ryx_i is the correlation coefficient of x_i with y

P_{yx_i} is the direct effect and each of the other term in the equation is an indirect effect.

$\sum_{i,j=1}^n rx_i x_j \times P_{yx_i}$ is the indirect effect of independent variable to $i, j=1$ dependent variable via another independent variable.

Results and Discussion

Attitude of panchayat leaders towards panchayati raj institutions

The data pertaining to attitude of panchayat leaders towards panchayati raj institutions is

represented in table 1 It is observed that most of the gram panchayat leaders (40.00%) had moderately favourable attitude towards panchayati raj institutions, followed by 32.00 per cent of them who had highly favourable attitude whereas 28.00 per cent of the gram panchayat leaders had less favourable attitude towards panchayati raj institutions.

As regards attitude of Janpad and Jila panchayat leaders it was found that majority of them (58.73%) had moderately favourable attitude towards panchayati raj institutions, followed by 26.98 per cent of them who had highly favourable attitude whereas 14.29 per cent of the Janpad and Jila panchayat leaders had less favourable attitude towards panchayati raj institutions.

An inference may be drawn that two fifth of the gram panchayat leaders and just less than three fifth of the Janpad and Jila panchayat leaders had moderately favourable attitude towards panchayati raj institutions.

Similar findings have been reported by Shrivastava (1999), Rathi (2004) and Thakur (2006).

Direct effect

The data in table 2 shows that the variable material possession had maximum positive direct effect (0.5033) on attitude of gram panchayat leaders towards panchayati raj institutions followed by role performance (0.4284), extension participation (0.3146), size of land holding (0.1915), education (0.1568), political efficacy (0.0613), family size (0.0577), training need (0.0574), political affiliation (0.0219), achievement motivation (0.0184), occupation (0.0115), time allocation for panchayat activities (0.0102), caste (0.0075) and cosmopolitaness (0.0028).

The remaining nine variables had negative direct effect on attitude of gram panchayat

leaders towards panchayati raj institutions which in sequential order are socio economic status (- 0.5558), annual income (-0.0764), social participation (- 0.0648), age (- 0.0424), political ideology (- 0.0347), gender (- 0.0215), information sources (- 0.0113), job satisfaction (- 0.0065) and experience (- 0.0062).

Indirect effect

Table 2 also reveals that the variable socio economic status had highest positive total indirect effect on attitude of gram panchayat leaders towards panchayati raj institutions with path coefficient 1.0094 followed by cosmopolitaness (0.6502), education (0.5785), extension participation (0.5171), role performance (0.4433), annual income (0.3402), information sources (0.3042), time allocation for panchayat activities (0.2805), occupation (0.2122), size of land holding (0.1838), job satisfaction (0.1729), caste (0.1592), achievement motivation (0.1549), family size (0.1275), political ideology (0.1262), political affiliation (0.1210), political efficacy (0.1178), experience (0.0957), social participation (0.0425) and training need (0.0420).

Only three independent variables viz. age (- 0.2871), material possession (- 0.0782) and gender (- 0.0505) had negative total indirect effect on attitude on gram panchayat leaders towards panchayati raj institutions.

Substantial indirect effect

The data given in extreme right column of table 2 indicates that the variable role performance had highest positive substantial indirect effect (0.4284) through role performance itself on attitude of gram panchayat leaders towards panchayati raj institutions, followed by extension participation (0.3640) through role

performance, education (0.3359) through role performance, cosmopolitaness (0.2999) through role performance, information sources (0.1370) through role performance, achievement motivation (0.0867) through role performance, job satisfaction (0.0837) through role performance, political ideology (0.0599) through role performance, training need (0.0574) through training need itself, political affiliation (0.0562) through role performance, gender (0.0544) through material possession and experience (0.0498) through extension participation.

The eleven variables which had negative substantial indirect effect on attitude of gram panchayat leaders toward panchayati raj institutions are sequentially as follows: socio economic status (- 0.5558) through socio economic status itself, material possession (- 0.5470) through socio economic status, size of land holding (- 0.4590) through socio economic status, annual income (-0.3776) through socio economic status, occupation (- 0.1794) through socio economic status, family size (0.1745) through socio economic status, time allocation for panchayat activities (- 0.1725) through socio economic status, political efficacy (- 0.1672) through socio economic status, age (- 0.1437) through role performance, caste (- 0.1140) through socio economic status and social participation (- 0.0648) through social participation itself.

Direct, total indirect and substantial indirect effect of independent variables on attitude of Janpad and Jila panchayat leaders towards panchayati raj institution

Direct effect

It is clearly visible in the table 3 that the independent variable socio economic status had maximum positive direct effect on the attitude of Janpad and Jila panchayat leaders towards panchayati raj institutions with path

coefficient value of 2.6285 followed by cosmopolitaness (0.4113), extension participation (0.2542), education (0.2254), political affiliation (0.1973), time allocation for panchayat activities (0.1782), experience (0.1688), political ideology (0.1298), information sources (0.1095), training need (0.1085), political efficacy (0.0754) and role performance (0.0549). However, the independent variable material possession had

maximum negative direct effect on attitude of Janpad and Jila panchayat leaders towards panchayati raj institutions with path coefficient value of -2.4776 followed by size of land holding (-.3372), achievement motivation (-0.2387), family size (-0.2066), annual income (-.1445), age (-0.0454), caste (-0.0398), occupation (-0.0365), gender (-0.0269), social participation (-0.0232) and job satisfaction (-0.0135).

Table.1 Distribution of panchayat leaders according to their attitude towards panchayati raj institutions

S. No	Attitude	Gram Panchayat Leaders (n ₁ =200)		Janpad and Jila Panchayat Leaders (n ₂ =63)	
		Frequency	Per cent	Frequency	Per cent
1	Less favourable attitude	56	28.00	9	14.29
2	Moderately favourable attitude	80	40.00	37	58.73
3	Highly favourable attitude	64	32.00	17	26.98
	Total	200	100.00	63	100.00
		Mean : 35.35		Mean : 40.33	
		S.D. : 9.72		S.D. : 87.76	

Fig.1 Distribution of panchayat leaders to their attitude towards panchayat raj institution

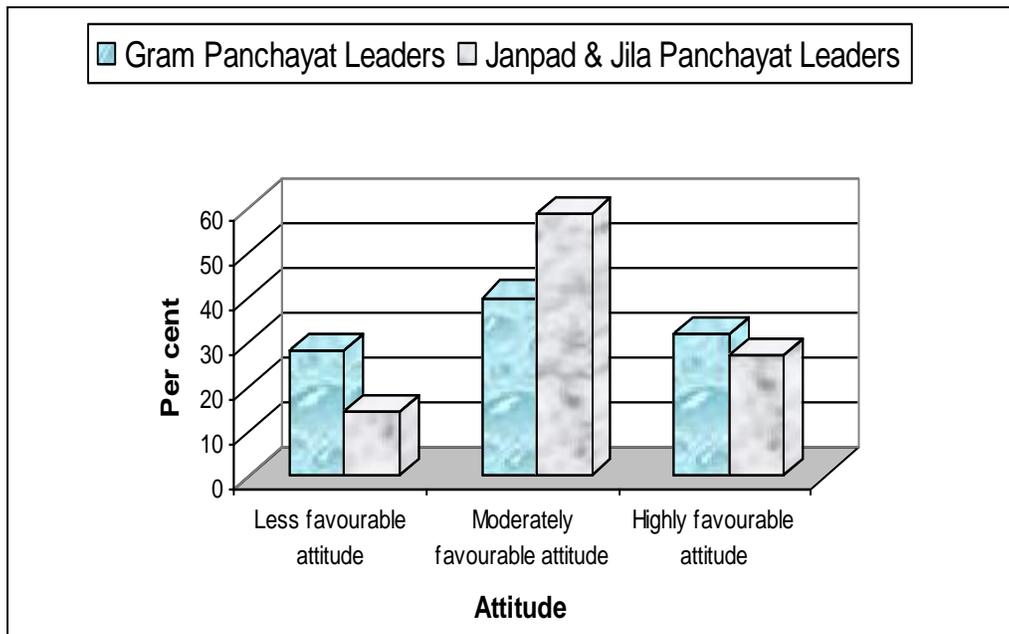


Table.2 Path coefficient showing direct, indirect and substantial indirect effect of independent variables on attitude of gram panchayat leaders towards panchayati raj institutions

S. No.	Variable	Independent Variables	Direct Effect	Total Indirect Effect	Substantial indirect effect through first
1	X ₁	Age	- 0.0424	- 0.2871	- 0.1437 (X ₂₃)
2	X ₂	Gender	- 0.0215	- 0.0505	0.0544 (X ₁₀)
3	X ₃	Caste	0.0075	0.1592	- 0.1140 (X ₁₁)
4	X ₄	Education	0.1568	0.5785	0.3359 (X ₂₃)
5	X ₅	Family size	0.0577	0.1275	- 0.1745 (X ₁₁)
6	X ₆	Social participation	- 0.0642	0.0425	- 0.0648 (X ₆)
7	X ₇	Occupation	0.0115	0.2122	- 0.1794 (X ₁₁)
8	X ₈	Annual Income	- 0.0764	0.3402	- 0.3776 (X ₁₁)
9	X ₉	Size of land holding	0.1915	0.1838	- 0.4590 (X ₁₁)
10	X ₁₀	Material possession	0.5033	- 0.0782	- 0.5470 (X ₁₁)
11	X ₁₁	Socio economic status	- 0.5558	1.0094	- 0.5558 (X ₁₁)
12	X ₁₂	Achievement motivation	0.0184	0.1549	0.0867 (X ₂₃)
13	X ₁₃	Cosmopolitaness	0.0028	0.6502	0.2999 (X ₂₃)
14	X ₁₄	Job satisfaction	- 0.0065	0.1729	0.0837 (X ₂₃)
15	X ₁₅	Information sources	- 0.0113	0.3042	0.1370 (X ₂₃)
16	X ₁₆	Extension participation	0.3146	0.5171	0.3640 (X ₂₃)
17	X ₁₇	Time allocation to panchayat activities	0.0102	0.2805	- 0.1725 (X ₁₁)
18	X ₁₈	Experience	- 0.0062	0.0957	0.0498 (X ₁₆)
19	X ₁₉	Training need	0.0574	0.0420	0.0574 (X ₁₉)
20	X ₂₀	Political affiliation	0.0219	0.1210	0.0562 (X ₂₃)
21	X ₂₁	Political ideology	- 0.0347	0.1262	0.0599 (X ₂₃)
22	X ₂₂	Political efficacy	0.0613	0.1178	0.1672 (X ₁₁)
23	X ₂₃	Role Performance	0.4284	0.4433	0.4284 (X ₂₃)

Table.3 Path coefficient showing direct, indirect and substantial indirect effect of independent variables on attitude of Janpad and Jila panchayat leaders towards panchayati raj institutions

S. No.	Variable	Independent Variables	Direct Effect	Total Indirect Effect	Substantial indirect effect through first
1	X ₁	Age	- 0.0454	- 0.0144	0.2019 (X ₁₁)
2	X ₂	Gender	- 0.0269	- 0.0432	- 0.1931 (X ₁₁)
3	X ₃	Caste	- 0.0398	0.2440	- 0.6562 (X ₁₀)
4	X ₄	Education	0.2254	0.5505	0.8387 (X ₁₁)
5	X ₅	Family size	- 0.2066	0.2477	1.0618 (X ₁₁)
6	X ₆	Social participation	- 0.0232	0.3684	0.1398 (X ₁₃)
7	X ₇	Occupation	- 0.0365	0.3552	1.3695 (X ₁₁)
8	X ₈	Annual Income	- 0.1445	0.3362	1.2506 (X ₁₁)
9	X ₉	Size of land holding	- 0.3372	0.5820	1.9741 (X ₁₁)
10	X ₁₀	Material possession	- 2.4776	2.8028	2.5855 (X ₁₁)
11	X ₁₁	Socio economic status	2.6285	- 2.2888	2.6285 (X ₁₁)
12	X ₁₂	Achievement motivation	- 0.2387	0.2252	0.6367 (X ₁₀)
13	X ₁₃	Cosmopolitaness	0.4113	0.3751	0.7160 (X ₁₁)
14	X ₁₄	Job satisfaction	- 0.0135	0.1631	0.2383 (X ₁₁)
15	X ₁₅	Information sources	0.1095	0.2768	1.2435 (X ₁₁)
16	X ₁₆	Extension participation	0.2542	0.5554	1.0980 (X ₁₁)
17	X ₁₇	Time allocation to panchayat activities	0.1782	0.2510	- 1.4177 (X ₁₀)
18	X ₁₈	Experience	0.1688	0.1119	0.1688 (X ₁₈)
19	X ₁₉	Training need	0.1085	- 0.1832	0.3383 (X ₁₁)
20	X ₂₀	Political affiliation	0.1973	0.0630	0.4136 (X ₁₁)
21	X ₂₁	Political ideology	0.1298	- 0.1199	0.1452 (X ₁₀)
22	X ₂₂	Political efficacy	0.0754	- 0.0249	1.1067 (X ₁₁)
23	X ₂₃	Role Performance	0.0549	0.6078	0.9434 (X ₁₁)

Total indirect effect

So far as the path coefficient values of total indirect effect are concerned it was found that the independent variable material possession

had highest positive total indirect effect (2.8028) on the attitude of Janpad and Jila panchayat leaders towards panchayati raj institutions followed by role performance (0.6078), size of land holding (0.5820),

extension participation (0.5554), education (0.5505), cosmopolitaness (0.3751), social participation (0.3684), occupation (0.3552), annual income (0.3362), information sources (0.2768), time allocation for panchayat activities (0.2510), family size (0.2477), caste (0.2440), achievement motivation (0.2252), job satisfaction (0.1631), experience (0.1119) and political affiliation (0.0630).

On the other hand the independent variable socio economic status showed highest negative total indirect effect on the attitude of Janpad and Jila panchayat leaders towards panchayati raj institutions with path coefficient value of -2.2888 followed by training need (-0.1832), political ideology (-0.1199), gender (-0.0432), political efficacy (-0.0249) and age (-0.0144).

Substantial indirect effect

On examining the path coefficient values for substantial indirect effect on attitude of Janpad and Jila panchayat leaders towards panchayati raj institutions it was found that the independent variable socio economic status showed maximum positive substantial indirect effect (2.6285) through socio economic status, followed by material possession (2.5855) through socio economic status, size of land holding (1.9741) through socio economic status, occupation (1.3695) through socio economic status, annual income (1.2506) through socio economic status, information sources (1.2435) through socio economic status, political efficacy (1.1067) through socio economic status, extension participation (1.0980) through socio economic status, family size (1.0618) through socio economic status, role performance (0.9434) through socio economic status, education (0.8387) through socio economic status, cosmopolitaness (0.7160) through socio economic status, achievement motivation (0.6367) through material possession,

political affiliation (0.4136) through socio economic status, training need (0.3383) through socio economic status, job satisfaction (0.2383) through socio economic status, age (0.2019) through socio economic status, experience (0.1688) through experience itself, political ideology (0.1452) through material possession and social participation (0.1398) through cosmopolitaness.

Only three variables viz. time allocation for panchayat activities (-1.4177) through material possession, caste (-0.6562) through material possession and gender (-0.1931) through socio economic status had negative substantial indirect effect on attitude of Janpad and Jila panchayat leaders towards panchayati raj institutions.

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