



## **AWARENESS OF SCHEDULED CASTE AND SCHEDULED TRIBE SARPANCHES ON PANCHAYAT ACTIVITIES IN ANDHRA PRADESH STATE**

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### **Abstract**

*The constitutional protections in India have a moderately good effect on the lives of Scheduled Castes (SCs). Additionally, the social movements helped marginalized communities' voices to some extent by empowering them to assert their rights and participate in the decision-making process. The Constitution has opened up political entry to underprivileged groups as a part of the decentralization movement at the grassroots level. Given an opportunity on par with other social groups, the SCs are showing more interest and are ahead in contesting in the elections with the support of their respective political parties. An effort has been made in this context to emphasize the problems and difficulties experienced by the elected SC members in local bodies in rural Andhra Pradesh. The main objectives of the study are to examine the participation of SCs and STs Representatives in Gram Sabha, and their awareness on panchayat activities in Andhra Pradesh State.*

**Key words:** *Scheduled Caste, Sarpanch, Panchayats, Awareness.*

### **Introduction**

India as a welfare state is committed to the welfare and development of its people in general and of vulnerable sections in particular. The government has special concern and commitment for the well-being of the socially disadvantaged group's i.e. the Scheduled caste (SCs), the Scheduled tribes (STs.) the other Back ward classes (BCs) and Women. These groups have passed through the process of welfare and development during the past fifty years.

Initially, the Welfare programs provided were directed to provide a few basic curative and rehabilitative services. Now, these are oriented towards providing social justice and empowerment to the disadvantaged and marginalized sections of the society. Hence, it is no more welfare rather empowerment of the disadvantaged sections. The responsibility for empowerment of the targeted groups in India is being shared between Central and State governments. The central government is responsible for formulating the related policies and programs besides coordinating and promoting implementation of different schemes launched by different states.

Considering the centuries old backwardness of these weaker sections of the Indian society, the constitution of India guarantees, equality before the law (Article 14). It also empowers the state to make provisions for reservations in appointments or posts in favor of backward classes of citizens (Article 16(4)). It empowers the state to appoint the commission to investigate into the conditions of Socially and Educationally Backward classes (Article 340). [R.V.K.Naidu 2004]

Awareness deals with the perception and knowledge of a person about any particular object, idea, concept or work etc. It decides his working performance in any institution which leads to his job performance also. The level of awareness of panchayat functionaries is referred as the degree to which these functionaries were familiar with the knowledge about the different subject matter and content of panchayati raj system of the country. It determines the perception and knowledge of Elected



Representatives (E.Rs.) and Government Officials (G.Os.) of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) about the system and also affects their working pattern and outcome of panchayat bodies. Therefore, it was found important and taken for the present study and operationalized as to investigate the conceptual knowledge of respondents about panchayat raj in terms of meaning, general perception, historical perspectives, and various committees on it as well as 73rd constitution Amendment Act of 1992 with its important features, provisions, efforts of government and power and responsibilities given to PRIs.

### Objectives

1. To study the concept of Panchayath system in India.
2. To analyse the levels of awareness on Panchayat activities by the SCs.

### Methodology

**Table -1: Universe and Selection of Sample**

S. No	Name of the District	Total Panchayats	Reserved Category	Total Reserved	Gender	Sample size
1	Anantapuramu	1013	SC	178	Male	40
					Female	49
			ST	48	Male	10
					Female	14
2	Chittoor	1387	SC	228	Male	55
					Female	69
			ST	52	Male	12
					Female	14
3	Kadapa	804	SC	130	Male	28
					Female	37
			ST	16	Male	04
					Female	04
4	Kurnool	959	SC	204	Male	48
					Female	56
			ST	22	Male	05
					Female	06
		Total 4163		878		451

### Universe & Sample

The Total Panchayats in Rayalaseema region in all the four districts are 4163 in which Anantapuramu has 1013, Chittoor 1387, Kadapa 804, and Kurnool 959 Panchayats respectively. Among the 4163 Panchayats, 878 Panchayats are reserved for Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes. In Anantapuramu 178 & 48, Chittoor 228 & 52, Kadapa 130 & 16, and Kurnool 204 & 22 for SCs & STs respectively. In all the 4 districts a 50 per cent sample was drawn at Random from among the 878 reserved Panchayats from all revenue Mandals. Altogether 451 Sarpanches (202 Male and 249 Female) Sarpanches were drawn at random and selected for detailed study.

### Tools of Data Collection

Primary data was collected through well prepared Interview Schedule which was pretested in a Pilot survey and perfected by adding some questions deleting repetitive ones and adding clarity some questions which were vague. Secondary data was gathered from government sources at the Panchayati Raj Department at District Headquarters the State. The data is presented in form of two way tables and percentages and averages are calculated. The inferences are drawn from the tables.



**Table- 2: Distribution of the Sarpanches by Whose Awareness of Various Income Sources of Panchayats**

S. No	Taxes	No. of Respondents				GT	Percentage
		Anantapuramu	Chittoor	Kadapa	Kurnool		
1	Tree taxes & Cess	87	111	45	64	307	68.07
2	Donation of land and grass sales	18	29	16	35	98	21.73
3	Tree taxes, Cess & grass sales	5	11	8	9	26	5.76
4	Fisheries and Panchayat Forests	3	6	4	7	20	4.44
	Total	113	150	73	115	451	100

**Source: Field Survey**

Every Sarpanch needed to have the knowledge regarding the income sources of the village Panchayat along with the duties and responsibilities. The leader should be aware of the income and expenditure of the Panchayat and according that he should do development works, mobilize the funds from various sources and take various steps to raise the funds. The data presented in Table 2 that majority of the respondents have stated that the revenue were generated from Tree taxes and Cess in all the four district like Anantapuramu (87), Chittoor (111), Kadapa (45) and Kurnool (64) altogether 307 respondents. Another source of revenue to the Panchayat raj by providing/donation of land and grass sales -according to this dimensions 18 respondents from Anantapuramu, 29 respondents from Chittoor district, 16 respondents from Kadapa district and 35 respondents from Kurnool district. Other sources were also generated by these four district with fisheries and Panchayat forest- expressed by the less respondents in the study area.

From the data presented in the table the overall inference is that 68.07 per cent of Sarpanches have awareness regarding the main income from the Tree taxes and Cess; 21.73 per cent of them expressed their opinion as having received the income from the donation of the land and grass sale; 5.76 per cent of the respondents have awarded on the income from Tree taxes, Cess and grass sales, 4.44 percent of the respondents are aware of the income from Fisheries and Panchayat forests. It is inferred that majority of the Sarpanches have awareness that every village Panchayat has income from the Trees, Taxes and Cess. Success of every leader is depending upon the awareness of the income sources and the development works to be carried out in the Panchayat.

**Table -3: Sarpanches Opinion on the Adequacy of Finances to Meet the Development of Panchayats**

S. No	Response	No. of Respondents				GT	Percentage
		Anantapuramu	Chittoor	Kadapa	Kurnool		
1	Sufficient	60	81	39	63	243	53.88
2	Insufficient	53	69	34	52	208	46.12
	Total	113	150	73	115	451	100

**Source: Field Survey**

Sarpanches estimate the income sources and took up various developmental steps according the income source. To take up various development works he should feel the income as sufficient or not



sufficient to meet his expected development. The opinion of the Sarpanches presented in the table found that 60 sample respondents from Anantapuramu, 81 respondents from Chittoor, 39 respondents from Kadapa and 63 respondents from Kurnool district were expressed that the revenue/income of Panchayat were sufficient. It is further found that 53 respondents from Anantapuramu, 69 respondents from Chittoor, 34 respondents from Kadapa and 52 respondents from Kurnool district were stated that fund is insufficient in their respective Panchayat in the study area.

On the whole the data reveals that Table- 3 shown that 53.88 per cent of the respondents felt that the funds are sufficient, while 46.12 per cent of the respondents felt that the funds as not sufficient to take up the developmental activities in the Panchayat. Sarpanches are necessary to aware of funds adequacy or inadequacy at considerable extent.

It is a fact that the Panchayats have very little funds available and they are not able to do any new activity. Many schemes are directly funded by Governments both State and Central and most of the time they do not come in time or come in insufficient quantum corruption most of the times deprives Panchayats of their due share.

To get the real feeling of empowerment of the Scheduled castes and scheduled Tribe Sarpanches could be garnered only by the analysis of the self- appraisal given by the Sarpanches about the given term of their office. Self- appraisal on the achievements of the Sarpanches enlightens his or her political system and their performance. This study tried to bring self -evaluation of the performance of the Sarpanches, and perceptions of their term of office. This was identified so that whether the Sarpanches had the ability to discharge their duties, execute the various programs and schemes to their satisfaction.

**Table-4: Programmes Implemented By Sarpanches**

S.No	Programmes	No. of Respondents				GT	Percentage
		Anantapuramu	Chittoor	Kadapa	Kurnool		
1	Janmabhoomi & DWACRA	45	62	31	49	187	41.46
2	J.B, DWCRA & weaker sections development	5	9	6	11	31	6.87
3	J.B, DWCRA & JRY weaker sections	63	79	36	55	233	51.67
	Total	113	150	73	115	451	100

**Source: Field Survey**

The Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes class Sarpanch Achievements in his term of five years has presented in the table-4. The table demonstrated with district wise analysis found that 45 sample respondents from Anantapuramu, 62 from Chittoor, 31 from Kadapa, 49 from Kurnool district were stated that Janmabhoomi and Development of Women and children in Rural area (DWACRA) programmes implementing in their Panchayat level. Another major programme like Janmabhoomi, DWACRA and JRY weaker section were also implementing various Panchayat and it is found in districts – 63 (Anantapuramu), 79 (Chittoor), 73 (Kadapa), and 55 ( Kurnool) in the study area.



It is further found that 51.67 percent of the respondents successfully implemented the Schemes like Janmabhoomi, DWCRA, JawaharRozgarYojana (JRY) for the weaker section people. 41.46 per cent of the respondents were able to implement the schemes only Janmabhoomi and DWCRA, 6,87 percent of the respondents were able to implement Janmabhoomi, DWCRA and weaker section development programs.

Implementation of the various schemes by the backward section Sarpanches depended on the funds given by state ad central government, co-operation from all the members of village level representatives. Above table reflects the confidence of the Sarpanches with which they have succeeded in the implementation of more number of programs. We can observe more than 50 per cent of the backward Sarpanches has got confidence to say that they were succeeded implementing major programmes in their respective Gram Panchayats.

The Sarpanches are the key functionaries of the government to the successive implementation of various schemes at village level, Mandal level, district level, State level and National level. It is essential that the Sarpanches are aware of the various schemes and know how to coordinate with Government Department officials for the flow of funds and for the programme implementation in their Panchayats. It is a fact that these Sarpanches could say with pride that they had successfully implemented the major flagship programmes of the Government during their term as Sarpanches.

**Tabel-5: Sarpanches' Awareness of Different Government Functionaries**

S.No	Govt. Functionaries	No. of Respondents				GT	Percentage
		Anantapuramu	Chittoor	Kadapa	Kurnool		
1	Village Secretary	77	96	46	68	287	63.64
2	Village secretary & MPDO	36	54	27	47	164	36.36
	Total	113	150	73	115	451	100

**Source: Field Survey**

Sarpanches should have the knowledge regarding the functionaries of the various government departments, their duties and responsibilities. The present table data found in district wise- 77 respondents from Anantapuramu district, 96 from the Chittoor district, 46 respondents from Kadapa district, 68 respondents from Kurnool district were stated they have well aware about village secretary functional activities at Panchayat level, and other governmental functional activities like village secretary and Mandal Parishad Development Office activities and awareness of sample respondents were found in district wise- 36 from Anantapuramu, 54 from Chittoor, 27 from Kadapa and 47 from Kurnool district in the study area.

It is another dimension- Table-5 presented the data about the awareness levels to the Sarpanches on the different Government functionaries. It was found that 63.64 percent of the respondents have full awareness regarding the Functionaries of village secretary and his responsibilities and duties and their linkages with him while 36.36 per cent of the respondents expressed as they aware of both the functionaries of village secretary and Mandal Parishad Development officer directly above them in the Panchayat Raj system.



**Table-6: Sarpanches by the Panchayatraj Training Received**

S.No	Response	No. of Respondents				Gt	Percentage
		Anantapuramu	Chittoor	Kadapa	Kurnool		
1	Training Received	86	117	56	84	343	76.05
2	No Training	27	33	17	31	108	23.95
	Total	113	150	73	115	451	100

**Source: Field Survey**

At grass root level Politics Sarpanches should have awareness of the politics, administrative Skills, Minimum knowledge of reading and writing, ability to take decisions and co-ordinate different administrative functionaries etc. These are quite essential for their successful role performance because most of the SC and ST community Sarpanches do not have political experience, no education or low education, no awareness on administration procedure etc. The table found from the data that 86 respondents from Anantapuramu district, 117 from Chittoor district, 56 from Kadapa district and 84 from Kurnool district were stated that they have received training from the Panchayat department for development of skills, knowledge and others. While some of the respondents were stated negative response line not taken any training programme from the Panchayat department and it can be found that 27 respondents from Anantapuramu district, 33 respondents from Chittoor district, 17 respondents from Kadapa district and 31 respondents from Kurnool district in the study area.

It is evident from the Table-6 that 76.05 per cent of the Sarpanches of Rayalaseema said they had received the Training from the Department while 23.95 percent had not taken any training for getting knowledge on administrative skills. Training plays a key role for their effective performance and for the success of the governance at grass root level administration. The training has a twin benefit of imparting importance of the office of Sarpanch and the role expectations which in turn can aid their own perceptions and performance in the little republics.

### **Conclusion**

The present study indicates that awareness regarding various activities at panchayat level. The Sarpanches are the key functionaries of the government to the successive implementation of various schemes at village level, Mandal level, district level, State level and National level. It is essential that the Sarpanches are aware of the various schemes and know how to coordinate with Government Department officials for the flow of funds and for the programme implementation in their Panchayats. It is a fact that these Sarpanches could say with pride that they had successfully implemented the major flagship programmes of the Government during their term as Sarpanches. It can be concluded that Training plays a key role for their effective performance and for the success of the governance at grass root level administration. The training has a twin benefit of imparting importance of the office of Sarpanch and the role expectations which in turn can aid their own perceptions and performance in the little republics.

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