

**A STUDY ON ROLE PERFORMANCE OF
WOMEN IN PANCHAYATS**

by

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**Submitted
in fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

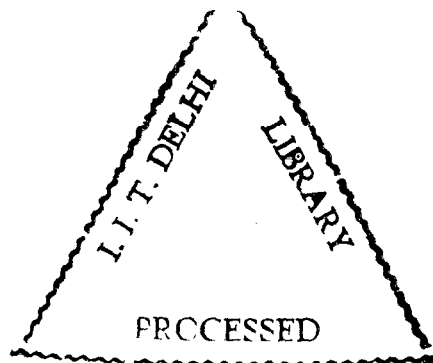
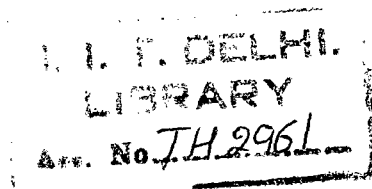
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “ **A STUDY ON ROLE PERFORMANCE OF WOMEN IN PANCHAYATS**” being submitted by **Ms Monica Banerjee** to the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, India for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, is a record of bonafide research work carried out by her under my guidance and supervision in conformity with the rules and regulations of Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi.

The research report and results presented in this thesis have not been submitted, in part or full, to any other University or Institute for the award of any degree or diploma.



(Dr Dil Bagh Kaur)

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for

‘swapna’, my mother

for whom I live...

‘dipankar’, my partner

with whom, life is an eternal bliss...

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Field visits to some of the most remote pockets of India are regular feature of my work and my passion. But visiting the panchayats of some of the most articulate women I have ever met, was an experience apart. I learned from them, I grew as a person from these ecstatic field visits.

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this world 10 months back. As a 7-month-old foetus, he covered all the distances with me to meet some of the great grass-roots leaders in their own villages.

I dedicate this work to two of the most important persons in my life. My mother, whose stands in life, I have always appreciated and respected. My life partner, Dipankar, whose magnanimity is beyond the confines of words. This study has been possible only because of him.

A study on Role Performance of Women in Panchayats in Betul and Raisen districts of Madhya Pradesh was done with the following objectives:

- 1. To study the Social-economic-physical-psychological profile of selected women panchayat leaders.*
- 2 (a) To measure the Role Perception and Role Performance of selected women panchayat leaders.*
(b) To measure the Role Expectation from women panchayat leaders and Role Performance of women and men panchayat leaders as judged by the community, state and civil society representatives
- 3 (a) To measure significant difference, if any, between Role Perception and Role Performance of women panchayat leaders as judged by the women leaders themselves*
(b) To measure significant difference, if any, between Role Expectation and Role Performance of women panchayat leaders as judged by community, state and civil society representatives.
(c) To measure significant difference, if any, in Role Performance between men and women panchayat leaders as judged by community, state and civil society representatives.

4 (a) To measure significant difference, if any, in selected variables between HIGH and LOW groups of women panchayat leaders categorised on the basis of their Role Performance

(b) To determine the effect of selected factors on Role Performance of women panchayat leaders

5. To assess the problems faced by women in performing their role as panchayat leaders.

92 mahila sarpanchs (read women presidents of gram panchayats – the lower most tier of the three tiered rural local governance structure known as Panchayati Raj) from five blocks of Betul and Raisen formed the sample of study. Besides, another sample consisting of 60 respondents from village communities, state government officials and civil society (read voluntary organisations) was selected to determine the role expectation these people have from women panchayat leaders how their expectations match with the performance of women panchayat leaders; also, how do they compare performance of men and women panchayat leaders.

The study revealed that majority of respondents were found to be between 35 and 45 years (43.47%), had no formal education (52.17%), were married (72.82%), belonged to schedule tribes (48.91 %) followed by Other Backward Classes (32.60 %), belonged to the income group less than Rs.30,000 annual income (44.55%) , were elected for the first time in the two consecutive

elections held in the state after implementation of 73rd Amendment Act (78.26%), had contested from the seats reserved for women (82.60), had no previous experience in governance and politics (71.73%) , had no association with social organizations (73.91%), did not hold any additional responsibilities in their panchayat area (80.43%), cited 'support from community/ family/ social organizations' as the motivating factor for contesting elections (51.08%), had low level of job involvement (55.43%), faced high role conflict (67.39%), had medium level of achievement motivation (76.08%), had low (47.82%) and medium levels (41.30%) of knowledge about panchayat activities and had a less favourable attitude towards their role as panchayat leaders (56.52%) .

Distribution of respondents (women panchayat leaders, n=92) on their Role Perception and Role Performance revealed that majority of respondents were divided between good and poor levels of role perception but when it came to performing these functions, majority of respondents were found to measure either poor or average on role performance and indicated a significant difference between Role Perception and Role Performance.

As regards Role Expectation and Role Performance of women panchayat leaders, results showed that there was no significant gap between what the state, civil society and members of the community (n=60) expected the women to do and what they found these women were actually doing as panchayat

leaders. The same respondents however felt that given the same work functions, men performed slightly better as panchayat leaders than women.

On the basis of scores obtained under role performance by the respondents (women panchayat leaders) the top 25.00 percent and bottom 25.00 per cent were identified and put separately under 'HIGH' (high role performance) and LOW (low role performance) groups respectively.

It was found that respondents did not differ as 'high' or 'low' performers because of differences in Role Conflict. But level of performance differed because of differences in age, education, job involvement, total annual income of their families, achievement motivation, knowledge on panchayat activities and attitude towards role as panchayat leaders. Moreover, unlike the other group, majority of respondents with high performance belonged to scheduled tribe, had contested from 'open' seats, had previous experience in politics / governance, were associated with social organizations, held additional responsibilities in panchayats and were self motivated enough to contest the elections. This suggested that attributes like caste, number of terms elected, type of seat contested, previous experience in politics, participation in social organizations, holding additional responsibilities in Panchayats and motivating factor for contesting elections might also have caused the difference in performance of women panchayat leaders.

Further, Role Performance of women panchayat leaders was found to have positive and significant correlation with Education ($r=0.304$), Total Annual Income ($r=0.831$), Job Involvement ($r=0.804$), Knowledge about panchayat activities ($r=0.721$), Achievement Motivation ($r=0.841$) and Attitude towards role as panchayat leader ($r=0.8361$). Age as variable was found to have negative and significant correlation with Role Performance ($r= - 0.3165$). Role Conflict as a variable was not correlated with Role Performance of women panchayat leaders ($r = - 0.057$)

Out of the 8 independent variables taken, the variables Age ($b= - 0.262$), Education ($b=0.355$), Total Annual Income of family ($b=0.915$), Job Involvement, ($b=0.907$), Achievement Motivation ($b= 0.922$), Knowledge about panchayat activities ($b= 0.721$) and Attitude towards role as panchayat leader ($b= 0.916$) could be termed as good predictors of Role Performance as their regression coefficient (b) values were found to be significant.

The R^2 value was found to be 0.834, which, suggested that the 8 variables jointly contributed 83.4 percent towards variation in role performance. The 'F' value was also found to be significant ($F =12.48$) which indicated the significant effectiveness of the 8 variables in predicting the Role Performance when all the independent variables (including Role Conflict) are functioning jointly.

The most serious problems faced by the respondents were frequent introduction of legislative laws and constitutional norms like ban on contesting elections if a person has more than 2 children, lack of education, difficulties in raising finances, imposition of social sanctions and tendency of communities to underestimate women's abilities.

The assessment of problems also revealed that majority of respondents faced less number of problems (49.68 %) while 25.76 percent faced moderate number of problems.

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