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Personal, socio-economic, organizational and communicational characters of Sarpanchs trained under Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan

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Abstract

The study was conducted in Ratnagiri district of Konkan region of Maharashtra. Eight tahsils were selected randomly from Ratnagiri district. The sarpanchs were selected randomly from each tehsil. Thus total 120 Sarpanchs (respondents) were selected for present study.

The study indicated that majority of the sarpanchs were in middle age category with secondary school level of education having medium range of annual income, two and more trainings received, medium level of use of social media having most of them using WhatsApp, with medium resource availability, majority of sarpanchs have high change proneness, about two-third of them have favourable attitude towards RGSA, majority (78.34%) of them having cosmopolitaness with medium range of organizational participation, with high interest in public work, medium 2 to 3 years of tenure.

It was revealed that slightly more than medium of respondents had satisfactory post training performance. The study enlightened that the selected variables like age, number of training received, use of social media, attitude towards RGSA, cosmopolitaness, interest in public work and tenure of work were found significantly associated with post training performance. The constraints analysis and suggestions given by sarpanchs necessary to take into consideration for enhancement of their performance.

Keywords: Post training performance, RGSA, Sarpanchs, training to sarpanchs

1. Introduction

The Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) is a flagship initiative aimed at strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and improving rural governance in India. Launched in 2018, RGSA focuses on empowering grassroots institutions like Panchayats by providing resources, training, and support to enhance their governance capabilities. The program promotes decentralized governance, enabling Panchayats to address local challenges effectively and deliver development initiatives tailored to community needs. RGSA emphasizes capacity building for Panchayat members, particularly Sarpanchs, through comprehensive training in financial management, project planning, and community engagement. It also encourages e-governance, accountability, and inclusive development, ensuring marginalized groups benefit equally. Collaboration with central and state governments, civil society, and academic institutions enhances the program's implementation and outcomes.

Evaluation mechanisms under RGSA monitor PRIs' performance, measure developmental impacts, and refine strategies based on feedback. This ensures continuous

improvement and alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By fostering participatory democracy, promoting devolution of powers, and supporting resource mobilization, RGSA aims to improve governance quality, strengthen rural institutions, and drive inclusive growth across India's villages.

2. Methodology

In this study, a multistage sampling technique was used to select the district, tahsils, and villages. At the first stage, the Ratnagiri district from the Konkan was selected. In the second stage, Dapoli, Khed, Mandangad, and Chiplun tahsils were selected from the district. The final stage consisted of selecting villages from each selected tehsil. Thus, 120 respondents from 12 villages were selected for the collection of required information. The selection of Ratnagiri district was purposive based on the migration of Banjaras.

2.1 Research design

The ex-post-facto research design was adopted for this study since the phenomenon has already started and is continuing.

Ex-post-facto research is the most systematic empirical inquiry, in which the researcher does not have direct control over the independent variables as their manifestation has already occurred or as they are inherent and not manipulatable. Thus, inferences about relations among variables were made without direct intervention from concomitant variation of independent and dependent variables.

3. Results and Discussion

The findings of the study as well as relevant discussion given below.

3.1 To know the personal, socio-economic, organizational and communicational characteristics of the sarpanchs trained under Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSa)

The data in respect of the selected personal, socio-economic and situational profile of the Sarpanchs are presented and discussed in this part.

3.1.1 Age

The information regarding distribution of the Sarpanchs according to their age is given in Table 1.

It is revealed from Table 1 that majority (72.50 percent) of the Sarpanchs belonged to 'middle' age category, while 15.00 percent of the Sarpanchs were in 'old' age and remaining 12.50 percent of the Sarpanchs were in 'young' age category. The average age of the Sarpanchs was 46.16 years.

The results suggest that the majority of Sarpanchs belonged to the middle age category. This trend could be attributed to the maturity and heightened interest that middle-aged Sarpanchs typically exhibit in Grampanchayat activities compared to their older counterparts.

The similar findings were reported by Murthy (2012) [8].

Table 1: Distribution of the Sarpanchs according to their age

Sl. No.	Age (Year)	Respondents (N=120)	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Young (Up to 36)	15	12.50
2.	Middle (37 to 54)	87	72.50
3.	Old (55 and above)	18	15.00
Total		120	100.00
Average = 46.16		S.D = 9.73	

3.1.2 Education

The information regarding distribution of the Sarpanchs according to their education is given in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of the Sarpanchs according to their education

Sl. No.	Education (Std)	Respondents (N=120)	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Pre-primary (Up to 4 th)	03	02.50
2.	Primary (5 th to 7 th)	16	13.33
3.	Secondary (8 th to 10 th)	57	47.50
4.	Higher secondary (11 th to 12 th)	26	21.67
5.	Graduate (13 th and above)	18	15.00
Total		120	100.00

The data presented in Table 2 shows that less than half (47.50 percent) of the Sarpanchs had 'secondary level

education'. Additionally, 21.67 percent had education up to 'higher secondary level', 15.00 percent had education up to 'graduation' and above, 13.33 percent had education up to 'primary school level', and 2.50 percent had education up to 'pre-primary school' level. On average, the education level of Sarpanchs was 5th to 10th standard.

Therefore, it can be inferred that more than 95.00 percent of the Sarpanchs were learned up to primary to higher secondary level of education.

Thus, it can be concluded that the overall all Sarpanchs were literate, likely due to the availability of educational facilities up to the secondary school level at the village level. This formal education has likely enabled them to establish contacts with various private and public agencies to gather information about village development programs and activities. With this educational background, Sarpanchs can comprehend the rules and regulations governing Gram panchayats and effectively address local grievances through informed decision-making.

This finding is in concurrence with the finding of Diwan (2007) [2], Jadhav *et al.* (2011) [4], Murthy (2012) [8].

3.1.3 Annual income

The data pertaining to annual income of the Sarpanchs are studied and data were presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Distribution of the Sarpanchs according to their annual income

Sl. No.	Annual income (Rs.)	Respondents (N=120)	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Low (Up to 99,066/-)	40	33.33
2.	Medium (99,067/- to 2,62,549/-)	57	47.50
3.	High (2,62,550/- and above)	23	19.17
Total		120	100.00
Average = 1,80808		½ S.D = 81,742	

Upon reviewing Table 3, it is noted that the majority, (47.50) percent of the Sarpanchs, had a 'medium' level of annual income ranging from Rs. 99,067/- to Rs. 2,62,549/- Additionally, there was 33.33 percent sarpanch reported as a 'low' annual income, while 19.17 percent reported a 'high' annual income. This indicates that the average annual income of the Sarpanchs was Rs. 180,808/-.

This finding was in conformity with the studies of Belli (2008) [1] and Patil (2018) [9].

3.1.4 Number of training received

The data pertaining to number of training received by the sarpanchs are studied and data were presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Distribution of the sarpanchs according to their number of training received

Sl. No.	Training received	Respondents (N = 120)	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	One	36	30.00
2.	Two and more	84	70.00
Total		120	100.00
Average = 2.38			

The data in Table 4 about number of trainings received by Sarpanchs revealed that majority (70.00 percent) of the

Sarpanchs had received 'two and more trainings', while 30.00 percent of them received 'one training'.

The findings were similar with the studies of Gurjar (2002)^[3] and Yadav *et al.* (2002)^[13].

3.1.5 Use of social media

The data pertaining to use of social media by the Sarpanchs are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Distribution of the Sarpanchs according to their extent of use of social media

Sl. No.	Use of social media (Score)	Respondent (N = 120)	
		Number	Percentage
1.	Low (Up to 10)	19	15.83
2.	Medium (11 to 15)	72	60.00
3.	High (16 and above)	29	24.17
Total		120	100.00
Mean = 12.80		S.D. = 2.32	

The data from Table 5 revealed that, majority (60.00 percent) of Sarpanchs had 'medium' level of use of social media, while 24.17 percent 'high' and 15.83 percent 'low' category level of use of social media respectively.

Despite network issues in rural areas of the Kokan region, a significant majority (60.00 percent) of Sarpanchs reported a 'medium' level of social media usage. They utilize these platforms primarily for staying connected with each other and staying updated with technological advancements, rural development, upliftment of villagers and global changes. Many Sarpanchs are enhancing their knowledge by participating in WhatsApp groups that provide information related to rural development and governance. Additionally, Sarpanchs are turning to YouTube for solutions to their challenges. However, due to the vast amount of information available on social media platforms, they express concerns regarding its validity. Therefore, there is a strong desire among Sarpanchs to receive accurate and updated information directly from Agricultural Universities, Yashwantrao Chavan Academy of Development Administration, Pune, zilla parishad and panchayat samities via YouTube channels and WhatsApp groups.

In conclusion, efforts should be directed towards disseminating valid and timely information to the grassroots level through social media platforms such as WhatsApp, YouTube, and Facebook.

Further data in Table 6 indicates that majority (90.83

percent) of the Sarpanchs were always accessing the 'WhatsApp'. While 'YouTube' (55.84 percent), 'facebook' (29.17 percent) of the Sarpanchs were always accessed.

Moreover 54.17 percent and 20.83 percent and 7.2 percent Sarpanchs, 'sometimes' used Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp respectively.

Table 6: Distribution of the Sarpanchs according to their use of different social media platforms

Sl. No.	Use of social media	Respondents (N = 120)		
		Always	Sometimes	Never
1.	WhatsApp	109 (90.83)	09 (7.2)	02 (1.67)
2.	Facebook	35 (29.17)	65 (54.17)	20 (16.66)
3.	Instagram	-	02 (1.67)	118 (98.33)
4.	You Tube	67 (55.84)	25 (20.83)	28 (23.33)

The findings were similar with the studies of Rana and Singh (2014)^[11].

3.1.6 Resource availability

The data with regards to resource availability of the Sarpanchs were presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Distribution of the Sarpanchs according to their resource availability

Sl. No.	Resource availability (Score)	Respondent (N = 120)	
		Number	Percentage
1.	Low (Up to 18)	18	15.00
2.	Medium (19 to 29)	81	67.50
3.	High (30 and above)	21	17.50
Total		120	100.00
Mean = 24.21		S.D. = 5.81	

It is noticed from table 7 that more than two third (67.50 percent) of the Sarpanchs were 'medium' category, nearly one sixth 17.50 percent of the Sarpanchs were in 'high' category and 15.00 percent of the Sarpanchs were in 'low' resource availability category. The average resource availability score of Sarpanchs was 24.21.

The newly directly elected Sarpanchs under study are having sufficient resources available with their own. Which helps in transparent governance in Gram Panchayat.

3.1.7 Change proneness

The data pertaining to change proneness of the Sarpanchs were presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Distribution of the Sarpanchs according to their change proneness

Sl. No.	Change proneness (Score)	Respondent (N = 120)	
		Number	Percentage
1.	Low (Up to 6)	16	13.33
2.	Medium (7)	11	09.17
3.	High (8 and above)	93	77.50
Total		120	100.00
Mean = 7.56		S.D. = 0.98	

The data presented in Table 8 shows the percentage distribution of Sarpanchs according to their change proneness. Out of total Sarpanchs majority had 'high' change proneness (77.50 percent) and 'low' change

proneness 13.33 percent followed by 09.17 percent had 'medium' change proneness. Thus, it can be concluded that most of the Sarpanchs had 'high' change proneness followed by low change proneness.

3.1.8 Attitude towards RGSA

Attitudes are learned, emotional predispositions to react consistently, favourably or unfavourably, towards a person's objects, situation or ideas. Keeping this in view, attitude of the Sarpanchs towards RGSA was studied and data are presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Distribution of the Sarpanchs according to their attitude towards RGSA

Sl. No.	Attitude towards RGSA (Score)	Respondent (N = 120)	
		Number	Percentage
1.	Less favourable (Up to 38)	27	22.50
2.	Favourable (39 to 40)	74	61.67
3.	More favourable (41 and above)	19	15.83
Total		120	100.00
Mean = 39.19		$\frac{1}{2}$ S.D. = 1.74	

It was observed from Table 9 that, more than half (61.67 percent) of the trained Sarpanchs had 'favourable' attitude towards RGSA, followed by 22.50 percent and 15.83 percent of them had 'less favourable' and 'more favourable' attitude towards RGSA respectively. It is concluded from these findings that, most of the trained Sarpanchs were having favourable attitude towards RGSA.

Similar findings were recorded by Meshram *et al.*, (2006) [7], Shamagat (2008) [12].

3.1.9 Cosmopolitaness

The data pertaining to cosmopolitaness of the Sarpanchs are presented in Table 10. An overview of the Table 10 indicates that majority of the Sarpanchs (78.34 percent) had 'medium' level of cosmopolitaness, followed by 18.33 percent of the Sarpanchs 'low' cosmopolitaness and there is only 03.33 percent sarpanch falls under 'high' cosmopolitaness.

Table 10: Distribution of the Sarpanchs according to their cosmopolitaness

Sl. No.	Cosmopolitaness (Score)	Respondent (N = 120)	
		Number	Percentage
1.	Low (Up to 9)	22	18.33
2.	Medium (10- 11)	94	78.34
3.	High (12 and above)	04	03.33
Total		120	100.00
Mean = 10.10 S.D. = 1.43			

The findings were similar with the studies of Kanase (2012) [5] and Patil (2018) [9].

3.1.10 Organizational participation

The data pertaining to organizational participation of the Sarpanchs are presented in Table 11.

Table 11: Distribution of the Sarpanchs according to their organizational participation

Sl. No.	Organizational participation (Score)	Respondent (N = 120)	
		Number	Percentage
1.	Low (Up to 2)	34	28.33
2.	Medium (3- 6)	56	46.67
3.	High (7 and above)	30	25.00
Total		120	100.00
Mean = 4.63		S.D. = 2.81	

It is observed from Table 11 that majority (46.67 percent) of the trained Sarpanchs were having their organizational participation up to 'medium' level; followed by 28.33 percent had 'low' and 25.00 percent having 'high' level of organizational participation respectively. The average score of organizational participation score was 4.63.

The findings were similar with the studies of Prakash (2004) [10] and Belli (2008) [11].

3.1.11 Interest in public work

The data pertaining to interest in public work of the Sarpanchs were presented in Table 12.

Table 12: Distribution of the Sarpanchs according to their interest in public work

Sl. No.	Interest in public work (Score)	Respondent (N = 120)	
		Number	Percentage
1.	Low (1)	08	06.67
2.	Medium (2)	46	38.33
3.	High (3)	66	55.00
Total		120	100.00
Mean = 2.48		2S.D. = 1.14	

Further, majority (55.00 percent) of the Sarpanchs said that they had 'high' interest in public work and followed by 38.33 percent and 06.67 percent had 'medium' and 'low' interest in public work.

3.1.12 Tenure of work

The data pertaining tenure of work of the Sarpanchs were presented in Table 13.

Table 13: Distribution of the Sarpanchs according to their tenure of work

Sl. No.	Tenure of work (Years)	Respondent (N = 120)	
		Number	Percentage
1.	Up to 1	13	10.83
2.	2 to 3	85	70.84
3.	4 and above	22	18.33
Total		120	100.00
Mean = 2.54			

It was seen from Table 13 that majority of (70.83 percent) of the Sarpanchs had '2 to 3 years' work tenure, while 10.83 percent had 'up to 1 year' 18.34 percent had '4 and above years' tenure of work respectively. The average score of tenure of work of the Sarpanchs was 2.54 years.

The findings were similar with the studies of Diwan (2007) [2] and Kujur (2008) [6].

4. Conclusion

The findings indicate that the profile of sarpanchs trained under Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan, the majority (72.50 percent) of the respondents was in the 'middle' age group, the majority (47.50 percent) of the respondents were completed their 'secondary' level of education, the majority (47.50 percent) of the sarpanchs had medium level of annual income, the majority (70.00 percent) of the sarpanchs completed two or more trainings in their tenure, the majority (60.00 percent) of of sarpanchs had medium use of social media, the majority (67.50 percent) of sarpanchs had medium level of resource availability, the majority (77.50

percent) of trained sarpanchs had high change proneness, the majority (61.7 percent) of respondents reported a 'medium' income, the majority (66.67 percent) of sarpanchs had a favourable attitude towards RGSA, the majority (78.34 percent) of respondents had a 'medium' level of cosmopolitaness, nearly half (46.67 percent) of the sarpanchs had medium organizational participation, (55.00 percent) of the sarpanchs had interest in public work and (70.87 percent) of the sarpanchs had 2 to 3 years or medium level of tenure of work.

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