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Role performance of gram panchayat members in Udaipur District, Rajasthan

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Abstract

The Panchayati Raj system is a vital instrument of democratic decentralization in India, ensuring people's participation in local governance and rural development. Gram Panchayat members play a crucial role in implementing government programmes, developing rural infrastructure, promoting social welfare, and addressing the needs of village communities. The effectiveness of Panchayati Raj Institutions largely depends on how efficiently these members perform their assigned responsibilities. Therefore, the present study was undertaken to assess the role performance of Gram Panchayat members in Udaipur district of Rajasthan. A total of 120 Gram Panchayat members, comprising 60 male and 60 female members, were selected through random sampling. Role performance was assessed using a structured interview schedule consisting of 47 statements grouped under five dimensions, namely administrative roles, infrastructure and development roles, women and child welfare roles, social welfare roles, and agriculture and allied roles. The data were analysed using frequency, percentage, and Mean Percent Scores. The findings revealed that Gram Panchayat members demonstrated a high level of role performance, with a self-assessed overall Mean Percent Score of 89.38 and a Sarpanch-assessed overall Mean Percent Score of 86.65. The study concludes that Gram Panchayat members are effectively contributing to grassroots governance and rural development; however, continuous training, institutional support, and improved coordination with line departments are essential for enhancing their role performance and strengthening the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Keywords: Democratic decentralization, gram panchayat members, mean percent score, Panchayati raj institutions, Rajasthan, role performance, rural development

Introduction

The Panchayati Raj system is the foundation of democratic decentralization in rural India and plays a crucial role in promoting participatory governance and sustainable rural development. It enables rural communities to actively participate in planning, decision-making, implementation, and monitoring of development programmes. The concept of village self-governance has existed in India since ancient times; however, after Independence, the need for a structured local governance system led to the establishment of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). Based on the recommendations of the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee (1957) ^[1], the Panchayati Raj system was introduced to strengthen grassroots democracy. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, which came into effect on 24 April 1993, provided constitutional status to Panchayati Raj Institutions and entrusted them with greater authority and responsibility for rural development. The Panchayati Raj system operates through a three-tier structure comprising the Gram Panchayat at the village level, Panchayat Samiti at the block level, and Zila Parishad at the district level. Among these, the Gram Panchayat is the basic unit of local self-

government and serves as the primary institution responsible for implementing development programmes and delivering essential public services. Gram Panchayat members act as representatives of the rural community and perform a wide range of functions related to village administration, infrastructure development, agriculture, education, health, sanitation, social welfare, and implementation of various government schemes. Their effectiveness directly influences the quality of governance and the socio-economic development of rural areas.

Role performance refers to the actual execution of duties and responsibilities assigned to an individual occupying a particular position. In the context of Panchayati Raj Institutions, it reflects the extent to which Gram Panchayat members effectively discharge their administrative, developmental, and welfare responsibilities. Efficient role performance ensures better implementation of government programmes, optimum utilization of available resources, improved public service delivery, and greater community participation. Conversely, inadequate performance may hinder rural development and reduce the effectiveness of decentralized governance. Although Gram Panchayat

members are entrusted with numerous responsibilities, variations in their performance are often observed due to differences in awareness, capacity, training, administrative support, and resource availability. Therefore, evaluating their role performance is essential for understanding the effectiveness of Panchayati Raj Institutions and identifying areas requiring improvement. Such assessment provides valuable insights for policymakers, extension professionals, and rural development agencies to design appropriate capacity-building programmes and strengthen grassroots governance. Keeping this in view, the present paper attempts to study Role Performance of Gram Panchayat members in Udaipur District of Rajasthan".

Methodology

The study was conducted in the Udaipur district of Rajasthan using an ex post facto research design. A total of 120 Gram Panchayat members (60 male and 60 female) were selected through random sampling. Role performance was assessed using a structured interview schedule comprising 47 items under five dimensions. The collected data were analysed using frequency, percentage, and Mean Percentage Score (MPS).

Results and Discussion

A. Self-assessed role performance of Gram Panchayat members

The effectiveness of Panchayati Raj Institutions largely depends on how efficiently Gram Panchayat members discharge their assigned responsibilities. To assess their performance, respondents were asked to evaluate their role performance under five major dimensions, namely administrative roles, infrastructure and development roles, women and child welfare roles, social welfare roles, and agriculture and allied roles. The response was recorded on a four point continuum of good, average, poor and nil assigning 3,2,1 and 0 score respectively. Mean Percent Score (MPS) were calculated to find out the overall role performance and the findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Overall self assessed performance of different roles by the Gram Panchayat Members

S. No.	Roles	Mean Percent Score		
		Male	Female	Total
1	Administrative roles	89.72	92.10	90.91
2	Infrastructure and Development roles	96.67	96.42	96.37
3	Women and Child Welfare roles	89.03	87.64	88.33
4	Social Welfare roles	90.56	81.88	82.36
5	Agriculture and Allied roles	82.85	87.92	86.88
	Overall	89.91	89.72	89.38

The findings presented in Table 1 indicate that Gram Panchayat members perceived themselves to be performing their assigned responsibilities effectively across all five functional dimensions. The overall Mean Percent Score of 89.38 per cent reflects a high level of self-assessed role performance, suggesting that the respondents considered themselves actively engaged in implementing developmental programmes and carrying out the responsibilities entrusted to them under the Panchayati Raj system. The consistently high MPS values across different dimensions indicate that the elected representatives were actively involved in local

governance and rural development activities.

Among the five dimensions, Infrastructure and development roles recorded the highest overall performance with an MPS of 96.37 per cent. This finding suggests that Gram Panchayat members devoted considerable attention to the creation and maintenance of basic rural infrastructure such as roads, public buildings, drinking water facilities, sanitation, electricity, irrigation structures, and other community assets. The high performance in this dimension may be attributed to the visible nature of infrastructure development activities, continuous monitoring by government agencies, and regular allocation of funds under various rural development programmes. Since infrastructure development is one of the primary responsibilities of Gram Panchayats, members are generally more involved in planning, execution, and supervision of such activities, resulting in a higher level of performance.

The second highest performance was observed in administrative roles, with an overall MPS of 90.91 per cent. The findings indicate that Gram Panchayat members actively participated in routine administrative functions such as attending Panchayat meetings, maintaining official records, encouraging community participation, facilitating implementation of government schemes, and coordinating village-level development activities. Efficient performance in administrative responsibilities is essential for ensuring transparency, accountability, and smooth functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions. The high score obtained in this dimension reflects the commitment of Gram Panchayat members towards fulfilling their statutory responsibilities and ensuring effective local governance.

The overall performance in women and Child Welfare roles was also found to be satisfactory, with an MPS of 88.33 per cent. This indicates that Gram Panchayat members actively participated in promoting maternal and child health, monitoring Anganwadi centres, creating awareness regarding child rights and women's welfare programmes, preventing domestic violence, and supporting various government initiatives aimed at improving the well-being of women and children. The comparatively high performance in this dimension reflects the increasing emphasis placed by both the Government of India and the Government of Rajasthan on women and child development through Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Similarly, Agriculture and Allied roles registered an overall MPS of 86.88 per cent, indicating that respondents were actively involved in promoting agricultural development and allied activities within their respective Gram Panchayats. Their responsibilities included motivating farmers to adopt improved agricultural practices, creating awareness regarding government agricultural schemes, encouraging livestock development, promoting water conservation measures, and facilitating access to agricultural extension services. The relatively high performance observed in this dimension highlights the important contribution of Gram Panchayat members in strengthening the rural agricultural economy and supporting farmers through various developmental initiatives.

Among all the functional areas, Social Welfare roles recorded the comparatively lowest overall MPS of 82.36 per cent, although the score still indicates a satisfactory level of performance. Activities under this dimension included implementation of welfare schemes, promotion of sanitation

and public health, assistance in employment generation, disaster management, and ensuring that eligible beneficiaries received the benefits of various government programmes. The comparatively lower score may be attributed to the complexity of implementing multiple welfare schemes, limited financial and administrative resources, procedural delays, and the need for coordination among different government departments. Nevertheless, the overall performance remained satisfactory, indicating that Gram Panchayat members were making considerable efforts to improve the social well-being of rural communities.

The gender-wise analysis reveals only marginal variation in self-assessed role performance. Male Gram Panchayat members recorded a slightly higher overall MPS (89.91%) compared to female members (89.72%), indicating that both groups perceived themselves to be performing their responsibilities with nearly equal efficiency. While female members reported comparatively higher performance in administrative roles and agriculture and allied roles, male members recorded marginally higher scores in infrastructure and development, women and child welfare, and social welfare roles. However, the differences were minimal, suggesting that both male and female representatives contributed substantially to the functioning of Gram Panchayats and the implementation of rural development programmes.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Gram Panchayat

members exhibited a high level of self-assessed role performance across all functional dimensions. The high overall MPS reflects their active participation in local governance, implementation of development programmes, and delivery of public services. The results further indicate that Panchayati Raj Institutions in the study area are functioning effectively, with elected representatives contributing significantly towards rural development and grassroots democracy. However, relatively greater emphasis may be required to strengthen social welfare activities through continuous capacity-building programmes, institutional support, and improved interdepartmental coordination to further enhance the effectiveness of Gram Panchayat members.

B. Role performance of gram panchayat members as assessed by their Sarpanch

To obtain an objective assessment of the role performance of Gram Panchayat members, the Sarpanch of each selected Gram Panchayat was asked to evaluate the performance of members across five major functional dimensions. The assessment was based on the same set of 47 role statements used for the self-assessment of Gram Panchayat members. The Mean Percentage Score (MPS) was computed to assess the overall level of role performance, and the findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Overall role performance of Gram Panchayat Members on the basis of self assessment and assessment by their Sarpanch

S. No.	Roles	MPS	
		Self assessment	Assessment by Sarpanch
1	Administrative Roles	90.91	89.88
2	Infrastructure and Development Roles	96.37	95.54
3	Women and Child Welfare Roles	88.33	87.88
4	Social Welfare Roles	82.36	95.66
5	Agriculture and Allied Roles	86.88	64.31
	Overall	89.38	86.65

The findings presented in Table 2 reveal that, according to the assessment made by the Sarpanch, Gram Panchayat members demonstrated a high level of role performance, with an overall Mean Percentage Score (MPS) of 86.65 per cent. The high overall score indicates that the elected members were actively involved in carrying out their assigned responsibilities and contributed effectively towards village administration and rural development. Although the overall performance was satisfactory across all functional dimensions, the level of performance varied depending on the nature of the responsibilities assigned.

Among the different dimensions, social welfare roles secured the highest overall MPS (95.66%), indicating that Gram Panchayat members performed exceptionally well in activities related to public welfare, sanitation, implementation of welfare programmes, promotion of social harmony, assistance to disadvantaged sections, and facilitating access to various government welfare schemes. The high performance in this dimension reflects the increasing emphasis placed on social development programmes under various centrally and state-sponsored schemes and the active involvement of Panchayat representatives in ensuring that these benefits reach rural households. It also suggests that Gram Panchayat members

have developed strong community interaction and are actively engaged in addressing the social needs of the village. The second highest performance was observed in Infrastructure and Development Roles, which recorded an overall MPS of 95.54 per cent. This indicates that Gram Panchayat members effectively discharged their responsibilities relating to the construction and maintenance of roads, public buildings, sanitation facilities, drinking water systems, irrigation structures, electricity, and other essential rural infrastructure. Infrastructure development remains one of the most visible and measurable responsibilities of Gram Panchayats, and the high score may be attributed to regular monitoring, availability of government funding under rural development programmes, and close supervision by Panchayat authorities and government officials.

The overall MPS for Administrative Roles was 89.88 per cent, indicating that Gram Panchayat members efficiently performed routine administrative responsibilities such as participating in Panchayat meetings, maintaining official records, facilitating the implementation of government schemes, encouraging community participation, and coordinating developmental activities. Effective administrative functioning is fundamental to the success of Panchayati Raj Institutions, and the high MPS suggests that

members were actively involved in ensuring transparency, accountability, and efficient execution of Panchayat functions.

Similarly, Women and Child Welfare Roles recorded an overall MPS of 87.88 per cent, reflecting satisfactory performance in promoting maternal and child health, monitoring Anganwadi centres, creating awareness regarding women and child welfare programmes, preventing social evils such as child marriage and domestic violence, and supporting vulnerable groups within the community. The findings indicate that Gram Panchayat members actively participated in welfare-oriented activities aimed at improving the quality of life of women and children. The comparatively high score also reflects the priority accorded to women and child development programmes under various national and state government initiatives.

In contrast, Agriculture and Allied Roles recorded the lowest overall MPS (64.31%) among all the functional dimensions. Although the score indicates a moderate level of performance, it was considerably lower than the other dimensions assessed in the study. The relatively lower performance may be attributed to the technical nature of agricultural activities, limited expertise of Panchayat members in agriculture and allied sectors, dependence on line departments for technical guidance, and comparatively fewer direct responsibilities assigned to Gram Panchayat members in agricultural extension activities. Moreover, many agricultural development programmes are primarily implemented through the Department of Agriculture, Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), and other specialized agencies, which may have reduced the direct involvement of Panchayat representatives in this area.

The gender-wise assessment showed only marginal differences in the performance of male and female Gram Panchayat members. Female members recorded a slightly higher Grand Overall MPS (86.90%) than male members (86.40%), indicating that both groups performed their responsibilities with almost equal efficiency. Female members demonstrated marginally better performance in Administrative Roles, Infrastructure and Development Roles, and Agriculture and Allied Roles, whereas male members recorded slightly higher scores in Women and Child Welfare Roles and Social Welfare Roles. However, these differences were very small and indicate that both male and female representatives contributed substantially to the effective functioning of Gram Panchayats.

Overall, the findings indicate that Gram Panchayat members performed their responsibilities effectively from the perspective of the Sarpanch. Higher performance in social welfare, infrastructure development, and administrative functions demonstrates their active participation in implementing rural development programmes and strengthening grassroots governance. However, the comparatively lower performance observed in agriculture and allied activities highlights the need for greater technical support, specialized training, stronger convergence with agricultural extension agencies, and capacity-building programmes to enhance the effectiveness of Gram Panchayat members in promoting agricultural and allied sector development. The findings underscore the important role played by Gram Panchayat members in achieving the objectives of decentralized governance and sustainable rural

development.

A comparison of self-assessment and Sarpanch assessment further indicates that Gram Panchayat members generally rated their own performance slightly higher than the Sarpanchs did. However, both assessments consistently indicate that members performed well in administrative, infrastructure, and social welfare functions. The differences observed in women and child welfare and agriculture-related activities suggest that certain functional areas require additional capacity building, technical guidance, and institutional support to further enhance the effectiveness of Gram Panchayat members.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Gram Panchayat members were perceived by their Sarpanchs as performing their assigned responsibilities effectively, particularly in social welfare, infrastructure development, and administrative functions. Nevertheless, strengthening the agricultural and allied sector through regular training programmes, improved coordination with line departments, and enhanced technical support would further improve the overall effectiveness of Panchayati Raj Institutions in promoting sustainable rural development.

Conclusion

The findings of the study indicate that Gram Panchayat members exhibited a high level of role performance in carrying out their assigned responsibilities under the Panchayati Raj system. The overall self-assessed role performance (MPS = 89.38%) and Sarpanch-assessed role performance (MPS = 86.65%) demonstrate that the respondents were actively involved in local governance and developmental activities. Among the five functional dimensions, infrastructure and development roles received the highest self-assessed Mean Percentage Score, whereas social welfare roles were rated highest by the Sarpanch. These findings reflect the active participation of Gram Panchayat members in planning and implementing developmental programmes, maintaining village infrastructure, and delivering welfare services to rural communities. The study further revealed satisfactory performance in administrative roles and women and child welfare activities, indicating that Gram Panchayat members effectively discharged their routine administrative responsibilities and contributed to the implementation of programmes related to health, education, and social welfare. However, comparatively lower performance was observed in agriculture and allied roles, particularly from the Sarpanch's assessment, suggesting the need for greater technical support, stronger coordination with line departments, and enhanced involvement of Panchayat members in agricultural development activities. Overall, the study concludes that Gram Panchayat members are playing a significant role in strengthening grassroots democracy and promoting rural development in Udaipur district. Nevertheless, continuous capacity-building programmes, need-based training, technical guidance, and effective convergence among Panchayati Raj Institutions and development departments are essential to further improve their role performance. Strengthening the knowledge and competencies of Gram Panchayat members, particularly in agriculture and allied sectors, will enhance the effectiveness of local governance and contribute to inclusive and sustainable rural

development.

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