

Welfare of Weaker Sections: A Study of PRIs and a Political Dimension

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Abstract

The process of self governance and planning by empowering the people through Panchayati Raj system started nearly five decades earlier. But 73rd and 74th amendments in the Constitution of India brought an historic change in the process of decentralisation towards the grass root level and participation of people both in the formulation as well as implementation of the plans. The paper explores how the Constitution 73rd Amendment Act (1992), provided certainty, continuity and strength to the PRI's for the welfare of the weaker sections through Decentralization, and its different aspects such as uniform three-tier level of the village, block and district levels, direct elections to all seats and at all levels, indirect elections to chairpersons at intermediate and apex levels, and reservation on rotational basis for SC's ST's in proportion to their population, both for membership as well as Chairpersonships of the PRI's. The present paper intends to discuss the political participation of weaker sections in panchayat raj institutions in Karnataka in general and in Afjalpur taluk of Gulbarga District in particular as a case study. Finally the paper discusses about the political participation of weaker sections and sought their opinion of their involvement in the process of political, economic development and social justice, with the transfer of the list of Eleventh and the Twelfth Schedule of the Constitution to the rural and urban elected local bodies, and the process of welfare activities for weaker sections through the Panchayat Raj Institutions.

Key Words: Panchayat Raj Institutions, Political Participation, Weaker Sections.

1. Introduction

Social inequalities existed in the villages and these have continued for centuries. Under these circumstances, soon after Independence the concept of social justice figured in the Indian Constitution. The constitution of India made an attempt to provide equal social opportunities for the development of all the people in the society, without any discrimination on the basis of caste, sex or race. However, social inequalities continued for a long time in the Indian society. The reasons may be several. The people from higher social strata had received education, and they controlled and managed land. They took up high income - generating activities. On the contrary, people in the lower strata people were denied education, and they were deprived of their right to manage and

control land. Thus they were forced to take up low - income generating activities. Particularly in the villages the people from lower strata took up supportive works for the people who had taken up agricultural activities, such as Carpentry, Blacksmith, Leather work, and labour.

These reasons among others, restricted upward mobility of the marginalized. Rural development is a definite strategy for the improvement of the living conditions of the rural poor. In this direction the Government of India made efforts to solve problems such as poverty, ill health, illiteracy, and backwardness of varied nature prevailing in rural areas, by giving grater attention to the upliftment of the rural poor (Shivanna N; 1990)¹.

Further, the marginalized sections, i.e., SC, ST, and OBC have become an important component in defining of the development policies because of their socio-economic deprivation in the traditional society like India. The political involvement of the upper castes is still more in institutions like Assembly and Parliament. The reservation of seats was 15% in State Assemblies and Parliament. On the contrary there was no representation from the larger sections of the marginalized castes i.e., from the backwards (Singh; 1996)². As a result of this, at present, political participation in India is limited to only a few upper castes. As they manage and control the political system, land pattern. The upper caste people do not mind in formulating and execution of welfare and developmental policies intended for the weaker sections. It can be seen in the failure of several programmes. Among these are community Development Programmes (CDP) and National Extension Programme (NEP). These programmes were implemented in tune with the upper caste people in the rural areas.

2. Review of Related Literature

¹ Shivanna N. (1990) "Panchayati raj Reforms and rural Devaelopment", Usha Prakashan Mandir, Allahabad, p.2.

² Singh, S.N. (1996). "Reservation Policy for Backward Classes", Rawat Publications, Jaipur, New Delhi.

Sukla Deb Kanoongo (1996)³ in his research on women's leadership in the Panchayati Raj with special reference to the State of West Bengal, found that many of them, in spite of being educated, in spite of having a tradition of political activity in the family and of having great support from their respective parties, are unable to participate in the whole process in a meaningful way. Many are finding the responsibilities very demanding, some are thoroughly engaged in their domestic responsibilities and some do not maintain good health. He also felt that the socio-cultural factors acted as a deterrent in many cases.

Ujwala Hiremath (1997)⁴ conducted a survey of 40 women members of ten village Gram Panchayats in Karnataka. Her studies show the same trend that is seen at the national level politics: members of influential families always seem to have an edge over the rest. Majority of the members were illiterate-thumb impression ones. However, it was interesting to note that all these women had a manifesto of development items for the village-shelter for the poor, electricity, toilets, roads, schools, water facility, doctors for primary health centers, sewing machines for young girls and many other things, including old-age and widow pensions, employment for youth, girls education, transport facilities, etc.

Nagendra Ambedkar (2000)⁵ in his book on "Panchayat Raj at Work" explained the origins and growth of panchayat raj institution in India and structural patterns of panchayat raj in Rajasthan. The author also has given importance to electoral system of the local bodies. Further, he analysed the socio-economic and political background of the panchayat raj elite, their perceptions and orientations of various issues, pertaining to the panchayat raj institution. Finally he analyzed the leadership in panchayats and the qualities, attitude of the leaders towards weaker section of the society.

³ Sukla Deb, Kanoongo, January-March, 1996, Panchayat Raj and Emerging Women Leadership, Vol. 46, Social Welfare, p. 86.

⁴ Hiremath, Ujwala, May, 1997, Women in Grassroot Politics, Vol. 44, No. 2, Social Welfare, p. 13.

⁵ Nagendra Ambedkar, New Panchayat Raj at work, ABD Publishers, Jaipur, India, 2000.

In another study Aziz (1994)⁶ found more or less the same phenomena. When he (Buch, Jain and Chaudhary; 1999)⁷ conducted Study on Women in Panchayati Raj in Madhya Pradesh. The study was conducted in three district socio-cultural zones where the ST, SC was others are numerically dominant. So far as their social profile is concerned, the study documented that maximum number of PRI leaders (307 out of 343) are from the marginalized groups. 283 women and 80 men participated in the study. Majority of the leaders are above the age of 25 years and 'they are engaged in agricultural work. In fact, either they are the wage earners or cultivators. Although, there is slight district wise variation but majority of the respondents are from below the Poverty line. More than 50 per cent are illiterate. Even in the case of chairpersons out of 72, 23 are illiterate. Most of them had no affiliation with any of the political parties in the formal sense. 53 of the respondents are landless but a good number of them (126) possess either or more than 5 acres of land. It is interesting to note that a good number of respondents have discontinued labour work after becoming PRI leaders but even today 92 are engaged in this work. The study concluded that PRI is formally imitated by the leaders of lower Socio-economic status in M.P.

Similar observation was made by Lele (2001)⁸ In course of the Comparative Study between Traditional Village Panchayat and the modern Gram Sabha in Maharashtra from the point of view of empowerment of the weaker sections, the author opined that of course platform of statutory Gram Sabha is theoretically opened for the marginalized but in the real sense it is not. In fact, alienation from the political processes seems to prevail and that is why even reservation has not helped to make the marginalized more vocal. This then creates the right conditions for the domination of traditional power of the upper castes and classes. The other factor is economic dependence of the marginalized on the dominants. For those who work on the fields or

⁶ Aziz, A. (2000): "Democratic, Decentralization – Experience of Karnataka" Kalpaz Publications, New Delhi.

⁷ Buch, N., Jain, U. and Chaudhary, S.N. (1999): Women in Panchayati Raj in Madhya Pradesh, (Mimeo) Bhopal: Mahila Chetna Manch.

⁸ Lele, M.K. (2001): "Local Government: Conflict of Interests and Issues of Legitimization", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. XXXVI, No. 51, Dec. 22-28.

run small shops or are service providers, opposing the gavki is unthinkable. They would be digging their own graves by opposing the upper castes and rich farmers on whose fields they work and earn their daily wages. Beside personal loans are also made available by the same people, those who constitute the gavki. Thus opposing the gavki could mean starvation as a result of boycott by the rich peasants and others.

3. Committees Appointed from Time to Time

After the Community Development Programme was launched in 1952, it was realized that without an agency at the village level, which could represent the entire community, assume responsibility and provide the necessary leadership for implementing development programmes, real progress in rural development could not take place. It was against this background that a Committee headed by Balwant Rai G. Mehta was appointed in 1957 to make recommendations for revitalization for the Panchayati Raj system and define its role in the development process. The report of the Committee recommended that public participation in community works should be organized through statutory representative bodies. Community Development can be real only when the community exercises necessary powers through its chosen representatives. Therefore, it recommended the establishments of statutory elected local bodies.

The Ashok Mehta Committee Report in 1978 was influential in bringing about a shift in emphasis between the first and second generation of panchayats from development *per se* to Local Government in its full meaning. Originally, panchayats found a place only in the Directive Principles of State Policy. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments revitalized the Panchayats and Urban Bodies by giving them Constitutional status, providing for regular elections and reserving 1/3 seats for women and introducing representation for marginalized groups.

To provide the constitutional support to the Panchayati raj institutions, a Constitutional Amendment Bill was introduced in 1989 by Sri. Rajiv Gandhi, the then Prime Minister with an intention of transferring power to the people. It relates to part IX

of the constitution. This bill was passed by the Loka sabha on the 10th August 1989. However it failed in Rajya Sabha and could not become the part of the constitution. After the defeat of both the bills, another bill that is 73rd constitution amendment Bill was introduced in the Lok sabha. The attempt at extending the constitutional benefits to the panchayat raj institutions, through the 64th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1988 and 74th Amendment Bill of 1990 did not succeed. Another attempt was made by introducing the Constitutional Amendment Bill on 16th September 1991. After the series of discussions in the parliament, the matter was referred to joint select committee of parliament for detailed examination. Accordingly joint committee presented its report to parliament in July 1992. The Lok Sabha finally passed the bill on December 22nd 1992 and the Raja Sabha on December 23rd 1992. The President of India accorded this asset on April 20th 1993. Finally the 73rd constitutional amendment act of 1992 came into effect on April 24th 1993 (Panchayat Raj at a Glance: 1964)⁹.

There shall be three tiers of Panchayats at the village, intermediate and district levels. So, only those states having population not exceeding 20 lakhs have the discretion not to constitute the panchayats at the intermediate level. Under Article 243 the President can make special dispensation for Union Territories.

Direct elections: All seats in a panchayat at every level are to be filled by direct elections from territorial constituencies demarcated for this purpose, with the ratio between the population of such constituency and the number of such constituency and the number of seats allotted to it being the same throughout the Panchayat area. Reservation of seats: There shall be reservation of seats at every level for SC/ STs in proportion to their population in a given Panchayat area and *for* women to the extent of not less than one- third of the total number of seats. Likewise, the office of the Chairpersons in the Panchayats at each level shall be reserved for women, to the extent of not less than one-third of the total numbers in the office of Chairpersons of Panchayats. In addition, the legislature of any state

⁹ Panchayat Raj at a Glance (as on 31st March, 1964), New Delhi, 1965.

can make provision for reservation of seats in any panchayats at any level in favour of the backward classes.

Finance Commission: It was provided that by 24th April 1993, that is, the coming into the effect the constitutional (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992 and thereafter at the expiration of every fifth year, a finance commission shall be constituted in every fifth year. A finance commission shall be constituted in every state to go into the governing principles of the distribution and revolution of financial resources between the state and the panchayats at every level and the measures to improve the financial position of the panchayats.

State Election Commission: The direction and control of the preparation of electoral rolls and the conduct of all elections in the panchayats shall be vested in a state election commission, to be constituted by the state concerned.

Eleventh Schedule: Finally, the XI Schedule comprising 29 items has been added to the Constitution which ought to provide an effective role to the PRIs in the planning and implementation of works of local significance. Activities ranging like drinking water, agriculture, land and water conservation to communications, poverty alleviation programmes family welfare, education, libraries and cultural activities, maintenance of community as sets etc.

4.1 Karnataka Panchayat Raj Act 1993-Salient Features

The 1993 Act establishes a three-tier Panchayat raj system in the state with elected bodies at Grama, Taluka, and District level for greater participation of the people and for more effective implementation of Rural Development Programmes. The three tiers of the Panchayat Raj System are:

- 1) Gram Panchayat/Village Panchayat.
- 2) Taluka Panchayat.
- 3) Zilla Panchayat.

4.2 Outstanding Features of 1993 Act

As a part from the creation of three-tier panchayat system in the state based on population as per published data of census, the features of 1993 Act are as follows (The Karnataka Panchayati Raj Act: 1993).

1. The act facilitates the constitution of gram sabha in each village.

2. It provides for reservation of seats in favour of SCs and STs in proportion of their population and subjected to minimum of 15 and 3% respectively at all levels.
3. The Act provides for reservation of 1/3 of seats to women at all levels.
4. It also provides for reservation of 1/3 of seats to persons belonging to Backward Classes.
5. The Act also provides for reservation of 1/3 of seats in each category (SCs, STs, and Backward Classes and General) at all levels for women. The seats reserved shall be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in panchayat area.
6. The office of the Chairperson and Deputy Chairpersons are also reserved at all levels for the persons belonging to SCs, STs and Backwards Classes and Women.
7. The Act envisages the constitution of state election commission, the finance commission and district planning committee. The finance committee is to recommend periodically the policy on finance to Panchayat Raj Institutions.
8. The new law stipulates that the elections to Gram Panchayat are to be conducted on non-party basis. This is intended to minimize the local conflicts during election time. However, participation of political parties has been allowed for upper level Panchayats.
9. The new Act substantially increases the power of State governments to supervise and control Panchayat Raj Institutions. The Secretary of Panchayat Raj Department and the Divisional Commissioner are empowered accordingly for this purpose. They are entitled to issue instructions, conduct enquiry, and call for proceedings of Zilla Panchayat and performance of Panchayat Raj Institutions. The government is also authorized to add or delete any programme or scheme in the functions of Panchayat Raj Institutions.
10. All the Adhyakshas of Taluka Panchayats can be members of Zilla Panchayats. All the MLAs, MLCs, and MPs can be Members of Zilla Panchayats and Taluka Panchayats.
11. As regards to finance, every Gram Panchayat will receive annual grant of rupees one lakh towards development activities.

12. The proceeds of heavy cash levy, on land revenue and surcharge on stamp duty will be passed on to Gram Panchayats and Taluka Panchayats. The Panchayat Raj Institutions will receive resources from State Government also.

5. Objectives and Methodology

The present paper intends to analyze the involvement of weaker sections representatives in the institutions of Panchayat Raj in Gulbarga and Afjalpur Taluk of Gulbarga District. It also intends to assess the awareness, commitment, ability and problems of weaker sections representatives in the process of implementing the welfare policies for SC, ST and OBC. Both historical descriptive and analytical methods have been employed in the present study to examine the status of weaker sections in village Panchayats of Gulbarga and Afjalpur Taluks in Gulbarga District and to compare the status of weaker section's representatives with the representatives of other castes in Panchayat Raj Institutions of Gulbarga District. The objective was also to identify the education level of weaker sections representatives in Panchayat Raj Institutions of Gulbarga District. Awareness towards the working of Panchayat Raj institutions, involves policy implementations for the effective involvement of weaker section and better implementation of welfare policies for weaker sections through Panchayat Raj institutions.

6. Political Participation of Weaker Sections

It is widely believed that the analysis of age, education, Caste, family structure, occupation, income, land holding, party affiliation, etc., are important in determining the nature of leadership. The data relating to socioeconomic background of elected respondents of Panchayati Raj institutions were collected in the % study to get an insight into the emerging pattern of rural leadership in the Afjalpur Taluk of Gulbarga District.

The socio-economic conditions play an important role in characterizing the social life and behaviour of an individual. The socio-economic status of an individual affects the patterns of interaction in the society. It is therefore, essential to analyse the socio-economic background of the relationship between the leader and the environment. In a developing society like ours where forces of caste and kinship influence the social life and acute disparity in the standard of living and sub culture among various groups and regions are existing, a study of the socio-economic conditions of SC , ST and OBC respondents would help reveal sociologically significant dimensions (Singhi, N.K. 1974)¹⁰.

Knowledge of the socio-economic, educational and political background of the leaders would also enable us to anticipate as to what they are capable of doing, what we should expect of them and how well they are equipped to discharge the responsibilities put upon them by the electorate (Sashilata Puri 1978)¹¹. Knowledge of socio-economic background of a community is an indispensable prerequisite, for the understanding of the thought or behaviors of its members. This holds good for all human communities, and more so in the case of SC/ST and OBC communities, which are intrinsically more traditional in their structure.

Table No. 1. Distribution of Respondents by Nature of Members

Sl. No.	Institution	Frequency	%
1	VP	44	58.67
2	TP	23	30.67
3	ZP	8	10.67
4	Total	75	100.00

Source : Compiled from the Data Collected from Field Work.

¹⁰ Singhi, N.K. (1974) "Bureaucracy, Positions and Participation", New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, P. 55.

¹¹ Sashilata Puri (1978), "Legislative Elite in an Indian State: A Case Study of Rajasthan", New Delhi: publications, p. 31.

Table No. 1 is to discuss the nature of members in the study area. It is evident from the table that there are three types of members, i.e (1). Village Panchayat members are 44 constituting 58.67 %, Taluk Panchayat members are 23 constituting 30.67 % and Zilla panchayat members are 8 constituting 10.67 %.

Table No. 2. Distribution of Respondents by Position in PRIs

S.No	Position	Frequency	%
1	Presidents	10	13.33
2	Vice - Presidents	17	22.67
3	Members	48	64.00
4	Total	75	100.00

Source: Compiled from the Data Collected from Field Work.

Table No. 2 is intended to discuss the position of respondents in the institutions of PRIs at Afzalpoor Taluk. The response and the study area have been grouped into three categories, viz, Respondents (10 constituting 13.33%) vice - presidents (17, constituting 22.67 %) and members (48 constituting 64.09 %).

Table No. 3. Distribution of Respondents by Sex

S.No	Sex	Frequency	%
1	Male	49	65.33
2	Female	26	34.67
3	Total	75	100.00

Source: Compiled from the Data Collected from Field Work.

Table No. 3 discusses the sex wise distribution of respondents in the study area. It is evident from the table that out of the total 75 respondents, the highest number 49 constituting 65.33 % are male and 26 respondents constituting 34.67 % are female.

Table No. 4. Caste - Wise Distribution of Respondents

Sl.	Caste	Frequency	%
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No			
1	SC	25	33.33
2	ST	10	13.33
3	OBC	40	53.33
4	Total	75	100.00

Source: Compiled from the Data Collected from Field Work.

Table No 4. is intended to discuss the cast wise distribution of the respondents in the study area. The table shows that out of the total sample of 75 respondents belonging to SC 25 (constituting 33.33 %) 10 to STs (constituting 13.33 %) and 40 to OBCs (constituting 53.33 %).

Table No. 5. Distribution of Respondents by Age

S.No	Age	Frequency	%
1	18-25	22	29.33
2	26-35	34	45.33
3	36-45	8	10.67
4	46 & Above	11	14.67
5	Total	75	100

Source: Compiled from the Data Collected from Field Work.

Table NO. 5 is intended to analyse the distribution of respondents by age. It is observed from the table that the age group of the respondents has been grouped into 4 categories. Among these the highest numbers of respondents (34 constituting 45.33 %) are from the age group of 26 - 35, followed by 22 respondents constituting 29.33 % belonging to the age group of 18 - 25. Further the table shows that the lowest number 8 respondents constituting 10.67 % are from the age group of 36 – 45.

Table No. 7. Distribution of Respondents by Religion

S.No	Religion	Frequency	%
1	Hindu	53	70.67
2	Buddhism	15	20.00
3	Muslims	4	5.33
4	Others	3	4.00
5	Total	75	100.00

Source: Compiled from the Data Collected from Field Work.

Table No.7 is to analyse the Distribution of Respondents By Religion. The table shows that out of the sample 75 respondents, the highest number, 53 respondents constituting 70.67 %, are Hindus, followed by 15 respondents constituting 20 % who are Buddhists. These Buddhists are converted from a particular caste among the SC. In the study area there are 4 respondents constituting 5.33 % belonging to Muslim OBCs, and 3 respondents constituting 4.00 per cent belonging to other religions.

Table No. 8. Distribution of Opinion by Caste about the Objectives of Panchayat Raj Institutions

S.No.	Opinion	SC	%	ST	%	OBC	%	Total	%
1	Yes	19	76	5	38.46	10	27.03	34	45.33
2	No	6	24	8	61.54	27	72.97	41	54.67
3	Total	25	100	13	100.00	37	100.00	75	100.00

Source: Compiled from the data collected from the field data.

Table No 8, reveals the caste wise distribution of respondent's opinion about the objectives of Panchayat Raj institutions. The table reveals that out of the total 75 respondents, the highest number of respondents across the castes does not know about the objectives of Panchayat Raj institutions. The caste wise distribution of opinion reveals that there are 25 respondents from SC. Among these the highest number (76%) of respondents are aware of the objectives of Panchayat Raj institutions. Where as only 24 % of respondents do not know the objectives of Panchayat Raj institutions.

The respondents belonging to STs hold the different opinion than those of the SC respondents. The highest number 61.54 % respondents out of 10 do not know the objectives of Panchayat Raj institutions and where as 38.46% of respondents are aware of the objectives of Panchayat raj Institutions.

Among the OBC respondents, out of the total 40, the highest number 30 respondents do not know the objectives of Panchayat Raj Institutions. The over all observation of the table is that majority of SC respondents are aware of the objectives of Panchayat Raj Institutions. And on the other hand majority of respondents from STs and OBC are not aware of the objectives of Panchayat Raj Institutions.

Table No. 9. Distribution of Respondent's Opinion by Education about the Objectives of Panchayat Raj Institutions

Opinion	Illiterates	%	Up to 10th	%	PUC	%	Degree	%	Total	%
Yes	9	37.5	5	17.24	3	20	7	100	24	32
No	15	62.5	24	82.76	12	80			51	68
Total	24	100	29	100.00	15	100	7	100	75	100

Source: Compiled from the data collected from the field data.

Table No. 9. shows the education wise distribution of representative's opinion about the objectives of Panchayat Raj institutions. The table reveals that out of the total respondents belonging to illiterates, the highest number 62.5% of respondents do not know the objectives of Panchayat Raj Institutions, and 37.5% respondents are aware of the objectives of Panchayat Raj Institutions. Among the total, 29 respondents who have studied up to SSLC, the highest number 82.76% do not know about the objectives of Panchayat Raj Institutions, only 17.24% know about it. The respondents who have studied up to PUC are 15 in total, among these the highest number 80 % respondents does know the objectives of Panchayat Raj Institutions. It is evident from the table that the respondents who have studied up to degree are 7 in total and these respondents have understood the objectives of Panchayat Raj Institutions.

The overall observation of the table is that most of the respondents with lower educational level such as illiterates, and who have studied up to 10th and pre

University education (PUC) have not understood the objectives of Panchayat Raj Institutions in the study area. On the other hand, the respondents who have studied upto the level of graduation are aware of the objectives of Panchayat Raj Institutions.

Table No. 10. Distribution of Opinion by Caste Towards the awareness of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act

S.No	Opinion	SC	%	ST	%	OBC	%	Total	%
1	Yes	18	72	6	60	10	25	34	45.33
2	No	7	28	4	40	30	75	41	54.67
3	Total	25	100	10	100	40	100	75	100.00

Source: Compiled from the data collected from the field data.

Table No. 10 discusses the caste wise distribution of respondents towards the awareness of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act. The respondents in Panchayat Raj Institutions are supposed to have understood the provisions of 73rd Amendment Act. Because, the radical changes have taken place in the institutions of Panchayat Raj in India by 73rd Amendment Act. The table reveals that the highest number (72%) of respondents belonging to SC is aware of 73rd Act. Among the respondents belonging to STs the highest number (60%) of respondents are not aware of 73rd Act and only 40% of respondents are aware of it. So for as the respondents belonging to OBC's are concerned, the highest number (75%) of respondents are not aware of 73rd Act and only 25% of respondents are aware of it.

The findings of the table are that the most of respondents belonging to SCs and STs are aware of 73rd Act. And the majority of respondents from ST, and OBC, are not aware of 73rd Act. Therefore, it is viewed that SC & ST respondents has consciousness towards the working of Panchayat Raj Institutions in the study area.

Table No. 11. Distribution of Opinion by Education towards the Awareness of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act

S.No	Education	Yes	%	No	%	Total	%
1	Illiterates	7	15.22	15	51.72	22	29.33
2	Up to 10 th	23	50.00	9	31.03	32	42.67
3	PUC	9	19.57	4	13.79	13	17.33
4	Degree	7	15.22	1	3.45	8	10.67
5	Total	46	100.00	29	100.00	75	100.00

Source: Compiled from the data collected from the field data.

Table No. 11 reveals the education wise distribution of respondents towards the awareness of 73rd amendment Act. It is evident from the table that the highest numbers (51.72%) of respondents from illiterates are not aware of 73rd Act. And the highest number 50.00%, 19.57% and 15.22% of respondents from 10th, PUC, and Degree as education level respectively are aware of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act.

The findings of the table are that the most of illiterate respondents are working in Panchayat Raj Institutions without understanding the provisions of 73rd Act. The most important finding of the table is that the respondents with minimum level of education and above are working in Panchayat Raj Institutions with the awareness of 73rd constitutional provisions.

Table No. 12. Education - Wise Distribution of Respondent's Opinion towards the Accuracy of the Existing Reservation Provisions in Panchayat Raj Institutions

S.No	Education	Yes	%	No	%	Total	%
1	Illiterates	17	58.62	7	26.92	24	32
2	UP To 10 th	10	34.48	22	84.62	32	42.67
3	PUC	2	6.90	12	46.15	14	18.67
4	Degree		0.00	5	19.23	5	6.67
5	Total	29	100.00	26	100.00	75	100

Source: Compiled from the data collected from the field data.

Table No. 12. discusses the education wise distribution of respondent's opinion towards the adequacy of the existing reservation provisions in Panchayat Raj Institutions. The table shows that the highest number 58.62% of respondents from illiterate opined that the existing reservation provisions are adequate. The majority of respondents i.e. 84.62%, who have studied up to 10th opined that the existing reservation provision in Panchayat Raj Institutions are not adequate and only 34.48% have satisfied with the existing provisions. The majority of respondents who studied upto PUC and degree respectively 46.15% and 19.23% are opined that the existing reservation provision are not sufficient in the Panchayat Raj Institutions.

The overall observation of the table is that the illiterate respondents in Panchayat Raj Institutions have not understood the reservation provisions and the respondents with educational levels such as 10th, PUC and Degree have understood the reservation provisions and they want to increase number of seats for SC, ST and OBC in Panchayat Raj Institutions.

Table No. 13. Caste - Wise Distribution of Respondent's Opinion Towards Specific Earmark of Allocations and Expenditure for the Welfare of SC, ST, and OBC in Panchayat Raj Institutions

S.No	Opinion	SC	%	ST	%	OBC	%	Total	%
1	Yes	19	76	7	70	30	75	56	74.67
2	No	6	24	3	30	10	25	19	25.33
3	Total	25	100	10	100	40	100	75	100.00

Source: Compiled from the data collected from the field data.

Table No. 13 reveals the caste wise distribution of respondent's opinion towards specific earmark of allocations and expenditure for the welfare of SC, ST, and OBC in Panchayat Raj Institutions. It is evident from the table that the majority 76% of respondents belonging to SCs wanted a specific earmark of allocations and expenditure for the welfare of SC and STs in the institutions of Panchayat Raj, and 24% of respondents opined that their should not be a special earmark for SC and STs in Panchayat Raj Institutions. Respondents belonging to STs opined that the highest number 70% wanted a special earmark and 30% does not want a special earmark of

allocations and expenditure for the welfare of SC and STs. The highest number 75% respondents belonging to OBC wanted a special allocations and expenditure where as 25% are not in favor of special earmark for the welfare of SC and STs in Panchayat Raj Institutions.

The over all observation of the table is that the majority of respondents belonging to weaker sections wanted special allocations and expenditure for the welfare of SC ST and OBC's in Panchayat Raj Institutions.

Table No. 14. Distribution of Opinion by Caste towards Their Reaction if The Funds Intended for Weaker Sections is not implemented by Panchayat Raj Institutions

S.No	Opinion	SC	%	ST	%	OBC	%	Total	%
1	Yes	18	72	8	80	25	62.5	56	74.67
2	No	7	28	2	20	15	37.5	19	25.33
3	Total	25	100	10	100	40	100	75	100.00

Source: Compiled from the data collected from the field.

Table No. 14 reveals caste-wise distribution of representative's opinion towards their reaction if the funds intended for weaker sections are not implemented by Panchayat Raj Institutions. The table shows that 72% of respondents belonging to SC expressed that they will keep quite and 28% opined that they protest in different forms in case the funds from Central and State Governments intended for the welfare of these sections are not utilized by Panchayat Raj Institutions. The respondents belonging to STs, the highest number 80% of respondents opined that they will keep quite and only 20% of respondents will protest in various forms. The respondents belonging to OBC's, the highest number 62.5% of respondents will keep quite and 37.5% of respondents opined that they will protest in different forms in case funds intended for the welfare of weaker sections by Centre or State governments are not implemented.

The overall observation of the table is that the majority of respondents across the castes in Panchayat Raj Institutions are not committed for the utilization of funds given by Central and State Governments for the welfare of weaker sections.

7. Conclusion

Social inequalities existed in the villages and these have continued for centuries. Under these circumstances, soon after Independence the concept of social justice figured in the Indian constitution. Thus the constitution of India made an attempt to provide equal social opportunities for the development of personality of all the people in the society, without any discrimination on the basis of caste, sex or race. Therefore, after Independence, India was one among the countries which went in for social and economic transformation of the rural population. As a preferred condition, rural development became a definite strategy for the improvement of the living conditions of the rural poor. In this direction the Government of India made efforts to solve problems such as poverty, ill health, illiteracy, and backwardness of varied nature prevailing in rural areas, by giving grater attention to the uplift of the rural poor.

By this case study we came to know that the representatives belonging to weaker sections are able to implement welfare policies for the development of SC, ST and OBC in the study area. Due to the illiteracy and ignorance of weaker section's representatives, several welfare policies intended for the welfare of SC's, ST's and OBC's are not being implemented properly through the institutions of Panchayati Raj. Greater effort is needed for effective implementation of these policies for the welfare of weaker sections and bring them to the main stream and provide equal opportunity as stipulated in the Indian Constitution.

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