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STUDY ON THE LEGAL KNOWLEDGE OF ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES OF PANCHAYAT RAJ INSTITUTIONS (PRIS) IN TUMKUR DISTRICT KARNATAKA STATE-INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to know the legal knowledge of the elected members of Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) in Tumkur district Karnataka State. The introduction of the community development programme (CDP) in the first five year plan gave a new dimension as well as impetus to the participation of people in development. Development implies on overall positive change in the physical quality of life. This positive change for the better encompasses economic as well as social aspects. In other words Development implies growth with justice; it means an improvement in the quality of life through better Health, Education, Housing and Welfare. Study reveals that majority (73 %) of the elected members of Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) were not having legal knowledge. It is evident from study was majority (46.66 %), of the elected members educational level was middle school and High school level.

KEYWORDS :Legal Knowledge, Development, Community, Panchayat Raj, Elected representative.

INTRODUCTION

In order to evaluate the working of community development and to suggest ways and means to overcome the shortfall of the Programme BALVANTRAY MEHTA as a chairman committee recommended a three tier system of Panchayat Raj with the Village Panchayat at the lowest level, a Zilla Perished at the apex (District Level) and a Panchayat Samiti at the Intermediate (Block /Taluk level a new system for local self Government suggested. Panchayat Raj System came in to existence in 1959 with the



twin objectives of

- 1)Democratic Decentralisation and
- 2)Local participation in Plan programme.

Panchayats in India are an age old institution for governance at village level. In 1992, through the enactment of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) were strengthened as local government organizations with clear areas of jurisdiction, adequate power, authority and funds commensurate with responsibilities.

Panchayats have been assigned 29 rural development activities, including several, which are related to health and population stabilization. The XI schedule includes Family Welfare, Health and Sanitation, (including hospitals, primary health centers, and

dispensaries,) and the XII schedule includes Public Health.

KARNATAKA PANCHAYAT RAJ SYSTEM; Karnataka has the distinction of enacting a comprehensive Panchayat Raj act, which incorporates all the essential features of the 73 rd constitution Amendment. The Act came in to force from May 10 1993 within a few days of the 73 rd constitution amendment being adopted. The Karnataka Panchayat Raj act 1993 provides for an elected three tier system at the Village (Grama Panchayat), Taluk (Taluk panchayat) and District (Zilla Panchayat) levels. The Salient Features of the Act are

- (1) Establishment of three tiers elected Panchayat Raj Institutions at gram, Taluk, and District Level.
- (2) Holding of Grama sabhas in each Village.
- (3) Reservations of seats for SCs, STs, BCs, and Women in Panchayat raj institutions.
- (4) Reservations of Adhyakshyas and upadyakshyas to SCs, STs, BCs, and Women.
- (5) Constitution of State Election Commission to conduct election to Panchayat Raj institutions.
- (6) Constitution of state finance commission once in every five years to review the financial position of Panchayats.
- (7) Constitution of District Planning Committees in each district to prepare plan for integrated development.

Zilla Panchayat Tumkur; The Zilla Panchayat (ZP), Tumkur came into existence subsequent to formation of Tumkur district in the year 1997. Tumkur Zilla Panchayat is formed as per the Karnataka Panchayat Raj Act, 1993 which implements decentralized planning and programme implementations at the grass root level. As per the Karnataka Panchayat Raj Act, three tier system Administration have been introduced, i.e., Zilla Panchayats, Taluk Panchayats, Grama Panchayats at District, Taluk and village level respectively. Tumkur Zilla Panchayat has an elected body consisting of 57 elected members and administrative body consisting of administration staff in different sections like Development, Administration, Planning, Accounts, DRDA and Council sections. Tumkur Zilla Panchayat is an elected body: - the elected members as determined under Section 160; the members of the House of People and the members of the State Legislative Assembly representing a part or whole of the district whose constituencies lie within the district; the members of the Council of State and the members of the State Legislative Council who are registered as electors within the district; and the Adyakshas of Taluk Panchayats in the district. There are 11- M.L.A's, 3 - M.L.C's, 3 - M.P.s, 57 - Zilla Panchayat members, 212 - Taluk Panchayat Members, 5362 - Grama Panchayat members.

Introduction about Tumkur District; Tumkur district is about 70 Kms to the west of Bangalore, the capital city of Karnataka, three national highways run through the district connecting many districts of Karnataka to Bangalore.

Tumkur is at 818.51 meters from the sea level has 10596 Sqkm land area and it is in the third place in land area of Karnataka state occupying 5.53% of total area consisting of 10 taluks, for the smooth administration district divided into three revenue divisions. According to 2001 census Tumkur district is having a population of 2584711 [rural 2077509, urban 507202] out of which males are 1313801 females are 1270910 with a literacy rate of 76.10% and 56.90% respectively.

Tumkur district has 10 towns and 2708 villages where 5.50 lakh families resides, out of which 4.41 lakh (80.18%) and 1.09 lakh (19.82%) families resides in rural and urban areas respectively.

The Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, is aimed to provide free and competent Legal Services to the weaker sections of the society to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities and to organize Lok Adalats to secure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice on a basis equal opportunity.

Creating legal awareness, legal aid and settlement of disputes through amicable settlement are the main functions of the Authority.

Legal awareness programmes are taken up for empowerment of legal knowledge to all the citizens in general and to the weaker sections of the society in particular. Various activities are taken up to reach the vulnerable sections of the society such as SC/ST, Women, Industrial Labourers etc.,

The Authority provides legal aid by way of providing the services of able efficient services of Lawyers. Any person, who fulfills the criteria, is entitled for the legal Aid.

Lok Adalats organized by the Authorities and the Taluk Committees help the disputing parties to come to settlement through conciliation and such settlement reached before a Lok Adalat becomes a record having equal status as that of a judgment/decreed of the Court.

Karnataka State Legal Services Authority is a Statutory Body constituted under a Central Legislation "Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987". Hon'ble the Chief Justice of Supreme Court of India is the Patron-in-Chief of National Legal Services Authority. Sr. Judge of the Supreme Court of India is the Executive Chairman of the National Legal Services Authority. Hon'ble the Chief Justice of High Court of Karnataka is the Patron-in-Chief of Karnataka State Legal Services Authority, Bangalore. Sr. Judge of High Court of Karnataka is the Executive Chairman of Karnataka State Legal Services Authority. Karnataka State Legal Services Authority has 17 official Members which include the Principal Secretary, Dept. of Law, Finance Secretary, IGP, Registrar General of High Court of Karnataka etc., Apart from the above State Authority has 11 nominated Members who have experience in the field of Law, Finance, Social Service or Administration and who are engaged in the upliftment of the weaker sections of the society, including Schedule Castes, Schedule Tribes, Women, Children, rural and Urban Labour and who are interested in the implementation of the Legal Service Schemes. Success of the Creating legal awareness, legal aid and settlement of disputes through amicable settlements in rural area significantly dependent on well functioning gram, block and district level Panchayats. Hence to Study on the legal knowledge of Elected Representatives of Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) in Tumkur District Karnataka State-INDIA carried out.

METHODOLOGY

Random sampling technique with purposive selection was employed. 90 Elected Representatives of Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) were selected from ten Taluks Tumkur District. Elected Representatives of Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) were selected by proportionate random sampling method from three categories of Zilla Panchayats, Taluk Panchayats, and Grama Panchayats. Thus 30 Members of Zilla Panchayats, 30 Members of Taluk Panchayat and 30 Members of Grama panchayat were taken as respondents and Data was collected by personal interview method. Out of 90 Elected Representatives of Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) 63 were Male & 27 were female members.

Data collection tools and procedures; A questionnaire was developed for the purpose was used for the survey. The questions were asked in Kannada and were used for collecting responses from elected members of PRIs. Data were also collected from secondary sources of information such as reports of Department of Panchayat Raj and Rural Development. Discussions were held with officials of these Departments, experts, executives, to elicit their views, ideas and opinion on the important issues pertaining to Legal aid services.

Statistical Analysis; The data collected for the study was tabulated, processed and analyzed using simple statistical tools like frequency and percentage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION;

The results from Table 01 and 02 indicated that 57 (35-Male, 22-Female) Zilla Panchayat members, 212 (124-Male, 84 Female) Taluk Panchayat Members, 5362 (2823-Male, 2109 Female) Grama Panchayat members. Total 4989 (2986-Male and 2003-female) Elected Representatives of Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs), 59.85 % were male and 40.14 % female members in Tumkur District of Karnataka State.

Table 01; Elected Representatives of PRIS of Taluk Panchayat and gram Panchayat of Tumkur district:

Sl.No	Taluk	Total TP members			Total Gram Panchayath Members		
		M	F	T	M	F	T
01	Tumkur	18	9	27	342	251	593
02	Gubbi	10	14	24	333	231	564
03	Tiptur	10	7	17	226	164	390
04	Turvekere	11	6	17	221	176	397
05	Kunigal	12	9	21	300	244	544
06	Chikanykanhalli	12	7	19	257	189	446
07	Sira	17	9	26	331	239	570
08	Pavagada	14	8	22	290	211	501
09	Madugiri	15	9	24	350	230	580
10	Koratagere	9	6	15	196	151	347
	Total	128	84	212	2823	2109	4932

Source; Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department

Table 02 Elected Representatives of PRIS of Zilla Panchayat Tumkur District.

Sl.No	Name of the District	Male	Female	Total
1	Tumkur	35	22	57

Source; Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department

The results from Table 3 indicated that majority and same percentage (23.33 %) of the respondents were having Middle School and High School education (total 46.66 %), followed by having primary school education (18.88 %), illiterates (14.44) and only 11.11 % & 8.88 % of elected members were completed Higher Secondary School and above education respectively.

Table 03 Distribution of respondents according to their education.

Sl.No	Category	Gram Panchayat members		Taluk Panchayat Members		Zilla Panchayat Members		Total	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Illiterate	07	23.33	04	13.33	02	6.68	13	14.44
2	Primary school	08	26.66	06	20.00	03	10.00	17	18.88
3	Middle school	06	20.00	08	26.66	07	23.33	21	23.33
4	High School	05	16.66	08	26.66	08	26.66	21	23.33
5	Higher secondary school	02	6.67	03	10.00	05	16.66	10	11.11
6	Above Higher	02	6.67	01	3.33	05	16.66	08	8.88
	Total	30	100.00	30	100.00	30	100.00	90	100.00

It was apparent from Table 04 that majority of the respondents (66.66 %) were under middle age category followed by same percentage of young age (16.66 %) and old age (16.66 %).

Among the groups, majority of the respondents were under middle age category followed by (23.33 %) Zilla panchayat members in old age group, Young age group of (20.00 %) Grama Panchayath members.

Table 04 Distribution of respondents according to their age.

Sl.No	Category	Gram Panchayat members		Taluk Panchayat Members		Zilla Panchayat Members		Total	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Young age (<35 yrs)	06	20.00	05	16.66	04	13.33	15	16.66
2.	Middle age(36-50 yrs)	19	63.33	22	73.33	19	63.33	60	66.66
3.	Old age (>50 yrs)	05	16.66	03	10.00	07	23.33	15	16.66
	Total	30	100.00	30	100.00	30	100.00	90	100.00

To understand the Role of of Elected Representatives of Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) in enhancing Rural Health Services in Tumkur District Karnataka was analyzed. The findings from Table 05 showed that majority (70.00 %) of the respondents were having low involvement and low knowledge about the Rural health services followed medium 20.00 % and only 10.00 % of the respondents were having high level of knowledge and involving in providing the Rural health services.

Table 05 Distribution of respondents according to their Legal Knowledge

Sl. No.	Category	Gram Panchayat members		Taluk Panchayat Members		Zilla Panchayat Members		Total	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Not having Legal Knowledge	28	93.33	23	76.66	15	50.00	66	73.33
2.	Having legal	02	6.66	07	23.33	15	50.00	24	26.66
	Total	30	100.00	30	100.00	30	100.00	90	100.00

CONCLUSION

The study has clearly shown that majority of the Elected Representatives of Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs), were having low knowledge and awareness about Legal aid services. It is essential to organize awareness programmes and capacity building programmes to all Elected Representatives of Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs), to acquire knowledge about Legal aid programmes and their role in particular.

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