A STUDY ON LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR OF HEADS OF PANCHAYAT RAJ INSTITUTIONS FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH SAURASHTRA AGRO-CLIMATIC ZONE OF GUJARAT

A B S T R A C T

Key words: Leadership behaviour, Panchayat Raj institutions, Agricultural development.

The local self-government institutions are expected to plan and implement the programmes for rural, agriculture, horticulture and allied sectors. Heads elected to the various Panchayat Raj institutions are therefore very important because they are not only politically influential, but because they are direct carriers of knowledge of rural & agricultural development programmes and rural people are convinced to a greater extent by them. However, their success and efficiency depends upon the leadership behaviour in taking decisions in favour of farmers and based on the knowledge possessed by them about rural, agriculture development. With this consideration, the problem entitled “A study on leadership behaviour of Heads of Panchayat Raj institutions for agricultural development in South Saurashtra Agro-climatic zone of Gujarat” was undertaken.

A study was conducted in Junagadh and Amreli district of Gujarat state. Four tehsils from Junagadh district and Two tehsils from Amreli district from South Saurashtra Agro-climatic zone were selected purposively. President of district panchayat, Seven Chairmans of various standing committees in district panchayat, Chairman of taluka panchayat and 25 Sarpanch from each tehsil were the respondents for study. Thus from these two districts total of 172 respondents were selected for the study. A multidimensional scale was developed for assessing leadership behaviour of the respondents and they were grouped by developing a leadership behaviour index specially formulated for the study.

In respect to socio-personal characteristics, nearly half of the respondents were from middle age group, 68.60 per cent of them were male representatives, more than half of them were educated up to primary and middle school level and was from joint family with 6-8 family members. Majority (34.30 per cent) were from semi medium land holding category, 28.49 per cent of them were having annual income above two lacs and farming as their major occupation. Almost 70.00 per cent of them were not having any political background. Whereas, regarding social participation (58.72 per cent), trainings undergone (65.12 per cent), extension participation (55.82 per cent), attitude towards agriculture (58.72 per cent), cosmopolitaness (54.65), risk orientation (48.84 per cent) and self confidence (58.14 per cent) majority of them were from the middle categories. The leadership behaviour of the respondents was again assessed
under 9 different dimensions derived for the study. The weightage was derived for each of this dimension from the judges and respondents score was transformed according to weightages derived. In these 9 behavioural dimensions it was observed that, regarding achievement motivation (48.84 per cent), communication skills (43.03 per cent), operational skills (64.54 per cent), decision making skills (51.74 per cent), information behaviour (60.47 per cent), agricultural progressiveness (60.47 per cent), power orientation (69.20 per cent), reporting skills (66.28 per cent) and social insight skills(56.97 per cent ) majority were from medium categories. The index developed for the study revealed that majority (52.90 per cent) were from medium level of leadership behaviour followed by 30.24 per cent and 16.86 per cent of the respondents, who were from high and low level of leadership behaviour, respectively.

The data on knowledge level of the respondents regarding agricultural development revealed that, majority (60.47 per cent) were in medium category of knowledge level. The data on component wise knowledge revealed that majority of respondents were having knowledge regarding package of practices of major crops, followed by 75.58 per cent respondents having knowledge regarding subsidy components of government schemes.

Out of sixteen independent variables, education, land holding, annual income, occupation, trainings undergone, social and extension participation, risk orientation and self confidence were found to have significant correlation with leadership behaviour of the respondents, whereas, regression analysis revealed that education, trainings undergone, extension participation, self confidence and risk orientation were contributing significantly to the leadership behaviour of respondents. Discriminant function analysis revealed that variables, age, education, land holding, risk orientation and self confidence were significantly discriminating male and female respondents, whereas, family type, family size, political background and extension contact were bringing them together. Also it was revealed that although 29.60 per cent of the respondents were female they were like their male counterparts as interpreted by the independent variables. Results of path analysis revealed that extension contact, education, self confidence, risk orientation were having highest direct effects on leadership behaviour whereas, trainings undergone was having highest indirect effect.

The important constraints given by respondents were concerning to the finance and functionary, delay in sanctions, insufficient funds allotted, delay in sanctioning resolutions and lack of trainings related to panchayat raj and information technology (IT) ; In case of suggestion, vacant positions may be filled up, development grants should be increased, trainings should be given on panchayat raj activities and information technology, sufficient administrative powers to be given were the major suggestions given by the respondents. For active involvement and leadership development among panchayat raj representatives capacity building programmes should be arranged considering the areas like soft skills development, rules and regulations, administrative powers and information technology.