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Designation of scheduled castes members in Panchayati Raj institutions and political activism: A sociological study

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Abstract

In this study, a total of 572 members of Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) were randomly selected from the population being studied. Exploratory-cum-descriptive research design was used, and both primary and secondary data sources were utilized. The results of the study show that Panches cast their vote in any election after discussing with one another, while Sarpanches and Block Samiti Members prefer newspapers, TV, radio, and signboards as sources of information to cast their vote in any election. Family background is the most motivating factor for Panches, whereas family background, interest in politics, and local issues worked as motivator factors for Sarpanches, Block Samiti Members, and Zila Parishad Members to fight elections at different levels of PRIs. Maximum Panches are elected on reserved seats such as reserved for women and reserved for scheduled castes. It has been observed that Panches took part in mass movements, while others took part in encamps, strikes, demonstrations, and marches. The results of the study reveal that the father, husband, mother-in-law, father-in-law, and daughter-in-law background of maximum PRIs Members attached them with different political parties. Panches work as party workers, whereas Sarpanches and Block Samiti Members attend political rallies and make posters for their affiliated political parties. Zila Parishad Members attend political rallies, make posters and advertisements for their party, and appeal to vote in favour of their concerned political party.

Keywords: Panchayati Raj institutions, political activism, scheduled castes, dalit, depressed classes, panch, sarpanch, block samiti & zila parishad members

Introduction

India, a secular democracy, is known as an exemplar of a culturally diverse society, evident in its cultural diversity across castes, languages, and regions (Singh, 1996) ^[21]. India's society is intricate and boasts a long legacy of 5000-year-old civilization. Throughout history, individuals of diverse religions, cultures, languages, races, castes, and beliefs migrated to India and helped shape its diversity and richness (Dube, 1967) ^[5]. In recent years, India's society has undergone major changes, especially with the move away from traditional Hindu caste system and religious-philosophical ideologies due to urbanization, industrialization, and socio-economic development. These changes have altered traditional norms and values, leading to a new societal ideal (Srinivas, 1966) ^[25].

Historical Perspective of Scheduled Castes

The term "Dalit" is used to describe the scheduled castes, who suffered from untouchability. Previously referred to as Outcastes, Harijans, Depressed Castes, and Panchams, now they are legally known as Scheduled Castes (Yagati, 2003) ^[4]. M. K. Gandhi used term "Harijans," for Dalits." The term "Harijan" was first used by Narsi Mehata (Oommen, 1994) ^[16]. Dr. Ambedkar first introduced term "Dalit." Today, it is a widely used academic term and gained prominence in the 1970s with the rise of the Dalit Panther Movement (Joshi, 1986) ^[7].

The extent of suffering for Scheduled Castes varies across regions and castes over time. They have faced disabilities, including economic, educational, social, political, and psychological issues, or a combination thereof. Dalits have endured significant inequality and disabilities in their lives. In 1931, the Census of India documented various disabilities among the Scheduled Castes, such as being denied service from clean Brahmins, barbers, water carriers,

tailors, etc., being prohibited from entering Hindu temples, using public amenities like roads, wells, schools, etc., and being forced to pursue undesirable occupations.

Approximately 3000 castes exist in India, with 779 classified as SCs. These castes are further divided into sub-castes (Singh, 1995) [24]. In traditional India, caste was the most critical source of power, based on the idea of purity and pollution (Dumont, 1970) [6] which imposed the practice of untouchability. People in low-caste positions were stigmatized based on the impurities of their work. The power structure in such a society was traditional and descriptive. For a long time, Brahmins held power due to the significance placed on ritual status and knowledge. Later, economically dominant castes took power from Brahmins, as economic power and landholding became more important than ritual status and knowledge. Dalits were positioned at the lowest rung of the societal ladder and encountered disadvantages in employment, learning, socio-cultural and spiritual customs, and governance (Naidu, 2004) [15].

Panchayati Raj in Haryana State

The Balwant Rai Mehta committee was appointed in 1956 after the failure of community development programs (1952), and it emphasized on three-tier Panchayati Raj system so that people's participation enhanced in the development activities and considered a driving force for development and socio-political transformation in rural areas (Malik, 2008) [12]. Between 1966 and 1993, the Punjab Gram Panchayat Act of 1961 underwent nineteen modifications. In 1987, the Haryana version of the act was altered to reserve seats for backward classes members if their population in the gram sabha region was over 2%. The act also mandated the presence of one representative from the backward classes in the Panchayat Samities. In 1994, the 73rd amendment to the constitution led to the establishment of the Haryana Panchayati Raj Act, which re-established the three-tier structure of Panchayati Raj and provided for reserved seats for women, SC's, and backward classes (Malik, 2012) [13].

Political Activism

The concept of a "social system" refers to a group of interconnected units that work together to perform specific roles and functions in a society. Similarly, a political system is defined as a system that carries out political functions within a society. (Almond and Coleman, 1960) [1] the Indian political system has evolved over time and the rural political system has also changed in response to these changes. The Panchayati Raj institutions and the 73rd amendment have played a significant role in promoting democratic decentralization and ensuring people's participation in the decision-making process. However, the implementation of these systems has been uneven, and there are still challenges to overcome in terms of ensuring political representation for marginalized communities and increasing the accountability of elected representatives.

Political Activism serves as a tool for bettering the circumstances of marginalized groups and raising social and political awareness. Activism takes on various forms, ranging from personal conversations to large-scale demonstrations, peaceful to aggressive methods, and gentle appeals to forceful measures. Activism cannot be succinctly defined, thus it has been approached from multiple perspectives (Martin, 2007). Political activism encompasses

a range of actions aimed at bringing about change in political systems, institutions, or policies. This can involve face-to-face discussions, large-scale protests, peaceful or violent acts, and from gentle requests to strong interventions. There is no single definition of activism, as various perspectives exist on what it entails. Political activism can occur both within and outside political parties, and the media can play a significant role in its promotion. Factors that contribute to the growth of political activism include the availability of resources, recruitment efforts, and political orientations, such as interest, efficacy, information, and a general outlook on politics (Nancy, Schlozman, and Verba, 2001) [3].

Review of Literatures

In his book 'Caste in Modern India and Others Essays', Srinivas (1962) [11] analysed the impact of caste on democratic processes in modern India. He discussed the differing views of the elite classes on caste, with some seeking to abolish it through legislation, while others sought to preserve it. Srinivas explored the concepts of Sanskritization and Westernization as social processes of social mobility, with the former within the caste system and the latter outside it. After independence, the democratic system in India, with its reservation policies and protections, improved the status of marginalized groups such as the scheduled castes, tribes, and backward castes. The British introduced the principle of equality before the law, prohibiting caste-based discrimination.

Owen Lynch's (1969) [10] study of the Jatav community, a scheduled caste in Agra, highlights the role of political participation in social mobility. The study found that some wealthy Jatavs, influenced by the Arya Samaj Movement, opened cotton mills and shoe factories and attempted to raise their status by aligning themselves with upper castes. Zelliott notes that the Mahars, a minority presence in almost every village in Maharashtra, have acquired political skills and developed behaviours that have allowed them to participate in the nation's political culture. Historically, the Mahars performed roles like village watchmen and road sweepers, but their touch was considered impure and they had limited interaction with higher castes. With the arrival of British rule, new work opportunities emerged, such as working on docks, railways, roads, and textile mills, leading many Mahars to migrate to cities and strive for education to improve their social status. The significance of their role as village servants declined with the advent of new methods of communication, justice, and government.

Shah (1975) [19] conducted a study on the political awareness and behaviour of SCs and STs towards political activism. In certain primary political activities, such as voting and political involvement, their participation surpasses that of upper castes. The study showed active participation in campaign activities, but a decrease in participation in activities requiring complex procedures. Mohan and his team (1982) carried out a research titled "Leadership Trends among Harijans: A case analysis of three villages in Malwa region of Punjab". The findings suggested that Harijan leaders showed relatively lower political awareness in comparison to non-Harijans, possibly due to their limited exposure to political information from sources such as newspapers, TV, radio, and mobile. Nevertheless, the study acknowledged that the implementation of reservation policies has paved the way for Scheduled Castes leaders to

participate in politics. Hargian Singh (1985) [22] observed that traditional power structure was losing significance in rural areas, with young and educated individuals emerging as leaders in rural politics. Education was found to be a significant factor in determining leadership in rural politics. The study found family background and economic status also helped individuals enter into political life easily. Other factors such as family size and land ownership played a role in acquiring power positions. People from government jobs and business occupations were also successful achieving the elite status.

Singh (1997) [23] noted, previously supporters of the Congress, Dalit of Haryana, were seeking a separate political identity. Before the rise of BSP, they had been searching for an alternative to the Congress, and now saw BSP as their own party. If BSP, which advocates for their cause, could form an alliance with a party that has a strong rural Haryana base, the Dalits in Haryana could become a significant political force. In 2006, Prasad published a paper in Third Concept called "Globalization and Dalits in India" which revealed that Dalits, also known as Scheduled Castes, make up 16.2% of India's population. The author explained that liberalization, globalization, privatization, and information revolution have resulted in a significant decrease in employment opportunities across the government and private sectors. Education is seen as a key tool for social mobility, however, the education system still favours the upper classes with its curriculum, course content, and fees. Prasad suggests that reservations in education and employment in the private sector be put in place. The paper concludes by highlighting the major concern for Dalits is their economic future and security, as economic liberalization offers no benefits for them. In his article, Raj (2013) [18] explores the role of Dalit women as political agents in the state of Kerala, India. He highlights their experiences in leftist radical politics and the ways in which they participated in public actions such as demonstrations and strikes. Despite their active involvement, however, Dalit women remained invisible in the discourse and organizational structure of leftist politics. The author notes that Dalit women have strong bonds with their families, but face patriarchal values within the community. He believes it's important for Dalit women to

establish families that can help them accumulate wealth and social status.

Studies have shown that despite various welfare measures and affirmative action policies, the social and economic status of Scheduled Castes remains low compared to other communities in India. Research on the impact of reservation for Scheduled Castes in India has shown mixed results. While it has enabled access to education, employment and political representation for some, it has also led to backlash and discrimination from other communities. Studies on political participation of Scheduled Castes in India have shown that while reservation has increased their representation in political bodies, actual political empowerment remains limited due to various structural and cultural barriers. Studies on the caste system in India have shown that discrimination and prejudice against Scheduled Castes remains prevalent, affecting their access to resources and opportunities in various domains. These studies provide a nuanced understanding of the socio-economic and political realities faced by Scheduled Castes in India and the impact of various policies aimed at improving their status (Singh, 2012) [13].

Methodology

In brief, methodology serves as a detailed blueprint for conducting research. The present study aims to understand "Designation of Scheduled Castes Members in Panchayati Raj Institutions and Political Activism: A Sociological Study". It follows an exploratory-cum-descriptive research design and information is collected through an interview schedule, observation methods and secondary sources. In Haryana, two constituencies, Sirsa and Ambala reserved for Schedule Castes (Census of India, 2011). A total 572 respondents were randomly selected from the rural area of both the reserved constituencies, including 10% Panches (409 - 220 Male and 189 Females), 20% Sarpanches (69-44 Males and 25 Females), 40% Panchayat Samiti (72 - 42 Males and 30 Females), and 80% Zila Parishad Members (22 - 11 Males and 11 Females) out of a total of 4092 Panches, 345 Sarpanches, 181 Panchayat Samiti Members, and 27 Zila Parishad members.

Results and Discussions

Table 1: Status of PRIs Members and their Source of Information to cast their vote

Type of Members	Information Sources to cast vote							Total
		Newspaper	Radio	Signboard	TV	Discuss with one another	Advertisement	
Panch	O	9	4	13	71	252	60	409
	%	2.2%	1.0%	3.2%	17.4%	61.6%	14.7%	100.0%
Sarpanch	O	9	0	10	16	24	10	69
	%	13.0%	.0%	14.5%	23.2%	34.8%	14.5%	100.0%
Block Samiti Member	O	7	1	6	22	27	9	72
	%	9.7%	1.4%	8.3%	30.6%	37.5%	12.5%	100.0%
Zila Parishad Member	O	7	2	0	4	2	7	22
	%	31.8%	9.1%	.0%	18.2%	9.1%	31.8%	100.0%
Total	O	32	7	29	113	305	86	572
	%	5.6%	1.2%	5.1%	19.8%	53.3%	15.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	105.819 ^a	15	.000

Upon examining the table, it can be observed that the chi-square value obtained is significant at a significance level of 0.05. This is because the calculated value, 105.819, exceeds

the table value for 2 degrees of freedom, which is 24.996, at a significance level of 0.05. Based on this, it can be inferred that Panches communicate with each other about how they

will cast their votes during an election, as a significant correlation has been established between their status and their source of information; whereas Sarpanches and Block Samities Members prefer newspaper, TV, Radio, and

signboard while, Zila Parishad Member prefer the newspaper, radio and advertisement as source of information to cast their vote in any election.

Table 2: Status of PRIs Members and Motivating Factors to fight elections

Status of Member	Factors Motivate to fight election							Total
		Family Background	Political engagement interest	Locale Indicators	Community people upliftment	Consensus of Community Members	All the factors	
Panch	O	201	51	115	13	26	3	409
	%	49.1%	12.5%	28.1%	3.2%	6.4%	.7%	100.0%
Sarpanch	O	24	30	12	2	1	0	69
	%	34.8%	43.5%	17.4%	2.9%	1.4%	.0%	100.0%
Block Samiti Member	O	26	27	14	1	3	1	72
	%	36.1%	37.5%	19.4%	1.4%	4.2%	1.4%	100.0%
Zila Parishad Member	O	9	10	3	0	0	0	22
	%	40.9%	45.5%	13.6%	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
Total	O	260	118	144	16	30	4	572
	%	45.5%	20.6%	25.2%	2.8%	5.2%	.7%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	63.423 ^a	15	.000

The result of the above table showed that for Sarpanches, first three factors namely family background, Political engagement interest and local indicators were reported as motivation for participating in elections. In the case of Block Samities Members, family background and interest in politics were worked as a motivator factors. After these two

factors, local issues were worked as a motivator factors to fight the election for Block Samities Members. Zila Parishad Members contest elections due to their interest in politics. It is also concluded, Panches & Block Samities are elected only on reserved seats while Sarpanches & Zila Parishad members are elected on general also.

Table 3: Status of member of PRIs and sources of information of daily matter of village

Type of member	Different Information Sources of Information									Total
		Himself/herself	People of ward /village	Through personal interaction	Any other methods	The village watchman	All the factors	Party Worker	No Response	
Panch	O	144	57	64	32	7	27	0	78	409
	%	35.2%	13.9%	15.6%	7.8%	1.7%	6.6%	.0%	19.1%	100.0%
Sarpanch	O	19	8	16	4	1	14	0	7	69
	%	27.5%	11.6%	23.2%	5.8%	1.4%	20.3%	.0%	10.1%	100.0%
Block Samiti Member	O	29	8	10	6	0	5	0	14	72
	%	40.3%	11.1%	13.9%	8.3%	.0%	6.9%	.0%	19.4%	100.0%
Zila Parishad Member	O	2	2	1	5	0	2	3	7	22
	%	9.1%	9.1%	4.5%	22.7%	.0%	9.1%	13.6%	31.8%	100.0%
Total	O	194	75	91	47	8	48	3	106	572
	%	33.9%	13.1%	15.9%	8.2%	1.4%	8.4%	.5%	18.5%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	112.012 ^a	40	.000

The study has identified six techniques that are used by PRIs members as sources of information: themselves, people in their ward or village, communication, the village watchman, candidates' workers, and others. The study shows that Panches tend to rely on people in their ward or village watchman and themselves as a source of information for daily matters, while other category of PRIs Members uses all techniques for it. The study also shows that maximum

members of PRIs are involved in decision-making processes, while most Panches are not. Panches tend to attend meetings with husband while Sarpanches, Block Samities and Zila Parishad Members attend meetings alone. Panches do not file objections in ward or village meetings, while Sarpanches, Block Samities and Zila Parishad Members do if they believe a decision is wrong. Panches do not put pressure on their MLA or MP to take action, while Sarpanches and Block Samities Members do.

Table 4: PRIs Members and their response to participate in political activities

Type of member	Response to participate in political activities							Total
	Mass movement	Encompass	Strike	Demonstration	March	NA		
Panch	O	3	10	20	32	11	333	409
	%	0.7%	2.4%	4.9%	7.8%	2.7%	81.4%	100.0%
Sarpanch	O	0	1	6	9	9	44	69
	%	0.0%	1.4%	8.7%	13.0%	13.0%	63.8%	100.0%
Block Samiti Member	O	0	5	4	11	7	45	72
	%	0.0%	6.9%	5.6%	15.3%	9.7%	62.5%	100.0%
Zila Parishad Member	O	0	1	2	4	9	6	22
	%	0.0%	4.5%	9.1%	18.2%	40.9%	27.3%	100.0%
Total	O	3	17	32	56	36	428	572
	%	0.5%	3.0%	5.6%	9.8%	6.3%	74.8%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	82.590 ^a	15	.000

The chi-square value calculated in the experiment is significantly higher than the table value of chi-square for the corresponding degree of freedom and a 5% level of significance. As a result, the hypothesis is not supported by the results of the experiment. We have identified five distinct activities that were undertaken by members of PRIs in the political arena, including mass movements, encompassing activities, strikes, demonstrations, and marches. Based on our observations, Panches tended to participate more frequently in mass movements, whereas other remaining category of PRIs Members were more

involved in encompassing activities, strikes, demonstrations, and marches. It is noteworthy that Block Samities and Zila Parishad members submitted memorandums to higher authorities about social issues, while Sarpanches and Panches did not participate in this activity. The majority of Panches did not participate in hunger strikes, as revealed by the survey. However, maximum Sarpanches, Block Samities, and Zila Parishad Members stated that maximum demands were fulfilled by competent authorities after their involvement in hunger strikes.

Table 5: PRIs Members Status and Take part in different activities

Type of member	Name of the activities of involvement of respondents								Total
	Registration of voters	Take the people in the election booth	To distribute the pamphlets	Go to take part in party office or others	Take part in nearest Political activities	Involved in all activities	No Response		
Panch	O	95	213	16	17	16	35	17	409
	%	23.2%	52.1%	3.9%	4.2%	3.9%	8.6%	4.2%	100.0%
Sarpanch	O	14	20	4	5	2	21	3	69
	%	20.3%	29.0%	5.8%	7.2%	2.9%	30.4%	4.3%	100.0%
Block Samiti Member	O	30	15	1	5	2	19	0	72
	%	41.7%	20.8%	1.4%	6.9%	2.8%	26.4%	.0%	100.0%
Zila Parishad Member	O	7	4	0	1	0	10	0	22
	%	31.8%	18.2%	.0%	4.5%	.0%	45.5%	.0%	100.0%
Total	O	146	252	21	28	20	85	20	572
	%	25.5%	44.1%	3.7%	4.9%	3.5%	14.9%	3.5%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	83.149 ^a	18	.000

The study identified five activities that were done by the PRIs members in the political field before the election time, such as registering voters, transporting people to the polling booth, participating in party offices, and participating in nearby activities. It was observed that Panches participated in the election at the booth level and went to nearby places for political activities. On the other hand, Sarpanches, Block Samities, and Zila Parishad Members participated in all the

aforementioned activities during the election or before the election, such as registering voters, providing transportation for people to reach the polling booth, participating in party offices, and participating in nearby political activities. Therefore, it was noted that the majority of PRIs members participated in activities during the election or before the election, such as booth-level activities and voter registration.

Table 6: Status of member of PRIs and campaigns to other candidates in election

Type of member	Response regarding to campaigns for other candidates in election			Total
		Yes	No	
Panch	O	188	221	409
	%	46.0%	54.0%	100.0%
Sarpanch	O	42	27	69
	%	60.9%	39.1%	100.0%
Block Samiti Member	O	51	21	72
	%	70.8%	29.2%	100.0%
Zila Parishad Member	O	18	4	22
	%	81.8%	18.2%	100.0%
Total	O	299	273	572
	%	52.3%	47.7%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	26.205 ^a	3	.000

The table shows that the calculated chi-square value of 26.205 is significant at the 0.05 level of significance, as it is greater than the table value of 7.819 for 3 degrees of freedom. The statistics indicate that members of Sarpanch, Block Samities, and Zila Parishad participated in other candidate's campaigns, while most Panches did not. The result of the study show that general caste members have been reported as torturing Panches, and people of upper

castes do not visit their homes when they are called. In contrast, Sarpanches, Block Samities, and Zila Parishad members report that general caste members do not torture them and people of higher castes visit their homes when they are called. Additionally, the survey found that Panches meet with MPs or MLAs once every six months, while Sarpanches, Block Samities, and Zila Parishad members meet with them weekly or monthly.

Table 7: PRIs Member Status and response attachment with Dalit organisation

Type of member		Attach with Dalit organisation		Total
		Yes	No	
Panch	O	81	328	409
	%	19.8%	80.2%	100.0%
Sarpanch	O	24	45	69
	%	34.8%	65.2%	100.0%
Block Samiti Member	O	24	48	72
	%	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
Zila Parishad Member	O	11	11	22
	%	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Total	O	140	432	572
	%	24.5%	75.5%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	19.603 ^a	3	.000

Fieldwork showed that most Panches were not affiliated with any Dalit Organizations, while a majority of Sarpanches, Block Samities, and Zila Parishad members were affiliated with Dalit Organizations in various capacities. Panches stated that marches or demonstrations by organizations did not increase political consciousness among SC people. However, Sarpanches, Block Samities, and Zila Parishad members disagreed and argued that marches and demonstrations by organizations do help

increase consciousness among SC people. The data collected in the field confirms that most Panches are not in favour of Dalit Organizations and their involvement in political activities, while most Sarpanches, Block Samities, and Zila Parishad members are in favour of it and believe that Dalit Organizations should participate in political activities or campaigns in order to increase political activism among SC people.

Table 8: PRIs Member Status and their relationship with political party

Type of member		Family members whom affiliated with political party								Total
		Respondents Father	Respondents Husband	Respondents Wife	Respondents Son	Mother-in law	Father-in law	Daughter-in law	Uncle	
Panch	O	135	102	35	2	45	2	17	71	409
	%	33.0%	24.9%	8.6%	0.5%	11.0%	0.5%	4.2%	17.4%	100.0%
Sarpanch	O	24	17	4	3	4	0	2	15	69
	%	34.8%	24.6%	5.8%	4.3%	5.8%	0.0%	2.9%	21.7%	100.0%
Block Samiti Member	O	24	19	6	3	3	0	1	16	72
	%	33.3%	26.4%	8.3%	4.2%	4.2%	0.0%	1.4%	22.2%	100.0%
Zila Parishad Member	O	5	7	0	1	6	0	0	3	22
	%	22.7%	31.8%	0.0%	4.5%	27.3%	0.0%	0.0%	13.6%	100.0%
Total	O	188	145	45	9	58	2	20	105	572
	%	32.9%	25.3%	7.9%	1.6%	10.1%	0.3%	3.5%	18.4%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	29.378 ^a	21	.105

The table shows that a majority of Panches' father, husband, mother-in-law, father-in-law, and daughter-in-law are affiliated with different political parties. Sarpanches' father, son, and uncle are affiliated with political parties. Block Samities Members' father, husband, wife, son, and uncle are also affiliated with political parties. Zila Parishad Members' husband, son, and mother-in-law are also affiliated with political parties. The results of the study indicate that Panches work for political parties as party workers, while Sarpanches and Block Samities Members attend political rallies and make posters for their affiliated political parties. Zila Parishad Members attend political rallies, make posters, advertise for the party, and appeal to people to vote for their affiliated political party.

Table 9: PRIs Members Status and their involvement to distribute Party literature

Type of member	Views of Respondents regarding distribution of Party Literature				Total
		Yes	No	NA	
Panch	O	224	134	51	409
	%	54.8%	32.8%	12.5%	100.0%
Sarpanch	O	49	11	9	69
	%	71.0%	15.9%	13.0%	100.0%
Block Samiti Member	O	54	15	3	72
	%	75.0%	20.8%	4.2%	100.0%
Zila Parishad Member	O	20	1	1	22
	%	90.9%	4.5%	4.5%	100.0%
Total	O	347	161	64	572
	%	60.7%	28.1%	11.2%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	26.641 ^a	6	.000

We can conclude that there is a significant relationship between the status of members of PRIs and their views on distributing party literature. The table shows that Panches do not show interest in distributing political party literature, while Sarpanches, Block Samities, and Zila Parishad members are fully involved in distributing their respective political party's literature among the people. The survey data shows that Panches do not donate money to their political party, while Sarpanches, Block Samities, and Zila Parishad members do donate money to their respective political party. Additionally, the survey found that a majority of Panches do not attend meetings of their political party, while a majority of Sarpanches, Block Samities, and Zila Parishad members attend public meetings of their respective political parties as required."

Conclusion

The result of the study shows that Panches cast their vote in any election after discussing with one another, while Sarpanches and Block Samities Members prefer to use newspapers, TV, radio, and signboards as sources of information when casting their vote. Family background is the most motivating factor for Panches in participating in elections, while family background, interest in politics, and local issues motivate other members of PRIs to participate in elections. The majority of Panches are elected to reserved

seats for women and scheduled castes. Panches take part in mass movements, while other remaining PRIs Members participate in protests, strikes, demonstrations, and marches. Panches did not take part in hunger strikes as their counterparts did. Maximum Sarpanches, Block Samities, and Zila Parishad Members stated that their maximum demands were fulfilled by the competent authority after their involvement in hunger strikes. It was observed that Panches only take part in elections at the booth level, while other remaining Members of PRIs take part in all political activities before and during elections. Panches reported that they were tortured by General Castes people after becoming members of PRIs, while Sarpanches, Block Samities, and Zila Parishad Members did not experience this. Panches do not attach themselves to any Dalit Organizations, while Sarpanches, Block Samities, and Zila Parishad Members do. Panches said that demonstrations by Dalit Organizations do not enhance political consciousness among SCs, while Sarpanches, Block Samities, and Zila Parishad Members believe that they do. Panches said that Dalit Organizations should not take part in political campaigns, while Sarpanches, Block Samities, and Zila Parishad Members disagreed and argued that they should. The study also revealed that Panches, Sarpanches, and Block Samities Members work as party workers and attend rallies and make posters for their political party. Zila Parishad Members attend rallies, make posters and advertisements for the party, and appeal for people to vote for their political party. Panches do not distribute party literature, donate money, or take part in party meetings, while Sarpanches, Block Samities, and Zila Parishad Members do all these things.

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