

Effectiveness of Capacity Building and Training Programmes: Perceptions of Elected Representatives of Gram Panchayats of Hoshiarpur District of Punjab (India)

Ashwani Kumar,

Ph. D Research Scholar,

Department of Public Administration,

Punjabi University, Patiala.

Email: maniryf@gmail.com

Introduction:

After the Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, Panchayats became an institution of self-governance and got a legal status. It became mandatory for regular elections of these bodies with a term of five years and during five years these institutions have to play a significant role in the social and economic development of their areas. Therefore, it is necessary that the elected representatives (henceforth ERs) should be educated and aware about the programmes and schemes of various development departments as most of the elected representatives are likely to be first timer elected and it is not expected that they may be much aware about Panchayati raj system. Therefore, capacity building and training of all stakeholders of PRIs is required on the priority basis. As soon as, they built capacity and get training in the field of panchayat raj system, they will become effective in discharging their responsibility. "Thus, the utmost importance has been put for giving training programs by Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) through State Institutes of Rural Development (SIRDs) throughout the country."*

The present paper is focused on Hoshiarpur district of Doaba region in the state of Punjab which is situated at the foot hills of Shivalik Range with River Beas and Sutlej flowing North and South of it respectively. It is predominantly covered by *choes*, *nallahs* and *beins* at large number of places. A major portion of Hoshiarpur District lies on the left side of river Beas. It shares common boundaries with Kangra and Una districts of Himachal Pardesh in the north east, Jalandhar and Kapurthala districts (interspersed) in south-west and Gurdaspur district in the north-west. It has an area of 3386 sq. km. and a population as per 2011 Census of 15,86,625. The district comprises of five sub/divisions (Tehsils), Ten Development Block and Seven Municipal councils and two Nagar Panchayats. It has Municipal Corporation also.† This Hoshiarpur district was chosen from *Doaba* Region of Punjab as it had maximum number of Panchayats in the *Doaba* region.

Research Methodology

For the present study, primary data was collected through Interview Schedule Method. A sample of 200 Elected Representatives of Gram Panchayats from General, SCs, BCs and Women members' categories were analyzed. The data was collected from 25 Gram Panchayats of each selected blocks (Talwara and Dasuya) of Hoshiarpur district on the convenience basis. These ERs of Gram Panchayats were elected for the term of 2019-2024. An attempt has been made to understand the effectiveness of capacity building and training programmes of panchayati raj which were conducted at block levels. These training programmes were conducted by SIRD, Punjab for building capacity of elected representatives of Gram Panchayats.

* Report on "Evaluation of Training Programmes of PRIs in the State of Punjab," CRRID, Chandigarh, p.1

† <https://hoshiarpur.nic.in> accessed on 15/03/2024 at 2.30pm.

Profile of the Elected Representatives of Gram Panchayats:

The socio-economic background of the respondents would influence their efficiency in discharging the responsibilities like implementing welfare schemes at grass-roots level. In the profile of the Elected Representatives of Gram Panchayats, some variables like gender, category, position in the Gram Panchayats and educational qualifications were examined.

Table 1.1
Gender-wise categorization of respondents

Gender	No. of Respondents
Male	106 (53%)
Female	94 (47%)
Transgender	00
Total	200 (100%)

Source: Primary data

Table no. 1.1 shows the percentage of gender of respondents in the study. Total numbers of respondents were 200 in this study. Fifty three per cent of respondents were male whereas forty seven per cent of the respondents were female. However, there was no respondent belonging to transgender category. Punjab is one of the states in the country to give 50% reservation for the women leaders in panchayat elections. So, the number of female respondents was taken nearly half in the study.

Table 1.2
Category wise distribution of respondents

Category	No. of Respondents
General	73 (36.5%)
SC	69 (34.5%)
OBC	58 (29%)
Other	00
Total	200 (100%)

Source: Primary data

Table No. 1.2 deals with caste wise distribution of respondents. 36.5% respondents represents general category. 34.5% respondents were related with Scheduled Castes (SCs) and 29% respondents were related with Other Backward Classes (BCs) in the study.

Table 1.3
Position in Gram Panchayat

Position	No. of Respondents
Sarpanch	40 (20%)
Panch	160 (80%)
Total	200 (100%)

Source: Primary data

Table no. 1.3 reveals that high percentage 80 per cent respondents were panches and 20 per cent respondents were Sarpanches in the present study.

Table 1.4
Educational qualifications of Respondents

Educational Qualification	No. of Respondents
Post-graduate	04 (02%)
Graduate	14 (07%)
Secondary	27 (13.5%)
Matric	95 (47.5%)
Middle	31 (15.5%)
Primary	27 (13.5%)
Literate	08 (04%)
Total	200 (100%)

Source: Primary data

Table no. 1.4 shows the educational level of respondents in the study. 47.5 percent respondents had passed matric and 13.5 percent out of total respondents had passed secondary level. Further, the analysis reveals that only 15.5 percent and 13.5 percent respondents had passed middle and primary level classes. The data reveals that only a small percent (07%) were Graduates and only 02 percent was highly qualified with Masters and professional degree who was elected as a Sarpanch of Gram Panchayats. There were only 04 percent respondents who were only literate but they did not have any school certificate.

Education is one of the most significant instruments for change in the attitude and mind set of people. Training outcome depends on the level of education of the trainees. Thus, the educational level of respondents is very conducive to absorb the contents of training methods, and other information related to Panchayati Raj Institutions more easily and implement it at grass-roots level.

Table 1.5
ERs elected from...

Particulars	No. of Respondents
General Ward	76 (38%)
Woman Seat	21 (10.5%)
SC Woman	37(18.5%)
BC (Backward Class)	35 (17.5%)
SCs	31 (15.5%)
Total	200 (100%)

Source: Primary data

Above table no. 1.5 indicates that 38 percent respondents were elected from General ward and 10.5 percent respondents were elected on seats reserved only for Women. There were 18.5 percent and 17.5 percent respondents were elected on seats reserved for SC Women and OBC categories respectively. On the other side, 15.5 percent respondents were elected on SCs seats. This indicates a fair representation to different groups of seats which were reserved for different ward categories in the Gram Panchayats.

Table 1.6
Term of the Elected Representatives of Gram Panchayats

Term	No. of Respondents
1 st	171 (85.5%)
2 nd	25 (12.5%)
3 rd	03 (1.5%)
4 th	01 (0.5%)
Total	200 (100%)

The above table shows that a high majority (85.5 percent) of respondents were elected in Gram Panchayats for their first term and some (12.5%) were elected in Gram Panchayats for second term. Only 1.5 percent respondents were elected in Gram Panchayats for third time and only one respondent was elected fourth time in Gram Panchayat. It can be concluded that first-timers ERs were in majority and that highlights the crucial need for training them.

Table 2.0
Were Gram Panchayat meetings held in your village?

Particulars	No. of Respondents
Yes	200 (100%)
No	00 (00)
Total	200 (100%)

Source: Primary data

Table 3.0
It is held on:

Particulars	No. of Respondents
Monthly basis	68 (34%)
After three months	68 (34%)
After six months	41 (20.5%)
On special occasion	23 (11.5%)
Total	200 (100%)

Source: Primary data

Table No. 2.0 indicates that all respondents said that meetings of Gram Panchayats were held in their villages in Hoshiarpur district. In the table no. 3.0 further shows that equal percent of respondents told that meeting of Gram Panchayat was held every month and after three months in their respective villages. Only 20.5 percent respondents admitted that meetings of Gram Panchayat were held after six months. On the other hand, rest of (11.5 percent) respondents said that meetings of Gram Panchayat were held on special occasion only.

Table 4.0
Do you participate in meetings of Gram Panchayat regularly?

Particulars	No. of Respondents
Yes	114 (43.5%)
No	16 (6.5%)
Rarely	70 (50%)
Total	200 (100%)

Source: Primary data

The above table no. 4.0 shows that less than half (43.5%) respondents said that they had attended meetings of Gram Panchayats regularly since they got elected as representatives of Gram Panchayats. 50 percent respondents said that they had attended Gram Panchayat's meeting rarely. Rest of (6.5%) respondents said that they did not attend any meeting of Gram Panchayats. On the whole, the scene is not very encouraging.

During informal discussion, it was found that the Panchayat Secretary of GPs did not convey messages regarding meeting of Gram Panchayats to some elected members. Some of them, said that due to domestic obligations they had attended meetings of Gram Panchayats rarely.

Table 5.0
Do you know about the functioning of Gram Panchayat?

Particulars	No. of Respondents
Yes	91 (45.5%)
To a large extent	19 (9.5%)
To some extent only	76 (38.0%)
No	14 (7.0%)
Total	200 (100%)

Source: Primary data

Table No. 5.0 reveals that nearly half of respondents said that they fully knew about the functioning of Gram Panchayats and only 9.5 percent reported that to a large extent. On the other hand, 38 percent respondents said that they were aware about the functioning of Gram Panchayats to some extent only and 7 percent respondents admitted that they were not aware about functioning of Gram Panchayats. As per provision of the Punjab Panchayati Raj Act, 1994 Gram Panchayat has a basic responsibility for doing social and economic development of their areas and residents. Therefore, Elected Representatives of Gram Panchayats must know about functioning of Gram Panchayats and role and responsibilities of Gram Sabha also. The above findings are disappointing in this regard because more than half of respondent's response was negative.

Table 6.0
Did you attend any training after your election in Panchayat?

Particulars	No. of Respondents
Yes	200(100%)
No	00 (00)
Total	200 (100%)

Source: Primary data

It was asked from each respondent if he or she attended training programme conducted by SIRD, Punjab. The table no. 6.0 shows that all respondents attended training programme after getting elected as representative of Gram Panchayat. It was good to note this.

Table 7.0
Where was training programme conducted?

Particulars	No. of Respondents
Zila Parshid level	06 (03)
Block Samiti level	194 (97)
Gram Panchayat level	00 (00)
Total	200 (100%)

Source: Primary data

Training is key for the successful implementation of any development programmes and welfare schemes at grass-roots level. High majority respondents reported that they attended training programme at block headquarters level only 03 percent respondents attended training programmes at Zila Parshid level/District level. During informal discussion, respondents stated that they have faced many difficulties due to semi hilly areas to attend block level training programmes which were held in allotted city. They suggested that training programmes should be held at the villages by making clusters of ten to fifteen villages.

Table 8.0
Arrangement during training programmes

Q.	Particulars	Very Good	Good	Not Good
1.	How was sitting arrangement during training programme?	62 (31%)	130 (65%)	08 (04%)
2.	What was the arrangement of snacks and food?	53 (26.5%)	135 (67.5%)	12 (06%)

Source: Primary data

Table no. 8.0 indicates responses about arrangement of sitting, snacks and food during training programmes. Majority of respondents reported that sitting arrangements were good at the training venue and 31 percent respondents reported very good sitting arrangements provided during training programs by office of Block Development and Panchayats in their respective blocks. Only few respondents (04%) reported sitting arrangement was not proper during training programmes.

In each training programme, tea, snacks and lunch etc. are to be given to the participants. It was asked from each respondent that how was the arrangement of snacks and food during training programme. Data presented in Table no. 8.0 shows that majority of (67.5%) respondents found arrangement of snacks and food good during training programmes. However, 26.5 percent found this arrangement as very good. On the other hand, 06 percent respondents reported that the arrangement of food and snacks was not good. During informal discussion, they told that tea was served during lectures and the quality of food as well as the arrangement for serving food during lunch time were not satisfactory.

Table 9.0
How many Resource Persons/Trainers were from SIRD?

Particulars	No. of Respondents
Three	05 (2.5%)
Two	145 (72.5%)
Only One	50 (25%)
Total	200 (100%)

Source: Primary data

The role of Resource Persons/Trainers is the key for success of any training programme. Table no. 9.0 shows that majority (72.5 percent) respondents reported that two resource persons/trainers were from SIRD while only 2.5 percent said that three resource persons/trainers came from SIRD. On the other hand, 25 percent reported that only one resource person/trainer came from SIRD.

Table 10.0
Are you satisfied with Resource Person/trainer's content delivery?

Particulars	No. of Respondents
Satisfied	37 (18.5%)
To a large extent	107 (53.5%)
To some extent only	15 (7.5%)
Not satisfied	41 (20.5%)
Total	200 (100%)

Source: Primary data

Table no. 10.0 indicates that more than half participants were satisfied to a large extent while 18.5 percent participants were fully satisfied with content delivery by resource persons/trainers who were deployed by SIRD Punjab. It is necessary that for better understanding of the rules and regulations of PRIs, there must be discussion on every important related topic in which the trainees can ask questions regarding their doubts. The data indicates that 72% (53.5+18.5) trainees were satisfied with the content delivery of resource persons/trainers.

On the other hand, 20 percent trainees reported that they were not satisfied and rest of 7.5 percent respondents reported that they were satisfied to some extent only with content delivery by resource persons/trainers in the training programmes.

Table No. 11.0
What was the Mode of training? (More than one option can be given)

Particulars	No. of Respondents (200)
Lecture Method	200 (100%)
Power Point Presentation	40 (20%)
Audio/Video aids	50 (25%)
Exposure visits/field visits/best practices	00
Flow charts	00
Case studies/story telling	20 (10%)
Role play to make it more interactive	00
Group Discussions	90 (45%)
Brainstorming	00
Online Mode Training	20 (10%)

Source: Primary data

Table No. 11.0 indicates various modes of training which were used by trainers/resource persons in capacity building and training programmes for ERs at block level in Hoshiarpur district. In this question the respondents could select more than one option.

All respondents in the study reported that lecture method was used by trainers/resource persons during training programme. Twenty percent respondents reported that trainers used power-point presentation and many respondents complained that there was no projector installed at the training venue. Twenty five percent respondents told that trainers used audio/video method for delivering contents in the training programme.

No respondents replied regarding the modes of training i.e. exposure visits/best practices, flow chart, role play and brainstorming. It means these modes of training were not used in the training programmes at all. There are many Gram Panchayats in Punjab which are known with their best practices in the different thematic areas like water, sanitation, women and child development, social justice, good local governance etc. and it is sad if these are not discussed in the training programmes. Forty five percent respondents reported that trainers/resource persons used group discussions method in the training programme.

Only ten percent of respondents reported that trainers/resource persons used Online Mode Training during the Covid-19 period, otherwise there is no training programme conducted through online mode for ERs of Panchayats.

Table 12.0
In which time registration was done?

Particulars	No. of Respondents
09:30am to 10:30am	120 (60%)
10:31am to 11:30am	60 (30%)
11:31am to 12:00pm	20 (10%)
After Lunch Break	00 (00)
Total	200 (100%)

Source: Primary data

Table no. 12.0 indicates timing of registration during training programme at block level. Sixty percent respondents told that they reached on time at venue of training and got registered for training programme between 9:30 to 10:30am. Less than half (30%) respondents told that they got registered after 10:30am. Only ten percent told that they got registered in training between 11:30am to 12:00 pm and rest of respondents told that they got registered after lunch break in the training programme.

Table 13.0
Do you get all the information regarding govt. schemes on time?

Particulars	No. of Respondents
Yes	38 (19%)
No	82 (41%)
Rarely	56 (28%)
After long time	24 (12%)
Total	200 (100%)

Source: Primary data

Table no. 13.0 shows that only 19 percent respondents revealed that they received information regarding govt. schemes by office of BDPO and other line departments in time. Forty one percent respondents replied that they did not receive timely information regarding govt. welfare schemes from concerned departments. Twenty eight percent respondents complained that they received information rarely and rest of the respondents said that they received information

after a long time regarding govt. schemes and any other information related to PRIs. It presents a disappointing picture.

Table 14.0
Why did you attend training programme?

Particulars	No. of Respondents
To gain knowledge about PRIs	80 (40%)
Due to order of BDPO	57 (28.5%)
Due to an invitation letter	31 (16.5%)
Motivated by Peer Group	32 (16%)
Total	200 (100%)

Source: Primary data

In the above table, respondents were asked why did they attend the training programme and from whom they got message regarding to attend it. Data shows that 40 percent respondents replied that they attended training programme to gain knowledge about functioning, powers, rules and regulations and schemes related to Panchayati Raj Institutions. 28.5 percent respondents replied that they attended training due to a message/call from BDPO office directly. Other 16.5 percent respondents replied that Panchayat Secretary invited them with an invitation letter to attend training programme. Only 16 percent respondents replied that their peer group motivated them to attend the training programme.

During informal discussion, it was found that some respondents complained that they had received a message regarding training programmes on the spot by concerned Panchayat Secretary.

Table 15.0
Why training is required for Elected Representatives of Gram Panchayats?

Particulars	No. of Respondents
Capacity Building of first timers	90 (45%)
Effective management of Rural development Programmes	50 (25%)
For maintaining record in proper way	00 (00)
For implementation of Govt. Schemes	18 (09%)
All	42 (21%)

Source: Primary data

Table no. 15.0 shows that training is required to strengthen Sarpanches and Panches of Gram Panchayats. Training is necessary because without awareness, elected representatives of Panchayats cannot work properly.

Near half (45 percent) respondents said that training is important for building capacity of newly elected representatives of Gram Panchayats. 25 percent respondents admitted that training is required for effective management of rural development programmes for social and economic development of any village while only 9 percent respondents admitted that training is important for implementation of Govt. schemes at grassroots level. Apart from that, 21 percent respondents admitted that all training is required in all components i.e. capacity building of first timers, effective management of rural development programmes, for management of Panchayat record in proper way and implementation of govt. schemes at grass roots level for welfare of people.

Conclusion:

Training is very important to build the capacity of elected representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions. In the present empirical study, 200 Elected Representatives of Gram Panchayats were interviewed from two blocks (Talwara and Dasuya) of Hoshiarpur district in Doaba region of Punjab State. During data collection, elected representatives of Gram Panchayats gave full co-operation. They suggested that venue of training should be approachable; training contents should be updated and provided in simple language; training venue should be equipped with proper arrangements and ICT enabled and field visits must be arranged in other best performing Gram Panchayats.