

Figure 12: Education vs. level of participations

Does education influence decisions making?

Education is such a powerful parameter, which is necessary for any value judgments, any political participation or any decision making. Because decision power effected by the educational level of the member. Better understanding of rules, regulations and procedures of the panchayats and the various schemes are equally important for the women members to take proper decision at the panchayat level and these understanding from education. Fig 12 indicates that, 21 percent illiterate member involve in decision making where as half (51 percent) of them are educated up to primary level, where as 18 per cent were found to be secondary and only 3 percent are graduate. It clearly indicates that the participation of respondents with below secondary education tends to be more in a decentralized democracy. It is an accepted fact that the overall educational status of female is quite low in all the GP.

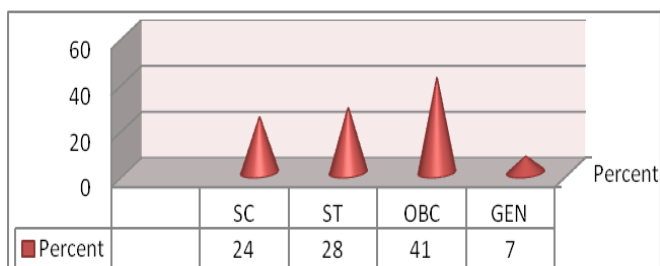


Figure 13: Nature of involvement in decisions making according to caste

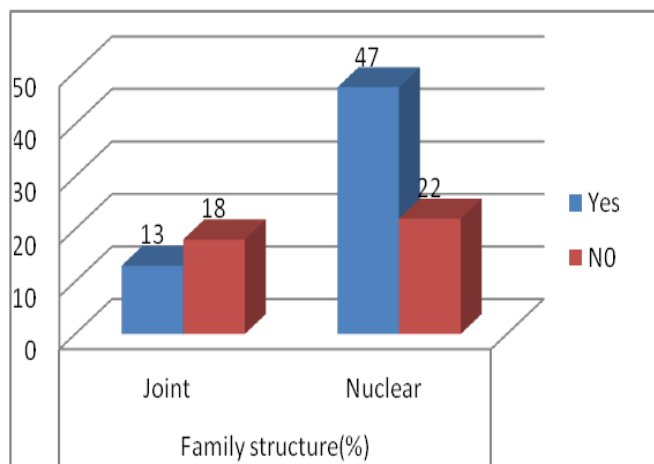


Figure 14: Family structure influencing in taking decisions

Does family structure influence decisions making?

Family is vital parameter for measuring social background of the leaders and type of family influence nature of women’s to handling issues independently because it build up one’s attitude, preference pattern and political outlook. It indicates the class in which the leader belongs to. Both parameter nature of issues handling and family type connect each other so there is an analysis of these parameter in this study. Above fig. 13 and 14 reveals that in joint family 13 percent EWR handle issues self and other 18 percent work with the support of other and same as nuclear family 47 percent work self and other 22 percent of nuclear family member work with the help of other. Hence it clearly indicate nuclear family member work self as compare to joint family because in joint family there are lot of social constraint.

4. Conclusion

The result of the above study shows that the reservation for women can be an important impetus to women’s empowerment in India in village level but it is not a guarantee for participation of the elected women. The goal of women’s empowerment cannot be accomplished only by giving reservation, the other social and demographic factors also influencing the EWR to participate and work actively in local self governance. To expedite and speed up this process it is essential to implement some supplementary policies which encourage the self-confidence of women, build their negotiation skills and remove operational obstacles in their participation and decision making. On the basis of the present study it cannot be stated that women are categorically empowered but also it cannot be denied that they have gained a certain extent of authority and confidence as a direct outcome of the women reservation in Gram panchayat.

5. Recommendations

In the light of the above study following specific recommendations can be made for the empowerment of women through their effective participation in political processes:

1. **Setting up Panchayat Resource Centres (Help-desk):** Panchayat Resource Centers in every block can be set up which can create awareness of the common people and PRI functionaries on developmental issues. This resource center should also be used as a help desk to the EWR for getting relevant information, all the Govt. circulars translated in local language and other relevant information so that the women functionaries can read it.
2. **Radio and other media as a tool for awareness creation and feedback:** A 15 minute radio programme in the local language should be broadcast every week, covering subjects like the role of panchayats in providing basic services and their monitoring, planning and budgeting, identification and verification of the BPL list, micro planning, domestic violence, legal provisions relating to the rights and protection of women, social practices and their impact on women. At the end of each programme, a dedicated telephone line can be allowed so that listeners can call with their queries. Besides that media both print as well as electronic can play an important role in creating awareness in the rural society. It can act as an agent of political socialization for inculcating the values of gender equality and gender justice
3. **Exposure visits and expansion of training:** Exposure visit to WER to the panchayats where women Sarpanch are doing good work can be visited so that they should get encouragement to do good work. Studies on women in politics have emphasized that contact with outside world makes women more alert and also active in the political process. There could be two ways of doing it. Firstly, interaction between enlightened rural women and illiterate elected one's should be encouraged. Secondly, these women could be taken out to the urban areas also and their interaction with educated urban elected women representatives be arranged.
4. **Attitudinal Change:** It is evident that men's attitude towards women's entry into politics has begun to change from that of total rejection to limited encouragement and in some cases even to active encouragement. This trend needs to be strengthened through orientation courses and training programmes for officials and elected representatives, both men and women. Besides there is a need to train the women leaders at regular intervals to enable them to manage the responsibilities assigned to them in the Panchayats at all the levels.
5. **Women Organisation:** The women should also be encouraged to organize themselves. The Mahila Mandals, Self Help Group in the village can be effective instruments to mobilize them for this purpose. Some successful women's organisations can also act as catalytic agents for encouraging the women's participation in social and political activities. The Government should provide finances and infrastructure to some of the deserving and successful women organizations to take up the responsibility of encouraging the women elected representatives. The leaders of women's movement in the country could also take up this task. They too can provide support to sensitize the rural women.
6. **Incentives:** Incentives play an imperative role in ensuring the participation of elected representatives in decision-making. It has been noticed that there are

certain very active and enlightened women leaders at all the levels of Panchayats, who have been successfully implementing the developmental schemes and have ensured overall development of their constituencies. Such leaders need to be encouraged by publicizing their leadership qualities and honoring them in public meetings. It will certainly encourage other women representatives and their success stories and good practices will get replicated.

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