

**EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN
IN DECENTRALISED GOVERNANCE: A STUDY
IN ANANTAPUR DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH**

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE
UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD

FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

By

SATHARLA NAGABHUSHANA RAO



**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD
HYDERABAD – 500 046**

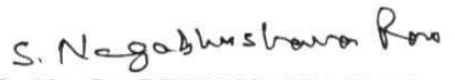
DECEMBER
2003

DEDICATED TO
MY PARENTS

**S. CHINNA VEERANNA
J. SUGUNAMMA**

DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled **Empowerment of Women in Decentralised Governance: A Study in Anantapur District of Andhra Pradesh** written by me under the guidance of Professor **P. Manikyamba**, Department of Political Science, University of Hyderabad, for the award of degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science**, is the original work and it has not been submitted previously in part or full to this or any other University for the award of any degree or diploma.


S. NAGABHUSHANA RAO
Department of Political Science
University of Hyderabad
Hyderabad – 500 046

Hyderabad
Date: 24/12/03

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled **Empowerment of women in Decentralised Governance: A Study in Anantapur District of Andhra Pradesh** submitted by Satharla Nagabhushana Rao, for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** in the Department of Political Science is a bonafide record of research done by him under my supervision and that it had not formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or other similar title.

Hyderabad

Date: 31-12-63

P. Manikyamba
P. MANIKYAMBA

(Supervisor)
PROFESSOR

Department of Political Science
University of Hyderabad
Hyderabad-500 046

S. J. ...
Head

Department of Political Science
University of Hyderabad
Hyderabad. - 500 046

HEAD

Department of Political Science

N. ...

DEAN

School of Social Sciences
University of Hyderabad
Hyderabad - 500 046
India

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is my primary responsibility to record my deepest sense of gratitude to **Professor P. Manikyamba**, Department of Political Science, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, for her most encouraging and patient supervision of the thesis. Over the entire period of research during which the present work was conducted, she ungrudgingly extended all sorts of assistance, inspiration and guidance at all stages of this investigation in spite of her heavy official pre-occupations. This work could not have been completed but for her constant cooperation and guidance.

My great thanks are to **Dr. A. V. S. Reddy**, former Director General, National Institute of Rural Development, Hyderabad for his constant encouragement and words of wisdom and sanctioning of study leave, which helped for the completion of this study. My great thanks to **Shri. Lalit Mathur**, Director General, National Institute of Rural Development for constant motivation to complete this study. It goes without saying that research in NIRD for the past one-decade has influenced me and my thinking. I owe almost all of my humble achievements to NIRD.

I am also thankful to Sri **Mathew C. Kunnumkul**, Deputy Director General for his valuable suggestions, which have been a constant source of inspiration for completing this task with ease and confidence.

I am also thankful to **Smt. Veda Kumari**, FM & FA, for her constant encouragement and for valuable suggestions. My thanks also to **Shri G. V. V. Sharma**, Registrar & Director, (Admn) for his suggestions, support and motivation.

I am fortunate enough to have a teacher like **Dr. O. N. Srivastava** as my Director, who has been so inspiring, so demanding and yet so caring. I also thank **K. Hanumantha Rao**, Director, Research Cell, for constant inspiration and motivation. It is my pleasant duty to express my sincerest thanks to my senior colleagues, Dr. B. Bhattacharya, Dr. S. Venkatadri, Dr. A. K. Jaiswal, Dr. A. P. Purandare, and Dr. P. K. Das, Faculty of the Centre for Natural Resource Management, National Institute of Rural Development for the continuous motivation and invaluable assistance, suggestions and constructive criticism in various stages of this work. I also implore my earnest gratefulness with profound regard to Dr. R. Gangadhar Reddy, Faculty member, Centre for Panchayati Raj and Dr. Aneesuddin, Faculty member, Centre for Behavioural and Organisational Development, National Institute of Rural Development, for their prompt and practical suggestions during various stages of this study.

I am grateful to Sri **Jonna Suryanarayana**, Chairman, Zilla Parishad, Anantapur district for his constant cooperation during my fieldwork in the district. I express my heart felt thanks to the respondents (ZPTC Members, MPPs, MPTC Members and Sarpanches of Gram Panchayats for their help and for their patience answering during interview and also for their hospitality. I also thank all the staff members, especially Shri. K. Rajendra Prasad, of Zilla Parishad, Anantapur district for their help in contacting the women respondents.

My heartfelt thanks are to Smt **P. Shamanthakamani**, Ex - Minister, Government of Andhra Pradesh for her help in every stage of my current research. I also thank Shri **B. Ashok** who shared pleasant moments and painful process of field visits to the Mandals and Villages in the District.

I thank Jayashree for analysing the data in SPSS. Thankfully, I like to mention the active cooperation of A. Prem Kumar and G. Srinivas in CNRM, faculty of NIRD and V. Madhav Rao, Director I/C, Geomatics Cell of NIRD and the library staff of NIRD for their help in collecting material for this study.

The acknowledgement remains incomplete if I don't offer heartiest thanks to my wife, **Dr. B. Anitha Bala** and my son **S. Rohit Raj** for their forbearance and sacrifice during the entire course of the study.

* * *

List of Tables

			P. No
Chapter – III	–	Political Status of Women	
3.1		Women’s Representation in Parliament 1952 - 1998	57
Chapter – V	-	Socio – economic and Political Background of Respondents	
5.1		Age – Wise Distribution of Respondents	111
5.2		Caste – Wise Distribution of Respondents	112
5.3		Educational Qualifications of Respondents	114
5.4		Primary Occupation of Respondents	117
5.5		Economic Status of Respondents	119
5.6		Political Experience of Respondents	121
5.7		Party Affiliation of Respondents	123
5.8		Experience in Social Service	125
5.9		Chief Factor Elevating to the Presented Position	127
Chapter - VI	-	Awareness & Perceptions	
6.1		Chief Source of Awareness of Panchayati Raj & 73 rd Constitutional Amendment	137
6.2		Awareness about Rural Development Programmes	140
6.3		Awareness about Rural Development Programmes for Women	144
6.4		Women’s Perceptions about Men’s Feelings on Women Entering PRIs	148
6.5		Perceptions about Women’s Entry into Panchayats	151
6.6		Perceptions about Husband’s Attitude towards Wife's Entry into PRIs	154
6.7		Perceptions Regarding Obstacles for Women to Enter Politics	156
6.8		Perceptions about Women’s Leadership at Grassroots Level	158
6.9		Perceptions about Constraints to Women’s Leadership at Panchayat Level	160
6.10		Perceptions about Factors Contributing to Women’s Leadership at Panchayat Level	163
6.11		Perceptions about Reservation for Women in Panchayats	166
6.12		Perceptions about Women’s Empowerment through Reservation in PRIs	168

Chapter - VII - Participation

7.1	Participation in Initiating Proposals for Rural Development in PRIs	-	175
7.2	Participation in Discussions in Panchayats	-	176
7.3	Decision – Making Criteria In Panchayati Raj	-	178
7.4	Participation in Decision - Making	-	180
7.5	Role in Decision - Making	-	181
7.6	Participation in RD Programmes for Women	-	183
7.7	Obstacles for Participation of Women in Implementation of RD Programmes	-	185
7.8	Mobilising People for Participation in RD Programmes	-	187
7.9	Rural Development Activities of Women Members	-	188
7.10	Performance Satisfaction in Panchayati Raj	-	189
7.11	Suggestions to Improve Participation in Panchayats	-	191

* * *

List of Maps

1. Andhra Pradesh State in India
2. Anantapur District in Andhra Pradesh
3. Location of Study Area and Mandals in Anantapur District

Abbreviations

BJP	-	Bharatiya Janata Party
CPI	-	Communist Party of India
CPI (M)	-	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
DWACRA	-	Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas
GAD	-	Gender and Development
GPSs	-	Gram Panchayat Sarpanches
IAY	-	Indira Aawas Yojana
INC	-	Indian National Congress
IRDp	-	Integrated Rural Development Programme
JRY	-	Jawahar Rojgar Yojana
JGSY	-	Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana
MPPs	-	Mandal Panchayat Presidents
MPTCMs	-	Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members
NIRD	-	National Institute of Rural Development
ODI	-	Oversees Development Institute
PR	-	Panchayati Raj
PRIs	-	Panchayati Raj Institutions
SGSY	-	Swarna Jayanthi Gram Swarozgar Yojana
SGRY	-	Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana
TDP	-	Telugu Desam Party
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
WID	-	Women in Development
ZPTCMs	-	Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members

* * *

CONTENTS

Chapter – 1	- Introduction	Page. No.
		1 - 14
1.1	The Problem	
1.2	Importance of the Study	
1.3	Focus of Inquiry	
1.4	Scope of the Study	
1.5	Objectives	
1.6	Indicators	
1.7	Study Area	
1.8	Methodology	
1.9	Sample	
1.10	Limitations of the Study	
1.11	Pilot Study	
1.12	Chapterisation	
Chapter – II	- Empowerment, Decentralisation and Governance: The Conceptual Context	15 - 46
2.1.	Empowerment	
2.2	Empowerment and Development	
2.3	Empowerment of Women in Development	
2.4	Women's Empowerment Framework	
2.5	Political Participation and Empowerment Process	
2.6	Women's Empowerment in Panchayati Raj Context	
2.7	Decentralisation	
2.8	Decentralisation, Delegation, Deconcentration and Devolution	
2.9	Fesler's Approach to Decentralisation	
2.10	Leonard's Definition of Decentralisation	
2.11	Democratic Decentralisation	
2.12	Decentralisation in Indian Context	
2.13	Objectives of Decentralisation in Indian Context	
2.14	B R Mehta Committee's Approach Towards Democratic Decentralisation	
2.15	Evolution of Panchayati Raj	
2.16	Governance	
2.17	From Government to Governance	
2.18	Global Governance	
2.19	Good Governance	
2.20	Good Governance and Indian Democracy	
2.21	Good Governance in India's Context	

- 2.22 Good Governance in Panchayati Raj Context
- 2.23 Good Governance and 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act – 1993
- 2.24 Good Governance and Andhra Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act - 1994
- 2.25 Impediments to Good Governance in Panchayati Raj in Andhra Pradesh

Chapter – III – Political Status of Women

47 - 71

- 3.1 Political Status of Women - Global Perspective
- 3.2 UN Conferences on Status of Women
- 3.3 Women's Representation in Parliaments - Global Perspective
- 3.4 Women' Political Leadership – Global Scenario
- 3.5 Political Status of Women - India
- 3.6 Women's Representation in Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies
- 3.7 Women's Status in Local Governments
- 3.8 Status of Women in Panchayati Raj after Independence
- 3.9 B R Mehta Committee Report (1957)
- 3.10 Ashok Mehta Committee Report (1978)
- 3.11 L. M. Singhvi Committee Report (1989)
- 3.12 64th Constitutional Amendment
- 3.13 Committee on Status of Women (1974)
- 3.14 National Perspective Plan (1988)
- 3.15 Status of Women in Panchayats in Different States
- 3.16 National Commission on Women
- 3.17 Status of Women in 73rd Constitutional Amendment
- 3.18 Panchayati Raj in Andhra Pradesh
- 3.19 Post 73rd Constitutional Amendment Developments

Chapter – IV - Review of Literature

72 - 108

- 5.1 Age
- 5.2 Caste
- 5.3 Educational Qualifications
- 5.4 Primary Occupation
- 5.5 Economic Status
- 5.6 Political Experience
- 5.7 Party Affiliation
- 5.8 Experience in Social Service
- 5.9 Chief Factor Elevating to the Presented Position
- 5.10 Marital Status
- 5.11 Two Child Policy

- 6.1 Awareness about Panchayati Raj
- 6.2 Awareness about Rural Development Programmes
- 6.3 Awareness about Rural Development Programmes for Women
- 6.4 Women's Perceptions about Men's Feelings on Women Entering PRIs
- 6.5 Perceptions about Women's Entry into Panchayats
- 6.6 Perceptions about Husband's Attitude towards Wife's Entry into PRIs
- 6.7 Perceptions Regarding Obstacles for Women to Enter Politics
- 6.8 Perceptions about Women's Leadership at Grassroots Level
- 6.9 Perceptions about Constraints to Women's Leadership at Panchayat Level
- 6.10 Perceptions about Factors Contributing to Women's Leadership at Panchayat Level
- 6.11 Perceptions about Reservation for Women in Panchayats
- 6.12 Perceptions about Women's Empowerment through Reservation in PRIs.

- 7.1 Participation in Initiating Proposals for Rural Development in PRIs
- 7.2 Participation in Discussions in Panchayats
- 7.3 Decision – Making Criteria In Panchayati Raj
- 7.4 Participation in Decision - Making
- 7.5 Role in Decision - Making
- 7.6 Participation in RD Programmes for Women

- 7.7 Obstacles for Participation of Women in Implementation of RD Programmes
- 7.8 Mobilising People for Participation in RD Programmes
- 7.9 Rural Development Activities of Women Members
- 7.10 Performance Satisfaction in Panchayati Raj
- 7.11 Suggestions to Improve Participation in Panchayats

Chapter - VIII - Relationships

194 - 213

AGE vs AWARENESS

- 8.1 Age vs Chief Source of Awareness About Panchayati Raj
- 8.2 Age vs Awareness About RD Programmes
- 8.3 Age vs Awareness About RD Programmes for Women

AGE vs PERCEPTIONS

- 8.4 Age vs Perception About Obstacles for Women to Enter in Politics
- 8.5 Age vs Perception About Women's Leadership at Grassroots level
- 8.6 Age vs Perception About Constraints to Women's Leadership at Panchayat level
- 8.7 Age vs Perception About Contributing Factors to Women's Leadership at Panchayat level
- 8.8 Age vs Perceptions About Reservation for Women in Panchayats
- 8.9 Age vs Perceptions About Women's Empowerment through Reservation in PRIs

AGE vs PARTICIPATION

- 8.10 Age vs Participation in Initiating Proposals for Rural Development
- 8.11 Age vs Participation in Discussion in Panchayats
- 8.12 Age vs Decision Making Criteria in Panchayats
- 8.13 Age vs Role in Decision Making
- 8.14 Age vs Participation in RD Programmes for Women
- 8.15 Age vs Mobilising People for Participation in Implementation of RD Programmes
- 8.16 Age vs Performance Satisfaction in Panchayati Raj

CASTE vs AWARENESS

- 8.17 Caste vs Chief Source of Awareness About Panchayati Raj
- 8.18 Caste vs Awareness About RD Programmes
- 8.19 Caste vs Awareness About RD Programmes for Women

CASTE vs PERCEPTIONS

- 8.20 Caste vs Perceptions About Obstacles for Women to Enter Politics
- 8.21 Caste vs Perceptions About Women's Leadership at Grassroots level
- 8.22 Caste vs Perceptions about Constraints to Women's Leadership at Panchayat level
- 8.23 Caste vs Perceptions About Factors Contributing to Women's Leadership at Panchayat level.
- 8.24 Caste vs Perceptions About Reservation for Women in Panchayats
- 8.25 Caste vs Perceptions About Women's Empowerment through Rerservation in PRIs

CASTE vs PARTICIPATION

- 8.26 Caste vs Participation in Initiating Proposals for Rural Development
- 8.27 Caste vs Participation in Discussion in Panchayats
- 8.28 Caste vs Decision Making Criteria in Panchayati Raj
- 8.29 Caste vs Role in Decision Making
- 8.30 Caste vs Participation in RD Programmes for Women
- 8.31 Caste vs Mobilising People for Participation in Rural Development Programmes
- 8.32 Caste vs Performance Satisfaction in Panchayati Raj

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS vs AWARENESS

- 8.33 Educational Qualifications vs Chief Source of Awareness About Panchayati Raj
- 8.34 Educational Qualifications vs Awareness About Rural Development Programmes
- 8.35 Educational Qualifications vs Awareness About Rural Development Programmes for Women

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS vs PERCEPTIONS

- 8.36 Educational Qualifications vs Perceptions About Obstacles for Women to Enter Politics
- 8.37 Educational Qualifications vs Perceptions About Women's Leadership at Grassroots level
- 8.38 Educational Qualifications vs Perceptions About Constraints to Women's Leadership at Panchayat Level
- 8.39 Educational Qualifications vs Perceptions About Factors Contributing to Women's Leadership at Panchayat Level
- 8.40 Educational Qualifications vs Perceptions About Reservation for Women in Panchayats
- 8.41 Educational Qualifications vs Perceptions About Women's Empowerment through Reservation in PRIs

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS vs PARTICIPATION

- 8.42 Educational Qualifications vs Participation in Initiating Proposals for Rural Development
- 8.43 Educational Qualifications vs Participation in Discussion in Panchayats
- 8.44 Educational Qualifications vs Decision Making Criteria in Panchayati Raj
- 8.45 Educational Qualifications vs Role in Decision Making
- 8.46 Educational Qualifications vs Participation in RD Programmes for Women
- 8.47 Educational Qualifications vs Mobilising People for Participation in RD Programmes
- 8.48 Educational Qualifications vs Performance Satisfaction in Panchayati Raj

Chapter - IX	-	Summary and Conclusion	214 - 237
Bibliography	-		238 - 249
Appendices	-		250 - 259
Annexures	-		260 - 274

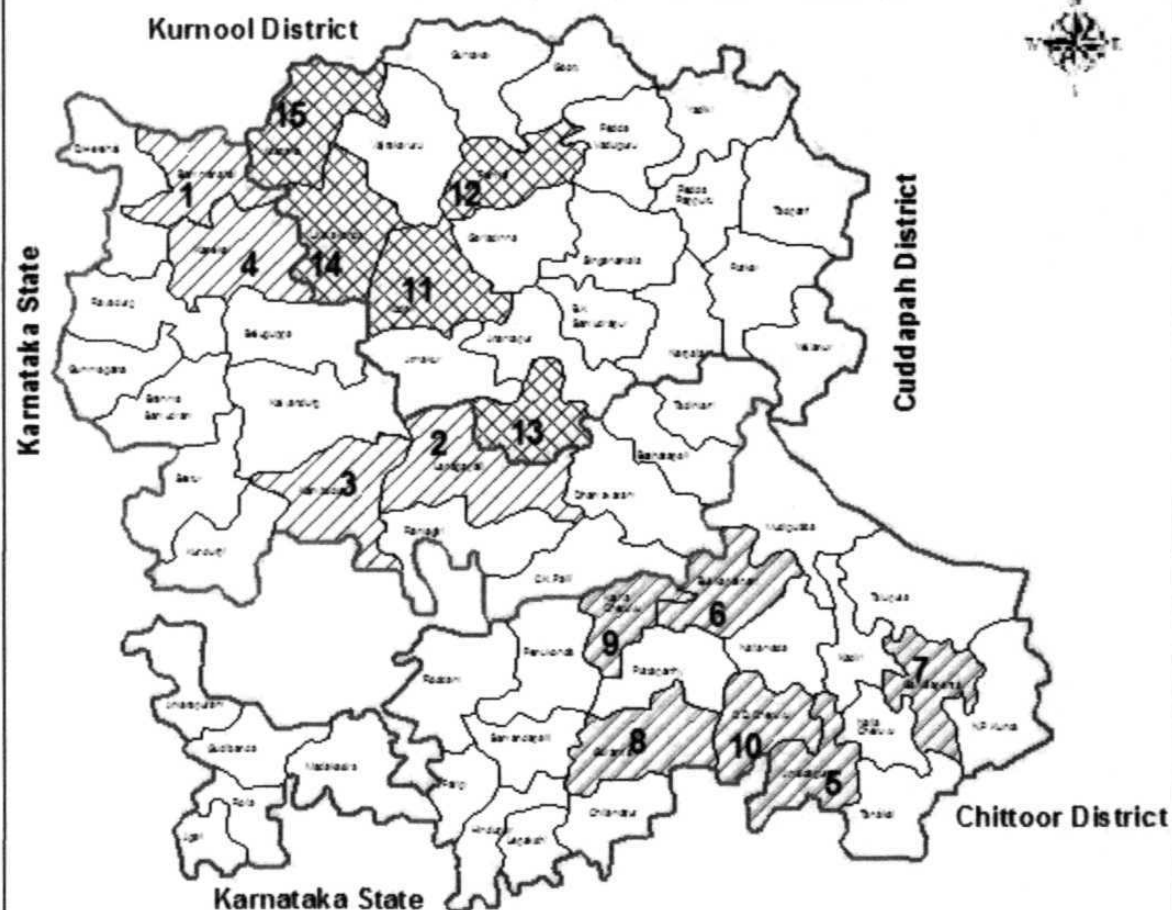
ANDHRA PRADESH STATE IN INDIA



ANANTAPUR DISTRICT IN ANDHRA PRADESH



ANANTAPUR DISTRICT



Dharmavaram Division

1. Bommanahal
2. C. K. Palli
3. Kambadur
4. Kanekal

Penukonda Division

5. Amadaguru
6. Bukkapatnam
7. Gandlapenta
8. Gorantla
9. Kothachervu
10. O.O.Chervu

Anantapur Division

11. Kudair
12. Pamidi
13. Raptadu
14. Uravakonda
15. Vidapanakal

Chapter – 1

Introduction

1.1 The Problem

Women in the world constitute nearly half of the total population but they still remain a minority community in public life. As rightly pointed out by Urmila Yadav, this difference of gender can be seen in all spheres of life viz. social, economic and political. In politics, women in general play submissive and marginal roles.¹ Similar is the opinion of Jain who says, 'only a small minority of women holds the elected office'.² During 1980s, women accounted only 10 per cent of the world's parliamentarians and less than 4 percent of national cabinets. In 1993, only six countries had women as heads of government.³ Many researchers attributed the low level of political participation by women to their subordinate social and economic positions in societies.

The United Nations, declaring the period between 1976 and 86 as the 'Decade for Women Development', observes that 'Women form two-thirds of the world's work. receive 10 percent of the world's income and one percent of the means of production. Thus, women are the largest excluded category. The UN Report on women observes "the scales of world's equality are out of balance. The side marked 'women' is weighed down with responsibility, while the side marked 'men' rides high with power. Tilting first women must do all domestic work, the scales are tipped further by men's greater opportunities to earn wages. Advantage builds on advantage until today, they are tilted so steeply that almost all of the world's wealth is on men's side, while most of the work is on women's.'"⁴

Women participate inadequately in employment and women's earnings are less than half those of men. Both Developed and Developing countries exclude women from political participation and productive work. As Marilee Karl says, "women are poorly

represented in the ranks of power, policy and decision – making. Women make up less than 5 per cent of the world's heads of State, heads of major corporations and top positions in international organizations. Women are not just behind in political and managerial equity, they are a long way behind. This is, in spite of the fact that women are found in large numbers in low-level positions of public administrations, political parties, trade unions and businesses".⁵

In developing countries women continue to face a variety of cultural, institutional and legal constraints that circumscribe women's involvement in their respective societies and that limit their participation in government. The limited presence of women in political processes has generated doubts about how to identify and integrate women's social and economic needs and priorities in the process of development. Women play a significant role in rural economy but there are no efforts to take into account their concern and skill while designing and implementing rural development programmes.

The long-term goal of social equity and participation of women requires increased political empowerment of women. Political empowerment, in the present context, is acquisition of the capacity as well as the adoption of needed strategies by women in order to exercise their powers more effectively and profitably for their own development and the development of the society. As Mahatma Gandhi rightly said 'as long as women of India do not take part in public life, there is no salvation for the country'.

1.2 **Importance of the Study**

Indian environment is predominantly rural. Even today, more than 70 per cent people live in rural areas. The focus on rural development started with the realisation of the fact that the rural sector is less developed economically, socially and politically and

needed special attention of the government. The Community Development Programme was launched in 1952 covering the entire nation. Later on, the institutional arrangements were made. This institutional arrangement is known as Panchayati Raj. Panchayati Raj is assigned the task of uplifting the weaker sections, which include women. But when the system was introduced, few women contested or got elected. If the women are not elected, they are coopted. So the participation of women had been minimal or negligible. In the light of this minimal representation, the Committee on the Status of Women recommended for representation of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions by means of reservation. This is provided by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. It should be noted that equality in all spheres is inseparable from active political participation and the national development is more effective if every citizen, irrespective of being a man or woman, has an equal share in all activities.

Political empowerment of women in rural India has assumed considerable significance in contemporary times. This is because of the passing of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, which is the result of the efforts of Indian women's movement. This is a historic step of far-reaching implications and has significant impact on the political processes in rural India. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment is considered as the 'greatest event' for women's empowerment and a milestone in bringing women into participation in political process. The importance of the amendment is that it brought the women mainly the underprivileged women into governance giving scope for them to take part in political and developmental affairs at local level, which is the very foundation of the democratic structure of the country. The amendment is particular that women should find representation in rural political institutions in the capacity of chairpersons as well as

members. Care is taken to provide representation to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Castes Women at all three levels in Panchayati Raj Institutions.⁶ Women have been provided access to power sharing, co-decision making and co-policy making at Panchayat level. This gives women an opportunity to influence decision-making process, planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of Rural Development Programmes and to integrate them into the political system.

India is considered as the first country to recognise the social fact of social engineering i.e., giving women an opportunity to participate in adequate numbers in Panchayati Raj Institutions. This is intended to be done by taking concrete measures to draw women into leadership positions and thereby into politics by giving them one-third reservation in the third tier of governance i.e., the Panchayati Raj.

1.3 **Focus of Inquiry**

The role of women in PR Institutions has been receiving increasing attention of the political scientists in contemporary social research. It has remained unexplored, as a subject of academic investigation, for a long time. The decisions of the rural local governments have a profound influence on problems concerning women and women's effective participation in the local bodies will facilitate solving of the problems. The focus of the present study is on political empowerment of women in decentralized governance.

1.4 **Scope of the Study**

As noted above, the role of women in PRIs is less explored as subject of academic investigation. The present study is intended to identify the type of women entering these bodies, their awareness of PR and RD Programmes, perceptions and nature and the extent

of their participation. It is also concerned about identifying the impact of the participation of women in decision-making and influence on the environment.

1.5 Objectives

The present study is undertaken to examine the

- (1) Socio - economic and political background of the women ZPTCMs / MPPs / MPTCMs and GPSs.
- (2) Awareness levels of women PR members regarding powers and functions and Rural Development Programmes.
- (3) Perceptions of women members of Panchayati Raj Institutions.
- (4) Participation of women in decision – making in Panchyati Raj Institutions and Rural Development Programmes and
- (5) To suggest measures for effective role performance of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions.

1.6 Indicators

Keeping in view, the objectives of the study as well as the discussions made in the theoretical framework, the indicators and variables to be studied have been prepared. In order to study the socio-economic background, age, marital status, caste, educational qualifications, economic status, family background, experience in politics and social service and activities at grassroots level are identified as the indicators.

Source of awareness about Panchayati Raj, awareness about Rural Development Programmes in general and awareness about development programmes meant for rural women are taken as the chief indicators for assessing awareness levels of the respondents. Perceptions regarding entry of women into Panchayati Raj Institutions, women's response

to women entering in PRIs, men's response to women's entry into local bodies, empowerment of women, obstacles to women entering politics and constraints to women leadership have been chosen as the indicators for studying the perceptions of women members of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Participation in discussion, participation in decision-making and participation in the implementation of Rural Development Programmes, especially those meant for women are the main selected indicators for assessing the performance of women respondents in the sample. The suggestions of women relating to mobilising people for participation in Rural Development Programmes, building effective women's leadership in rural political process in particular, and political process in general, 'male members' role in increasing participation of women in panchayats, reservation to women in Panchayati Raj Institutions, impact of caste politics on women's participation and impact of factional politics in women's participation have been obtained. The role performance in the implementation of Rural Development Programmes and in the Panchayati Raj Institutions is also analysed.

1.7 Study Area

The Anantapur district is chosen for study. Ananthapur District lies between 13'-40' and 15'-15' Northern Latitude and 76'-50' and 78'-30' Eastern Longitude. It is bounded by Bellary and Kurnool Districts on the North, Cuddapah and Kolar District of Karnataka on the Southeast and the North. The District is roughly oblong in shape, the longer side running North to South with a portion of Chitradurg District of Karnataka State intruding into it from west between Kundurpi mandalam and Amarapuram Mandalam.⁷

Anantapur district is the largest district in the state of Andhra Pradesh with a geographical area of 19,130 sq km and a population of 36.89 lakhs.⁸ The district falls in the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh. The other two regions being Coastal and Telangana. In terms of development, Rayalaseema occupies the third place. The first and second places go to Coastal and Telangana regions respectively. Within the region of Rayalaseema, Anantapur district occupies the last place regarding development.

Historically, Anantapur district has been a perpetually drought prone area. The district is also less developed socially and economically when compared with the other districts – Kurnool, Cuddapah and Chittoor in Rayalaseema region and also in contrast with the two other principal regions – Coastal and Telangana.

It was predicted that the Anantapur district becomes a desert by 2020. The sign of becoming desert also appeared in some Mandals of the district. The district is without vegetation with meager forest coverage i.e., three percent. This is also considered as a forest because it is thorny and bushy. Due to low rainfall, the district experiences annual drought. A large number of people from rural area migrate to the neighboring districts like Kurnool, Chittoor, and to cities like Bangalore and Hyderabad. Due to poverty and annual drought, the district is referred as ‘Anantha Poor’ i.e., unending poverty.

The presence of the district is felt in national politics. The former President of India, Mr. Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy hails from this district. Mr Reddy started his political career as rural leader and rose to the highest position in the country. Mr Reddy had full faith in rural leadership and during his tenure as the first Chief Minister of the state, Panchayat Raj System in the state was introduced. (The states of Rajasthan and Andhra

Pradesh are among the first to introduce Panchayati Raj system in the country in the year 1959). Another important political personality hailing from this district is Tarimela Nagi Reddy.

The district is known for having population with political consciousness and factional politics leading to serious untoward incidents. The political crime rate is reported to be increasing in the district. There have been frequently happening incidents of naxalite activities in the district. The pressures emanating from such activities have led to forced resignations of representatives, forced vacating of representatives from their villages and even murders and kidnaps. Factional politics and criminalisation of politics have been a source of insecurity for women in their social and economic activities. Such a situation will provide greater hurdles for women's involvement in political process.

With the above in the background, the empowerment of women in decentralised governance in the district of Anantapur is proposed to be studied.

1.8 Methodology

Systematic methodology is the key to success of any research project, as it has direct bearing on relevance of research findings. It is therefore essential to adopt some pattern of standard procedure in research studies. The present study is based on both primary and secondary sources. The method adopted for the study is essentially empirical. The primary data was collected by means of field survey. A comprehensive schedule is canvassed to seek information from the respondent's i.e., women Z.P.T.C.Ms (Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members), women M.P.Ps (Mandal Panchayat Presidents), M.P.T.C.Ms (Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members) and

women G.P.Ss (Gram Panchayat Sarpanches). Simple statistical technique is adopted wherever necessary.

1.9 Sample

The aim of choosing sample is to get from it an idea of the characteristics of the whole of the parent universe. Careful selection of sample helps testing of the hypothesis. If nothing is known about a population of a universe, random sampling could be adopted. In the context of present study, the women representative's names, places of residence and the roles assumed are identified initially. Thus, a representative sample of the universe is proposed to be selected.

The sample for the present study consists of 220 women representatives from PRIs drawn from the 'three' divisions of Anantapur district. The divisions are (i) Anantapur, (ii) Dharmavaram and (iii) Penukonda.

The 'three' stage sampling is adopted for the study. The respondents are drawn from three levels i.e., district, mandal and village. It is necessary to point that the sample consists of directly elected women representatives as well as ex-officio women representatives. The women elected from Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituencies, Mandal Parishad Territorial Constituencies and Sarpanches of Gram Panchayat are directly elected women representatives. The women Mandal Panchayat Presidents and women Sarpanches of Gram Panchayats are the respondents who are ex-officio representatives in the present context. To give details, the women Sarpanches are members of Mandal Paraja Parishad in their ex-officio capacity. Similarly MPPs are members of Zilla Parishad in their ex-officio capacity.

At the district level, among the 20 women Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members, 18 ZPTCMs representing three divisions were interviewed. Among 18 Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members, 5 are from Anantapur division, 6 are from Dharamavaram division and 7 from Penukonda division.

As regards choosing the sample at Mandal level, it is to be mentioned that the Mandals chosen are those where the Mandal Panchayats are headed by women. In Anantapur division 5 Mandals out of 20 were selected. In Dharamavaram division out of 17 mandals 4 are selected. In Penukonda division 6 out of 26 mandals are selected.

The number of selected women Sarpanches is 120. They are chosen from all the three divisions. The sample also consists of 67 women representatives elected from Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituencies. In brief, the sample consists of 18 Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members, 15 Chairpersons of Mandal Praja Parishads, 67 Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members and 120 Gram Panchayat Sarpanches, all women.

1.10 **Limitations of Study**

The findings and conclusion flowing from the study are conditioned by some limitations. The limitations in general, are related to time, cost and manpower. Establishing rapport with the respondents has been time consuming. The initial contacts have to be made through officials, local heads, and family members of the respondents. The unwillingness of the husband to give permission to women representatives has been a glaring obstacle. Frequent visits to the residence of the respondents have to be made on account of their non-availability on many occasions. The husband was insisting that he should be interviewed and not his wife, who is elected. The researcher has experienced the

suspicion of the respondents who thought that he is probably an inquiry agent of the government. The fear from the naxalities that they may be taken to task is another deterrent. Travelling to the interior parts of the district is associated with pleasure as well as pain.

1.11 Pilot Study

A pilot study is useful for purposeful research. Hence a pilot study was undertaken in Ananthapur division of Anantapur district during the January to March of 1999. The Pilot study provided good insights into information of locality and information in respect of indicators. Besides interviews, informal discussions have also been held with the respondents.

1.12 Chapterisation

The study is organised into nine chapters. The introductory chapter, which is also the First Chapter, deals with the problem, objectives, scope and methodology relating to the study. In the Second Chapter, a detailed discussion on the concepts of empowerment, decentralisation and governance is made. The need for women's involvement in the process of Panchayati Raj is also dealt with. The Third Chapter deals with the political status of women in general and that of women in Panchayati Raj in particular. The Fourth Chapter is devoted to review of the available literature on women in PRIs. The literature relating to women in PRIs in as many states as possible is analysed to assess the status of women in PRIs in general.

The background of individuals would have considerable influence and impact on their roles. Hence, a study of the socio-economic background of the respondents is made in the Fifth Chapter. Role performance and awareness levels are closely related. Hence an

attempt is made to assess the awareness levels of the respondents in the Sixth Chapter. Role performance is also associated with perceptions. The Sixth Chapter also gives details of the perceptions of the respondents relating to women PR members' about men's feelings on entering of women in PRIs, women's perceptions about women entering in PRIs and perception of husband's attitude towards wife's entry into Panchayati Raj. The perceptions about obstacles for women to enter politics, women leadership at grassroots level, constraints to women's leadership, factors that make women as good leaders, reservation for women in panchayats and about women's empowerment have also been detailed in this chapter.

Role assignment obtains meaning only when the role incumbents participate in the institutions they are members. The participation of the respondents in the processes of deliberation and decision making are detailed in the Seventh Chapter. The chapter also deals with their initiation in proposals for Rural Development, performance satisfaction, and suggestions to improve their participation in PRIs. The relationships are necessary to know the empowerment process. The Eighth Chapter deals with relationships between independent variables of age, caste and educational qualifications and dependent variables of awareness, perception and participation. The ninth and concluding chapter gives a summary of the study and findings. An attempt is also made to suggest measures for the effective participation and performance of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions.

References

-
- 1 Yadav, Urmila (1997), 'Women in Indian Politics: A Study of Their Participation in Democratic Process', in Virender Grover (ed.). *Foundations of Political System And Sociological Aspects*, Deep & Deep Publications, New Delhi, p. 677.
 - 2 Jain L. C. (1989), '*Grass Without Roots*', Sage Publications, New Delhi, p. 197.
 - 3 *United Nations Human Development Report* (1993) Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 25.
 - 4 Ibid.
 - 5 Marilee Karl (1995) *Women and Empowerment: Participation and Decision Making*, Zed Books Ltd, London & New Jersey, p. 6.
 - 6 Mathew George (2002) 'Panchayati Raj and Food Security: Opportunities for Women's Participation' in Pradeep Chaturvedi (ed.). *Women and Food Security: Role of Panchayats*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, pp 31 - 32.
 - 7 Government of Andhra Pradesh, (2002) 'Handbook of Anantapur District 2001 – 02' (Provisional), Chief Planning Office, Anantapur, p. 1.
 - 8 Ibid.

* * *

Chapter – II

Empowerment, Decentralisation & Governance: The Conceptual Context

The development thinking in 1990s is increasingly focusing on empowering women, decentralisation and governance. The empowering need of women arises due to the fact that women are not equal participants in socio-economic and political spheres. Women's participation in political process, especially in decision making, is more important because all social problems are in one way or the other are related to political decisions. As Prasad and Sushma note, 'the gender gap is greater in the area of decision – making and thus deprives women of enjoyment of rights and responsibilities as citizens and excludes their perspectives and interests from policymaking and decision making'.¹

Empowerment of women has become a debated issue worldwide. Empowerment approach has emerged from Third World Women's Movement² and emerged as one of the top global agendas in the United Nations Human Development Report.³ The present Study is related to the empowerment of women in decentralised governance. Hence it is important to have a clear understanding of empowerment, decentralisation and governance. The following discussion would focus on these concepts.

2.1 **Empowerment**

Empowerment is described by scholars in different situations with different meanings. According to Webster's New World Dictionary (1982), empowerment is a process by which 'power is gained, developed, seized, facilitated or given'. This means that individual or group moves from relative powerlessness to relative power through empowerment process. This empowerment is the state of possessing or controlling power, being able to act or prevent action. In this sense, empowerment (holding power) is the product of the process. Empowerment concept includes process and product dimensions.

The relationship between process and product dimensions is very important. The effective action on behalf of self (whether individual or collective) is essential to the notion of empowerment process and product. This means an ongoing capacity of individuals or groups to act on their own behalf to achieve a greater measure of control over their lives and destinies.

The Social Work Dictionary (Barker, 1991) defines empowerment as "the process of helping a group or community to achieve political influence or relevant legal authority".⁴ Swift (1984) characterises empowerment as an antithesis of paternalism.⁵ Rappaport (1981) characterises it with the key theme of being the participation of people in their own empowerment.⁶

Mayer (1984) describes empowerment as building community capacity, which involves in enhancing the aptitude of community groups to procure and manage social and economic resources.⁷ This implies a focus on developing resources and skills necessary for individuals and communities to exert authority and power.

Bandura (1986) defines empowerment as the process through which individuals gain efficacy.⁸ This means the degree an individual perceives that he or she controls his or her environment.

As regards empowerment of women, the empowerment approach is initiated at international workshop on feminist ideology and structures in the first half of the decade for women, organised by the Asian and Pacific Centre for Women and Development in Bangkok in 1979. In this workshop, two long-term feminist goals were formulated to liberate women from oppression and discrimination in all spheres and at all levels of society.⁹ These are freedom from oppression which involves equity, freedom of choice,

and to women to control their own lives within and outside home and (ii) removal of all forms of inequity and oppression by creating just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.

The workshop defined power beyond positions of public life of women and defined power in 'four' elements. These are (i) a sense of internal strength and confidence to face life, (ii) right to determine choices in life, (iii) ability to influence social processes that affect women lives, and (iv) influence on the direction of social change. The workshop emphasized on women's say at the personal level of gender relations in family and in public and social life.¹⁰

The above definitions refer to empowerment as a process where power is given, granted, or permitted. But Hess (1984) argues that power is not likely to be handed over to have not groups in society. So power must be developed or taken by the powerless themselves as well as being granted.¹¹ He further argues that it is possible for individuals or groups to empower themselves rather than merely being recipients of power bestowed by others. To Staples (1991) there are four components in empowerment. These are (i) to give power, (ii) to develop power (iii) to take or seize power and (iv) to facilitate or enable power.¹²

2.2 Empowerment and Development

According to Young, (1993) empowerment is used by development agencies mainly to entrepreneurial self-reliance. Young states: "the term echoes the general emphasis within the mainstream on unleashing the capacity of individuals to be more entrepreneurial and more self-reliant. It is closely allied to the current emphasis on

individualistic values: people's empowering themselves by pulling themselves up by their bootstraps."¹³

Empowerment approach to development also refers to people's participation in policy making and planning process. Young also says, "It is now recognised in development circles that economic growth and social betterment are best achieved when the mass of the population is informed about and involved in development aims and plans, and sees itself as a direct beneficiary of the expanded resources growth should bring. One of the ways to achieve this is structuring the decision-making process in such a way as to ensure widespread consultation at all levels of society about development goals, the processes by which those goals are to be reached and the resources needed to achieve them.... Empowerment can be a planning goal in the sense that government support is given to a range of interest groups and NGOs by using them as consultative bodies or councils"¹⁴

Friedmann (1992) defines empowerment as the inter relation of social, psychological and political power. He argues that these spheres are inter related in negative and positive ways depending on achieved level of empowerment in each sphere.¹⁵ To him, women have to gain empowerment on a day -to - day basis socially, politically and psychologically. There are many missing links to political empowerment. He feels that social empowerment is a necessity for political empowerment.¹⁶

Thapliyal (1994) defines empowerment as sexual equality in social, economic and political spheres. He says, "empowerment has a broader connotation particularly in relation to women, it has many dimensions such as inheritance and ownership of the property: sexual equality in social, economic and political spheres and decision making".¹⁷

Griffen (1987) considers empowerment as 'adding to women's power' and defines power in the following words. (i) having control or gaining further control, (ii) having a say and being listened to (iii) able to define and create from women's perspective, (iv) able to influence social choices and decisions affecting the whole society, and (v) recognised and respected as equal citizens and human beings with a contribution to make. Griffen in opinion that power means to make a contribution at home and all levels of society and also women's contribution recognised and valued.¹⁸

2.3 Empowerment of Women in Development

Two approaches are developed in the contest of women in Development. These are (i) Women in Development Approach (WID) and (ii) Gender and Development Approach (GAD).

In the International Year of Women (1975) a new approach i.e., Women in Development (WID) is formulated to integrate women in development. Women in Development approach assumes that the neglect of women could be remedied and women can be developed by including them in development projects and programmes. Caroline Moser, (1993) draws a framework of 'WID' and identifies three aspects. These are (i) equity, (ii) anti – poverty, and (iii) efficiency.¹⁹

According to Moser, 'equity is the original in Women in Development aspect'. Equity attempts to meet women's practical needs for income and strategic gender needs for equality with men. This is to be achieved through top-down legislative interventions by government and development agencies. But equity approach is abandoned by many countries due to interference in country's traditions by development agencies. Moser says, "from the perspective of the aid agency, equity programmes necessitated unacceptable

interference with the country's traditions... (While) similar antipathy was felt by many Third World governments"²⁰.

In the face of opposition, equity aspect was largely abandoned by most national and international development programmes and replaced with aspects that focused on practical gender needs. Anti poverty is a second aspect of WID approach and linked to economic inequality of women to poverty rather than to female subordination. This aspect is directed towards 'poorest of the poor' and provides economic activity usually small income-generating projects.

The efficiency aspect has emerged in late 1980s in the wake of debt crisis and it is widely used today. The efficiency aspect assumes that 'development is more efficient and effective through women's economic contribution'.²¹ The point is that WID approach and the model of development based on economic growth are determined by male policy makers and planners with little input from women.

In mid 1980s, the policy shifted from integration of women to mainstreaming of women and the focus has shifted from women to gender. This new approach is referred as Gender and Development (GAD) approach. Gender, in this context, is understood as 'socially defined and constructed roles of men and women'. Some organizations see GAD approach as women's visions of development. The Canadian Council for International Cooperation states: "Gender and Development is emerging as a progressive approach to development from women's perspectives and experiences. It is a part of the larger work of creating an alternative development mode, for a worldview, which moves beyond an economic analysis to include environmental, sustainable and qualitative (personal, ethical and cultural) aspects in its definition of development". The GAD approach is like

WID and does not question the prevailing development paradigm and its potential depends on its interpretation and application.

2.4 **Women's Empowerment Framework**

According to women's empowerment framework, 'women's development is viewed in terms of five levels of equality' and empowerment as an essential element at each level. The levels are: (i) Welfare, (ii) Access (iii) Conscientisation, (iv) Participation and (v) Control.²²

At the welfare level, the basic needs of women are addressed without recognizing or attempting to solve structural causes and considering women as the passive beneficiaries of welfare benefits. Access refers to equal access of resources such as education opportunities, land and credit. Conscientization implies action to close gender gaps or gender inequalities and women recognizes that their problems stem from structural and institutional discrimination. Participation refers to taking decisions along with men equally. Control is the ultimate level of equality and empowerment. Both men and women are equal and neither of them has dominance over the other. At this stage, women make decisions, which affect their lives and lives of their children, and play an active role in development process. Further women's contribution is fully recognized and rewarded.²³

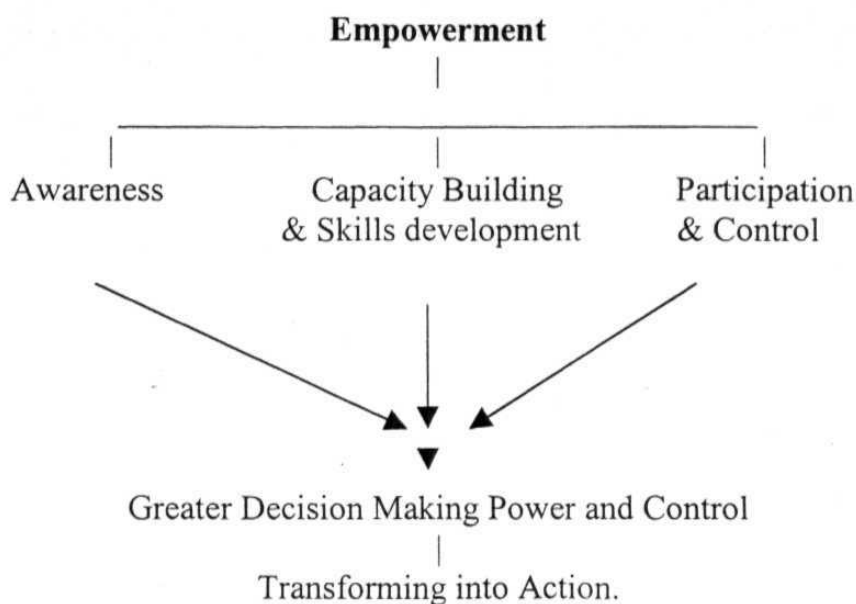
Using empowerment framework, development planner's determine a project or programme at the welfare, access, conscientization, participation or control levels and determine intervention to move women to higher levels of equality.

Efforts to uplift women in our society are made by securing for them economic independence and by integrating them into political process. This is done through various laws and programmes, while the constitution acting as the main guarantee of their rights.

2.5 Political Participation and Empowerment Process

Empowerment process is present at the individual and collective levels. It is through involvement in groups, developing awareness, ability to organize, taking action and bringing a change in society. Women's empowerment can be viewed as a continuum of several interrelated and mutually reinforcing components.²⁴

Marilee, Karl (1995) focuses on three aspects, which results in empowerment. These are (i) awareness, (ii) capacity building and skills development and (iii) participation and control. This means awareness about women's situation, discrimination, rights and opportunities. Capacity building and skills development to the ability to plan, make decisions, organize, manage and carry out activities and deal with people and institutions in the world around them. This involves participation and control in decision making power at home, community and society. This leads to action, which brings greater equality between men and women.²⁵ In short, 'empowerment is a process of acquiring awareness and capacity building leading to greater participation, to greater decision making power and control and to transform to action'. The following illustration gives a clear idea of empowerment.



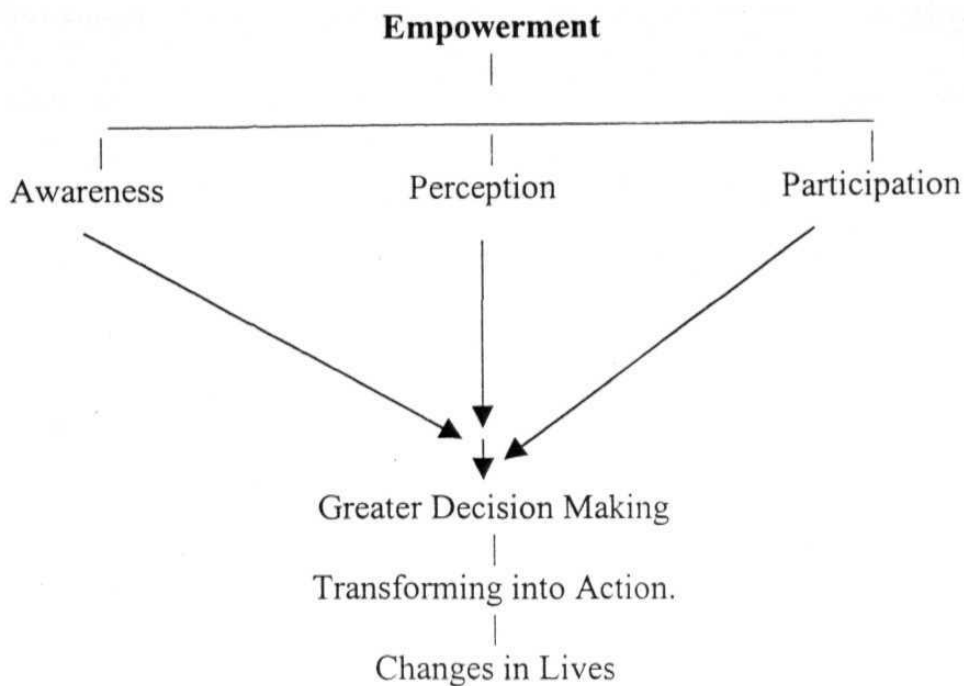
2.6 Empowerment of Women in Panchayati Raj Context

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment, passed in 1993, could be regarded as an important milestone in the process of empowering rural women in general and particularly empowering them politically. Before the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, the seats reserved for women in PRIs is so less that women could hardly influence political process. To improve the situation and to make women to come out of social bondage, the policy of reservation got expanded. Women are under-represented in political and administrative posts that make important policy decisions, which affect their lives. Women in rural areas, in general, got alienated from making policy decisions.

The focus of the present study, as pointed out, is political empowerment of women. Political empowerment means, providing women opportunity to influence the decision-making process by integrating them into the political system. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment enhanced opportunities for rural women to take part in the political process in greater numbers than before and greater efficiency because quantity helps to promote quality that means their problems and grievances could be raised effectively.

As Ashoka Mehta (1978) Committee Report pointed out 'the involvement of rural women in the developmental process has always been regarded as an integral part of the total development of the village community. The introduction of Panchayati Raj (PR) has added another dimension to the role of rural women'.²⁶

Empowerment is a process at individual and collective levels to develop awareness, perception and finally participation. The mandatory representation in PRIs is a process of empowering rural women i.e., amendment made a provision to participate in decision making on par with men and change their lives. The awareness of rights and responsibilities, perception of environment, participation in decision making, performance in job situation leads to action, which ultimately changes their lives. The determinants of empowerment are mainly awareness, perception and participation. The following illustration gives clear idea of political empowerment of women in the context of Panchayati Raj Institutions.



One important thing to understand empowerment is that in a sense, no one empowers anyone else. It is used in relation to development. True empowerment is achieved by people themselves through their own efforts. As Thapliyal rightly says, "In specific terms, empowerment of women refers to creating situations in which they can decide their own destiny and also participate as equal partners in various developmental activities".²⁷

2.7 Decentralisation

The English language derived the word decentralisation from the Latin word *decentraliz* meaning "away from the centre".²⁸ According to Webster's Student Dictionary, 'Decentralise' means 'to reorganise a government by distributing authority to smaller or local units'²⁹. According to Chambers 21st Century Dictionary, the word 'Decentralise' means two things. (i) to alter or be altered by the transfer of organization, etc. (ii) from one main central place to several smaller less central positions.³⁰ It is a word of different applications. The word is used under many different constitutional systems and in different

social environments. To an economist, decentralisation is dispersal of industries. To a local government expert, it is devolution of functions and responsibilities to small territorial units. To an administrator, it is delegation of responsibility within the same hierarchy. To a managing director, or business organisation, it is starting new administrative branches in certain areas. But these interpretations do not present a full view of decentralisation.

2.8 Decentralisation, Delegation, Deconcentration and Devolution

The word decentralisation is usually confused with words like delegation, deconcentration and devolution.³¹ Delegation is related to the technique of administration or management while decentralisation deals with broadening of democracy. Like delegation, deconcentration is also a technique of administration and it denotes assignments of certain functions to the agent of the central or state government in the field. There is a difficulty in governing the country from the centre and it compels the government to deconcentrate certain functions to its agents or officers in the field. Devolution is similar to deconcentration. Devolution is applied to formally constituted local authorities while, deconcentration is applied to the field agency or staff. So delegation, deconcentration and devolution are technical methods of efficient administration.³²

2.9 Fesler's Approaches to Decentralisation

Fesler (1965) says, 'the issue of decentralisation is more complex in concept and practice than is generally acknowledged'.³³ He has identified four approaches to decentralisation. These are (i) doctrinal, (ii) political, (iii) administrative and (iv) dual role. The doctrinal approach treats decentralisation as an end itself through a process of

idealisation. The political approach is related to the political character of decentralisation. Devolution of administrative set up is an attempt to set up autonomous governments at the grassroots level is a major political commitment. Administrative approach is motivated by the efficiency criteria to re-adjust from time to time the conflicting claims of areas and functions in a decentralised administration. The dual role is a kind of rehearsal of the area and functional dichotomy in a new setting.

Fesler's analysis of the concept basically points towards political and administrative aspects of decentralisation.³⁴

2.10 Leonard's definition of Decentralisation

Decentralization is also defined as a process of transferring authority from higher level to lower level. The same is the opinion of the Leonard. Leonard (1954) defines decentralisation as a "process which denotes the transfer of authority, legislative, judicial or administrative from a higher level of government to lower".³⁵

2.11 Democratic Decentralisation

The words 'democratic' and 'decentralisation' form the key to the understanding of the compound expression 'democratic decentralisation'. The word 'democratic' explains the nature and purpose of the concept as also its basic postulates in its institutional aspect. The word 'decentralisation' is indicative of the method to realise the end as contained in the word 'democratic'.³⁶

Iqbal Narain (1981) fairly brings out the distinction between the two concepts. He says "under democratic decentralisation, the underlying idea is to widen the area of democracy, by granting authority and autonomy to the people at lower levels".³⁷ So democratic decentralisation means creation of democracies within a democracy.

Democratic decentralisation seeks to vest in the institution of local government. Bryce (1962) describes such democracies as 'tiny fountain heads of democracy'.³⁸ The pre-fixing of the word 'democratic' widens the implication of the term 'decentralisation'. This means transfer of powers to local bodies, which are democratically constituted by the people and also function democratically. Democratic decentralisation confers freedom to the people in the election of the leaders, making policies and in their execution.

Democratic decentralisation as a political concept aims at widening the area of people's participation, authority and autonomy. This is through devolution of powers to people's representative organisations from top levels to the lower levels in decision-making, financial control and administrative management with least interference and control from higher levels.

2.12 Decentralisation in Indian Context

Independent India has opted for democratic decentralisation, which is characterised by flow of power through elected bodies and its members to the people. As is well known, B. R. Mehta Committee (1957) recommended 'the scheme of democratic decentralisation' in the form of a three-tier inter connected and inter dependent democratic structures of rural self government at the village, block and the district levels for planning and implementation of rural development and welfare programmes. The scheme is based on the principles of decentralisation, devolution and democratisation of power from state level to lower tiers in a democratic way and this process is termed as "Democratic Decentralisation". As democracy means 'power springing from people', the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru christened it as "Panchayati Raj". According to him what was

being envisaged was not a territorial government or administration but an approach to administration guided by and vested in people themselves.

2.13 **Objectives of Decentralisation in Indian Context**

The objectives of decentralisation vary from country to country depending on the needs and the socio-economic set up of the society. In the Indian context of socio – economic set up, the following objectives are identified.³⁹

(i) **Broadening of Democracy**

It is meant for broadening democracy from Parliament and State Legislatures and to the last rungs of the society. It is intended to bring the neglected, marginalised and deprived sections i.e., women and dalits in rural areas into the system of governance in the process of democracy.

(ii) **People's Participation**

Another objective is people's participation. In this process, the people are initiators and the government is the facilitator. People's participation in the developmental schemes is essential for sustainable development. People should be given opportunity to plan according to their needs and implements and monitor the programmes. The government is expected to facilitate the process and ensure transparency.

(iii) **Good Governance**

This implies involvement of people in the political process, transparent administration and reducing the gap between people and the system. For this, it is necessary that the rules are simplified and the complexities of rules eliminated. The rules, norms and regulations relating to governance should be made transparent.

(iv) **Capacity Building**

In the decentralised system of governance, people should be able to discharge their responsibilities. For this capacity building is very essential.

(v) **People's Oriented Administration**

It is necessary that decentralised governance should be people's oriented, taking special care for the uplifting of the socially and economically weaker sections and women. Women are the most neglected section of society as pointed out, both in participation and sharing of the benefits. In rural areas, women face more problems in the absence of basic amenities, facilities and service. So the activities of Panchayats have to be carefully designed to provide scope for women both in terms of participation and benefits.

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment is passed in accordance with the above objectives of democratic decentralisation.⁴⁰

2.14 **B R Mehta Committee's Approach Towards Democratic Decentralisation**

The B R Mehta Committee recommended the basic approach towards democratic decentralisation.⁴¹ The principles underlying democratic decentralisation according to the committee are:

- i) Provision for three – tier structure of local-self government bodies from the village to the district levels,
- ii) Organic linkage between the different tiers,
- iii) Adequate resources to these institutions to enable them to discharge their duties,
- iv) Genuine transfer of powers and duties,
- v) Implementation of development programmes through local bodies. The system should ultimately be able to facilitate further devolution of powers.⁴²

The committee looked at the Panchayati Raj system as a means of involving people and their representatives in the implementation of development programmes of the government and conceptualised Panchayats as ‘Instruments of Rural Development’.⁴³

2.15 Evolution of Panchayati Raj

The panchayat, as a unit of village government had existed in India for many centuries. The term ‘Panchayat’ literally means ‘council of five’. The principle of the panchyat is “Panch Parameshwar” meaning “God is speaking through the Five”. The word panchayat as a traditional one, refers to the ‘five elders’ in a village who mediated conflict and spoke on behalf of all residents of a village in pre-modern times.

The Panchayats in the past were rarely representative of the village as a whole. The members in traditional panchayats are from funding families or from the Bramhins and the superior cultivators.⁴⁴ In these traditional panchayats, the lower castes and women had no representation.⁴⁵ Since Independence, broadly, there have been three major phases in the evolution of Panchayati Raj as recommended by the three major committees. Balwantrai Mehta Committee Report is referred to as providing for Non-political Panchayats. The

Ashoka Mehta Committee Report is referred as facilitating Political Panchayats and L. M. Singhvi Committee Report is referred to as making available Constitutional Panchayats.

In the context of women's representation in panchayats, the Balwantray Mehta Committee and the Ashok Mehta Committee gave a nominal or token representation to women i.e., two women representatives used to be elected or co-opted or nominated. The L. M. Singhvi Committee Report emphasised on increased representation to women in Panchayati Raj. The recommendations of this committee had a great bearing on the 73rd Constitutional Amendment.

2.16 Governance

Governance literally means 'action or manner of governing'.⁴⁶ Till later 1980s 'governance' was not heard frequently within development community. But today the United Nations, multilateral and bilateral agencies, academics and voluntary organizations heavily use the term 'governance'.⁴⁷

In current development, governance is being used in different ideological persuasions.⁴⁸ The governance debate is wide-ranging and complex. The traditional use of 'governance' and its dictionary entry defined it as a synonym for government. The theoretical work on governance reflects the interest of the social science community in a shifting pattern in styles of governing.

The term governance is used in a variety of meanings and has a plethora of users. Governance is on occasions used for reductions in resource commitment and government expenditure and a code for less government.

The international financial institutions used the term governance in the context of volume of funding to Third World countries. By talking about governance rather than state

reform or social and political change, multilateral banks and agencies within development establishment have been able to address sensitive questions.⁴⁹ The efforts of international financial and donor communities to promote good governance in 1990s are presented as elements in the programme of institutional reform.⁵⁰

The term governance is sometimes used for rhetorical reasons and it is used in place of government to sell in a privatized, market-orientated society'. But there is a baseline agreement that governance refers to the development of governing styles in which boundaries between and within public and private sectors have become blurred.⁵¹ Some authors describe governance as the reinvented form of government.⁵² Hood refers to governance as 'new public management'.⁵³

Works on governance suggest that there is a redirection in its use and import and it signifies a change in the meaning of government, referring to a new process of governing or a changed condition of ordered rule or the new method by which society is governed. 'Governance is ultimately concerned with creating the conditions for ordered rule and collective action. The outputs of governance are not different from those of government. It is a matter of a difference in processes'.⁵⁴

Same is the opinion of Gerry Stoker. He says, 'governance challenges traditional notions of public administration and it is about new methods and forms in governing and ultimately is about a change in the meaning of government'.⁵⁵ Stoker speaks of five propositions of governance. They are

- (i) Multi-agency partnerships,
- (ii) Blurring of responsibilities between public and non-public sectors.
- (iii) Power dependence between organizations involved in collective action,

- (iv) Emergence of self-governing networks and
- (v) Development of new governmental tasks and tools.

Stroker defines governance as a “positive attempt to tackle social and economic challenges in innovative ways but not as a panacea”.⁵⁶

2.17 From Government to Governance

The term governance is first applied to the governments of Third World countries by the World Bank. Niraj Gopal rightly says, “The term ‘governance’ first landed on Southern shores as the medicine prescribed by the good doctors of the Bretton Woods Institutions, to remedy laggard and inefficient development performance of these states”.⁵⁷

Governance was first problematized in a World Bank document of 1989 on sub-Saharan Africa, which suggested that the Bank’s programmes of adjustment and investment in that region were being rendered ineffective by a ‘crisis of governance.’⁵⁸ Good governance soon came to be equated with ‘sound development management’, and was defined as ‘the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development’.⁵⁹ Accordingly, four aspects of governance were specified. They are (i) public sector management (capacity and efficiency); (ii) accountability; (iii) the legal framework for development and (iv) information and transparency.⁶⁰

2.18 Global Governance

‘Global Governance’ is a new phrase used for highlighting conflicts in civil society of Third World countries and mobilizing people from around the world in search of useful alternatives. This required institutional innovations in many spheres of activity. Attempts are made to link individuals and institutions at various levels of society (local, regional,

national and international), to deal with particular global problems. So the phrase 'Global Governance' is described as an effort to promote more efficient and democratic institutions within Third World countries.⁶¹

2.19 **Good Governance**

The concept of governance assumed global context by entering into the arena of developing countries. The World Bank applied it to a commitment to efficient and accountable government. The broad use of governance is that, the interdependence of public, private and voluntary sectors in developing countries.

The Third World countries like Bosnia, Liberia and Rwanda, the United Nations and bilateral donors and non-governmental development organizations confronted conflicts in civil society in their extreme form and led to social disintegration.⁶² Describing the civil society in these countries Hewitt says, (i) neighbours have killed neighbours; (ii) families have been torn apart; (iii) political and administrative capacity of the state has largely been destroyed.⁶³ The important aspect in these countries is strengthening of civil society and restoration of legitimacy of authority.

The financial crisis in East Asian countries exploded the myth of market economy and expressed that it is not the complete panacea for the countries of the South. Accordingly the definition of governance has transcended and alternative concepts of governance have emerged. These concepts are not driven by donor interests or tied to aid conditions. Martin Minogue describing new concept of governance says, "Governance or good governance is a broad reform strategy and a set of initiatives to strengthen the institutions of civil society with the objective of making government more accountable, more open, transparent, and more democratic".⁶⁴ Now in the context of governance,

there is a greater emphasis on (i) participation, (ii) decentralization, (iii) accountability, and (iv) governmental responsiveness, (v) social equality and (vi) justice. Most recently, governance is also linked with the agenda of human rights.⁶⁵

2.20 **Good Governance and Indian Democracy**

In India, governance has a wide ambit and encompassed a variety of spheres. These are: (i) political, (ii) economic and (iii) social. The political implies equal application of the rule of law, accountability and transparency, right to information and corruption in public life. The economic refers to corporate governance, regulation of the private sector and financial markets and social implies expression of civil society in its various manifestations like assertion of dalits and weaker sections.⁶⁶

At independence, the Indian State had given priority to development along with the task of reducing poverty and bureaucracy was the chief instrument for the accomplishment of this task. The failure of bureaucracy has resulted in innovations and departure from traditional notions of government to governance. Particularly in 1990s, governance aspects were more emphasised because Indian democracy confronted new challenges of economic, political and social. These challenges are departures in economic policy in the wake of liberalization and globalization and political assertions of Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The first entailed a shift from a state-centric conception of governance and the second is its centrality as the premier agency of social justice.⁶⁷ In this context Niraj Gopal identified six models of alternative governance. These are state-centered models.⁶⁸ They are

1. Rolling back of the state in the context of economic reforms;
2. Meeting the challenges to the state from social movements like those of the Bahujan Samaj Party to gain control of the state so that its link with upper-caste dominance may be severed;
3. Making possible of social justice for historically disadvantaged sections of Indian society;
4. Franchising the state through the contracting – out of public service delivery to non-governmental organizations;
5. Facilitating State-civil society partnerships such as Joint Forest Management and
6. Decentralisation of state structures through initiatives such as the new Panchayati Raj Institutions.

2.21 **Good Governance in India's Context**

In India, a change in the attitude of people was noticed. This change is anti – establishment factor. This is because most of the state governments and government at centre failed to live up to the expectation of people to meet the wave of liberalisation and globalisation. The government at centre and state governments are failed in addressing the needs of the people. So in present context good governance is “a government actually delivers”.⁶⁹ This means bringing more professionalism and efficiency in the government by bringing reforms in the ‘hierarchy – bound’ civil service to deliver with speed and efficiency.⁷⁰ The Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Shri N. Chandrababu Naidu says “Andhra Pradesh had 47 levels of bureaucracy from the top to bottom. Such a complex structure could not deliver with speed and efficiency and needed to be replaced by a lean and nimble-footed public service”.⁷¹

2.22 Good Governance in Panchayati Raj Context

Governance in PR context is a reform strategy and an initiative to strengthen institutions with the objective of making government more accountable, more open and transparent and more democratic. Ramesh Kumar identifies five parameters of good governance. They are (i) participation, (ii) legitimacy (iii) accountability (iv) openness and transparency and (iv) competence.⁷²

Participation refers to direct involvement of the entire society in areas hitherto kept exclusively for public domain. Legitimacy emphasizes the need for the assent of the governed and provides means to give or withhold their assent. Accountability is the mechanism to ensure politicians and officials are answerable for their actions, use of public resources and performance. Openness and Transparency implies public access to information and making transparent all transactions in which public interest is involved. Competence refers to create effective policy and decision making process to achieve efficient delivery of public services.⁷³

S. K. Dey, Minister for Community Development in Nehru's cabinet and the architect of Panchayati Raj after independence, elevating the idea of PR to a philosophical level viewed PR as "an instrument which linked the individual with the universe".⁷⁴ Within the sphere of national democracy, he also visualised an organic and intimate relationship between Gram Sabha and the Lok Sabha.⁷⁵

2.23 Good Governance and Seventy – Third Constitutional Amendment Act - 1993

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment provides certain aspects with basic structural framework for Panchayati Raj Institutions to withstand external interference and establish

themselves as effective and strong people's institutions to perpetuate good governance.⁷⁶ Kumar points out that, 'parameters of good governance or governance are included in the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. However, some aspects are left to the discretion of state legislatures to make suitable provision in their State Acts like providing reservation to Backward Castes.⁷⁷

2.24 Good Governance and Andhra Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act - 1994

In conformity with the Seventy – Third Constitutional Amendment, the Andhra Pradesh State Legislature has passed a new Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act, 1994 which has come into force with effect from 30th April, 1994. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment and the Andhra Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act - 1994 are intended to transform the PRIs from the institutions that are being governed to those of institutions of governance⁷⁸.

The parameters of good governance in these acts are (i) Legitimacy (ii) Democratization, (iii) Participation (iv) Decentralization, (v) Devolution and (vi) Accountability.

2.25 Impediments to Good Governance in Panchayati Raj in Andhra Pradesh

There are certain impediments to parameter of good governance in Andhra Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act – 1994. Theoretically the act broadens democracy by providing representation to all section of people including providing opportunity to Backward Castes.

The impediments to good governance include proxy membership and participation, inadequate funds, non-cooperating attitude of state governments, lack of awareness, absence of accountability and absence of training. These would be detailed later.

It is clear from the above that empowerment, decentralisation and governance are interrelated and inter - dependent.

* * *

References

- ¹ Prasad, R. R and Sushma, Sahay. (2000), 'Models for Empowering Women' in Kalpana Sinha, (ed.). *Empowerment of Women in South Asia*, Association of Management Development Institutions in South Asia (AMDISA), Hyderabad, p. 2.
- ² Ibid.
- ³ Sinha, Kalpana. (2000), 'Women: The Changing Organisation Dynamics' in Kalpana Sinha, (ed.). *Empowerment of Women in South Asia*, Association of Management Development Institutions in South Asia (AMDISA), Hyderabad, p. vi.
- ⁴ Barker, R. L. (1991), '*The Politics of Empowerment*', Social Work. Vol. 4, No.2, March, NASW Press, Washington DC.
- ⁵ Swift, C. (1984), 'Empowerment: An Antidote for Folly: Foreword', in Rappaport, J., Swift, C & Hess, R. (ed.). *Studies in Empowerment: Toward Understanding and Action*, The Haworth Press, New York.
- ⁶ Rappaport, J. , Swift, C & Hess, R. (ed.). (1984). *Studies in Empowerment: Toward Understanding and Action*, The Haworth Press, New York.
- ⁷ Mayer, N. (1984), *Neighbourhood Organisation and Community Deveopment*, Urban Institute, Washington, DC.
- ⁸ Bandura, Albert. (1986), *Social Foundation of Thought*, NJ. Prentice – Hall, Englewood Cliffs.
- ⁹ Prasad, R. R and Sushama, Sahay. (2000), 'Models for Empowering Women' in Kalpana Sinha, (ed.). *Empowerment of Women in South Asia*, Association of Management Development Institutions in South Asia (AMDISA), Hyderabad, p. 8.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ Hess, R. (1984), in Rappaport. J, Swift. C, Hess, R. (wd.). *Studies in Empowerment: Toward Understanding and Action*, The Haworth Press, New York.
- ¹² Staples, Lee H. (1991), *Powerful Ideas About Empowerment*, Administration in Social Work, Vol. 14 (20), The Haworth Press, New York.
- ¹³ Young, Kate. (1993), *Planning Development With Women: Making a World of Difference*, Macmillan, p. 157.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., pp 162 – 163.

-
- 15 Friedmann. (1992), in Anderson Bohman, *Women's Political Participation in Kerala, South India: A Case Study Based on Obstacles met When Entering the Political Sphere*, http://www.padrigu.gu.se/grundutbildning/uppsatser/Anderson_Bohman_I, p. 23.
 - 16 Ibid.
 - 17 Thapliyal, B. K. (1994), 'Women in Rural India', in Thapliyal, B. k., Sastry, K. R., Slater, R. P. (ed.). *Economic Development of Rural Women: Case Studies in Madhya Pradesh*, NIRD, Hyderabad, p. 23.
 - 18 Griffen, Vanessa. (ed.). (1987), *Women, Development and Empowerment: A Pacific Feminist Perspective*, Asian and Pacific Development Centre, Kuala Lumpur, pp. 117 – 118.
 - 19 Moser, O. Caroline. (1993), *Gender Planning and Development: Theory, Practice and Training*, Routledge, London, p. 65.
 - 20 Ibid.
 - 21 Ibid., p. 69.
 - 22 Karl, Marilee. (1995), *Women and Empowerment: Participation and Decision-Making*, Zed Books Ltd, London & New Jersey, p. 109.
 - 23 Ibid
 - 24 Ibid., p. 14.
 - 25 Ibid.
 - 26 Government of India. (1978), 'Report of the Committee on Panchayati Raj Institutions', New Delhi, pp. 141 – 142.
 - 27 Thapliyal, B. K. (1994), op.cit., p. 23.
 - 28 Arthur, W. Macmillan. (1961), *Delegation and Authority*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, p. 5.
 - 29 The New International Webster's Student Dictionary (2001), CBS Publishers, New Delhi, p. 183.
 - 30 Chambers 21st Century Dictionary (2001), Allied Publishers, New Delhi, p. 346.

- 31 Dutta, Vijay Ranjan (1982), 'Decentralisation and Political Development in India', *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. XXVII, No.2, April-June, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi, p. 2.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Fesler, James W. (1965), *Approaches to the Understanding of Decentralisation*, *Journal of Politics*, Vol. XXVII, August, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, UK, p. 7.
- 34 Ibid., p. 8.
- 35 Leonard, Decohite. (1954), 'Decentralisation', *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*, Vol. V, Macmillan Co., New York, p. 43.
- 36 Narain, Iqbal. (1981), *Democratic Decentralisation: The Idea, The Image and The Reality*, in T.N. Chaturvedi (ed.). 'Panchayati Raj', Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi, p. 15.
- 37 Ibid., p. 14
- 38 Bryce, James. (1962), *Modern Democracies*, Vol. 1, The World Press, p - 1.
- 39 Palanithurai,.G. (ed.). (2002), *Dynamics of New Panchayati Raj System in India – Select States* (Volume – I), Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, p. XII.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 Bhargava, B. S. (2002), 'Panchayati Raj in Andhra Pradesh', in Palnithurai , G. *Dynamics of New Panchayati Raj System in India: Select States*, (Vol – 2), Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, p. 187.
- 42 Ibid., pp. 187 – 188.
- 43 Dutta, Prabhat. (1997), 'Political Empowerment of Rural Women in India', *Administrative Change*, Vol. XXIV, No.2, January – June 1997, The Centre for Administrative Change, Jaipur, p. 130.
- 44 Ibid., p. 129.
- 45 Poornima and Vyasulu, Vinod. (2003), *Women in Panchayat Raj: Grassroots Democracy in India: Experience from Malgudi*, <http://magnet.undp.org/events/gender/india/VYASULU3.htm>, 14.07.03, p. 3.

-
- 46 *Oxford English Dictionary* (2001), Oxford University Press, New York, p. 257.
- 47 Cynthia, Alcantara Hewitt de. (1998), *Uses and Abuses of the Concept of Governance*, International Social Science Journal, Vol. L, No. 1, Blackwell Publishers Ltd for UNESCO, March, p. 105.
- 48 Ibid., p. 106.
- 49 Ibid., p. 107.
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 Stoker, Gerry. (1998), *Governance as Theory: Five Propositions*, International Social Science Journal, Vol. L, No. 1, Blackwell Publishers Ltd for UNESCO, March, p. 18.
- 52 Ibid., p. 17.
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 Ibid., p. 18.
- 56 Ibid.
- 57 Gopal, Jayal Niraja. (2001), 'Reinventing the State: The Emergence of Alternative Models of Governance in India in the 1990s', in Niraj Gopal Jayal & Sudha Pillai (ed.). *Democratic Governance in India: challenges of Poverty, Development and Identity*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, p. 132.
- 58 Ibid.
- 59 World Bank. (1992), *Governance and Development*, World Bank, Washington, D. C, p. 3.
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 Stroker, Gerry. (1998), op. cit., p. 17.
- 62 Cynthia, Alcantara Hewitt de. (1998), op. cit., p. 107.
- 63 Ibid.
- 64 Syedur, Rahman. (2001), 'Governance and Local Government System' in Hasnat Abdul Hye (ed.). *Governance: South Asian Perspectives*, The University Press Limited, New Delhi, p. 233.

-
- ⁶⁵ Gopal, Jayal Niraja. (2001), op. cit., pp. 132 – 150.
- ⁶⁶ Ibid.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid.
- ⁶⁹ *Advani may Head Panel on Good Governance*, The Hindu, 29.08.2003, p. 1.
- ⁷⁰ *Naidu calls for Civil Service Reforms*, The Hindu, 28.08.2003, p. 1.
- ⁷¹ Ibid.
- ⁷² Kumar, Ramesh G. M. (2001), 'Local Government for Good Governance: Experience in Andhra Pradesh', in Hasnat Abdul Hye (ed.). *Governance: South Asian Perspectives*, The University Press Limited, New Delhi, p. 247.
- ⁷³ Ibid., p. 248.
- ⁷⁴ Mathew, George. (1995), *Status of Panchayati Raj in the States of India*, Institute of Social Sciences, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, p. 5.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid.
- ⁷⁶ Kumar, Ramesh G. M. (2001), op. cit., p. 249.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 251.
- ⁷⁸ Ibid.

* * *

Chapter – III

Political Status of Women

3.1 Political Status of Women - Global Perspective

To understand the status of women in society, an examination of the political status of women is necessary. In the Ancient period, in the Greek State, women were admired for grace and motherly qualities but were completely subordinated to men.¹ The great Greek Philosopher Plato said that there should be equality between the sexes. But the status of women remained as it was. The political status of women in the Roman Empire was also same i.e., admiration for grace and motherly qualities but subordination to men.²

The feudal society accorded a special status to women. This is because of social values of the time like chivalry, which was imbibed, in every noble boy as a very important virtue to be cherished and preserved. But in terms of economic status, the positions of women remained unchanged.³ The civilisations of China, India, Rome and the Renaissance Movements in Western Europe could boast of small groups of highly cultivated women.⁴ Till the dawn of the Industrial Revolution in 1868, the gender roles established by tradition continued. From the middle of the 19th century i.e., from the dawn of Industrial Revolution, there has been significant progress in gender relations and a progress towards equality in the area of education, suffrage, property rights, equality in industry and the right to enter the professions and public life.⁵

Industrialisation accelerated the growth of 'two' social movements' i.e., 'Democracy and Equality Movement' and the 'Socialism and Natural Justice Movement'. In the 18th and 19th centuries, waves of these ideologies reverberated in society. With the spread of the ideals of democracy and equality, the demand for political equality of women started in the 18th century.⁶ In Western Europe and North America, the idea of the equality of gender took its roots. New Zealand was the first country to enfranchise

women in 1893 followed by Australia and Canada in 1908. In Britain attempts to enfranchise women before World War I were unsuccessful but by 1928 all women over 21 were enfranchised. In the USA women's suffrage was secured in 1920 and in 1944 in France.⁷

3.2 UN Conferences on Status of Women

The UN conducted 'four' conferences on the status of women. The First World Conference on the Status of Women was held in 1975 at Mexico City. The Second World Conference was held in 1980 at Copenhagen. The Third World Conference was held in 1985 at Nairobi and the Fourth World Conference was held in 1995 at Beijing. The Women's Conferences addressed 12 critical platforms for action, which are identified as obstacles blocking the advancement of women and the action needed to overcome them. These critical areas are Poverty, Education, Health, Violence, Armed and other Conflicts, Economic Participation, National and International Machineries (Technology), Human Rights, Mass Media, Environment and Development and Girl Child. All these conferences stressed on the need for increasing participation of women in power sharing and decision – making.⁸

Regarding power – sharing and decision – making to day more than 100 countries have no women in the government.⁹ So women in the world are systematically discriminated, less encouraged and supported and this makes continuing dependency.

The First World Conference on Women, held in 1975 in Mexico City proposed actions and set targets for a ten-year period in a wide range of areas, which includes political participation, education, health and employment. This conference led to the proclamation of 1976 – 1985 as the UN Decade for Women: Equality, Development and

Peace. The importance of the conference is that, it created consciousness all over the world regarding the need for raising the status of women in society and thereby enhancing their role in the process of development.

The Second World Conference on Women was held in 1980 at Copenhagen (Denmark). This conference reviewed and evaluated the progress made in the first half of the UN decade for women. The Copenhagen Conference is very important regarding political participation of women. The conference, focusing on elimination of discrimination in law and policy, called for women's participation in politics and decision making.¹⁰

The Third World Conference on Women was held in 1985 at Nairobi (Kenya). This Conference focused on Forward - Looking Strategies. These strategies are for gender equality and women's autonomy and power. Regarding gender equality, the conference expressed that all forms of discrimination against women and equal rights under law. Regarding women's autonomy and power, the conference felt that equal involvement of women at every stage and level of development is necessary. Regarding political participation, the conference focussed on 'promotion of women to positions of power at every level i.e., executive and legislative bodies to achieve parity with men.'¹¹

The Fourth World Conference on Women was held in 1995 at Beijing (China). At this Conference, it was agreed that 'inequalities between women and men have serious consequences for the well-being of all people',¹² The conference set goals for the progress of women in various aspects like health, education and politics. The delegates unequivocally stated that "the advancement of women and the achievement of equality

between women and men are a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice and should not be seen in isolation as a women's issue".¹³

The UN General Assembly's 23rd Special session was held in the year 2000 at Beijing. The conference was called as Beijing + 5. At a special session, focus was made on Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st century. The main focus of the Conference is women's participation in decision-making and access to power. The Beijing Declaration says, "women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society including participation in the decision making process and access to power, are fundamental for the advancement of equality, development and peace".¹⁴

Regarding Women in power and decision making, the special session mentioned two strategic objectives. These are access for political participation and increasing capacity for participation. The first strategic objective is for measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structure and decision making. The second strategic objective is to increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership.¹⁵

Regarding action on sharing of power and decision making, the session recommended a 'visible policy' of mainstreaming gender perspective in all policies and programmes. Regarding increasing women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership, the session recommended gender sensitive training for women to encourage women to participate in electoral process, political activities and leadership areas.¹⁶

The other World Summits also focussed on improving the status of women. The World Summit for Social Development held in 1995 at Copenhagen is another milestone in women's movement. This summit recognised the equality and equity between men and women and enhancing political participation and women's leadership. The commitment 5 of World Summit for Social Development Report is related "to promoting full respect for human dignity and to achieving equality and equity between men and women and to recognising and enhancing the participation and leadership roles of women in political, civil economic, social and cultural life and in development".¹⁷ The summit laid stress on broadening women's opportunities for empowerment.

3.3 Women's Representation in Parliaments – Global Perspective

Women's participation in the political process makes women's issues prioritized in the policy-agenda and is also more likely to be acted upon by policy – makers. The countries with more representation of women in the political process benefited the women in their countries.

Sweden provides high representation to women in the parliament. Women occupy 158 of the 349 (45.3%) seats in the parliament and 9 of the 11 (82%) cabinet ministries including the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Justice and Agriculture. In Norway, women hold 60 of the 165 (36.4%) seats in parliament. In South Africa, women have 119 out of the 399 (29.8%) seats in the National Assembly. In United Kingdom, women hold 118 of the 659 (17.9%) in Lower House of Parliament and 117 of the 713 (16.4) in the Upper House of Parliament. In the United States of America, women hold 62 of the 435 ((14.3%) seats House of Congress and 13 of the 100 (13%) in the Senate. In France, women hold 70

of the 574 (12.2%) in the Lower House of Parliament and 35 of the 321 (10.9%) in the Upper House of Parliament.¹⁸

Regarding women's representation in parliament, only one country i.e., Sweden provided highest representation i.e., 45.3 percent. Nine countries provided representation between 31 to 40 percent. Twenty-four countries provided representation between 21 to 30 percent. Fifty-six countries provided representation between 11 to 20 percent seventy-four countries provided representation between 1 to 10 percent in the Lower Houses of the national legislature.¹⁹

Women's representation in the parliament brought several positive things to women. In Sweden, issues such as child - care and equal opportunities have gained importance. In Norway, issues like child – care, the state's responsibilities to provide opportunities for women to combine the obligations of motherhood with the right to economic independence have gained importance. In South Africa, issues like introduction of the “women's budget process” which aims at analyzing the government's budget from a gender perspective in order to pressure governments to allocate money for women's empowerment and development came to light.²⁰

3.4 Women's Political Leadership - Global Scenario

Women's political leadership is very marginal around the world. Some examples of women leaders could be given here. Goldameir (Prime Minister of Israel), S. Bhandaranaike (Prime Minister of Srilanka), Ms. Benazir Bhutto (Prime Minister of Pakistan) Ms. Margaret Thatcher (Prime Minister of England), Begum Khaleds Zia and Ms. Sheikh Hasina Vajed (Prime Ministers of Bangladesh) Smt Indira Gandhi (India) have proved their courage and confidence in men's world of politics.

Other prominent women leaders are Chandrika Kumartunga (President, Srilanka) Madeleine Albright (U.S. Secretary of State) Aung San Syu Kyi, Pro-democracy leader of Myanmar and Meghawati of Indonesia. These female personalities survived the challenges from males in their respective country politics and became models for next generations.

3.5 Political Status of Women - India

The political status of women in India is determined by the social, cultural, religion, patriarchal and other factors. To begin with, in the Vedic age, women are reported to have possessed high status as equal partners with men with access to knowledge and freedom to marry. The women were relatively independent and were allowed to participate in the socio – economic and more importantly women were allowed to participate in political activities.²¹ Towards the end of the early Vedic period and the beginning of the later Vedic period, women's position began to decline.²² Women's status got changed and religion, traditions and patriarchy played negative influence on women's political status. Malladi Subbamma, tracing the causes of subjugation of women, points out that 'religion is the basic factor for the backwardness of Indian women'.²³ Marcus B. Fuller explains that, Hindu religious customs became obstacles to the emancipation of women. As a result, women suffered socially, economically as well as politically.²⁴

Women sinking deep and deeper in economic dependence, religious taboos and social subservience have been treated as second-class mortals. Women's education began to suffer. Pre- -puberty marriages became the order of the day. With, this political status of women was completely neglected.

The Muslim impact on India worsened the status of women. The system of *purdah* came and secluded women completely. When the British era started, the political,

economic and social status of women was worst in the history of India. With all social evils and religious restriction and taboos, women suffered socially, economically and politically.

In the above situation, one of the remarkable features of modern India is the unprecedented awakening of Indian women during the 19th and early 20th centuries. A number of movements both social and religious were launched in the middle of the 19th century reforming Hindu religion and the Indian society. These movements had a deep impact on women's identity and women's life in India. The freedom movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi brought women forward to participate in the independence movement. Thus started women's political participation in large scale.

In Salt Sathyagraha agitation, women outnumbered men. This is a spontaneous and massive participation of women in the struggle for national freedom. This participation helped to reduce the influence of social shackles and women began to press for political equality. In fact, the freedom struggle has produced some great women leaders who are a source of inspiration.

The Indian National Congress since its inception in the 19th century included women as members. In 1917 the INC elected a woman President, Annie Besant thus paving the women leadership in the country. Some women politicians are more successful than their male counter parts. Durgabhai Deshmukh, Mridula Sarabhai, Padmaja Naidu, Aruna Asaf Ali, Pandita Ramabai, Sarojini Naidu, Vijay Lakshmi Pandit, Sucheta Kriplani, Indira Gandhi all have proved that women do not lag behind in politics. At present Uma Bharathi, Sadhvi Ritambhara, Mamta Banerjee, Renuka Chowdhary, Najma Heptallah, Margaret Alva, Girija Vyas, Jayalalitha, Geeta Mukherjee, Menaka Gandhi and

Mayawati challenged the male bastion of politics and became models for younger generation.

3.6 **Women's Representation in Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies**

Despite women's mass participation in the national struggle, women's representation in the formal political structures has remained marginal. In Parliament, women have never crossed ten per cent of the membership till recently. In the Lok Sabha, women constituted less than three per cent in 1952. This increased to 7.3 per cent in 1996. This increased to 7.8 in 1998 where 43 women were elected. In the latest election in 1999, their number has become 49, but not reaching even the 10 per cent mark. In Rajya Sabha women's membership has not crossed 16%. Similar position is seen in the elections held to various state legislative assemblies in different years.

The table below gives a picture of women's representation in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

TABLE 3.1 Women's Representation in Parliament 1952 – 1999.

Year	Lok Sabha			Rajya Sabha		
	Number of Seats	Women MPs	% of women MPs	Number of Seats	Women MPs	% of women MPs
1952	499	22	4.4	219	16	7.3
1957	500	27	5.4	237	18	7.6
1962	503	34	6.8	238	18	7.6
1967	523	31	5.9	240	20	8.3
1971	521	22	4.2	243	17	7.0
1977	544	19	3.4	244	25	10.3
1980	544	28	5.1	244	24	9.8
1984	544	44	8.1	244	28	11.5
1989	517	27	5.3	245	24	9.8
1991	544	39	7.2	245	38	15.5
1996	543	39	7.2	223	19	8.5
1998	543	43	7.9	245	15	6.1
1999	543	49	9.0	245	19	7.8
Average	526	30	6.0	238	23	10.3

Source: S. Radha, Bulu Roy Chowdhury, (2002) 'Women in Local Bodies', Discussion Paper No. 40, Kerala Research Programme on Local Level Development, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, p – 11.

In State Legislative Assemblies, in the year 2000, women's representation is just less than 6 percent. The highest women representation is in Delhi with 13 percent followed by Andhra Pradesh with 10.5 percent. At present, the legislature of Andhra Pradesh women's membership has reached the number of 35 (10.9%). This is due to the death of male legislative members resulting in the election of wives and relatives to the Legislative Assembly. In Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Sikkim only one woman representative is present in each state. In Mizoram and Nagaland states, there is not even a single woman representation. In Indian Administrative Service, women's representation is less than 11 percent and in Indian Police Service it is Just 3 percent.²⁵

3.7 **Women's Status in Local Governments**

A purposeful assessment of the status of women in local governments requires an understanding of their status in the colonial and post - colonial periods.

The legislation on local government in the colonial period is considered as a matter of elected vs. nominated members. The male residents who paid rent, land revenue or tax or had a stipulated annual income were eligible to contest elections. Women were neither voters nor candidates in local elections.²⁶ The members for local government are male owners of houses and proprietors or tenants who are permanent residents of a village of the panchayat circle. The Holkar State (This was a princely state and presently it is a part of the state of Madhya Pradesh) Panchayat Act of 1928 spoke of the panchayat's establishment by the collector on his own or on the application by not less than 20 adult male residents of a village/group of villages. The word 'male' was deleted by an amendment in 1934.²⁷ The Gram Panchayat Act of 1946 included eligibility for voting by every adult male resident and adult female resident who were literate and holding immovable property.²⁸ Women got limited franchise for elections to the provincial legislatures but subject to conditions of property and educational qualifications. This was also extended to widows, if these conditions were fulfilled in the case of their husbands.

3.8 **Status of Women in Panchayati Raj After Independence**

The subject of women's representation in Panchayati Raj Institutions has been discussed at various levels, national, state and local and by High Power Committees, intellectuals, women's groups, academics and others.

The central council of local government in its meeting held at Srinagar in 1957 mentioned that the elected representatives in each block panchayat “will co-opt two women who are interested in work among women and children”.²⁹

3.9 **B. R. Mehta Committee Report (1957)**

The Balvantray Mehta Committee, in its Report, (1957) felt that women should have representation in rural political institutions. Accordingly the committee recommended the co-option of two women members, to the block level Panchayat Samiti and Village Panchayat, who are interested in work among women and children. If no women came through election and co-option of two women members to the Panchyati Samithi and Village Panchayat, were recommended.

Accordingly, many states that introduced the Panchyati Raj System provided representation of two women in Block Panchayat Samiti and in Village Panchayats. But the committee did not consider women's participation, as an issue of considerable significance and women's participation in decision-making process did not draw adequate attention of the committee. In practice, it resulted as a patronage of dominant socio-economic and political groups and co-opted women owed allegiance to them. Women in general, had neither political experience nor aware of their roles and responsibilities. As a result, women were not able to play an important role in the decision-making process in general and in matters pertaining to women and children in particular.

3.10 **Ashok Mehta Committee Report (1978)**

The Asoka Mehta Committee has reviewed the Panchayati Raj System in 1978. The committee suggested ‘two’ tier structures i.e., Zilla Parishad that coexists with district

and Mandal Panchayat for a group of villages. Regarding the status of women, the committee suggested 'three' measures.

- 1) If no women were elected, two women who would get the highest number of votes in Zilla Parishad elections should become members.
- 2) In the event of no women coming forward for election, two women might be co-opted.
- 3) Similar recommendation is made for the Mandal Panchayats.

A special feature of the Ashok Mehta Committee report is that the committee laid emphasis on the need to organise and strengthen women's constructive decision making and managerial roles. The committee categorically stated that introduction of PR has added a new dimension to the role of rural women and that the importance of women's role in decision making on development projects has been brought to the forefront. The committee considered women as the most important part of our population. The committee recommended that a committee with all the women members of the Mandal Panchayats represented on it should be formed, so that the decisions are made by women members themselves on priorities and choices in welfare and development programmes meant for women and children.³⁰

The Ashoka Mehta Committee had acknowledged the need for associating women in the process of decision making, but failed to give clear direction. This resulted in cumbersome proposal about the participation of women in panchayats.

The Narasimham Committee under the Chairmanship of Narasimham was set up by the Government of Andhra Pradesh in 1979 to discuss and suggest reforms in the light of Ashok Mehta Committee recommendations. Regarding women's representation, the

committee examined the co-option of women members from the defeated women candidates who contested for general seats, securing the highest number of votes. The committee found that the recommendation is fraught with possibilities of political stalemate, especially if the elections are held on party basis. Thus, in keenly contested elections, the defeated opposition may be able to secure majority through the backdoor if this suggestion of the Ashok Mehta Committee is implemented". So the committee did not recommend co-option of defeated women candidates but suggested reservations of 5 per cent of the posts of Sarpanches in each block for women.

The committee did not favour reservation of offices of Presidents of Panchayat Samithis in favour of women. It was felt that women should contest along with men for general seats.

3.11 **L. M. Singhvi Committee Report (1989)**

L. M. Singhvi Committee, constituted in 1989 was the first to stress on constitutional status to PRIs. The committee considered Gram Sabha as a base for decentralised democracy and viewed PRIs as self-government to facilitate people in participation of planning and implementation of RD Programmes. The main recommendation of the committee is that the Panchayati Raj Institutions should be constitutionally recognized, protected and preserved by the inclusion of a new chapter in the constitution.

3.12 **64th Constitutional Amendment**

The 64th Constitutional Amendment Bill, as regards representation of women, stated that "as nearly as may be" up to 30 per cent seats be reserved in favour of women in the membership of Panchayats at all the three levels. It did not provide for reservation of

chair positions, leaving such reservation permissible in favour of Scheduled Castes / Scheduled Tribes and Women if the state legislature wanted.

This proposed amendment gained importance for providing direct elections, making three tier system obligatory and providing for 30% reservation to women in Panchayati Raj Institutions. However, the bill could not achieve the status of Act.

The high power committees appointed by the Government of India from time to time have also deliberated upon women representation in local bodies and made some suggestions. Among these committees, the Committee on the Status of Women, which presented its report 'Towards Equality' in 1974 and the committee that prepared the National Perspective Plan in 1988 deserve special mention.

3.13 **Committee on the Status of Women (1974)**

The Committee on the Status of Women in India pointed out that the women are a different category and their problems and needs differ in socio – economic setting. To quote, “the women are a category by themselves and that their problems and needs differed according to socio-economic classes”.³¹

Iqbal Narain and V.M. Sirsikar, had studied the issue of women's political participation for the CSWI and drew the committee's attention to the wide gap between “symbolism and actuality” and the failure of political rights to bring about the desired changes in women's status.

The committee favoured the establishment of statutory All - Women Panchayats at the village level with autonomy and resources of their own for the management and administration meant for women and children development programmes. This is conceived as a transitional measure to break through the traditional attitudes that inhibited

most women in articulating their problems or participating actively in the local bodies. The committee recommended that to ensure viable relationship between the existing Gram Panchayats and the proposed Women's Panchayats, the chairman and secretary of both these bodies should be ex-officio members.

The emphasis laid by the committee on the representation of women in political institutions reiterated the argument in the debates on the 64th and 73rd Constitutional Amendments. This led to facilitating reservations to women at the grass roots level.

3.14 National Perspective Plan (1988)

The National Perspective Plan for Women among other issues, dwelt on political participation of women at the grassroots democratic institutions. The core group set up by the Government of India to prepare the plan pointed out that political power and access to position of decision making and authority are critical prerequisites for women's equality in the process of nation building.³² The recommendations of the committee are as follows.

- (1) Reservation of 30 percent of seats for women in all rural local self-governing bodies at all levels from the Village Panchayats to the Zilla Parishads;
- (2) Reservation of 30 percent of the executive heads of all bodies from Gram Panchayats to Zilla Parishads for women; and
- (3) Declaration of a certain percentage of constituencies in the lower tiers of Panchayats as exclusively women's constituencies and all executive positions in a certain number of territorial jurisdictions are to be reserved for women candidates.

The state sponsored national / regional conferences on panchayats also advocated reservation for women in the panchayats.

The need for increasing representation of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions is realised in Governmental circles and Non-Governmental circles (NGOs). This has led to thinking about structural and functional changes in the system of Panchayati Raj. The failure to hold regular election to Panchayati Raj bodies, inadequate representation to the weaker sections like Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women, inadequate financial resources and devolution of powers and responsibilities to the PRIs have received special attention of the central government. This resulted in the introduction of 64th Constitutional Amendment 1989, on May 15, by the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi himself. In 1989 he coined the slogan “power to people” and pioneer in getting a grant of constitutional status to Panchayati Raj Institutions.

3.15 Status of Women in Panchayats in Different States

The pattern relating to representation to women in Panchayati Raj Institutions in different states varied before the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. The position existing in some states could be examined.

The Mysore Village Panchayats and Local Boards Act, 1959 had provided reservation of two seats for women at Village and Taluka levels. The Karnataka Zilla Panchayat, Taluka Panchayat Samitis, Mandal Panchayats and Nyaya Panchayats Act of 1983 provided reservation of 25 per cent seats for women in both the Zilla Panchayats and Mandal Panchayats. This was a major initiative in favour of women. The Act attracted considerable attention and was treated as pacesetter for subsequent developments at the national level.³³

The State of Orissa introduced 30 per cent reservation for women in the membership of the panchayats. The state of Maharashtra made changes in 1991 by

introducing a 30 per cent reservation for women in the membership of the Panchayats. The Kerala State has also introduced 30 per cent reservation for women in Panchayats on the same lines of Orissa and Maharashtra states before 1993.³⁴

3.16 **National Commission on Women**

The women's movement gained further momentum under the leadership of late Rajiv Gandhi. For the first time, the Government of India have set up a separate department on women. In pursuance of the proposals of the U.N. Committee on the Status of Women, the 'National Commission on Women', was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1990.

Participation of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) has been considered as the most effective instrument to remove their inequality, invisibility and powerlessness. All Women's Organisation in India, which met successively under the leadership of Mrs. Margaret Alva, Minister of Women's Development, gave their considered opinion that women should have 50 per cent representation on the Panchayats. But 33 per cent representation was agreed upon and this was incorporated in the 73rd Amendment Act in 1993.

The 73rd Constitution Amendment Act, 1993 provides that not less than one-third of the elected members should be women. Besides, not less than one-third Chairpersons at the different tiers (i.e., Village, Block, and Zilla) or Panchayat should also be reserved for women. This is a landmark in the history of women's empowerment in decision-making in the political process in the country.

3.17 Status of Women in the 73rd Constitutional Amendment

The Minister of State for Rural Development while introducing the bill for 73rd Amendment in 1992 had stated that “we have provided for at least one third of the total seats at every level. Considering the fact that women constitute nearly half the population, even this reservation can be considered inadequate; but the honourable members will agree that it is significantly more than what has been attempted so far in most of the states.”³⁵

The states have restricted themselves to giving only the minimum mandated one-third reservation for women in Panchayat Membership and the Chairpersons. Some states provided reservations in the position of Vice-Chairperson also. The state of Orissa provided the post of Vice - Chairperson to a woman if the Chairperson’s post is held by a man. Similarly, Assam State made a provision that a woman should be made Vice-Chairperson if the chairperson’s post is held by a man. In West Bengal, the Vice - Chairperson’s post is reserved for Scheduled Castes / Scheduled Tribes and women on the same lines for the posts of chairpersons.³⁶

The states of Karnataka and Maharashtra made an innovation i.e., the rotating the posts of Chairpersons for twenty months and one year respectively. Thus, one tenure of Panchayat of five years will have three or five chairpersons limiting the scope of developing sufficient leadership and possibility of showing performance.³⁷

3.18 Panchayati Raj in Andhra Pradesh

Andhra Pradesh is one of the few states to introduce the system of PR. The three-tier system recommended by B.R. Mehta Committee has been set up early 1959. The PRIs

in Andhra Pradesh are known as Zilla Parishad, Mandal Parishad and Gram Panchayat. Expansion of middle level bodies took place in 1986.

According to the Andhra Pradesh Gram Panchayat Act of 1964 one seat was reserved for women if the total strength of Panchayat members was seven or less, and two seats if the total seats were nine or more. Three seats were to be reserved for women if the strength is between 10 – 15 and 4 seats if the strength is more than 15.³⁸

It should be noted that the GP Act ensured between 22-25% representation to women in PRIs. Till 1986, representation to women in the middle and district level PRIs was governed by A.P Panchayat samithies and Z.P Act of 1959 and 1986. During this period co-option of two women for each Panchayat Samithi, in addition to possibility of women members finding representation through election was followed. A standing committee of 7 members called Committee for Women Welfare, which was also in charge of Child Welfare, was provided in each Samithi.³⁹

It was also provided that on the Standing Committee for Education at least one woman representative should be there. The Committee on Women Welfare got amalgamated with the Committee for Social Welfare in 1976. The provisions relating to representation to women in Zilla Parishads and their Standing Committees were similar to those concerning Panchayat Samithies.

In the year 1986, some developments regarding women's representation in PRIs were made. The A.P Mandala Praja Parishads, Zilla Parishads and Zilla Pranalika Abhivruvuddi Sameeksha Mandals Act 1986 provided for reservation of 9 percent of the total number of offices of the chairpersons of Zilla Praja Parishads, Presidents of Mandal Praja Parishads to women.⁴⁰ Thus the Act ensured some percentages of key positions to

women. The Act has also reconstituted the Standing Committee on Women Welfare and emphasised that a majority of its members should be women. Thus, Andhra Pradesh is the first state in India to reserve positions of Chairpersons to women.

In 1992 B. P. R. Vithal committee was appointed to study and make recommendations on the structure, content and mode of elections to PR bodies in the state. The committee made many recommendations. It recommended for Women Welfare Committee at the Samithi level. With the recommendations of this committee, the elections of Panchayati Raj bodies were postponed. Government enacted the Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act, 1994 on 21 April in conformity with the 73rd Constitutional Amendment.

3.19 **Post 73rd Constitutional Amendment Developments**

The Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act, 1994 replaced the Andhra Pradesh Gram Panchayats Act, 1964 and the Andhra Pradesh Mandala Praja Parishads, Zilla Praja Parishads and Zilla Pranalika Abhivrudhi Sameeksha Mandals act, 1986. The 1994 act provided for a three-tier structure i.e., Gram Panchayat at the Village level, Mandal Parishad at the Mandal level and Zilla Parishad at the District level. The Andhra Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act of 1994 provided for one-third reservation to women in membership and chair positions in Gram Panchayats, Mandal Panchayats and Zilla Parishads.

It is clear that there has been considerable uncertainty regarding the percentage of seats to be allotted for women in the PRIs.

* * *

References

-
- 1 Vidya, V. C. (1997), *Political Empowerment of Women at The Grassroots*, Kanishka Publishers, New Delhi, p.1
 - 2 Ibid.
 - 3 Ibid.
 - 4 Ibid., pp. 1 – 2.
 - 5 Ibid., p. 2.
 - 6 Ibid.
 - 7 Ibid.
 - 8 *UN Conferences on Women*, (2003), <http://atdweb.soe.berkeley.edu.quest/herstory/Beijing.html>, 17.07.2003, p. 1.
 - 9 Ibid., p. 2.
 - 10 *Backgrounds on UN's Conferences on Women*, (2003), <http://www.nineveh.com/uncon.htm>, 17.07.2003, p. 1.
 - 11 *Toolkit For Women*, (2003), <http://www.earthsummit2002.org/toolkits/women/un-doku/un-conf/nairobi.htm>, 17.07.2003, p. 1.
 - 12 *Why Do We Celebrate Women's Day?*, (2002), <http://alumni.iatp.org.ua/publicationsWHY%20DO%20WE%20CELEBRATE%20WOMEN.doc>, 17.07.2002, p. 2.
 - 13 Ibid.
 - 14 *Fourth World Conference on Women: Platform for Action*, (2003), <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/decision.htm>, 17.07.2003, p. 1.
 - 15 Ibid.
 - 16 Ibid., p. 2.
 - 17 *Report of the World Summit for Social Development*, (1995), Copenhagen 6 – 12, March, gopher://gopher.undp.org/oo/unconfs/wssd/summit/off/a..9.en, 17.06.03, p. 1.

-
- 18 *Women in National Parliaments*, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn.e/classif.htm>, 07.08.2003, pp. 1 – 5.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Women's Environment and Development Organisation (WEDO) Programme, (2003), *Gender & Governance>50/50 Campaign: Women Making a Difference*, http://www.wedo.org/fact_sheet_2.htm. 07.08.2003, pp. 1 - 5.
- 21 Biju, M. R (2003), *Politics of Women's Reservation in India*, South Asian Journal of Socio – Political Studies (SAJOSPS), Kollam, India, Vol. 3 No.2, June, p. 29.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Hymavathi, Challa. (1998), *Women Leaders in Political Parties: Pattern of Recruitment, Perceptions and Performance in Andhra Pradesh*, Ph. D Thesis, University of Hyderabad, (Unpublished) p. 54.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Women in India (2000) (A statistical Profile), *Women in Decision Making in India States*, Planning Commission (Social Development & Women's Programmes Division), Government of India, New Delhi. (Also see Annexure – IV)
- 26 Buch, Nirmala. (2000) 'Panchayats and Women', in George Mathew (ed.). *Status of Panchayati Raj in the States and Union Territories of India*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, p. 34.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Government of India, Ministry of Health. (1957), *Proceedings of the Third Meeting of the Central Council of Local – Government*, para 14.
- 30 Manikyamba, P. (1989), *Women in Panchayati Raj Structures*, Gian Publishing House, New Delhi, p. 15.
- 31 Government of India. (1974), *Towards Equality*, Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India, New Delhi, 7.115.
- 32 Government of India. (1988), *National Perspective Plan for Women 1988 – 2000 A.D.*, Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Akashdeep Printers, New Delhi, pp. 156 – 157.
- 33 Buch, Nirmala. (2000), op.cit., p. 38.

-
- ³⁴ Ibid.
- ³⁵ Government of India. (1992), *Lok Sabha Debates*, Vol. XVI, No. 9, 1 December, Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi, p. 716.
- ³⁶ Buch, Nirmala. (2000); op.cit., p. 39.
- ³⁷ Ibid.
- ³⁸ Section 9, 3 (A) Andhra Pradesh Gram Panchayat Act 1964.
- ³⁹ Section 14, sub section 3 of the A.P Panchayat Samithies and Zilla Parishad Act as amended in 1963.
- ⁴⁰ Section – 5 sub section (2, b) the A.P Mandal Praja Parishad, Zilla Parishad and Zilla Pranalika Abhvrুদ্ধိ Sameeksha Mandals Act, 1986 as amended in 1987.

* * *

Chapter – IV

Review of Literature

Review of literature helps to identify the present trends, find the changing patterns and identify the running threads. In this chapter, it is proposed to give details of some findings relating to the role of women in Panchayati Raj. There is a plethora of literature available on Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), their structures and functioning in the country. These studies serve as the background material for a researcher to understand the Panchayati Raj System as a whole.

The literature available on women in rural local government after the implementation of 73rd Constitutional Amendment is quite sizeable. This includes Government reports, reports of team investigations and studies conducted by interested public citizens, research scholars, bureaucrats and academicians.

The Government of India report (1974) 'Towards Equality', the first major attempt to review and evaluate data on women's role, rights and opportunities in the wake of planned development mentions that a majority of women are very far from enjoying rights and opportunities guaranteed by the Constitution. In general the report stressed on the need for political participation and representation of women in political institution. As noted, the committee recommended the establishment of statutory women's panchayats at the village level with autonomy and resources to manage and execute welfare and development programmes for women and children. The committee recommended it as a transition measure to break traditional attitudes that inhibit women from articulating their problems and to participate actively in local bodies.¹

The Government of India report (1988) 'National Perspective Plan for Women 1988 – 2000' made significant recommendations regarding representation of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions. Thirty - percent reservation to women at all levels of the

panchayats and certain percentage of women chief executives of panchayati raj bodies at all levels and also certain percentage of women exclusive constituencies at lower levels of panchayati raj. The committee suggested to the political parties to ensure at least 30 per cent of women representation in elections.²

Haxel D' Lima's (1983) study in Maharashtra State focuses on the role of women in Zilla parishad and Panchayati Samities. She focused on the social background, social awareness and their outlook of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions. She points out that majority of them were there because of their husbands and not because of their merit. She also points out that majority of them were illiterate and were unable to read the agenda items. She noticed that feeling of inferiority among women members of panchayats initially. Pointing out of their economic background she points out 70 percent of women members belonged to a large land – holding class owning 15 acres of land and more. In conclusion she says that by the end of the term a majority of women gained self – confidence and social awareness because of issues discussed in the meetings.³

Prabhat Dutta (1997) examines the problems and prospects of political empowerment of rural women through participation in panchayats. He says that women's empowerment in Panchayats depends upon the breaking of feudal – patriarchal structure in the villages. He suggests sustained campaign and vigorous efforts for creating awareness of rights and duties of women representatives. He concludes by saying that reservation to women members in panchayats is not end but a means to an end.⁴

Manikyamba (1989) examines the working of Panchayati Raj in general and the role of women as beneficiaries and benefactors in the socio-economic and political

processes of development in particular. Studying all three tiers in East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh, she finds that their education and participation are interrelated. The other findings are economic status gives a sense of confidence and encouragement for participation in PRIs and caste is a vital element in selecting members. She is of the opinion that given the opportunity, talented and interested women could play very effective leadership role in politics.⁵

Manikyamba (2003) in one of her recent writings says that the 73rd Constitutional Amendment is an achievement of Indian Women's Movement. The Amendment is expected to provide bigger and better share to women in political process and a space for women in the male dominated public sphere and bring simple women in the task of governance. Though since the inception of Panchayati Raj, women's representation is recognised, the dilemma relating to the representation to women and the manner of recruitment continued for a long time.⁶

Manikyamba mentions a few success stories of women Sarpanches. The successful women Sarpanches include Sudha Patel, Sarpanch of Changa village in Gujarat state, Koeli, Sarpanch of Nimuchana village in Rajasthan is a daring Sarpanch and Fathima Bhi, Sarpanch of Kalva village, Orvakal Mandal of Kurnool district in Andhra Pradesh State. Fathima Bhi received UNDP Fight Against Poverty Award from the hands of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. This is a great achievement of women in Panchayats.⁷

Manikyamba points out that women in Panchayats took up social issues. Suramanjari President of Panchayat Union of Katpadi, Vellore district in Tamil Nadu State facilitated inter-caste marriages and widow marriages. She was honoured as Outstanding Woman Panchayat Leader Award by the Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi.⁸

Regarding the negative impact of the amendment, she says, women in panchayats are facing threats and violence and humiliation by the men with active cooperation from the officials. Mainly the upper caste men were not able to adjust to the condition of Sechduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes women becoming the Sarpanches of Gram Panchayats. Poolwathi, Sarpanch of Brmari Gram Panchayat in Hosanagabad district of Madhya Pradesh State belongs to the Scheduled Caste. The Rajputs, the upper caste people of that village put her in exile because 'her presence in the village is a discomfort to them and hence forced her to sell her house and leave the village. The Upa Sarpanch assures her saying that 'every thing will be O. K. provided you don't enter the village'.⁹

Manikyamba is optimistic about the future of women in Panchayats. She says 'women in Panchayats have moved from the innocence to strength, from reluctant entry to assertion and from passive to active role performance'.¹⁰

Bhargava and Subha (1995) studied the participation of women in PRIs in pre and post 73rd Constitutional Amendment Period in Karnataka State. In the pre 73rd Constitutional Amendment era, 25 percent of reservation was provided to women. So a large number of women made an entry into political arena hither to untouched to a great extent. The study points that the problems were enormous. At the Mandal and Village levels, the political parties found difficult to locate women for contest. But the political parties were not prepared for this mobilisation. As a result, the influential and dominant castes inducted their women into the Panchayats and few women asserted their position and participated in decision making.¹¹

Regarding the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, the study says statutory representation is the first step in the promotion of political participation and the

amendment is the greatest event for women's empowerment. In the post amendment era, response of women in some places is overwhelming and kidnaps, forced withdrawal of the nomination of women by men during elections are seen. Exceptional women fought and won the seats. The other findings are women members were accompanied by male members of the family and in some cases participated in deliberations. Discomfort of women members to sit on the chair in front of village elders is noted. The study recommends the training to improve women's participation in PRIs.¹²

Jayalakshmi (1995) applying clinical sociological theory says, 'empowered women make meaningful commitments and undertake effective, goal-oriented activities that they choose for themselves'. She points out that Aristotle and other classical political writers articulated that women are incompetent to engage in political activities and made a place for males and she mentions that conceptual framework of contemporary western political thought is gender-myopic. She advises to women saying that women should act on their strength of being women and make women's visibility in politics. Women should be politically visible, she adds.¹³ Pointing out the failure of women to organise themselves, she says that the women from weaker sections are hierarchical and stratified and unorganised and for this reason, they fail to articulate their interests and fail to participate actively in decision making process. Referring to the various studies on PRIs she points out the domination of dominant castes in panchayats. Regarding Seventy – Third Constitutional Amendment she says, 'a silent revolution and a phase of liberation, freedom and equity in women's political participation'.¹⁴

Ilaben Jani (1995) identifying the differences between boys and girls points out that female children are secondary children and she mentions many factors contributed towards

gender inequality in India. She says provision of reservation in Seventy – Third Constitutional Amendment brought recognition to the role of women in decision – making process in national development. She feels that the amendment brings gender equity in the new panchayat system but only steadily.¹⁵

Roshini (1996) examines the strategies for women's development to increase their participation in decision making and in various developmental programmes. Regarding the participation of women in PRIs, she says, gender equality strengthens the structure of grassroots democracy and brings feminine perspective to the processes of planning, policy formulation and execution of Rural Development Programmes. She points out that to achieve the objectives of Panchayati Raj, more realistic and effective legislative measures are necessary. She concludes that by providing powers to the people and women at grass-roots level, it is possible to implement Rural Development Programmes effectively.¹⁶

Susheela Kaushik (1996) points out that reserving seats for women and Scheduled Castes and Tribes has sent waves of enthusiasm and hopes among the weaker sections of Indian society. Focussing on women, she mentions that women are gearing up for challenge to enter in politics in the spirit of self-governance as committed citizens. She says that training to women members is needed to fulfil the gaps on issues like local government, functions, the intricacies of planning and management and the resolution of public and private challenges and tensions. Training should be imparted before and after the elections, she suggests.¹⁷

Vaidya (1997) examines the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in women's development for effective participation in decision-making process and for change in behaviour and attitudes of rural women after their entry into panchayats. The study finds

that women take a longer time to prove equally capable as men. The study points out that the policy of reservation for women is not an end but a step forward in promoting women's participation in the grassroots democracy.¹⁸

Susheela Kaushik (1998) focuses on the background and experience of women representatives in Panchayats in six states i.e., Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. A majority (74 percent) is from the age group of 20-40 and female candidates were put up by the villagers or by family members or the political parties or political persons. In the first term, the female candidates experienced character assassination, insults and mental cruelty from the family members and community. Some chairpersons faced violent consequences like sexual harassment from the male members and bureaucracy and male members. The women were looked at first as women and later, representatives. Mentioning the positive aspects of one-third representation, she says that 'all caste women worked together although in some instances upper caste women didn't cooperate with lower caste women'. She notes that according to women representatives in panchayats, 'reservation is the only the way women can enter and sustain themselves in politics'.¹⁹

Poornima and Vyasulu (1999) explain the hurdles in political participation of women in PRIs resulting from their limited mobility, domestic responsibilities and historical prejudices. Referring to the six case studies, they point out the positive attitude exhibited by the women members by overcoming humiliation and discrimination by the male members in Panchayats. They are optimistic about the future and say that the women in Panchayati Raj participate more in decision making and bring changes in decentralised governance.²⁰

Nirmala Buch (2000) focuses on women in Panchayats in the colonial period and after Independence i.e., pre and post Seventy – Third Constitutional Amendment. Focussing on women in Panchayats in the colonial period, she says that women were given neither voting nor candidature in panchayats. After Independence, women were given token representation. This trend continued till the implementation of the Seventy – Third Constitutional Amendment except in a few states.²¹

Nirmala Buch points out that in the post Seventy – Third Constitutional Amendment era, a majority of women were illiterate and a large percentage is from lower socio-economic strata. They are comparatively younger and predominantly first-generation entrants to political life. Referring to studies on Seventy – Third Constitutional Amendment, she points out that despite negative incidents, women improved in their perceptions, recognition, respect, status, confidence, levels of mobility, exposure and increased their political aspirations. Pointing out negative aspects, she says, rotation deprives women who performed better in panchayats. She urges civil society and women's movements to support women's emerging leadership in rural local bodies.²²

Buch Nirmala (2000) focuses on the positive implications of 73rd Constitutional Amendment. She says that the 73rd Amendment is a watershed in providing opportunity to women to participate in political process. But there are prejudices and reservations about women's political participation and mindset has not changed. She mentions that beyond one-third, reservation to women was not extended by any state.²³ Referring to 73rd Amendment she says, it provided opportunity to wider representation to women of different socio-economic background and have sensitive to the needs and concerns of the poor. She says, 'wider representation and participation of women from poorer sections and

those who have hitherto remained marginalised in the public sphere bring a qualitative change in the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions'.²⁴

Nirmala Buch mentions that ability to transform the nature of power and political institutions depends on commitment, enthusiasm and resources available to them. At present, the obstacles are illiteracy, lack of information networks or previous experience of running these institutions. She suggests training as an important aspect to empowerment. She is of the opinion that absence of training results in their dis empowerment and not empowerment. The principal goal of the new Panchayati Raj is poverty eradication and representation to women in Panchayats is a step towards to eradicate poverty.²⁵

Nirmala Buch (2003) focuses on participation and the levels of participation particularly in the context of one-third representation provided in the 73rd Amendment. She speaks of traditional Panchayats and the evolution of the institution of panchayats after independence from Balwantaray Mehta Committee's report of 1957 till the passing of 73rd Constitutional Amendment. Referring to 73rd Constitutional Amendment, she says, it broadened the scope of political participation at grassroots level by providing a space for politically marginalised sections, women and weaker sections.²⁶ Women's seclusion, lack of independent mobility, social practices and family ideology are the four constraints to women's effective participation to her. Referring to studies on participation of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions, she points out that women have shown tremendous leadership in participation and in management of Panchayati Raj Institutions in the interest of the local community. There are also experiments where associations of members and chairpersons of Panchayats have been developed to explore common issues for their effective participation.²⁷

Rama Devi (2000) former Governor of Karnataka State who was involved in the drafting of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment is a strong supporter of reservations for women in Panchayats. She says that the great social engineering of the century, providing 33 percent reservation for women in panchayats is a positive aspect. She expresses that the husbands or brothers or father-in-laws accompanying the women Panches is a temporary phenomenon and men themselves will withdraw when women start working independently.²⁸

Regarding women's problems in panchayats, Rama Devi referred to one instance when a woman Pradhan was asked about the problems in Panchayats. The Pradhan replied "women face problems because they are women". She was the Pradhan and the Upa Pradhan was a man. The Upa Pradhan believed that he was at a higher level than her because he was a man and that his voice should prevail on hers. Thus, men try to bully women even though, constitutionally men are supposed to take orders from women if women are in senior positions to men. On the contrary, men, even in junior positions, try to order women around. She says that these are the results of prejudices and patriarchal attitudes.²⁹

Rama Devi feels that when women realises power and taste it, they control decision-making. She stresses on training women representatives to articulate their thoughts in a systematic manner. She feels that this is a golden era for representative democratic local governance at the grassroots level to eradicate poverty. She concludes by saying that democracy should reach up to the family i.e., equal participation and equal partnership of men and women in every sphere of life.³⁰

Shabana Azmi (2000) points out that political empowerment of women is necessary because women work at home and outside the home and become knowledgeable about challenges at home and outside. Women in political process at higher level have come into power because of their family affiliation with politics or some women came with dalit agenda. So their mindset was not attuned with women's agenda and have no concern for women's needs. So real political empowerment requires empowering women who have concern for women's agenda and women's needs.³¹ —

Aineal O' Donoghue (2000) focuses on equality. She says that women across the globe face many difficult challenges and struggles, which can take many different forms'. She mentions that 'equal participation in decision making is a central concern of women in the globe'. In India, women in Panchayats are in the forefront of this struggle i.e., equal participation in political decision-making process.³²

Premajam (2000) focuses on the implications of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments. She says that these amendments are revolution of great significance. She mentions that although the Constitution guaranteed political equality, there is discrimination between men and women on the basis of sex and political empowerment remained elusive. To her, even after four decades of Independence, it became imperative that reservations was accepted as a starting point to bring women into the mainstream of political activity and women's organizations have fought relentlessly to achieve representation in Panchayats.³³

According to the Premajam, poverty, male domination over decision making, taking women for granted, confining them for domestic chores, absence of recognition of women's role are among the hindering factors for women uplift. This situation makes it

imperative that women should participate in decision making. She suggests training to women representatives to help them in improving their performance in Panchayats.³⁴

Mohanty (2000), focussing on one-third representation to women in panchayats refers to empirical studies in the states of Orissa, West Bengal and Maharashtra. He says that elected women representatives are more concerned with the supply of drinking water, electricity and construction of roads which enhance the quality of life in villages. But he regrets that the percentage of women involved in development process is not very significant due to constraints like absence of exposure to public life, illiteracy and complex language of schemes and bitter attitude of the officials.³⁵

Referring to participation of women representatives, Mohanthy says, 'in Gram Sabha meetings, the women sarpanches and ward members either sit silently or when they talk nobody takes them seriously'. He suggests simplification of procedures, delegation of powers, sensitization and capacity building of women representatives to perform better.³⁶

Pande (2001), examining the political participation of women in Panchayats in Uttar Pradesh, says that awareness of rights and duties and participation are higher at the district level than at the village level. The suggestions of Pande are training, incentives to outstanding women, honorarium and Travelling Allowance to women members for attending meetings.³⁷

Ramesh Kumar (2001) points out that woman contests because she is somebody's wife, sister or daughter. After election, woman becomes a proxy candidate and depends upon the man who set her up for election. The women Sarpanches from weaker sections face more problems like non-co-operation of bureaucracy at the village level and functioning of bureaucracy according to the whims of Ex-Sarpanches. He says, 'the Ex-

Sarpanches who fail to become Sarpanches due to reservation give more problems to the women Sarpanches'. Kumar recommends training and capacity building to women in Panchayati Raj to perform better.³⁸

Stephen's (2001) study argues that the staggering presence of women alters the relations in family, community, market and the state and contributes to their overall empowerment in society. To him, empowerment leads to transformation of existing political culture, which is deeply entrenched in corruption, criminalisation and patriarchal values'. But women from marginalised sections face gender, caste and class constraints leading to their dummy roles. Stephen also mentions that offering favours for withdrawal of nominations and instigating husband to discourage aspiring women contestants and upper caste influence on dalit women.³⁹

Stephen says, "it is only when threats to women's survival are reduced that they start prioritizing their strategic gender interests, such as by exercising political power until fighting the multifaceted oppression arising out of caste, class, ethnicity and gender. Even when women do get elected, they require basic information on the functioning of the panchayat to perform to their fullest capacity, especially in an environment that may not be quite supportive. They also need to be sensitized to class, caste and gender divisions, which marginalise the poor, and especially women. Balancing the tension between their roles and responsibilities in the panchayat and within their families is another area wherein they may require help".⁴⁰

Stephen mentions that training helped the women members to perform better. The post training interactions with women revealed many positive aspects. The women became independent members in functioning, selection of beneficiaries for anti – poverty

Programmes became just and fair and prevented illegal activities of the upper caste men. The main point is that they enhanced their self image and esteem, particularly changing their dress from common clothes to ceremonial functions clothes and asserted their rights on par with men.⁴¹

Ammu Joseph (2001) discusses the use of modern technology in empowering the grassroots women. She says that 'first-time participants requires inputs in the form of both information and political consciousness in order to fulfil their responsibilities as elected representatives of their rural communities. Women found themselves handicapped by their domestic responsibilities, low esteem, poor social status, inexperience with leadership and in many cases, non-cooperatin or even outright hostility from family members and fellow elected representatives'.⁴² —

Ammu Joseph says low status, relative powerlessness of women in society, ignorance about the political system, inexperience are among the stumbling blocks for women's active roles in politics. Imparting training through modern technology is a step forward in empowering the women in political process i.e., providing meaning to the reservation provided to the women in Panchayats'.⁴³

An NIRD study (2002) points out that a majority of women are still very far from enjoying the rights and opportunities guaranteed to them by the Constitution because of their inability to produce an impact on the political process. This is due to inadequate attention to political education and mobilisation by political parties and women's organisations. The failure to mobilise women is because political parties tend to see women as appendages of males and women's leadership is diffused and confused with inequalities that affect the status of women in social, economic and political spheres. This

shows that constitutional equality is still a distant objective. The study notes that the 73rd Constitutional Amendment empowered women politically. Regarding participation of women in new Panchayats the study presents positive and negative impact of the implementation of the amendment.⁴⁴

On the positive side women are performing their responsibilities and work with great courage by overcoming socio-cultural factors that obstruct them. The negative impact is intimidation of women representatives by their male colleagues, village elders and their own family members. In many cases, women representatives are accompanied by husbands and male relatives. Women from Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes or other weaker sections have remained as untouchables and hurdles to attain socially acceptable positions continue. The study is optimistic about women's political empowerment and says that it brings radical changes through the capacity building of women representatives to enhance their participation in development process.⁴⁵

Saxena (2002) argues that the Panchayats are searching for a role model, where all members men and women participate in decision making i.e., action and responsibility. Regarding women's empowerment, he emphasises that authorities should evince interest in women's participation. For this, he suggests that to empower rural women, the land should be recorded in the name of farmer women. Otherwise, the women who feed the world go themselves hungry. Saxena suggests that change in laws in favour of women and empowering them in decision making improves their status.⁴⁶

Mathew (2002) says that women in Panchayats are facing atrocities. He refers to three case studies. Gundiyabhai, Sarpanch of Pipra village in Tikamgarh district (Madhya Pradesh) was from Chamar Caste (Scheduled Caste). She was attacked by the upper caste

men on her way back home after hoisting the national flag. In Orissa, a woman Sarpanch was stripped off the robes by her own panchayat members because she refused to part with Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRY) funds for Dussehra celebrations. In Tamil Nadu, Leelavathy, the Madurai Municipal Councillor was hacked to death for bringing pipe water to her constituency, thus causing serious loss to the contractors who supplied drinking water by tankers. Mathew says that not a day passes without stories of atrocities on women elected members.⁴⁷

Mathew mentioning about the positive impact of the 73rd amendment says, women members, when convinced of the common good, stand up to be counted and courageously act without caring for the consequences. He says, Fatima Bi, Sarpanch of Kalva Gram Panchayat in Orvakal Mandal of Kurnool district receiving the UNDP award for “Race Against Poverty” is an achievement against several odds. He points out that failures are far more than successes. But women have become a big force in local bodies and can contribute for ensuring food security i.e., production, distribution and all other aspects.⁴⁸

Palanithurai (2002) says that training helps in getting awareness of roles and responsibilities and dealing with officials of PRIs. Pointing out men’s perceptions of women in PRIs, he says, ‘men of local bodies consider the women leaders as incompetent and inefficient’. Pointing out men’s behaviour, he says that in the meetings, men leaders never bother about decorum, decency and etiquette and use freely unparliamentary words without minding the presence of women members and wherever the female members are weak, the male members dominate the proceedings’.⁴⁹

Palanithurai, mentioning about women’s perceptions of men in Panchayati Raj Institutions says that male leaders mislead women members. So women are forced to

depend on male members of the family. The officials, he says, while dealing unethical things (corrupt practices), prefer the male members of the women leaders. Due to this, the male family members of women participate in the meetings. Regarding male family members' perception of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions, he says that whatever be the qualification of the women member though highly educated, men of the family think that women are not having enough skills to tackle the crisis situation and hence and the male members have a role to play. Wherever the seats are reserved for women and the husbands are denied and in these cases, husband gives directions to the wife.⁵⁰ He finds that women with high socio-economic background and little educational qualification, having self-esteem, deal better with officials, but these are few in rural local bodies. He says that trained women are fearless, articulate and active and come out from the shackles of the male members and performs better.⁵¹

Purohit, Arun Chaturvedi and Sanjay Lodha (2002) mention that 'due to large number of women representatives, new power centres had emerged in the State of Rajasthan'. Most of these women representatives are first time holders of public power and have improved in terms of their performance and understanding of wider social and political issues. Women PR representatives, who have family linkages in PR institutions, have better understanding of issues involved in administrative matters as compared to those who have no such linkages. Similarly, women functionaries who have active association with NGOs of the area, have better understanding of the social, political and economic issues.⁵²

Women at the lower levels i.e., at Gram Panchayat level face serious problems and suffer for being women. At this level, interference of family members and others in the

functioning of Gram Panchayats at the Gram Sabha level are more than that at higher levels. The study points out that 'this is a gender bias and will not go easily in a traditional society of Rajasthan where the vestiges of feudal society still exist'. Yet some women Panchayati Raj functionaries have shown courage and capabilities while discharging their responsibilities.⁵³

Referring to performance, the above mentioned study points out that 'the performance of women Pradhans at Panchayat Samiti level is better than at the Gram Panchayat level'. Better educational qualifications enhanced their performance and provided opportunity to enter higher levels of politics. 'Women Zilla Pramukhs are more efficient than their male counterparts'. Two women Zilla Pramukhs belonging to tribal groups in Udaipur division soon developed confidence after some time in office and amply demonstrated that they had good understanding of Panchayat matters'. The study suggests intensive training to provide better results.⁵⁴

Sisodia's (2002) empirical study conducted in the state of Madhya Pradesh notes that 'the women were considered backward class because of their negligible representation in political process and it is generally believed about rural women that their responsibilities are confined merely to kitchen and farms'. This prolonged myth is changed as a result of a big number of women joining the Panchayat elections. The study points out that most of the women representatives have entered in the political process for the first time. But many of them in general, including Other Backward Castes category belonged to families, which had traditional political base. Poor performance of women could be attributed to the backwardness, long political isolation interference of male members of their families,

absence of required exposure, lack of experience and non co-operative attitude of other Panchayati Raj representatives and government officials.⁵⁵

The study points out that in some cases, the interference is gradually declining and with the passage of time women's leadership became more assertive and independent. Sisodia suggests promotion of literacy, removal of complex feelings, change in the attitude of males and officials to strengthen women's participation and performance.⁵⁶

Radha and Chowdhury's (2002) empirical study in Kerala State focuses on the background and participation of women. They points out that women above fifty years of age have more time to work in Panchayats because by fifties, many of their burdens are relieved. So these women utilise their leisure time in Panchayats. Linking education with participation they say, more educated women participation and performance is better in Panchayats. Referring to social background, higher caste women's participation is higher than that of the lower caste women.⁵⁷

Regarding political background, women with political experience are having more awareness and better participation than first time entrants. In general, women members are influenced by the opinion of male members, Even in a group of five members in which four are women, man shapes the general opinion of group' they say. Women are yet to display self-confidence in Panchayats except in rare cases. Representation in Panchayats is not luck but continuity in women's empowerment process. They suggest capacity building, interaction among women members across Panchayats in district and state to enhance their awareness and political participation.⁵⁸

Anjali (2002) focuses on the status of dalit women in Panchyats. She refers to two instances from Betul district of Madhya Pradesh State. She points out that 'dalit women in

panchayats face violence and rape just because they are untouchables. One woman was paraded naked with bells tied around her neck on the allegation that she had relationship with a man. But nothing was done to the men who raped her.⁵⁹ A Dalit woman is raped because she has contested and won an election to a Panchayat defeating an upper caste rival'. So she points out that 'reservations in Panchayats has not brought any change in the social status of women'.⁶⁰

Sandip Das (2002) refers to several case studies in Himachal Pradesh. Women in Panchayats are less educated and more disadvantaged women, but exposed the social stigmas relating to women's ability in exercising power. The impediments in exercising the power are lack of knowledge and awareness of roles, duties and responsibilities. Sandip suggests awareness generation and capacity building to women in PRIs to perform better.⁶¹

Arun Mehta (2003) correlates low level of representation in political institutions to the high number of women in poverty. Quoting from UNDP's 1995 Human Development Report, Mehta says that "social access is a major investment to human development and equal access by women and men to health and education contributes to shaping democratic practices and the well being of society".⁶²

He says that 'largely men are elected to the executive and legislative branches of government and hold the key to decision making and in deciding development priorities. The challenges that women face in the 21st century are related to mainstreaming of women, fixing priorities into development budget allocations, facilitating of women's voice in development arena by the planners and politicians, achieving the status from de jure to de facto and providing good governance through women's participation'.⁶³

According to the report of Hunger Project (2003) the 73rd Amendment is a threat to monopoly of power enjoyed by social and political elite's in Panchayats by bringing the most powerless members into the Panchayats. Women are found to be changing the nature of leadership by incorporating the values such as honesty, openness, patience, collective support, inclusion and accountability and have become key change agents for a new future for India.⁶⁴

Kripa and Ganesh Prasad (2003) say that women in Panchayats face three problems, low literacy and domination by the elites and the prevalence of patriarchal values. To overcome these problems and to bring awareness an action-oriented research project was taken. As a part of the project, they broadcasted 13 episode of a Kannada serial titled 'Namage Naave Wodeyaru' (We are our own masters). They conclude that this programme had an impact to develop positive attitude among women in Panchayats.⁶⁵

UNDP (2003) emphasizes on Special Training for Panchayat Women Members. Training should be need based, gender sensitive and should be taken as a campaign mode according to the UNDP.⁶⁶

Angana Parekh (2003), commenting on two-child norm policy in the states of Haryana, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh, he says that now the environment is discouraging women to participate in political process. About men Parekh says 'men use several means. They deny the number of children in the house, give wrong birth certificates, desert or send away the pregnant wife, divorce and allege infidelity to avoid disqualification'. The 'two' child norm discourages people at the bottom of the pyramid i.e., the women and poor and weaker sections. But women suffer

more consequences and the norm discourages the women with independent minds, courage and ambition. This policy hampers the very objectives of the Panchayati Raj which hopes to bring i.e., giving the power to the women and weaker sections.⁶⁷

Deepak Tewari (2003) says that 'once shunned women with the 33 percent reservation making all the difference in Panchayats'. He points out that the new leadership of women representatives faces different problems like hostile bureaucracy and the high handed upper caste M.L.As from whom the power is slipping. Tewari quoted the instances of a Panchayat Secretary slapping a woman Sarpanch, when she came to hoist the national flag. Undemocratic removal of the same woman Sarpanch and the reinstatement of the secretary also took place.⁶⁸

Vimal Ahirwar, president of Tikamgarh district panchayat faced a threat from 'three Thakur Ministers' and a no-confidence motion. The officials and ministers are in hand-in-glove and politicians and officials have become two monsters of male domination. A woman Janapad President of Damoh district took bribe for signing documents. After election to Panchayats, women developed positive attitude of openness and also have become important because the decisions taken in the village meeting in the absence of women members are not valid.⁶⁹

Bharat Dogra (2003) provides several case studies from different states. Pushpa Rani, Pradhan of Atakfarm Panchayat in Dehradun district is known to resisting the demand of officials of their commission in developmental works. Sojar Bai of Ramtek Panchayat (Harda District of Madhya Pradesh) got suspended corrupt officials from their job. So women members are found to be more honest in managing the village funds. The women could successfully solve the disputes and also involve in developmental works.

Rajjo, a woman Sarpanch of Changa village of Anand district of Gujarat State is a dalit, illiterate and poor and also a blind. But the work done with the help of her friend adorned the entire village. Dogra's study confirmed that reservation makes difference and provides security to women from powerful vested interests that try to harm and harass them in various ways.⁷⁰

Perm Gopalam (2003) points out that the amendment is an impetus for women to enter formal political spaces and for providing tremendous opportunity for grassroots women's participation in planning and development. But despite large numbers of women in local governing bodies, gender issues were not addressed and women continue to be marginalised in local decision-making processes.⁷¹ She points out that women's participation and leadership with the support of women's collectives is changing the face of local governance. She concludes that, training and capacity building makes women 'gatekeepers of good governance'.⁷²

Shilpa Jain (2003) focuses on the reasons for reservations for women in political process. She says elected women serve as role models to young and old women and encourage them to participate in politics. It is matters of justice as women constitute fifty percent of the population and should not be absent from spheres of power. Elected women bring 'women's interests' to political sphere because men do not understand women's interests and male dominated political institutions either leave them off of the agenda or they act in a manner that indirectly or directly damages women's position. Elected women transform the culture of politics. The assumption is that women are more caring and cooperative individuals and less prone to factionalism and corruption. So women transform dirty politics into a more equitable and participatory politics.⁷³

Shilpa argues that throughout the world's representative democracies, despite the fact that across the board few women are present in formal political institutions, quotas for political representation are rare, if not non-existent. The political parties, who approved the 73rd Amendment in record time, argue that they are motivated by noble intentions i.e., "strengthen the position of the poor and weaker sections in rural India". But Jain argues that 'a majority (if not all) of political parties supported quotas for women, because they did not expect women's participation to be empowering. Instead, they assumed that women would take on a passive subdued role in the formal political sector and that women's weak presence would enable parties to easily dominate and forward their own agendas'.⁷⁴

Shilpa refers to descriptive representation (symbolic effect of quotas for women's representation), substantive representation (influence or impact of one's presence), transformative representation (impact of one's identity, meaning making systems one's world). She says descriptive and substantive representations are essentially external and personal transformative representation is internal. She points out that it is neglected by theorists and academics and rarely enters the vocabulary of political science'.⁷⁵

Shilpa refers to structural and socio - cultural constraints. The structural constraints are present in the laws themselves, in the mechanism of elections and in the processes. The rotation process is another constraint. In the socio-cultural constraints, negative stereotypes of women in rural areas and the hierarchical political party system affect women's representation. Incompetence and lack of merit are correlated with levels of literacy. Shilpa says that in Kerala State the party structure stifled women's political participation. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) acknowledge the need for the

presence of women in decision-making process, taking leadership roles with vocal participants.⁷⁶

Referring to the bright spots of women's representation she says that in one Panchayat in Rajasthan State, women expressed that 'they gained knowledge of public affairs and they realized that they too could do public work'. In Kerala State a majority of women representatives attend the Gram Sabha and saw themselves as community role models. She says that these small examples promote change in society.⁷⁷

Sara and Susanne's (2003) empirical study focuses on the obstacles to women to enter political sphere and decision-making in Gram Panchayats in Kerala State. They point out that political participation as a democratic right for women does not mean that they have same possibilities of entering the political field, as do men. Referring to Kerala model of development, they say 'high human development provided high social status to women but this has not been transformed into political empowerment'. The male-dominated society creates obstacles for women as men set rules and norms in the public arena.⁷⁸

As for the 73rd Amendment, they say that it is a step towards democratization at a grassroots level and has helped about one million women to enter into the public life. Referring to the positive impact of women's representation, they say 'women saw a new recognition and respect from family, neighbours and at the government office and family and neighbours are consulting them in various issues and problems. Women got invitations to weddings and most importantly their identity as some ones wife or daughter changed into an identity of their own person and name'. Referring to obstacles for participation of women in Gram Panchayats, they point out that men are an obstacle to

equal participation because they were afraid that women would getting positions in higher levels decreases male dominance. Men also realised that women were competent enough and this created jealousy among men. The male domination still persists because the norms of the society are set up up by men. The cultural norms of society overshadow the newly acquired awareness of political rights.⁷⁹

The electoral system i.e., rotation of reserved seats decreases women's chance to become re-elected. To Sara and Sussanne another obstacle is lack of support from political parties because political parties prefers men for open seats. Referring to the positive impact of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, they say 'women's representation unpacked the gender relations and transformed the quality of local self-government and political arena in Kerala State. Women's entry created change in the process and institutions of governance that affect policies and development of the state.'⁸⁰

Women's Environment Development Organisation Programme (2003), focusing on women's participation in the political process points out that women's participation enables prioritization of women's issues and implementation of women related programmes. The countries with more representation of women in the political process have benefited the women in their countries.⁸¹

Ranjit's (2003) study in Dehradun district of Uttarkhand State focuses on the positive implications of one-third representation provided to women by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. According to this study, women whether literate or illiterate or semi literate are gaining confidence to work in Panchayati Raj Institutions. Ranjit refers two cases where women exhibited confidence. Pushpa Rani, Sarpanch of Attock Farm Gram Panchayat got cancelled the police station posted in their village. She directed

the people of the village that all disputes should be settled in Gram Panchayat only. To the police she informed that cases relating to the village should be redirected to the Village Panchayat.⁸²

Nathu Begum, Sarpanch of Enfield Grant Panchayat, got applauses from even male members of Gram Panchayat for her sincerity, honesty and commitment. A local NGO, Rural Litigation and Entitlement Kendra (RLEK) is providing training to women members with support of UNDP and MORD Project known as Community Based Pro – Poor Initiatives (CBPPI). The training focuses on the rights, duties and methods of interacting with officials, public speaking, planning and implementation of Rural Development Programmes. Ranjit concludes by saying that ‘representation should accompany confidence building measures to articulate their concerns and make their voices heard in the centres of power’.⁸³

Devaki Jain (2003) says that one-third representation is an act of positive discrimination and exposed the political parties’ perception of women’s limited capacity for public office. Women in Panchayati Raj Institutions gained a sense of empowerment by asserting control over resources, officials and more importantly by challenging men. The Panchayati Raj Institutions have helped to change women’s perceptions of themselves and greater understanding of the working of politics in particular and importance of the political parties.⁸⁴

Women are changing governance by tackling issues of water, alcohol abuse, education, health and domestic violence and women are always in proximity to solve problems. The obstacles to women in Panchayati Raj Institutions are inadequate education, reproductive and productive roles, lack of self-confidence and cultural and

religious views. She suggests that women need information beyond technical training i.e., support to build solidarity amongst women and strengthening links between women's organisations and elected bodies.⁸⁵

Jagat Mehta (2003) points out that trained women representatives exhibit self-confidence, capacity for articulation and assertiveness. The training was imparted to the 47 women Panchayat representatives from isolated areas. These women have seen the train for the first time when they came to attend the training. The training was organised by the Vidya Bhavan Institute of Local Self - Government and Responsible Citizenship. After the training, women Sarpanches exhibited confidence and said "we will try to put an end to corruption and land encroachment on our village common lands". Few Gram Sarpanches said "we would not allow our husbands to guide us in discharging duties as Sarpanches". Mehta concludes by saying that women will save democracy for social justice.⁸⁶

Biju (2003) points out that in spite of the United Nations Economic and Social Council's endorsement that there should be 30 percent of women in all levels of decision making by 1995, globally women constitute only 10 percent in legislative bodies and less in Parliamentary positions. But he points out that the 73rd Constitutional Amendment is the most significant land mark in the journey of women's movement and he says that it facilitated the emergence of a young and talented leadership for active participation in the political process.⁸⁷

Biju says that for meaningful participation of women in the Panchayati Raj, the proportion of women's representation should be equal to the proportion of women's

population.⁸⁸ He concludes by saying that women in Panchayati Raj have a sense of involvement and commitment on the issues related to women.⁸⁹

The above would suggest that the problems faced by dalit women in Panchayati Raj Institutions are more than those of other women. There is a continuous conflict between male domination and female assertion. Preventive measures have not stopped but are increasing in number as well as in seriousness. The officials are acting as supporters of males instead of as change agents. The implementation of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment brought about a mixed bag of successes and failures. However, there is a clear indication of a march into the future.

* * *

References

- ¹ Government of India. (1974) *Towards Equality* - Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India', New Delhi, 7.115 – 7.117.
- ² Government of India. (1988), *National Perspective Plan for Women 1988 – 2000 A.D.*, Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Akashdedep Printers, New Delhi, pp. 156 – 157.
- ³ Hazel D. Lima, (1983) *Women in Local Government*, Concept Publishing, New Delhi.
- ⁴ Dutta, Prabhat. (1997) 'Political Empowerment of Rural Women in India', *Administrative Change*, Vol. XXIV, No. 2, January – June, pp. 129 – 148.
- ⁵ Manikyamba, P. (1989), *Women in Panchayati Raj Structures*, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, p.
- ⁶ Manikyamba. P (2003) 'The Numbers Dilemma: Success Stories and Manipulative Mechanisms', *South Asian Journal of Socio – Political Studies*, (SAJOSPS) Vol.3 No.2 June, p. 12. Kollam, India. pp. 12 – 18.
- ⁷ Ibid., p. 13.
- ⁸ Ibid., p. 14.
- ⁹ Ibid., pp. 16 – 17.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ Bhargava, B.S and Subha, K. (1995), 'Political Empowerment of Women: The Case of Karnataka's Experience in Panchayati Raj', in Jain S. P and Thomas W. Hochgesang, (ed.). *Emerging trends in Panchayati Raj (Rural Local Self-Government) in India*, NIRD, Hyderabad, pp. 103 – 119.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Jayalakshmi, K. (1995), 'Gender and Political Empowerment', in S. P. Jain and Thomas W. Hochgesang, (ed.). *Emerging Trends in Panchayati Raj (Rural Local Self- Government) in India*, NIRD, Hyderabad, pp. 121 – 126.

-
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Jani, Ilaben. (1995), 'Gender Issues in New Panchayati Raj System', in S. P. Jain and Thomas, W. Hochgesang. (ed.). *Emerging trends in Panchayati Raj (Rural Local Self - Government) in India*, NIRD, Hyderabad, pp. 127 – 129.
- 16 Nandal, Roshini. (1996), *Women Development and Panchayati Raj*, Spellbound Publications Private Limited, Rohtak.
- 17 Kaushik, Susheela. (1996), *Women and Panchayati Raj*, Har Anand Publications, New Delhi, pp. 51- 83.
- 18 Vaidya, V. C. (1997), *Political Empowerment of Women at the Grassroots*, Kanishka Publishers, New Delhi.
- 19 Kaushik Susheela (1998) *Women in Panchayats: Some Demystifications*, (unpublished), pp. 1 – 10.
- 20 Poornima and Vyasulu, Vinod. (2003), *Women in Panchyati Raj: Grassroots Democracy in India: Experience from Malgudi*, <http://magnet.undp.org/events/gender/india/VYASULU3.htm>. 14.07.2003.
- 21 Buch, Nirmala. (2000), 'Panchayats and Women', in George Mathew (ed.). *Status of Panchayati Raj in the states and Union Territories of India – 2000*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, pp. 34 – 41.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Buch, Nirmala. (2000), 'Decentralised Governance: Women's Participation and Poverty, Eradication' in Bidyut Mohanty, (ed.). *Women and Political Empowerment*, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi, pp. 78 – 88.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Buch, Nirmala. (2003), *Panchayats in India – Forum For Citizens Participation in Local Governance: Representation and Participation of Rural Women – Experience and Challenges*, <http://www.ciff.on.ca/Reference/documents/MX-936.1.files/Papers/Buch.htm>, 09/01/2003.

-
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Devi, Rama V. S. (2000), 'Towards the 73rd and 74th Amendments: Implications for Women', in Bidyut Mohanty, (ed.). *Women and Political Empowerment*, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi, pp. 18 – 28.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Azmi, Shabana. (2000), 'Women as Organised Agents for Poverty Eradication', in Bidyut Mohanty, (ed.). *Women and Political Empowerment*, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi, pp. 38 – 53.
- 32 Donoghue, Aingeal O. (2000), 'Salute to Women Elected Representatives of Panchayati Raj', in Bidyut Mohanty, (ed.). *Women and Political Empowerment*, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi, p. 77.
- 33 Premajam, A. K. (2000), 'Women as Decision – Makers', in Bidyut Mohanty, (ed.). *Women and Political Empowerment*, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi, pp. 133 – 136.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Mohanthy, Bidyut. (2000), 'Panchayats, Women and Poverty Eradication: Some Issues', in Bidyut Mohanty, (ed.). *Women and Political Empowerment*, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi, pp. 137 - 154.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Pande, G. S. (2001), *Political Participation of Women in India: Implementation of 73rd and 74th Amendments*, New Royal book Company, Lucknow.
- 38 Kumar, Ramesh. G. M. (2001), 'Local Government for Good Governance: Experience in Andhra Pradesh', in Hasnat Abdul Hye (ed.). *Governance: South Asian Perspectives*, The University Press Ltd, New Delhi, pp. 247 - 268.

-
- 39 Stephen, F. (2001), 'Empowering Women in Gram Panchayats Through Training', in Ranjani K. Murthy, (ed.). *Building Women's Capacities: Interventions in Gender Transformation*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, pp. 133 – 156.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 Ibid.
- 42 Joseph, Ammu. (2001), 'Grassroots Training Through Satellite Technology', in Ranjani K. Murthy, (ed.). *Building Women's Capacities: Interventions in Gender Transformation*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, pp. 157 – 171.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 National Institute of Rural Development. (2002), 'Women and Panchayati Raj' in *India Panchayati Raj Report*, Volume – 1, NIRD, Hyderabad, pp. 65 – 73.
- 45 Ibid.
- 46 Saxena, N. C. (2002), 'Land Rights to Women: Will Ensure Food Security', in Pradeep Chaturvedi, (ed.). *Women and Food Security: Role of Panchayats*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, pp. 15 – 17.
- 47 Mathew, George. (2002), 'Panchayati Raj and Food Security: Opportunities for Women's Participation', in Pradeep Chaturvedi, (ed.). *Women and Food Security: Role of Panchayats*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, pp. 26 – 30.
- 48 Ibid.
- 49 Palanithurai, G. (2002), 'The New Panchayati Raj System in Tamil Nadu', in Palanithurai, G (ed.). *Dynamics of New Panchayati Raj System in India*, (Volume – II, Select States), Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, pp. 131 – 155.
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 Ibid.
- 52 Purohit, B. R. Chaturvedi Arun and Lodha, Sanjay. (2002), 'Status of Panchayats in Rajasthan', in G.Palanithurai, (e.d). *Dynamics of New Panchayati Raj System in India* – (Volume – II, Select States), Concept publishing company, New Delhi, pp. 156 – 185.

-
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 Singh, Sisodia Yatindra. (2002), 'Panchayati Raj System in Madhya Pradesh', in G.Palanithurai, (ed.). *Dynamics of New Panchayati Raj System in India – (Volume – II, Select States)*, Concept publishing company, New Delhi, pp. 240 – 257.
- 56 Ibid.
- 57 Radha, S and Bulu Roy, Chowdhury. (2002), *Women in Local Bodies – Discussion Paper No. 40*, Kerala Research Programme on Local Level Development, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram pp. 20 – 40.
- 58 Ibid.
- 59 Mody, Anjali. (2002), *Their Tomorrow Never Comes*, The Hindu, 29.12.2002, pp. 16 – 17.
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 Das, Sandip. (2002), *Panchayati Raj: Women Panchayat Members Fight Against Rigid Values, Grassroots Feature Network*, http://www.reportpeople.org/issues_panchstory9.htm, 21.11.2002, pp. 1 – 5.
- 62 Mehta, Arun. (2003), AIDE MEMOIRE, *Women and Political Participation: 21st Century Challenges*, <http://arunmehta.freeyellow.com/page108.html>. 10.01.2003, pp. 1 – 5.
- 63 Ibid.
- 64 Hunger Project. (2003), *Panchayati Raj: Local Democracy in Action*, <http://www.thp.org/india.main.htm>, 11.07.2003, pp 1 – 6.
- 65 Kripa, A. P and Ganesh Prasad, G. S. (2002), *The Message of Panchayati Raj*, <http://www.mpinfo.org/english/policies/women/areas/htm>. 21.11.2002.
- 66 UNDP. (2003), *UNDP Indian News - Special Training for Panchayat Women Members i.e., Voices of Marginalised Sections*, <http://www.undp.org.in/UNDPNEWS/Dec2k1/Dec2k1/pg08.htm>. 11.07.2003.

-
- 67 Parekh, Angana. (2003)., *Weighted Against Women*, The Times of India, 09.08.2002, http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/com/cms,dll/html/comp/articleshow?art_id=18491241, 10.01.2003.
- 68 Tiwari, Deepak. (2002), *Meek No More*, <http://www.the.week.com98june07/life2.htm>, 31.10.2002.
- 69 Ibid.
- 70 Dogra, Bharat. (2002), *Panchayati Raj: Women Justify Reservation Policy in Panchayats*, Grassroots Feature Network, http://www.reportpeople.org/issues_panchstory9.htm, 21.11.2002.
- 71 Gopalam, Prema. (2003), *Developing Grassroots Women's Leader in Governance*, <http://sspindia.org/Developing%20Governance%20%20pdf>. 10.01.2003.
- 72 Ibid.
- 73 Jain, Shilpa. (2003), *Redefining the Politics of Presence: Women in Panchayati Raj Institutions in Rajasthan and Kerala*, http://www.wedo.org/fact_sheet_2.htm. 10/01/2003.
- 74 Ibid.
- 75 Ibid.
- 76 Ibid.
- 77 Ibid.
- 78 Anderson, Sara & Bohman Susanne. (2003), *Women's Political Participation in Kerala, South India – A Case Study Based on Obstacles Met When Entering the Political Sphere*, http://www.padrigu.gu.se/grundutildning/uppsatser/Andersson_Bohman_I, html versions of documents, 1/10/2003.
- 79 Ibid.
- 80 Ibid.

-
- ⁸¹ Women's Environment and Development Organisation (WEDO) Programme. (2003), *Gender & Governance 50/50 Campaign: Women Making a Difference*, http://www.wedo.org/fact_sheet_2.htm. 10.01.2003.
- ⁸² Dev, Ranjit. (2003), *Women Come To Power*, <http://www.undp.org/dpa/choices/2000/march/pg20htm>. 14.07.2003.
- ⁸³ Ibid.
- ⁸⁴ Jain, Devaki. (2003), *Panchayati Raj: Women Changing Governance*, <http://www.sdn.undp.org/gender/resources/mono5.html>. 14.07.2003.
- ⁸⁵ Ibid.
- ⁸⁶ Mehta, Jagat S. (2003), *Grassroots Democrats*, The Hindu, Sunday, 10.08.2003, pp. 4 & 6.
- ⁸⁷ Biju, M. R. (2003), *Politics of Women's Reservation in India*, South Asian Journal of Socio – Political Studies, (SAJOSPS). Kollam, India, Vol. 3 No. 2, June p. 28.
- ⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 36.
- ⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 38.

* * *

Chapter – V

Socio – economic and Political Background of Respondents

A study of the socio – economic and political background of people's representatives in panchayats is necessary and useful in several ways. It is useful to identify the type of people recruited into political roles, to understand the impact of recruitment its impact on perceptions and to establish links between background and perceptions and background and awareness.

The performance of people, to a considerable extent, depends upon the socio-economic conditions in which they have been brought up and live in. The socio-economic environment would also have an impact on their careers. A study of this helps in understanding the roots of the problems and in making fruitful suggestions for improvement.

This chapter proposes to examine the socio-economic and political background of women members in PRIs. The indicators are age, caste, educational qualification, primary occupation, economic status, political experience, party affiliation, experience in social service and factors that elevated to the present position.

5.1 Age

Age is one of the important indicators of background. It would influence the elegance and extent of participation. In general, young and middle aged could be expected to be more active than the old in any institution. Increasing age is likely to make representatives conservative in their performance. Young representatives are likely to be more radical in expression and also in experimentation.

Representatives who enter politics at young age gain expertise by the length of time spent in politics. Young people are more likely to take politics as careers. The age wise distribution of the respondents is given in the table 5.1

TABLE 5.1: Age - Wise Distribution of Respondents

Sl. No.	Level	21-35	36-50	51 and above	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	9 (50.0)	8 (44.4)	1 (5.6)	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	4 (26.7)	11 (73.3)	--	15 (6.8)
3	MPTCMs	29 (43.3)	37 (55.2)	1 (1.5)	67 (30.5)
4.	GPSs	68 (56.7)	48 (40.0)	4 (3.3)	120 (54.5)
	Total	110 (45.4)	104 (52.3)	6 (2.3)	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

It can be noted that a majority of the women respondents belong to the age group of 36 – 50 and those of the age group of 21 – 35 and 36 – 50 together constitute a very high majority. The percentage of those above the age of fifty is very marginal.

At the Gram Panchayat level, those in the age group of 21 – 35 constitute a majority and the remaining are from the age group of 36 – 50 and 51 and above. Among the Mandal Panchayat Presidents, a high majority of the respondents fall in the age group of 36 – 50 followed by those in the age group 21 – 35. A majority of those elected from Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituencies belong to the age group of 36 – 50 followed by those in the age group of 21 – 35. At the district level, those in the age group of 21 – 35 and those in other groups together are divided equally.

It should be noted that at the Gram Panchayat level, youngsters are numerically large whereas the middle aged are numerically large at the Mandal level. Interestingly the freshers seem to be more at all levels.

5.2 Caste

Caste is a very important factor in deciding the status of people, more importantly of women. In India caste and politics are intertwined. The respondents in the sample belong to Forward Caste, usually known as Other Castes (OCs), Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Castes known as OBCs. The Caste – wise distribution of the respondents is shown in table 5.2.

TABLE 5.2: Caste - Wise Distribution of Respondents

Sl. No.	Level	OC	OBC	SC	ST	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	8 (44.4)	6 (33.3)	3 (16.7)	1 (5.6)	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	8 (53.3)	4 (26.7)	2 (13.3)	1 (6.7)	15 (6.8)
3.	MPTCMs	17 (25.4)	33 (49.3)	15 (22.4)	2 (3.0)	67 (30.5)
4.	GPSs	31 (25.8)	66 (55.0)	14 (11.7)	9 (7.5)	120 (54.5)
	Total	64 (29.1)	109 (49.5)	34 (15.5)	13 (5.9)	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

The table indicates that the Other Backward Castes and Other Castes (OCs, SCs and STs) together are almost equally divided. Among the castes other than Other Backward Castes, the OCs constitutes the first largest group followed by the Scheduled Castes and then the Scheduled Tribes. In some areas, even though the seat is for General Category, because of the unwillingness of women from upper castes, women belonging to Other Backward Castes contested and won. It is also to be noted that the rise of Telugu Desam Party gave boost to the Backward Castes, as they are in more number

(appropriately 50%). This provided an advantage to other Backward Castes. This is also endorsed by a number of respondents.

The women from general category occupy the second place. These women mainly got the opportunity because the seats are reserved for women. Otherwise these seats must have been occupied by their husbands. As the seats are reserved for women, the husbands fielded their wives as the candidates. This is done to have hegemony over the village. The husband of one MPP said, "I have to put up my wife as a candidate because my rival had put up his wife as a candidate. If I can not put up my wife, I can not have a say in panchayat matters, which are vital in rural areas". But there are also exceptions of women members who contested with the help of husband and political party.

At the Gram Panchayat level, the Other Backward Castes representatives constitute a high majority followed by Other Castes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. At the middle level, among the Mandal Panchayat Presidents, Other Castes respondents constitute a majority followed by the Other Backward Castes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Among the Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members, the first largest group belongs to Other Backward Castes followed by Other Castes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes respondents. At the Zilla Parishad level, the first largest group of the respondents belong to Other Castes followed by Other Backward Castes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

The study reveals that the number of Other Backward Castes representatives is increasing at the lowest level of the grassroots. At the middle and district levels, the numerical domination of the Other Castes is present.

5.3 Educational Qualifications

Education is a means of acquiring knowledge. In the fast moving technological world, the importance of education cannot be underestimated. The representatives have to go through several official papers, representations and letters. In India few states like Kerala and Mizoram achieved female literacy on par with male literacy. But rest of the states show a wide gap between male and female literacy.

For purpose of convenience, the respondents' educational qualifications are divided into six groups i.e., illiterate, literate, primary, SSLC / SSC, Intermediate (10 + 2) and Graduation. The distribution of the respondents based on educational qualifications can be seen in table 5.3.

TABLE 5.3: Educational - Qualifications of Respondents

Sl. No.	Level	Illiterate	Literate	Primary	SSLC / SSC	Inter-mediate	Graduation	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	3 (16.7)	2 (11.1)	2 (11.1)	8 (44.4)	2 (11.1)	1 (5.6)	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	--	--	7 (46.7)	4 (26.7)	4 (26.7)	--	15 (6.8)
3.	MPTCMs	14 (20.9)	7 (10.4)	32 (47.8)	13 (19.4)	--	1 (1.5)	67 (30.5)
4.	GPSs	28 (23.3)	22 (18.4)	28 (23.3)	31 (25.8)	11 (9.2)	--	120 (54.5)
	Total	45 (20.5)	31 (14.0)	69 (31.4)	56 (25.5)	17 (7.7)	2 (0.9)	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

It is clear from the table that first largest group of respondents has primary educational qualifications followed by those with secondary school certificates, illiterates, mere literates, and those with intermediate and graduation qualification in descending

order. The graduates are seen at the Zilla Parishad level and Mandal Parishad level and their percentage is insignificant.

At the Gram Panchayat level, the percentage of respondents having intermediate qualifications is not insignificant. Similar is the position with regard to respondents having primary and SSC qualifications. A sizeable percentage of the respondents at the Gram Panchayat level, though not constituting a majority, are illiterates. This is really unfortunate. The illiterates and just literates together form a majority at the Gram Panchayat level.

At the Mandal level, a majority of the women representatives have primary educational qualifications followed by those with SSC and graduation qualifications. At this level again, the percentage of the respondents who are illiterates and just literates is significant. The just literates are those who can only put their signatures.

At the Zilla Parishad level, the respondents with SSC and Intermediate qualification together form a majority followed by those with primary and graduation qualifications. A little less than 20 percent of the respondents are either literates or just literates. Some women members who are literate also informed that they studied up to primary level. Among the ZPTC Members, a few who are less qualified exhibited confidence. This is due to their political affiliation and good political background of their families. The women members exhibited that illiteracy is not a hurdle in participation in panchayats. As Joan Holmes rightly said, "The transfer of power to one million women elected local representatives, many of whom are malnourished and illiterate, is the greatest social experiment of our time".¹

It is important to point out that illiterates have become just literates because they got elected as member of Panchayati Raj Institutions. It is only after election, that they became just literates. It is also to be noted that some of the illiterates are active in participation. But this participation gets strengthened and effective if they are also educated. It must be mentioned that the selection of literates is not because of the non – availability of educated women, but due to political equations. Some of the women representatives attended the non-formal educational courses like ‘Akshara Kranti’ and ‘Akshra Jyothi’, which helped them to the extent of learning to sign.

Illiteracy and other hurdles are leading to situations where the public and also the officials contact the husband of the respondent instead of women representative.

5.4 **Primary Occupation**

Occupation has a bearing on perceptions and participation. For Instance, lawyers exhibit argumentative trends and businessmen consider issues with profit as the motive. There are restrictions on some professions to contest and some professions do not find time to contest. Doctors with busy practice do not find time to contest. Contest in contemporary times is also associated with the capacity to spend.

The occupational background of the respondents, other than political, is detailed in table 5.4.

TABLE 5.4: Primary Occupation of Respondents

Sl. No.	Level	Farmer	Agri – labour	House-wife	Any other	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	6 (33.3)	1 (5.6)	10 (55.5)	1 (5.6)	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	4 (26.7)	--	11 (73.3)	--	15 (6.8)
3.	MPTCMs	11 (16.4)	5 (7.5)	51 (76.1)	--	67 (30.5)
4.	GPPs	84 (70.0)	4 (3.3)	20 (16.7)	12 (10.0)	120 (54.5)
	Total	105 (32.3)	10 (5.3)	92 (59.2)	13 (3.2)	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

The primary occupation is that which is other than political occupation, the occupation, which they are basically involved in and the occupation the respondents identified.

It can be noted from the table that a high majority of respondents are house – wives followed by farmers, agricultural labourers and others. Of the thirteen respondents who are included in the category of any other occupation, one is a practitioner of law, four are occupied in tailoring and others are associated with small business. The agricultural labourers will go to the fields for work. One Gram Panchayat Sarpanch in the sample has to depends on her children for livelihood. She said “I can not continuously depend upon my children for food. There might be problem at home. My son sometimes sides his wife. So, I prefer to go to work as an agricultural labourer instead of depending on children”. This middle-aged respondent is not shy of coming out with facts. At the Zilla Parishad level, one respondent is an agricultural labourer. She emphatically said, “I don’t want to depend upon my children. Why should I? So I am going to work”. When she said this,

her son was besides her who said, “I don’t want my mother to work out side my home, but she would prefer to earn on her own”.

The respondents who identified farming as their occupation do not have personal land holding. But the lands are either in the name of the husband or in the name of the male family members. But the respondents in this category take care of farming activities. They go to fields, personally supervise and occasionally work. In brief they share responsibilities along with the male members of the family. However, the decision - making is that of the male family members only.

At the district level, thirty percent of housewives said that they assist their male family members in business activities. The presence of a woman advocate in the Zilla Parishad could be regarded as a flavour to Zilla Parishad.

It is necessary to mention that the panchayats have not attracted the professionals. It is the less privileged like farmers, agricultural labourers and housewives that are attractive. At the state level, certain professionals like doctors, advocates, business people and those involved in social service also contest. The agriculturists contested at all levels.

5.5 Economic Status

Contemporary elections are very much influenced by money. The political parties look at the caste, financial power and mobilising capacity. While choosing candidates, the impact of money power malady, though often mentioned, is not cured.

The decision making power is influenced by economic power to a great extent. The economic status decides the fate of hopefuls in politics at all levels, especially at higher levels. At the Panchayat level also, economic status is important and makes its

presence felt in deciding things. The economic status of the respondents can be seen in table 5.5.

TABLE 5.5: Economic Status of Respondents

Sl. No.	Level	Below Rs.20,000	Rs 20,001 – 30,000	Rs 30,001 – 40,000	Rs 40,001 – 50,000	Rs 50,001 & Above	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	7 (38.9)	5 (27.8)	2 (11.1)	3 (16.7)	1 (5.6)	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	11 (73.3)	1 (6.7)	1 (6.7)	2 (13.3)	--	15 (6.8)
3.	MPTCMs	39 (58.2)	19 (28.4)	3 (4.5)	4 (5.9)	2 (3.0)	67 (30.5)
4.	GPSs	60 (50.0)	16 (13.3)	8 (6.7)	12 (10.0)	24 (20.0)	120 (54.5)
	Total	117 (55.4)	41 (22.3)	14 (6.3)	21 (9.5)	27 (6.6)	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

As the economic status is a sensitive matter, most of the respondents have shown hesitance in giving the correct picture. The rich do not want to be identified as rich though they are. The fear of naxalites is another factor, which made the respondents hesitant to give facts. The husband of a respondent said, “ We cannot give the correct picture of our income. If the naxalites know about this, they would ask us to part with our income. If we do not agree for parting, we will be compelled to leave our village”.

It is an open fact in the district, due to threats from naxalites, some families, leaving in the villages, migrated to the towns. The husband of a woman member of a Zilla Parishad said, “we have already got a threat from the naxalites, we have to leave our village and settle in a town”.

At the Gram Panchayat level, the hesitance to give facts is less. The husband who was sitting besides his wife at the time of interview said, “If I have to contest, I should

have money. Everyone in the village knows my economic status, Why should I give wrong information? Moreover, at the village level, most of the things are transparent”.

Personal observations by the researcher have revealed that most of the women members are dependent economically upon their husbands or on their family members. Only a few are earning and supplementing income to their families. Table 5.5 indicates that, more than 50 percent of women members are below the poverty line.² Only 38.1% women members are from middle class. The women members from rich class form only 6.6 percent.

5.6 Political Experience

Experience plays a vital role in enhancing performance capacity in job situation. In politics also, experience enhances the performance levels of people if those who had already completed a term at Gram Panchayat level are elected to Mandal level and if the Mandal level persons are elected to the district level. Experience also counts when sitting candidates are reelected to the same position. The performance is likely to be more effective because of experience. The political experience of the respondents is given in table 5.6.

TABLE 5.6: Political Experience of Respondents

Sl. No.	Level	Nil	1 - 5 years	6 -10 years	11 - 15 years	16 years & Above	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	14 (77.8)	4 (22.2)	--	--	--	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	9 (60.0)	6 (40.0)	--	--	--	15 (6.8)
3.	MPTCMs	45 (67.2)	22 (32.8)	--	--	--	67 (30.5)
4.	GPSs	96 (80.0)	24 (20.0)	--	--	--	120 (54.5)
	Total	164 (70.8)	56 (29.2)	--	--	--	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

It is clear from the table that a high majority of the women respondents are freshers. The percentage of freshers is more at the Gram Panchayat level followed by the Zilla Parishad and Mandal levels. None of the respondents has more than five years experience. The reasons for limited political experience is that women has been kept away for politics for a long time. Politics is regarded as a male domain in general. The Traditional objection has also prevented rural women's contest. There have been instances of woman representatives being threatened that they would be out caste. The father of one woman respondent of a Gram Panchayat lamented that she should not have been born to him. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment definitely gave scope for women to come out traditional constraints and enter mainstream politics.

The experienced members are those who served in the capacity of Ward Members, Gram Panchayat Sarpanches and Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members. The respondents at the Zilla Parishad level are those family members actively participated in politics and only a few of the respondents with experience have been active in politics.

5.7 Party Affiliation

Party affiliation reflects the nature of involvement of political parties at Panchayat level and also PR members' attachment to the political party. The political party's involvement makes the contest interesting and competitive. The party affiliation makes the Panchayat members aspire for higher - level politics i.e., at state level and even up to the central level. For Instance Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy, former President of India was a member of a traditional village Panchayat before moving to state level to become the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh and centre to become the President of India. The people of Anantapur district always refer to his movement as one from "Village President to President of India". He was affiliated with Congress, a national party. Another important person is Partha Sarathi, the present Member of Parliament and former Chairman of Zilla Parishad of Anantapur district.

Affiliation to political party helps the members to get more funds from state level to that of the villages, if the ruling party dominates at the village levels. Affiliation to political party also helps in bringing out leadership qualities. Thus political parties create leadership to guide the people. Party association adds strength to the people at every level to move to higher level positions. The party affiliation of the respondents is analysed in the table 5.7:

Table 5.7: Party Affiliation of Respondents

Sl. No.	Level	TDP	INC	CPI	BJP	Others / Independent	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	7 (38.8)	9 (50.0)	1 (5.6)	1 (5.6)	--	18 (18.0)
2.	MPPs	7 (46.7)	7 (46.7)	1 (6.6)	--	--	15 (15.0)
3.	MPTCMs	41 (61.2)	24 (35.8)	1 (1.5)	--	1 (1.5)	67 (67.0)
4.	GPSs	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Total	55 (55.0)	40 (40.0)	3 (3.0)	1 (1.0)	1 (1.0)	100 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

The table shows that the Regional Political Party, Telugu Desam, is having a majority and national political parties occupy the second position. The present ruling party at central level i.e., Bharatiya Janata Party (B.J.P) is having only one woman representative in the Zilla Parishad. This seat is obtained with the conspicuous understanding between the regional Telugu Desam Party and Bhartiya Janata Party. Narayana Reddy, a regional leader of Bharathiya Janata Party in the district said, “When the seat was reserved for women, I had bargained it for B.J.P from Telugu Desam Party.” Pullamma, the lone woman member from the Bharathiya janata Party said, “I am the consensus candidate between Telugu Desam and B.J.P”.

Another National party CPI is also having negligible presence in the Panchayats. In the sample the Party finds a place at the district and Mandal levels. Nagarathna, a Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Member, representing Communist Party of India says, “Previously communists’ had a good influence in this district. But the rise of Telugu Desam Party has reduced the communists’ influence in the district”. Another trend in the

district is the rise of radical politics. This resulted in an increase of naxalite activities in the district.

In the sample, only one candidate is an independent. She got elected as a Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Member. Her husband is having good influence in the Mandal and hence she successfully contested the seat.

The Indian National Congress (INC) is having a majority in the Zilla Parishad. Initially the Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members belonging to INC Party expressed reluctance for interview because the researcher was identified with Telugu Desam Party. They saw him discussing with Ms. Manjula, a Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Member belonging to Telugu Desam Party. The researcher had to approach Thippeswamy, the leader of INC in the Zilla Parishad to convince the INC members for interview. Smt. Mahadevi, a ZPTC member of Congress party said to the researcher, "As you are interviewing her (Ms. Manjula) we mistook you as a member of Telugu Desam Party".

It is clear from the table that the Indian National Congress representatives and the others including the Independents together are equally divided. The Indian National Congress members constitute the first largest group at the Zilla Parishad level.

Among the Mandal Panchayat Presidents, the Telugu Desam Party and Indian National Congress members have equal percentage followed by one belonging to Communist Party of India (CPI). The Telugu Desam Party members constitute a majority among the Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members followed by Indian National Congress members.

The Gram Panchayat Sarpanches are not elected, theoretically on party lines. A majority of them here not revealed their party identity. Hence their party identification is not discussed.

5.8 Experience in Social Service

Social Service gives commitment to the work. Commitment is a vital characteristic for serving people. Many NGOs are involved in providing basic services to the rural people. In fact some NGOs, since the implementation of the 73rd Amendment, have conducted orientation camps and trained women in capacity building for better performance in panchayats.

Experience in social service gives impetus for active involvement in Panchayats. This is a rededication to serve the rural people. The Experience of women PRI members in social service is analysed in table 5.8.

TABLE 5.8: Experience in Social Service

Sl. No.	Level	Nil	1 - 5 Years	6 – 10 Years	11 – 15 Years	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	16 (88.9)	2 (11.1)	--	--	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	13 (86.7)	2 (13.3)	--	--	15 (6.8)
3.	MPTCMs	59 (88.1)	8 (11.9)	--	--	67 (30.5)
4.	GPSs	96 (80.0)	24 (20.0)	--	--	120 (54.5)
	Total	184 (86.2)	36 (13.8)	--	--	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

It can be seen from the table that a very high percentage of the respondents do not have experience in social service before they entered politics. The experienced are those

involved in N.G.Os, which are working in local areas. Their main concerns have been health and literacy in general.

In this connection it may be pointed out that those who have been active in social service would prefer especially at the rural level, not to join politics. Even those who join may not be taking politics as an act of self-interest. This is one of the primary traditional constraints for active involvement in politics. But experience in social activity certainly helps for effective role performance in political careers.

5.9 Chief Factor Elevating to the Present Position

There would be certain factors which help people for their success. People identify different factors for their achievements. The women PR members, besides reservation, identified the chief other factor for their being elevating to the present position. The chief factor contributing to the entry in panchayats include reservation, husband's initiative, local political leader's initiative and encouragement, commitment, hard work and involvement in Self – Help Groups. The details are given in table 5.9.

TABLE 5.9: Chief Factor Elevating to the Present Position

Level	No Res- Ponse	Reser- vation	Husband's Initiative	Local Political Leaders Initiative	Self- Initiative	Hard work	SHGs	Total
ZPTCMs	3 (16.7)	3 (16.7)	2 (11.1)	8 (44.4)	--	2 (11.1)	--	18 (8.2)
MPPs	2 (13.3)	8 (53.3)	--	5 (33.4)	--	--	--	15 (6.8)
MPTCMs	8 (11.9)	22 (32.8)	8 (11.9)	14 (20.9)	3 (4.5)	3 (4.5)	9 (13.5)	67 (30.5)
GPSs	16 (13.3)	36 (30.0)	28 (23.4)	24 (20.0)	--	--	16 (13.3)	120 (54.5)
Total	29 (13.1)	69 (32.3)	38 (13.1)	51 (25.3)	3 (2.3)	5 (3.9)	25 (10.0)	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

It can be inferred from the table the first largest group of the respondents identified reservation as chief factor that elevated them to the present position. The next largest group of respondents are those who came to the position due to the encouragement and initiative of the local political leaders. Then follows the group of respondents who said that the husband's initiative is mainly responsible for their induction into the present political roles. A little less than 15 percent of the women representatives in the sample did not respond to the question relating to the chief factor leading to their elevation to the present positions. The reasons for silence could be hesitance, fear and absence of knowledge regarding identifying the chief factor.

It is important to point out that the percentage of respondents who identified reservation as a chief factor is more at the middle layer than at the other layers. And at the middle level, the proportion of women presidents identifying reservation as a chief factor is more than that of the women elected from Mandal Parishad Territorial Constituencies.

This makes clear that absence of reservation would not have brought adequate number of women to occupy the chair positions. It is also evident that the influence of local political leaders is seen more at the Zilla Parishad level followed by Mandal and Village levels.

The present research made clear that though husband's influence is invariably present in contest by women, husband's role as the chief factor is identified only by a limited percentage of the respondents.

Self-initiative as the chief factor is seen in a very low percentage of the women in the sample. There is a long way to go for women considering self-initiative as the chief factor for elevating to the political position. A small percentage of the respondents pointed out that their hard work during elections has brought them success. This implies the inability to mobilize, persuade and convince. This also shows the sense of commitment.

The role of Self – Help Groups as the chief factor for elevation is seen in the case of a small but not an insignificant percentage of the respondents. This is indicative of the impact of economic power on political involvement of women. Economic power has a bearing on political power. A continuation of this trend will increase the possibility of women to enter politics and strengthen the leadership roles of women.

It is relevant to mention that SHGs in Andhra Pradesh worked actively in the anti – liquor movement. These groups should have contributed for recruitment of more women candidates to the Panchayats. Some members of Mandal Parishads are also active in SHGs.

5.10 **Marital Status**

With the exception of a single respondent, the women representatives in the sample are married. The unmarried woman, who is 26 years old, got elected to Zilla Parishad from a Territorial Constituency. This indicates that traditional restrictions for women's involvement outside the home are getting relaxed. It should also be pointed out when this woman got opportunity to go up the higher ladder of political position, she was prevented on the ground of being unmarried. The real reason for prevention is political manipulation. Among the married respondents, one is a widow and another is staying separately from husband at the time of interview. The widow in the sample is 65 years old and she entered the contest for the first time and the family's political background contributed to initial decision to contest. The woman, staying separately, aged 38 years, got elected from a Mandal Parishad Territorial Constituency.

5.11 **Two – Child Policy**

There is the 'two child norm' in the state. It means that hopeful candidates should not have more than two children. This made several respondents to say that they have two children only, though they have more than two children. Some are prepared to lose the seats instead of giving wrong information. They said that they are not worried though they are denied of the position. They preferred to remain truthful and bold. At the time of interviewing Ramulamma, a ZPTC member, a woman besides her suggested to tell that she is having only two children. Ramulamma, replied that "let them take any action. I cannot disown my children". It must be pointed out that the two child norm may prevent capable and suitable women to take up political careers at the local level and should also be noted that so the called 'two child norm' is not applied to legislators and parliamentarians.

There were 200 petitions challenging the constitutional validity of a provision two-child norm in the Haryana Panchayat Act, 1994, in the Supreme Court. The provision says that while holding the office, if a person begets a third child he / she has to vacate the office and imposes the restriction in contesting the elections for Sarpanch and Panch.³

In a major ruling the Supreme Court upheld the provisions in the Haryana Panchayat Act, 1994. The Supreme Court upheld the provision by saying that the provision does not contravene any fundamental right nor does cross the limits of reasonability and it is in the national interest.⁴ A three – Judge Bench comprising Justice R.C. Lahoti, Justice Ashok Bhan and Justice Arun Kumar observed that “disqualification on the right to contest an election for having more than two living children does not contravene any fundamental right nor does it cross the limits of reasonability. Rather, it is a disqualification conceptually devised in the national interest”.⁵

The Supreme Court is of the opinion that India was most populous country second only to China in the list of 10 most populous nations and increase of population was one of the major hindrances in the pace of India’s socio-economic progress. The Court observed that the population explosion was a national problem and needed justification for priority in policy – oriented legislation wherever needed.⁶ The Bench also observed that right to contest an election for any office in panchayat was neither fundamental nor a common law right. So the statutory provisions, casting disqualification of holding an elective office, is not violation under the article 25 of Fundamental Rights.⁷

Referring to hypothetical situation giving birth to twins after the first child, the Bench said that “exceptions do not make the rule not render the rule irrelevant and validity of the law cannot be tested by abnormal situations.”⁸ The Bench further observed that

the provision of two – child norm neither arbitrary nor unreasonable nor discriminatory. The Bench also observed that the provision of two – child norm was neither a violation of Article 14 i.e., equality before law nor violation of right to life and liberty guaranteed under Article 21. The Bench also said that “It is futile to assume or urge that the provision violates right to life and liberty guaranteed under Article 21”.⁹

The All – India Democratic Women’s Association (AIDWA) has opposed the Supreme Court Judgement on the two – child norm by saying that the judgement was against the basic principle of the Cairo declaration, to which India is a signatory. The Cairo declaration and the National Population Policy are against the use of coercive methods in population control.¹⁰

The AIDWA felt that the stamp of approval had been given to laws of some State Governments that are highly discrimination in nature and it is the extension of economic and social inequality to democratic process. The AIDWA General Secretary, Brinda Karat said that “The apex court judgement is approval of some State Governments that are highly discriminatory in nature and the extension of economic and social inequality to democratic processes, creating an underclass that is deprived of the basic right to participate in elected decision - making bodies”.¹¹ She observed that the apex court reasoning and perception of ‘in the national interest’ ignores the interests of the majority who make up the nation. She says “the apex court’s perception of the ‘national interest’ ignores the interests of the majority who make up the nation”.¹² She further observes that Global experience and experience in India shows that family size is linked to factors like control of infant mortality, poverty eradication, literacy, access to safe contraception.

When these issues are tackled the people themselves adopt a small family and Kerala State is the example in adopting small family.¹³

The apex court's judgement on two child - norm is a retrograde step on women's participation in political process. The judgement deprives the honest, sincere and courageous women to come into the decision making bodies. The judgement is mainly against women because as mothers, women are sincere in accepting the number of children but men have many methods of denying. Men may divorce their wives alleging infidelity, deny the birth of third child and give the third child for adoption to others.

The apex court's reasoning of 'national interest' is against the silent majority of women who were deprived of access to political power has completely eliminated their access to power. The judgement should be revised to give opportunity to women to participate in political process and decision making bodies.

* * *

References

-
- ¹ Holmes, Joan. (2002), *Panchayati Raj: Local Democracy in Action*, <http://www.thp.org/reports/family/2000/sep/>, 21.11.02, p. 1.
 - ² The poverty line of GOI (Planning Commission) for Andhra Pradesh State and All India for the reference year 1999 – 2000 were Rs. 263/- and Rs. 328/- per capita per month respectively in rural areas. Assuming 6% rate of inflation the poverty line would be Rs. 19,000 and Rs. 23,000 for Andhra Pradesh and All India during the year 2002 – 2003. In the present study, a poverty line of Rs. 20,000 is adopted since some of the elected representatives are also residing in urban / rural areas. As per GOI a family of 'five' members having less than Rs. 23,000 per annum is considered below poverty line for the reference year of 2002 - 2003.
 - ³ *Upholds Haryana Panchayat Law on Two – Child Norm*. (2003), The Hindu, 31.07.2003, p. 13.
 - ⁴ Ibid.
 - ⁵ Ibid.
 - ⁶ Ibid.
 - ⁷ Ibid.
 - ⁸ Ibid.
 - ⁹ Ibid.
 - ¹⁰ *Ruling on Two – Child Norm Criticised*. (2003), The Hindu, 02.08.2003, p. 13.
 - ¹¹ Ibid.
 - ¹² Ibid.
 - ¹³ Ibid.

Chapter – VI

Awareness & Perceptions

Awareness

Awareness literally means extent of information and knowledge of surrounding social reality. According to the Encyclopaedia of Britannica, 'awareness indicates the degree to which an individual comprehends facts essential for his or her functioning as an active and effective citizen'. Awareness is the first step in the process of social and political changes. Unless one is aware of social realities, the process of change cannot be conceived. Awareness includes consciousness or deeper understanding of the reality, which may prompt for reaction. Thus awareness means knowledge with a sense of vigilance and spirit for action.

Hazel D' Lima, who studied the role of women in Panchayati Raj in Maharashtra State, says that there is significant relationship between political knowledge and community leadership.¹ According to Abraham, any social change cannot be affected by mere structural manipulations or legislative and executive actions. It has to find an echo in the hearts and minds of the people before it gets adopted.² Sushila Patni rightly says, 'this is precisely where awareness is to be tested'.³

Unless members of Panchayati Raj Institutions, whether men or women, are aware of social reality, they cannot bring about any social change. The women members of Panchayati Raj Institutions cannot represent the interests of their constituency without a reasonable level of knowledge of social and political realities. They must be conscious of what is happening and of the need for change, besides their commitment and dedication to solve social problems.

Since ancient times, as noted, the in-built tradition of our culture is that women should confine their attention to household affairs and leave politics to men. In the past as

well as today, some women have more political awareness than men, but their number is small and they constitute an exception. But in general, women have little or no political initiative because of many factors. It is common realisation that 'if half of the population remains indifferent to political affairs the democratic system can not function properly and women remain tools in the hand of others'. Therefore, it is necessary to prepare women politically and make them aware of their rights and responsibilities.

In democratic decentralisation, centralised planning cannot be in the interest of the country. Planning must start at the local level. The representatives of local bodies should be aware of social and political problems of their constituencies and should be able to make suggestions effectively and solve problems them with resources granted and generated by local bodies. Women members of Panchayats have to acquaint themselves with welfare provisions in the constitution. The women members must know the changes brought by the Seventy - Third Constitutional Amendment regarding their uplift and strengthening of Panchayats.

The above suggests that women members of Panchayati Raj Institutions, who constitute one – third of the total membership, should have concern and aware of social needs, planning at the grass roots to be effective. It is well known that Panchayati Raj is intended to promote local initiative, planning by locals and decision by locals only.

The present study aims at examining the awareness levels of the women representatives in the sample. Their awareness about Rural Development Programmes like SGSY, JGSY, SGRY, EAS, Rural Development Programmes for women and awareness of their functions are focussed in this chapter. While examining the awareness of the

respondents, care is taken to know about their awareness of powers, functions and structure, roles and responsibilities in the light of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment.

6.1 Chief Source of Awareness About P R and 73rd Constitutional Amendment

A system's functioning is dependent, to a considerable extent, on the awareness of the members participating in. The respondents have been asked about the chief sources of awareness of 73rd Constitutional Amendment. The sources mentioned by them in getting to know of the amendment are analysed in table 6.1.

TABLE 6:1 Chief Source of Awareness About PR and 73rd Constitutional Amendment.

Sl. No.	Level	Friends	Husband	Family Members	SHGs	Local Political Leaders	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	--	5 (27.8)	3 (16.7)	--	10 (55.5)	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	--	5 (33.3)	2 (13.3)	--	8 (53.4)	15 (6.8)
3.	MPTCMs	7 (10.4)	14 (20.9)	9 (13.5)	10 (14.9)	27 (40.3)	67 (30.5)
4.	GPSs	12 (10.0)	32 (26.7)	24 (20.0)	16 (13.3)	36 (30.0)	120 (54.5)
	Total	19 (8.6)	56 (25.4)	38 (17.4)	26 (11.8)	81 (36.8)	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

The table reveals that the respondents who came to know about Panchayati Raj and the Constitutional Amendment through local political leaders form the first largest group. The second largest group of respondents are those who came to know about Panchayati Raj and the constitutional amendment through husband, family members role, apart from husband, in getting knowledge is seen in the next largest group. Then comes the group of

women representatives who got the knowledge through Self Help Groups. In the case of less than 10 percent of the respondents, friends have been the sources of awareness.

The role of husband in awareness creation is seen more at the middle level followed by Zilla Parishad and the village levels. The role of the friends in awareness generation is absent at the Zilla Parishad level. It is seen at Mandal and Village levels. Family members' role is more at the village level than Zilla Parishad and Mandal levels. Awareness from local political leaders is more at the level of Zilla Parishad followed by Mandal and village levels. This shows that at higher levels, local political leaders' influence is visible. The Self Help Groups as awareness creators have been influential at the Mandal and Gram Panchayat levels and the percentage of the respondents influenced by Self Help Groups is slightly more at the Mandal level, compared to that at the village level.

A probe into the situation enabled the researcher to know that the local political leaders, as the agents of awareness, have played their role through the husband and family members indirectly. This influence is more at the village level than that at the Mandal and Zilla Parishad levels. Nirmalamma, MPP from Kudair Mandal says that, "local political leader of Congress party spoke to my husband about reservation provided in Panchayati Raj and the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. In turn my husband told me the details of the system and the amendment".

Manjula, Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency member from Tadimarri says, "I am having interest in political career but politics is highly competitive and male dominated. Mainly political parties prefer male candidates. In this situation, a local political leader belonging to Telugu Desam Party informed me about reservation to women

in Panchayats and about the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. I took the opportunity and contested from Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency. I am happy that I won and became a member of Zilla Parishad”.

Obulamma, Sarpanch of Kalagalla Gram Panchayat said, “I have come to know about reservations to women in Panchayats through my family members, especially my husband. I am also guided by my husband in functioning”.

6.2 Awareness About Rural Development Programmes

There are a number of Rural Development Programmes to be implemented by the State Governments and Central Government. It is often said that on three auspicious days i.e., August 15th, Independence Day, 26th January, Republic Day and 2nd October, the Father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi’s Birth Day, the Government announces at least one programme of Rural Development, especially a programme relating to poverty alleviation. Besides these, there are projects sanctioned and funded by donor agencies like World Bank, UNDP, DANIDA and ODI. The awareness of the respondents regarding Rural Development programmes is analysed in table 6.2.

TABLE 6.2: Awareness About Rural Development Programmes

Sl. No.	Rural Development Programmes	ZPTCMs (18)	MPPs (15)	MPTCMs (67)	GPSs (120)	Total
1.	Janmabhoomi	18 (100.0)	15 (100.0)	67 (100.0)	120 (100.0)	220 (100.0)
2.	Food for work	18 (100.0)	15 (100.0)	67 (100.0)	120 (100.0)	220 (100.0)
3.	TRYSEM	12 (66.7)	8 (53.3)	32 (47.7)	64 (53.3)	116 (52.7)
4.	SGSY	3 (16.6)	4 (26.7)	13 (19.4)	16 (13.3)	36 (16.4)
5.	JGSY	5 (27.6)	7 (46.7)	21 (31.3)	44 (36.6)	77 (35.0)
6.	IAY	13 (72.2)	12 (80.0)	46 (68.6)	72 (60.0)	143 (65.0)
7.	DPAP	11 (61.1)	10 (66.6)	43 (64.17)	76 (63.3)	140 (63.6)
8.	DDP	18 (100.0)	15 (100.0)	67 (100.0)	120 (100.0)	220 (100.0)
9.	DPIP	8 (44.4)	11 (73.3)	38 (56.71)	48 (40.0)	105 (47.7)
10.	IRDP	13 (72.2)	12 (80.0)	34 (50.74)	104 (86.6)	163 (74.1)
11.	EAS	6 (33.3)	7 (46.6)	38 (56.7)	84 (70.0)	135 (61.4)
12.	JRY	10 (55.5)	11 (73.3)	48 (71.6)	96 (80.0)	165 (75.0)
13.	Watershed	18 (100.0)	15 (100.0)	67 (100.0)	120 (100.0)	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

It can be noted that cent percent of the respondents are aware of Janmabhoomi, Food for work, Desert Development Programme and Watershed activities. It should be pointed out that Janmabhoomi, though theoretically not a Rural Development Programme, functionally is considered as a Rural Development Programme in Andhra Pradesh. Janmabhoomi literally means Motherland. This developmental programme is carried in a phase - wise manner to develop rural areas.

Wide publicity is given throughout the state about Janmabhoomi programmes. The bureaucracy plays a vital role in publicity and in the implementation of this programme. But the priority is relating to the activities for Janmabhoomi have to be decided in the meetings of Gram Sabha. The Gram Sabhas is convened at the village level and is attended by the officials. In Gram Sabha, the people would be asked to suggest the programmes to be implemented in their village. After receiving the responses from the people, works are to be prioritised. As the Gram Sabha is convened, the panchayat members from the district to village levels attend the meeting.

The programme 'Food for work' is implemented in drought prone areas. The Ananthapur district, as pointed out, experiences perennial drought. Agriculture is a failure in this district. The people are in dire need of work to live. Throughout the district, the food for work provides relief to the people. The Panchayats are demanding more funds to this programme for sustainable livelihood and to arrest migration. The poor women Panchayat members are also in demand of this programme for their livelihood. The press provides publicity to this programme.

The Desert Development Programme (DDP) is implemented in drought prone areas and desert areas. Some parts of the district are becoming the desert. This programme is implemented throughout the district. The watershed is also not a Rural Development Programme. It is an approach to ameliorate the conditions in drought prone areas and desert areas. But the respondents considered it as a programme. The Gram Panchayat members were part of the Watershed Committee, which is vital to implement the works of watershed. In Anantapur district, women alone take care of a few watersheds. Wide publicity is given to this programme in this district by the press and

administration. Besides, the Panchayats are directly involved in the implementation of this programme.

Knowledge of TRYSEM is seen in a larger percentage of the respondents at the Zilla Parishad level than at the other levels. The percentage of difference at the other levels is marginal in this regard. The SGSY Programme is known to a low percentage of the respondents, which has been less than 30 percent at all levels. Awareness regarding JGSY is slightly better. Those who know about it at any level constitute less than 50 percent. In this context the MPPs stand first followed by Gram Panchayat Sarpanches, Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members and Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members.

The Indira Aawas Yojana Programme is conspicuous for its being known to a majority of the respondents at all levels. Here again, the Mandal Panchayat Presidents stand first and than Gram Panchayat Sarpanches stands last. In between, there are the Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members and Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members. The Drought Prone Area Programme is known to the majority of respondents at all levels. The percentage at all levels is more than sixty. The variation in the percentage in respect of awareness about DPIIP Programme is conspicuous. The MPPs constitute the group having first place and the Gram Panchayat Sarpanches constitute the group at the bottom place. A majority of the Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members are aware of this programme.

The IRDP Programme is known to a high majority of the Gram Panchayat Sarpanches, Mandal Panchayat Presidents and Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members. The Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members are slightly over 50

percent. The variation regarding the percentage of the respondents having awareness of EAS Programme is marked. A high majority of the Gram Panchayat Sarpanches knows about this programme followed by Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members. Among the Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members and Mandal Panchayat Presidents, only a minority of them are aware of this programme. The Jawahar Rojgar Yojana Programme in general is known to a high majority Gram Panchayat Sarpanches followed by Mandal Panchayat Presidents and Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members. Slightly more than 55 percent of Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members have knowledge of JRY.

The programmes which were given wide publicity and where the Panchayats were involved, were known to most of the women members.

6.3 Awareness About Rural Development Programmes for Women

Women representatives must be more aware of the Rural Development Programmes that are being implemented to provide benefits to women. There are not so many programmes, which are especially meant to the rural women.

The panchayats have to play a vital role either directly or indirectly in planning, implementing and monitoring of Rural Development programmes for women or provide a space for women in the existing Rural Development Programmes. In this regard, a question was asked regarding the awareness of Rural Development Programmes initiated and implemented for women. The awareness of respondents regarding women development programmes can be seen from table 6.3.

TABLE 6.3: Awareness About Rural Development Programmes for Women

Sl. No.	Level	DWCRA	SHG	ICDS	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	18 (100.0)	18 (100.0)	9 (50.0)	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	15 (100.)	15 (100.0)	8 (53.3)	15 (6.8)
3.	MPTCMs	67 (100.0)	67 (100.0)	23 (34.3)	67 (30.5)
4.	GPSs	120 (100.0)	120 (100.0)	56 (46.7)	120 (54.5)
	Total	220 (100.0)	56 (100.0)	96 (46.6)	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

It can be inferred from the table that cent percent of the respondents are aware of Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) and Self Help Groups (SHGs). The DWCRA programme is especially meant for women. The programme was in implementation for 'two' decades. So this programme became more popular as only women are involved. This is a thrift and saving programme depending upon single economic activity. From this programme, the concept of Self – Help Group is derived. As the programme is in implementation since long time, it became popular in the villages. All the women members in the sample are aware of this programme. This programme is merged with SGSY, since 2000.

The Self – Help group is a concept derived from DWCRA programme. This SHGs are especially identified with women. Andhra Pradesh is having the largest number of SHGs in the country. The Self - Help Groups have become more popular since the anti - liquor movement. Since then, the state is encouraging women to form more Self - Help Groups. Wide publicity is given by the state and press about the formation and

achievements of SHGs. The SHGs are also identified with rural women. Some of the respondents have also been members of Self - Help Groups.

The Integrated Child Development Scheme is a programme for women and children to improve the health of the mother and child. Half of the Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members are aware of ICDS Programme followed by Mandal Panchayat Presidents, Gram Panchayat Sarpanches and Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members.

Level of Awareness

The level of awareness is important in planning, implementation and monitoring of Rural Development Programs. The level of awareness also decides the level of participation in planning, implementation and monitoring of RD Programmess. Besides the objectives, the guidelines, procedure for planning, implementation and monitoring of RD Programmes are complex. The names of the programmes are complex. For Instance: - SGSY, JGSY are in Hindi Language and it is very difficult to spell because these programmes are not in regional language.

Most of the respondents (98% - table 5.3) are either illiterates or literate or semi literate and those studied up to 10th or 12th standard have studied in regional language. It is difficult to know the objectives, guidelines and the procedure for planning, implementation and monitoring of all RD Programmes. The women members are partially aware of the objectives, guidelines and the procedure for planning, implementation and monitoring of RD Programmes.

The women members are not aware of the complexities of guidelines, procedure for planning, implementation and monitoring. Because of this weakness, the husbands,

officials and local political leaders exploits their ignorance and innocence. The women members are seen sincere and committed to do develop their villages and implement all the programmes.

* * *

Perceptions

The 21st Oxford Dictionary interprets perception in psychological terms as the neuron physiological processes, including memory, by which an organism becomes aware of and interprets external stimuli. Perception varies from person to person. Different people perceive different things about the same situation.⁴ Philosophers interpreted the word 'perception' in different ways. Descartes, Melebranche and Locke employed the term perception as 'consciousness' in its widest signification. Generally, the act of perceiving is a cognizance by the senses or intellect, apprehension by the bodily organs, or by the mind, of what is presented to them.⁵ In psychology, perception is referred as affirmative. It means experience of subjective facts and non – facts.

The concept of perception has become popular in leadership behavioural research. According to Charlesworth (1969) the behavioural approach is able to deliver reliable knowledge with regard to political common place.⁶ Political knowledge and political behaviour are inseparable. As behaviour is an individual act, the process of perception springs from the inner self. But what is actually perceived and how it is understood can be affected by prior socialization. So perception is said to be a social phenomenon. In the opinion of Gold Stein, an understanding of how people arrive at their impressions of reality requires considerations of the dimensions of the social context.⁷

David Easton is of the opinion that political life is a system of behaviour which operates with in and responding to social environment.⁸ The social behaviour has either a purpose or a consequence. The meaning of an act is what the act 'stands for' and it represents in a perceptual space. So there is a close relation between action and perception.⁹ So perception is a source of knowledge, process of receiving, selecting,

organising and interpreting. Uday Pareek rightly says, “Perception is the source of our knowledge of the world and perception is the process of receiving, selecting, organising, interpreting, checking and reacting to sensory stimuli or duty.”¹⁰ So perception is important for political action.

Perceptions play a vital role in influencing the roles and responsibilities of the incumbents and provide scope for involvement. In other words perceptions provide guidance to the women representatives to involve in participation and decision making. In this chapter, it is proposed to give details of women representatives’ perceptions of men’s feelings about women’s entry into Panchayats, women’s perceptions about entering of women in large number into Panchayat Raj Institutions and husband’s perception of wife’s entry into politics. This chapter also deals with obstacles to women’s entry into politics, constraints to women’s leadership and factors that enable women to become good leaders at grassroots level. The details are the following.

6.4 Women’s Perceptions About Men’s Feelings on Women Entering in PRIs

TABLE 6.4: Women’s Perceptions About Men’s Feelings on Women Entering PRIs

Sl. No.	Level	No Response	Happy	Not Happy	An Accepted Reality	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	3 (16.7)	5 (27.8)	6 (33.3)	4 (22.2)	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	2 (13.3)	3 (20.0)	8 (53.3)	2 (13.4)	15 (6.8)
3.	MPTCMs	32 (47.8)	12 (17.9)	10 (14.9)	13 (19.4)	67 (30.5)
4.	GPSs	24 (20.0)	16 (13.3)	60 (50.0)	20 (16.7)	120 (54.5)
	Total	61 (27.7)	36 (16.4)	84 (38.2)	39 (17.7)	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

It can be noted from the table that the percentage of the respondents who felt that men are happy about women entering Panchayati Raj Institutions is the highest at the Zilla Parishad level. However these respondents are less than thirty percent. The lesser is the percentage of the respondents at lower levels who felt that men would be happy. A majority of the Mandal Presidents have a feeling that men would be unhappy about women entering Panchayati Raj Institutions. Then follows the percentage of Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members and Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members, Fifty percent of Gram Panchayat Sarpanches feel that men would be unhappy.

A small percentage of women representatives in the sample expressed the feeling that men would consider women's entry as an accepted reality. The largest group of women representatives who expressed this view is seen at the Zilla Parishad level followed by Mandal and Gram Panchayat levels. Slightly less than Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members did not respond either because they are not aware or because they hesitant to speak freely. The percentage of respondents at the other level is twenty at the Gram Panchayat level and less than twenty percent at the levels of Zilla Parishad and Mandal Panchayat Presidents. It would be useful to give details of some women members' views.

Sulochanamma, Mandal Panchayat President of Pamidi Mandal expresses that "men always perceive that politics is a male domain". Y. Vanemma, ZPTC Member of Nallacheruvu constituency says, "men thought, because of reservation women entered in panchayats. These women depend on husbands to participate in panchayats. So it is also indirectly reserved for men". This feeling is more at the Mandal level. As noted the 73rd

Amendment provided mandatory representation of one – third of chair positions to women. The positions hitherto occupied by men have now gone to the women. Now men are made to work under a woman chairperson. This has become a bitter pill to men. In a patriarchal society, the feeling of superiority is dominant among men. So men are not happy about women entering Panchayats”.

Brundamma, Mandal Panchayat President of Bukkapatnam said “men feel that the performance of women would not be on par with them. Hence, the representation provided to women is only symbolic and metaphorical”. Parvathibai, a Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Member says, “Men feel jealous about women getting membership in Panchayati Raj Institutions”. But men have to accept women as leaders because of one-third representation provided to women as members and chair positions. Mary Nirmala, Kuderu Mandal Panchayat President says, “We have one - third representation. So they (men) accepted as our entry is compulsory as members and chair positions”.

Some women members expressed that men are happy because women got the opportunity to enter Panchayats. Leelavathi, Gram Panchayat Sarpanch of Uravakonda says “men are happy because women got opportunity to participate in the political institution at village level”. Manjula, Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Member from Tadimarri says “society consists of men as well as women. There is no reason why men should not be happy for women becoming members of Zilla Parishad. In fact, this adds strength to the status of men. So men would be happy”. Another Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Member Lakshminarayanamma from Anantapur rural Mandal says “it is irrelevant whether men are happy or not happy about women entering the local

bodies. That one – third of the membership and the chair positions go to women, is an accepted reality”.

6.5 Perceptions About Women’s Entry in Panchayats

In view of larger representation provided to women in Panchayats a question is asked about respondents perception about women’s entry into Panchayats. The perceptions of respondents is analysed in table 6.5.

TABLE 6.5: Perceptions About Women’s Entry into Panchayats

Sl. No.	Level	Happy	Not happy	Contempt	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	13 (72.2)	3 (16.7)	2 (11.1)	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	11 (73.3)	2 (13.3)	2 (13.4)	15 (6.8)
3.	MPTCM	35 (52.2)	21 (31.3)	11 (16.5)	67 (30.5)
4.	GPSs	76 (63.3)	20 (16.7)	24 (20.0)	120 (54.5)
	Total	135 (61.4)	46 (20.9)	39 (17.7)	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

A mixed response is noted to the question relating to women’s perception regarding women’s entry into Panchayats. The presence of women in adequate number facilitates collective strength, absence of isolation, possibility for participation in and outside the institutions. Women’s presence helps to voice their needs from development perspectives.

It is noted that a high percentage of the respondents at all levels are happy about women entering Panchayats, because women felt that they can develop their lives through participation in politics. The percentage of the respondents saying that women’s entry in Panchayats is not happy is below twenty five. The Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members form the first largest group in this context. The Zilla Parishad

Territorial Constituency Members as well as Gram Panchayat Sarpanches each form 16.7 percentage. The percentage of Mandal Panchayat Presidents is less than this. Some women members have said that women's entry into politics is looked with jealousy by the other women because political positions are associated with power and status. The opinions of some women representatives are worth mentioning here.

Padmavathi, a Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Member says "now women are in adequate numbers at the Zilla Parishad level. We have opportunity to speak about women's issues and to protect women's cause". Renuka Devi, a Mandal Panchayat President of Gorantla says "I am occupying the chair position of Mandal and hence I have some powers. I will be able to protect women's interests. Women are happy for having women representatives at the Mandal level". Nirmalamma, Sarpanch of Paacherla Gram Panchayat points out "A woman chair person is more accessible to women than a male chair person. Women's specific problems can be detailed to woman Sarpanch without inhibition. Hence, women like to have women enter in Panchayats. Women Sarpanches can deal with domestic problems effectively. If a conflict arises between husband and wife, the wife can immediately go to the woman Sarpanch and get the conflict resolved".

Women's unhappiness regarding women's entry into panchayats is due to the odds involved. Govindamma, a Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Member feels "women feel that political career to women is not smooth and is not acceptable and respectable. So women are not happy about women's participation in Panchayats". Chennamma, Mandal Panchayat President says "in general women feel that taking care of family should be their priority item. Involvement in politics means strained environment at home and this keeps women away from politics. Hence, women feel that women should not take up politics".

Mariakka Gram Panchayat Sarpanch says “the village atmosphere is not favourable for women’s entry into politics. Further the factional politics and criminalisation of politics create fears among women that they would be targeted if they enter panchayats. So women should keep themselves away from politics”.

Jealousy and contempt of men towards women’s entering politics is a big hurdle to women. Hence, women feel that they should not participate in the politics is opinion of some women members. This view is expressed by the Gram Sarpanches followed by Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members, Mandal Panchayat Presidents and Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members.

The women representatives feel that jealousy and contempt in getting to politics arise because of the absence of real equality and because the hierarchical nature of caste decides the status of individuals. The high caste women and men look at the women members of lower castes with jealousy and contempt. Hence, women’s entry into Panchayati Raj Institutions is not totally fruitful.

Those who have felt that women’s entry is not all that delicious because they viewed that politics are meant for males and is also dirty. And due to violence and threats, women cannot fit into politics. Hence women should look after household work and children. A very high majority of the respondents at all levels said that women must participate in politics. Mahadevi, Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Member says “the presence of fair sex is a source of strength in politics”.

6.6 Perceptions About Husband’s Attitude towards Wife’s Entry into PRIs

Patriarchy plays a vital role in society. In most cases, entering of women into politics depends upon the willingness of the husband in the family. An attempt is made to

understand the respondents' perception about husband's attitude towards wife's entry into PRIs. The women representatives' perception regarding husband's attitude towards wife's entry into PRIs is analysed in table 6.6.

TABLE 6.6: Perceptions About Husband's Attitude towards Wife's Entry into PRIs

Sl. No.	Level	Happy	Encouraged	An Accepted Reality	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	9 (50.0)	2 (11.1)	7 (38.9)	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	7 (46.7)	3 (20.0)	5 (33.3)	15 (6.8)
3.	MPTCMs	35 (52.2)	14 (20.9)	18 (26.9)	67 (30.5)
4.	GPPs	56 (46.7)	28 (23.3)	36 (30.0)	120 (54.5)
	Total	107 (48.6)	47 (21.4)	66 (30.0)	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

A Majority of the Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members in the sample said that the husband is very happy for their entering Mandal Panchayat through contest. Half the respondents at Zilla Parishad level said that the husband is happy and slightly less than 50 percent of Gram Panchayat Sarpanches felt that the husband is happy. The details of the responses given by women representatives are worth mentioning. Radhamma, Sarpanch of Kothakota Gram Panchayat says "my husband is happy because I could win the elections and my opponent lost and my husband is particular that his opponent's wife should not win".

The feeling that reservation for women is an accepted reality is seen more at the Zilla Parishad level compared to the other two layers. Husband's encouragement is specially mentioned by a few respondents. The percentage of respondents, who said the

husband encouraged, is seen more at the Gram Panchayat level followed by Mandal and Zilla Parishad levels. The contributing causes for this situation could be identified. Women are not encouraged to contest to higher positions in political hierarchy. The political parties work for perpetuation of this culture. Sulochana, Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency member says “women’s entry into politics cannot be ensured merely by constitutional and legal provisions. The encouragement of the husband is vital in striking a balance between domestic responsibilities and those outside the home”.

6.7 Perceptions Regarding Obstacles for Women to Enter Politics

As Pointed out earlier, women constitute a statistical rarity in the political arena and with the implementation of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, the induction of women into representative roles became compulsory. It took 45 years to provide representation to a reasonably good number of women in the formal political institutions of Panchayats. The obstacles identified by the representatives include lack of awareness about political process, lack of opportunity, lack of education, lack of finances and lack of family support. Women representatives’ perception regarding obstacles to women’s entry into politics is analysed in table 6.7.

TABLE 6.7: Perceptions Regarding Obstacles for Women to Enter Politics

Sl. No.	Level	Lack of Awareness of Political Process	Lack of Opportunity	Lack of Education	Lack of Finances	Lack of Family Support	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	3 (16.7)	6 (33.3)	3 (16.7)	4 (22.2)	2 (11.1)	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	--	6 (40.0)	2 (13.3)	4 (26.7)	3 (20.0)	15 (6.8)
3.	MPTCMs	4 (6.0)	29 (43.3)	7 (10.4)	18 (26.9)	9 (13.4)	67 (30.5)
4.	GPSs	8 (6.7)	60 (50.0)	12 (10.0)	16 (13.3)	24 (20.0)	120 (54.5)
	Total	15 (6.8)	101 (45.9)	24 (10.9)	42 (19.1)	38 (17.3)	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

The respondents who identified lack of opportunity constitute the first largest at all the three levels. The percentage of respondents belonging to this group is the maximum at the Gram Panchayat level followed by Mandal and Zilla Parishad levels. Then comes the group of respondents who said that lack of finances is an important obstacle for women's entry into politics. This obstacle is identified by more percentage of respondents at the Mandal level compared to Zilla Parishad and Gram Panchayat levels.

Lack of political awareness is emphasised by the Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members and their percentage is the highest followed by Mandal Panchayat and Gram Panchayat members. Interestingly, none of the presidents at the Mandal level identified lack of awareness of political process as an obstacle. Y. Vanemma, ZPTC Member of Nallacheruvu constituency says, "lack of political education and lack of support from men is a constraint to women's entry into politics".

The percentage of respondents identifying lack of education as a hindering factor is the highest at the Zilla Parishad level followed by the Mandal and Gram Panchayat levels.

Lack of family support is found to be an obstacle by 20 percent of the Mandal Panchayat Presidents and Gram Panchayat Sarpanches. The percentage of the women representatives who said that lack of support is a problem is lesser at the Zilla Parishad level.

Lack of finances, preventing women entering politics, is identified by less than 25 percent of the representatives. The percentage of respondents identifying this factor as a hindrance is the highest at the Mandal level followed by Zilla Parishad and Gram Panchayat levels. The opinions of some women representatives deserve to be given here. Pullamma, Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Member says, "lot of money is needed to contest and win the elections. Without money people cannot survive in politics". Renuka Devi, Mandal Panchayat President says "In earlier occasions women never had opportunity to contest. Even the political parties prefer men to contest and win. So reservation to women is a good opportunity to enter politics".

Referring to lack of opportunity Smt. N. Pullamma, ZPTC Member of singanamala constituency says, "without reservation women is difficult to enter in politics". Govindamma, Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Member says, "besides finances, women should be aware of the political process before contesting. For this, family support is essential". Geethalakshmi, Gram Panchayat Sarpanch of Agraharam says "family support is essential to enter politics. To stay in politics, husband's support is a must".

6.8 Perceptions About Women's Leadership at Grassroots Level

As noted earlier, leadership plays a vital role in providing direction. Panchayati Raj became popular and gained roots in the countryside and the local power structure have developed a close nexus with its counterpart at the state level. The state leadership

controls its 'vote bank' through Panchayati Raj leaders. Thus, there is strong linkage between the grassroots level leadership and of the leadership at the state level. Further, leadership provides impetus for active involvement in Panchayati Raj Institutions and in the planning and implementation of Anti-poverty programmes and gives a new philip to these bodies for increasing their sphere of influence.

In view of the importance of leadership, a question regarding women becoming leaders was asked. Women members' perception regarding women's leadership is analysed in table 6.8.

TABLE 6.8: Perceptions About Women's Leadership at Grassroots Level

Sl. No.	Level	Yes	No	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	12 (66.7)	6 (33.3)	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	15 (100.0)	--	15 (6.8)
3.	MPTCMs	67 (100.0)	--	67 (30.5)
4.	GPSs	120 (100.0)	--	120 (54.5)
	Total	214 (97.3)	6 (2.7)	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

A high majority of women representatives in the sample responded positively to the question relating to the possibility of women becoming good leaders. It is only at the Zilla Parishad level some have said that women cannot become good leaders. The percentage of women representatives who said that women can become good leaders is hundred at the Mandal and Gram Panchayat levels. They feel that "given opportunity, women would prove themselves as good leaders and could reach higher levels". The women leaders are

accessible and sensitive to the people needs. Mainly women feel, free to talk to women leaders about their problems and needs. Gavvala Kamala, Narpala Gram Panchayat Sarpanch says, "If a woman is a leader, people feel free to ask anything and speak without any fear". One – third of the Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members said that "the first priority to women is household work".

Women at each of three levels are seen hoping for higher positions. Manjula, Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Member says "in the next elections, I want to go to the state level politics". Sugunamma, Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Member says "if opportunity comes, next time I want to contest at the district level". Leelavathi, Sarpanch of Uravakonda Gram Panchayat says, "if my husband cooperates, in the next elections, I am hoping to move to Mandal level politics".

6.9 Perceptions About Constraints to Women's Leadership at Panchayat Level

For a woman to become good leader, she should have not only qualities of leadership but also recognition as a leader. The respondents pointed out the chief factors working as constraints to women's leadership. These include men's attitude and behaviour, anti – women oriented political culture, lack of finances and lack of family support. Women representatives' perceptions of constraints to women's leadership at grassroots level are analysed in table 6.9.

**TABLE 6. 9: Perceptions About Constraints to
Women's Leadership at Panchayat Level**

Sl No.	Level	Men's Attitude & Behaviour	Anti Women Political Culture	Lack of Finances	Lack of Courage & Shyness	Lack of Family Support	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	7 (38.9)	4 (22.2)	3 (16.7)	2 (11.1)	2 (11.1)	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	4 (26.7)	2 (13.3)	3 (20.0)	3 (20.0)	3 (20.0)	15 (6.8)
3.	MPTCMs	31 (46.3)	18 (26.9)	6 (8.9)	4 (6.0)	8 (11.9)	67 (30.5)
4.	GPSs	32 (26.7)	28 (23.3)	16 (13.3)	20 (16.7)	24 (20.0)	120 (54.5)
	Total	74 (33.6)	52 (23.6)	28 (12.7)	29 (13.3)	37 (16.8)	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

It is noted that the representatives having the feeling that men's attitude and behaviour are the primary factors constraining the promotion of women's leadership constitute the first largest group in general. The largest group of respondents having this perception is seen more in Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members followed by Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members. The percentage of Mandal Presidents and Gram Panchayats is the same in this regard. Referring to men's attitude and behaviour G. Padmaavathi, ZPTC member of Ramagiri constituency says, "dominating culture of men in politics and men's feeling that politics is their domain is a major constraint to women's leadership".

The anti women oriented political culture among the women themselves, as a constraint, is identified by 23.6 percent of respondents who form the next largest group. The anti women oriented political culture feeling is high among the Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members followed by Gram Panchayat Sarpanches, Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members and Mandal Panchayat Presidents. Referring to anti

women culture Smt. N. Pullamma, ZPTC Member of Singanamala constituency says, "Men think that women cannot become leaders. So they will not allow women to be leaders". Khajabi, ZPTC Member of Vajrakarur constituency says, "political culture which is dominated by the men is a constraint to women's leadership".

The major constraint to women's leadership is less participation of women in politics. K. Krishnaveni, Jantuluru Gram Panchayat Sarpanch says, "less participation of women itself is a big constraint to women leadership". For a woman to become a leader family support is required more than that to men. Some women in the sample said that lack of courage and shyness among women are hindering the growth of their leadership. Sarada, Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Member is an illustrious example holding this perception. At the time of interview, she was feeling shy to talk to the researcher. Lack of family support is identified as hindering factor by 16.8 percent of the respondents. Equal percentage Gram Panchayat Sarpanches and Mandal Panchayat Presidents are having this perception. Then follow the Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members and Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members.

Silence and submission are considered to be feminine characteristics and courage and valour are treated as male attributes. When women are treated with subordinate status at home, it is difficult but not impossible for them to become leaders. The only need is to bring the hidden leadership qualities out and make use of them. Absence of courage and presence of shyness is identified as a factor by a larger percentage of Mandal Panchayat Presidents compared to that of the others. Then Follow the Gram Panchayat Sarpanches, Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members and Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members.

Lack of finances is identified by more percentage of Mandal Panchayat Presidents followed by Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members, Gram Panchayat Sarpanches and Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members. Some women representatives' perceptions are worth mentioning here.

Ratnamma, Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency member says "men think that women cannot become good leaders because they feel that women know nothing about political participation. They feel that women should be at home taking care of family and children". Mahadevi, Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Member says, "the isolation of women from political process made them to think that they should be apolitical". Some women respondents felt that lack of political experience is constraint to women's leadership and also felt that society has not accepted always women leadership. Bhagyalakshmi, Sarpanch of dayyalakuntapalli Gram Panchayat says, "women's less political experience is a constraint to women's leadership and society has not accepted always women leadership ". Girijamma, Mandal Panchyat President points out "money is the most important factor for livelihood, education and politics. Here, in this district, people do not have money for their livelihood. So how can women think of joining politics? The survival of the family and searching for their livelihood are the major concern of women. From July 2002 to January 2003, 313 women committed suicide, due to lack of livelihood opportunities".¹¹

6.10 Perceptions About Factors Contributing to Women's Leadership at Panchayat Level

The political status of Indian women could be best adjudged on the basis of their political status at the rural level because a majority of Indian women as pointed out earlier,

live in rural areas. The factors identified by the respondents for promotion of leadership at grassroots level are hard work, corruption free attitude, democratic culture, development orientation and commitment. The respondents' perceptions regarding the factors contributing to women's leadership is analysed in table 6.10.

TABLE 6.10: Factors Contributing to Women's Leadership at Panchayat Level.

Sl. No.	Level	Hard Work	Corruption free Attitude	Democratic Culture	Development orientation	Commitment	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	5 (27.8)	6 (33.3)	2 (11.1)	3 (16.7)	2 (11.1)	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	3 (20.0)	8 (53.3)	--	2 (13.4)	2 (13.3)	15 (6.8)
3.	MPTCMs	18 (26.9)	37 (55.2)	--	9 (13.4)	3 (4.5)	67 (30.5)
4.	GPSs	24 (20.0)	52 (43.3)	4 (3.4)	28 (23.3)	12 (10.0)	120 (54.5)
	Total	50 (22.7)	103 (46.8)	6 (2.7)	42 (19.1)	19 (8.7)	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

The table makes clear that the largest group of the respondents who are slightly less than 50 percent emphasized on corruption free attitude and behaviour. As is well known, corruption is all pervasive and none of the areas of development is untouched by corruption. Women in general, are expected to clean corruption in politics and some women have demonstrated their honesty in administration. Hard work is emphasized by some respondents who form less than 25 percent and those who focussed on development orientation, commitment and democratic culture together form 30.5 percent. Of these, the first largest group emphasized on development orientation.

The percentage of respondents stressing on hard work is the highest among the Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members and the lowest in the Mandal Panchayat Presidents and Gram Panchayat Presidents. However, the difference is not glaring. A majority of the Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members said that promotion of women's grassroots leadership is possible through corruption - free attitude and behaviour and smallest the percentage of respondents in this regard are Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members. However, laying stress on corruption - free attitude and behaviour is seen in large percentage among the Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members. Not much of emphasise is given to democratic culture.

As regards development orientation, the Gram Panchayat Sarpanches' percentage is the largest and of the Mandal Panchayat Presidents and Mandal Panchayats Territorial Constituency members is the lowest. The percentage of Mandal Panchayat Presidents and Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members is equal in this regard. Focus on commitment is laid by less than 9 percent of respondents. The Mandal Panchayat Presidents constitute the largest group in this regard, and Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members form the smallest group. In between are Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members and Gram Panchayat Sarpanches. Sulochanamma, Mandal Panchayat President says "men are violent most of the times and women should not be like men. We need to adopt democratic and peaceful methods to focus on development activities. Peaceful environment is conducive to the implementation of development activities".

Lakshmi Devi, Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Member says that in her village, there occurred a conflict in the implementation of watershed activities. The

conflict led to bloodshed and withdrawal of funds for development activities. Finally the interventions of the officials helped in arriving at peaceful solutions and getting back the funds.

Gram Panchayat Sarpanches are expected to play an important role in the implementation of developmental activities. Committed leadership adds strength to this. Lakshminarayanamma, Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Member says "members who have commitment can address the needs of the people carefully and timely". The biggest advantage of women to become leader is their sensitivity to the people's needs. G. S. Firoz, Gooty Gram Panchayat Sarpanch says, "Women pay more attention to the people needs than men and women are work oriented. This is a major contributing factor to become women as leaders at grassroots level". Pushapalatha, Mandal Panchayat President of Bommanhal says, "women are sincere and highly motivated in doing works. This is a contributing factor to become leader at grassroots." Dhanamma, MPTC Member of Kondakondla Constituency of pamidi mandalam says, "Women are more thinking about development. Because all rural problems are women problems". Another advantage of women is they are apolitical. Mary Nirmala, Kuderu Mandal Panchayat President says, "Men mainly sides with political party. But women leaders are ruling without political party influence".

The women associations and women leaders at the central and state levels should encourage women in panchayats to become role models. Sharada kolli, Mayor of Guntur city, Andhra Pradesh hailing from active political family says that 'the women leaders have the responsibility in promoting female participation in politics'.¹²

6.11 Perceptions About Reservation for Women in Panchayats

146

Reservation, as mentioned, is an important aspect of social engineering to provide representation to women in Panchayati Raj Institutions. Reservations are expected to usher more meaningful democratic functioning. So a question was asked about their perception of reservation to women in Panchayats. Four factors have come from the respondents. The women representatives' perceptions regarding reservation to women in Panchayats is analysed in table 6.11.

TABLE 6.11: Perceptions About Reservation for Women in Panchayats.

Sl. No.	Level	To be Increased up to 50%	To be Decreased	Should stand as it is (1/3)	Should be given up	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	13 (72.2)	--	5 (27.8)	--	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	12 (80.0)	--	3 (20.0)	--	15 (6.8)
3.	MPTCMs	54 (80.6)	--	13 (19.4)	--	67 (30.5)
4.	GPSs	96 (80.0)	--	24 (20.0)	--	120 (54.5)
	Total	175 (79.5)		45 (20.5)		220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

It can be noted, from the above table, that a high majority of them felt that it should be increased up to 50 percent and those who feel that it should stand as it is form 20.5 percent. None of the respondents opined that it should be either decreased or given up. The percentage of the respondents who said that reservation should be increased is the highest among the Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members and lowest among the Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members. Naturally the Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members who have the idea that the proportion of reservation

should be kept as it is form the largest group. The percentage of the Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members is lowest in this regard.

It can be said that the Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members are more practical but not without the intention of increasing the reservation in proportion. Sulochana, a Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Member says, “Reservations is useful at present for women’s entry into PRIs because it has provided increased representation for them in Panchayats. Women should utilise reservation policy properly by working for the elimination of the proxy system to give equal representation to women. Fifty percent reservation seems desirable”. Khajabi, ZPTC Member of Vajrakarur constituency says, "Let the present one - third should be utilised properly. After that the reservation should be increased to 50 percent".

Nirmalamma Mandal Panchayat President says “now proxy membership is strongly working. Some times, the husband comes on behalf of woman' sometimes the son comes and some times relatives attend. Until we use the present 33 percent of reservation properly, there is no meaning in demanding increased women’s representation”.

6.12 Perceptions About Women’s Empowerment through Reservation in PRIs

The process of empowerment is both individual and collective. Through involvement in group activity, people develop their awareness, ability to organise, to take action and bring about change. Women’s empowerment is viewed as continuum of several inter – related and mutually reinforcing components. The respondents have been asked to express their opinion regarding the benefit of reservation for women’s

empowerment. Table 6.12 gives an idea of the perceptions of the respondents regarding their empowerment in Panchayats.

**TABLE 6.12: Perceptions About Women's Empowerment
through Reservation in PRIs**

Sl. No.	Level	Yes	No	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	12 (66.6)	6 (33.3)	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	15 (100.0)	--	15 (6.8)
3.	MPTCMs	65 (97.0)	2 (3.0)	67 (30.5)
4.	GPSs	112 (93.3)	8 (6.7)	120 (54.5)
	Total	204 (93.3)	16 (7.3)	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

It can be noted from the table that cent percent of the Mandal Panchyat Presidents feels that reservation has positive impact. Referring to performance satisfaction Among the Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members, two – thirds said that there is positive impact and the rest feel that the impact is not positive. A very high majority of Gram Panchayat Sarpanches in the sample reacted positively to the question. Chandrakala, President of Uravakonda Mandal says “providing representation is itself amounts to empowering women. One – third representation gives women an opportunity for participation in decision – making and for transforming decisions into actions. Women have to wait long to get fifty percent representation. The process may be delayed but cannot be denied”.

Lakshmikanthamma, A Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Member says “although representation is provided, women face many hurdles in participation and decision making. As long as proxy system continues, women’s representation remains formal but would not empower women. Women have to learn slowly. Once they learn, they become assertive. So, in the process of empowering women, there are functional problems”. Leelavathi, Gram Panchayat Sarpanch of Uravakonda quotes the exemplary work done by Fathima Bee, a Gram Sarpanch in the neighboring district. She says “the present reservation is a milestone in the process of empowerment. Fathima Bi, the former Sarpanch of Kalva Bugga village in Orvakal Mandal of Kurnool district was a timid house –wife in the beginning. She got international recognition i.e., she got the prestigious UNDP Fight Against Poverty Award. This shows that women can assert though they face hurdles. Illiteracy and clinging to feminine qualities may be constraints for the time being. But in future, women would excel men in Panchayats”.

* * *

References

- ¹ Lima, Hazel D. (1983), *Women in Local Government*, Concept Publishing House, New Delhi, p. 128.
- ² Abraham, D. (1974), *Dynamics of Leadership in Village India*, India International Publications, Allahabad, pp. 69 – 70.
- ³ Patni, Sushila. (1994), *Women Political Elite*, Printwell, Jaipur, p. 125.
- ⁴ *Perception*, <http://www.worldtrans.org/TP1/TP1-9.HTML>, 28.07.2003, p. 1.
- ⁵ *Perception*, <http://www.selfknowledge.com/70236.htm>, 28.07.2003, p.1.
- ⁶ James, C. Charlesworth. (1969), *Contemporary Political Analysis*, The Free Press, New York, p. 1.
- ⁷ Howard ,Gold Stein. (1981), *Social Learning and Change*, Tavi Stocks Publications, New York, pp. 151 – 154.
- ⁸ Easton, David. (1957), *A System Approach to the Analysis of Political System*, World Politics, Eagle Wood Cliffs, New York, pp 380 – 400.
- ⁹ Nowski, Mashe, M. Czwd. (1976) *Comparing Political Behaviour*, Sage Publications, London, 1976, p. 62.
- ¹⁰ Pareek, Udai. (1988), *Organisational Behaviour Process*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, p. 37.
- ¹¹ Chandrakanth, W. (2002), *Silence Reigns as Fairer Sex is Dealt an Ugly Deal*, The Hindu, 10.03.02, p. 5.
- ¹² Sharada, Kolli. (2003), op.cit., p. 1

* * *

Chapter – VII

Participation

Participation

People's participation is central to development in democratic systems. Marilee Karl rightly says "Participation is a process of empowerment that leads to greater decision-making power and the transformation of society through the inclusion of women's priorities and perspectives".¹ Exclusion of women from participation in development process negatively affects their lives. But women's involvement in participation becomes meaningful. Women are playing a significant role in the formation of groups, organizations and movements worldwide. Women in rural areas have started becoming active in their communities and governments.

Meaning of Participation

Participation refers to taking part or sharing.² Participation means involvement of people in the economic, social, cultural and political processes that affect their lives. People may, in some cases, have complete and direct control over these processes. In other cases, the control may be partial or indirect. One important aspect of participation is that the people should have constant access to decision-making and power. Participation in this sense is an essential element of human development.³

The concept of participation is understood differently in different contexts. Stan Burkey (1993) defines participation "as an essential part of human growth i.e., the development of self - confidence, human initiative, creativity, responsibility, pride and cooperation."⁴ Burkey understands 'participation as a process by which people learn to take charge of their own lives and find solutions to their own problems'. This understanding of participation is restricted to direct participation. But participation occurs in different ways, in different groups and serves different interests.

The operation of democracy results in innovations and provides opportunity for citizens to participate in the activities of democratic functioning. According to Lawrence Prachett “participation is a process and its adoption may improve institutions of representative democracy”.⁵

To Beetham, two aspects of democracy are popular control and political equality.⁶ This emphasizes on participation of people in public bodies. This enables people to exercise control over decisions and ensures equal opportunity to all in participation.

Participation in governance in a representative democracy is seen in the election of their representatives. And these representatives act on behalf of their constituents. With the complexities of governance and emerging identities and aspirations of various social groups, the need for increased involvement of citizens in decision – making came to be underestimated.

Broadly participation is of two types. These are formal and effective participation. The formal participation is limited to voting to select representatives, consultation and attendance. Effective participation encompasses active engagement in issues, taking leadership roles identification of priorities and their acceptance, allocation of resources, implementation and participation in accountability mechanisms.

Regarding participation, there is also the question as to which citizens are participating. Participation of those who have remained marginal in the institutions of governance so far is the most crucial indicator to assess citizens’ participation. It is the participation of women and weaker sections like Schedule Castes and Scheduled Tribes that should be treated as important for effective citizens’ participation.⁷

Importance of Women's Participation

Women's political participation helps to adjust the goals pursued through development.⁸ In this connection participation of women in Panchayats is essential.

True democracy requires equal participation of women and men in all spheres of life and at all levels of decision making. Women's participation could change the world by bringing new priorities and perspectives to the political process and the organization of society. Women's participation makes society more responsive to the needs of people. Women bring new insights and contributions to all issues. This enriches and shifts the focus and content of discourse to political process and society.

Participation of Women in Panchayats

The pattern of participation of women depends upon the level of education, background and perceptions. It also differs from one level to another level. In the present chapter the levels are District, Mandal and Village. The present chapter deals with participation of women in initiating proposals, in discussions, in decision-making, participation in Rural Development Programmes, participation in Rural Development Programmes for women, obstacles in participation in Rural Development Programmes and mobilisation of people to participate in Rural Development Programmes. An attempt is also made in this chapter to identify the nature of participation of the respondents and constraints and to explore possible steps for improvement in participation and their role in decision making process. As, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee observed 'rural uplift and elimination of poverty do not depend upon plethora of schemes launched and the amount of money spent, but upon meaningful participation of the people'.⁹

7.1 Participation in Initiating Proposals for Rural Development

The main objective of Panchayati Raj is rural development. Panchayats are expected to function as an instrument of rural development. For this purpose, Panchayati Raj members must participate in initiating proposals regarding Rural Development Programmes, discussing priorities and monitoring Rural Development Programmes.

During interviews with the respondents it was observed that the women members with a few exceptions were not aware of 29 items mentioned in the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. But they participated in initiating proposals for Rural Development. Participation in initiation of Rural Development works by women representatives is analysed in table 7.1.

TABLE 7.1: Participation in Initiating Proposals for Rural Development

Sl. No.	Level	Initiated Proposals	Not Initiated	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	14 (77.8)	4 (22.2)	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	15 (100.0)	--	15 (16.8)
3.	MPTCMs	44 (65.7)	23 (34.3)	67 (30.5)
4.	GPSs	120 (100.0)	--	120 (54.5)
	Total	193 (87.7)	27 (12.3)	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

The table reveals that all the Mandal Panchayat Presidents and Gram Panchayat Sarpanches, who are in chair positions participated in initiation of proposals for Rural Development. At the Zilla Parishad level, a majority of the respondents participated in the initiation of proposals for Rural Development works. At Zilla Parishad, slightly more than 20 percent did not participated in initiation. At the Mandal level, slightly less than 35

percent did not participate in initiation. The factors for not participating in initiation include ignorance and hesitation i.e., a feeling that their views may not be taken into account.

The Mandal Panchayat Presidents and Gram Panchayat Sarpanches participated in initiating proposals for Rural Development Works. They said that absence of funds and official apathy are the factors for not implementing their proposals. But all the women representatives are enthusiastic to initiate proposals and to develop their constituencies.

7.2 Participation in Discussions in Panchayats

Participation in discussions may be active or not. It may be continuous or occasional. But participation in discussions is a good sign of political participation process in democracy. The women representatives' participation in discussions is analysed in table 7.2.

TABLE 7.2: Participation in Discussions in Panchayats

Sl. No.	Level	Participated	Not Participated	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	15 (83.3)	3 (16.7)	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	15 (100.0)	--	15 (16.8)
3.	MPTCMs	52 (77.6)	15 (22.4)	67 (30.5)
4.	GPSs	120 (100.0)	--	120 (54.5)
	Total	202 (91.8)	18 (8.2)	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

The table reveals that a majority of them participated in discussion. Chairpersons i.e., Mandal Panchayat Presidents and Gram Panchayat Sarpanches have participated in discussion. Rather it became a compulsion for chairpersons to initiate and participate in discussion. Sulochanamma, Mandal Panchayat President says, "being in chair position, it

is a compulsion to initiate and participate in deliberations". Sarada, Gram Panchayat Sarpanch says, "Gram Panchayat members make me to initiate the discussions".

At the Zilla Parishad, a high majority i.e., slightly more than 80 percent participated in discussion and few of them i.e., less than 20 percent were not able to participate in discussion. At the Mandal level, a high majority of Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members i.e., slightly more than 75 percent have participated in discussion and less than 25 percent have not participated in discussion. The factors are ignorance and shyness. Proxy members' participation in discussion either inside the meeting hall or outside the meeting hall is another and more important factor.

The researcher had opportunity to witness the proceedings of the Zilla Parishad and one Mandal Parishad. At the Zilla Parishad, the nameplates of members are placed on the table in front of the chairs. The members occupy the respective places i.e., chairs allotted to them. The male members, accompanying women representatives, often occupy the chairs behind them. The women members go to the family members sitting behind them and consult about what should they speak in the meetings. At the Mandal level, generally male and female members sit separately. The family members accompanying women representatives occupy back chairs or sit behind the male members on some occasions.

The table explains that there is cent percentage participation in discussion by the Mandal Panchayat Presidents and Gram Panchayat Sarpanches followed by a majority of Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members and Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members is there. The point is that the role of family members in participation in discussion on behalf of women representatives is obvious.

7.3 Decision - Making Criteria in Panchayati Raj

In decision making, an informal criteria is followed by the people. The criteria may differ in different Institutions. The women representatives in Panchayats were asked about the criteria followed in Panchayats. The same is analysed in table 7.2.

TABLE 7.3: Decision - Making Criteria in Panchayati Raj

Sl. No.	Level	Collective	Majority	Party – Wise	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	--	9 (50.0)	9 (50.0)	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	--	7 (46.7)	8 (53.3)	15 (16.8)
3.	MPTCMs	--	39 (58.2)	28 (41.8)	67 (30.5)
4.	GPSs	21 (17.5)	62 (51.7)	37 (30.8)	120 (54.5)
	Total	21 (9.5)	117 (53.2)	82 (37.3)	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

It can be observed that decision – making in Panchayats is mostly taken by majority voting and party wise. While this trend is general, the incidence of collective decision is seen at the Gram Panchayat level and absent at the other two levels. At the lower level, a few Gram Panchayat Sarpanches informed that they are able to bring collective decisions on important issues concerning village development. For Instance, on the issues of controlling drought, all members collectively take decision.

The largest group of women representatives supports majority voting. At all the levels, it is the majority vote that is assuming importance except in the case of Mandal Panchayat Presidents. The next largest group of the respondents are those who are the supporters of party views. More percentage of women representatives supporting good decisions is seen among the Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members.

Supporting party views is seen more among the Mandal Panchayat Presidents followed by Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members, Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members and Gram Sarpanches in descending order. Less than ten percent support collective decision at the village level. At the other two levels, collective decision is absent.

The above explains the fact that majority and party views are equally dominating at the Zilla Parishad level. At the Mandal level, party views are prevalent more among Mandal Panchayat Presidents and in the Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members, majority vote trend is prevalent. The decisions are taken in presence of members and officials. Mary Nirmala, Kuderu Mandal Panchayat President says, "decision are taken after the prolonged discussions with members of mandal panchayat and along with government officers like Mandal Panchayat Development Officer and Executive Officer".

At the village level, majority vote occupies the first place followed by party views and collective decision. Collective decision, that too when a female is the chairperson, is a welcome feature for the smooth functioning of Panchayats.

7.4 Participation in Decision - Making

Participation in decision making is a useful indicator of participation. Greater participation in the process of decision making is a good sign and vice versa. The role of women members in decision - making is analysed in table 7.4.

TABLE 7.4: Participation in Decision - Making

Sl. No.	Level	Supporting party views	Supporting good decisions	Collective decisions	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	8 (44.4)	9 (50.0)	1 (5.6)	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	5 (33.3)	8 (53.3)	2 (13.4)	15 (16.8)
3.	MPTCMs	18 (26.9)	42 (62.7)	7 (10.4)	67 (30.5)
4.	GPSs	24 (20.0)	64 (53.3)	32 (26.7)	120 (54.5)
	Total	55 (25.0)	123 (55.9)	42 (19.1)	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

The study reveals that a majority of women respondents support good decisions. At all the levels supporters of good decisions are more than fifty percent except at the Zilla Parishad level, where it is fifty percent. Supporting good decisions is seen more among Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members followed by Mandal Panchayat Presidents and Gram Panchayat Sarpanches having equal percentage followed by Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members. What is good is relative but supporting good decisions is suggestive of rationalistic approach.

The next largest group of respondents is that which supports party views. Modern democracies are party based democracies. The views of majority party prevail in decision making. The need for supporting party views has become inevitable. Supporting party views is seen more at Zilla Parishad, followed by Mandal and Gram Panchayat levels in descending order.

Less than 20 percent of the respondents support collective decisions. Collective decision is seen more at the Gram Panchayat level and less at the Mandal and Zilla

Parishad levels. The influence of party views is more at the Zill Parishad level and the incidence of collective decision is more at the Gram Panchyat level.

7.5 Role in Decision - Making

The role of the respondents in decision making in the present context is categorised as central, marginal and nil. The central role could be understood as that where the proposals and opinions of the members are given due recognition and are taken as the basis for decision. The marginal role is that where opinions are expressed and heard but are not taken cognizance of. Where the role is nil, the members do not either express views or not allowed to express. The women representatives' role in decision making is analysed in table 7.5.

TABLE 7.5: Role in Decision – Making

Sl. No.	Level	Central	Marginal	Nil	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	--	14 (77.8)	4 (22.2)	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	7 (46.7)	8 (53.3)	--	15 (16.8)
3.	MPTCMs	13 (19.4)	35 (52.2)	19 (28.4)	67 (30.5)
4.	GPSs	44 (36.7)	76 (63.3)	--	120 (54.5)
	Total	64 (29.1)	133 (60.5)	23 (10.4)	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

A majority of women representatives have marginal role in decision making. Slightly less than 30 percent are playing a central role in decision making and slightly more than 10 percent do not have any role in decision making. The factors responsible for playing central role, according to the women representatives, are chair position and active cooperation from family members, mainly from husband. Nirmalamma, Mandal

Panchayat President says, “my husband encourages me to take a leading role in the meetings because of the position and my being vocal”. Tulasamma, Gram Panchayat Sarpanch says, “my family members encourage me to be active in the meetings. They encourage me to do more works in the village”.

The table reveals that higher the level, lesser is the central role of women in decision – making. The percentage of women having central decision – making role is more at the Mandal level followed by Gram Panchayat Sarpanches at village level and Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency members. The central role is nil at Zilla Parishad. The percentage of the marginal role performers is the highest at the level of Zilla Parishad Members followed by Gram Panchayat Sarpanches, Mandal Panchayat Presidents and Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members in descending order. Slightly less than 30 percent of Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members do not have role in decision making and slightly more than 20 percent at Zilla Parishad do not have role in decision making.

The marginal role is because of their hesitance to express their ideas in front of male officials and male members. They have a feeling that male members may behave in a ridiculous manner if expressions are not clear. Yellamma, Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Member of Rappthadu Mandal says, “whenever I want to speak in the meetings, male members express that I know nothing. For this reason, I talk less in the meetings”. The women representatives who do not have any role in decision making are those who completely depend upon their family members. Here proxy members play a vital role in influencing the women representatives. The researcher observed that

Thippamma, Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Member is completely depending upon her son.

7.6 Participation in Rural Development Programmes for Women

Motivating and encouraging women to get the benefit of Rural Development Programmes is an important part of the role of women representatives. This role is analysed in table 7.6

TABLE 7.6: Participation in RD Programmes for Women

Sl. No.	Level	Forming SHGs	Involving Women in RDP	Motivating Women	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	3 (16.7)	11 (61.1)	4 (22.2)	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	--	12 (80.0)	3 (20.0)	15 (16.8)
3.	MPTCMs	9 (13.4)	53 (79.1)	5 (7.5)	67 (30.5)
4.	GPSs	--	96 (80.0)	24 (20.0)	120 (54.5)
	Total	12 (5.4)	172 (78.2)	36 (16.4)	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

The table reveals that involvement of women in Rural Development Programmes is done by a majority of the women representatives followed by motivating them for involvement. A small percentage of women representatives also contributed to the formation of Self - Help Groups.

At the Mandal level, the study revealed two contrary things. The Mandal Panchayat Presidents are not involved in forming Self Help Groups where as a few Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members are involved in forming Self Help Groups. The fact is that the Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members who are concerned with the formation of Self Help Groups are concerned with supplementing

income to their families by forming groups. The Mandal Panchayat Presidents are more involved in other programmes like Food for Work. A majority of the Mandal Panchayat Presidents expressed that they are providing opportunity to women to involve in RD Programmes. A small percentage of Mandal Panchayat Presidents and Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members expressed that they are involving women in Rural Development Programmes. Next in order are those who are helping in the formation of Self-Help Groups. Motivators are less than 10 percent.

At the village level, the Gram Panchayat Sarpanches are not involved in forming Self-Help Groups but are concentrating on other programmes like Food for Work Programme and Watershed activities. A majority of Gram Panchayat Sarpanches are involving women in Rural Development Programmes. A small percentage of these Sarpanches are motivating women to involve in Rural Development Programmes.

7.7 Obstacles for Participation of Women in Implementation of RD Programmes

The women representatives in Panchayati Raj face many problems in the implementation of Rural Development Programmes. A majority of them expressed that the main obstacle in the implementation of Rural Development Programmes is corruption and official apathy. A small percentage (28.2) of women representatives' feel that lack of knowledge in implementation procedures of Rural Development Programmes is another obstacle. Less than 10 percent of women representatives say that factional politics and caste politics are also obstacles in the implementation of Rural Development Programmes. The obstacles identified by women representatives are analysed in table 7.7.

**TABLE 7.7: Obstacles for Participation of Women in
Implementation of RD Programmes**

Sl. No.	Level	Lack of knowledge	Factional politics	Caste politics	Officials apathy	Corruption	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	5 (27.8)	1 (5.5)	1 (5.5)	4 (22.2)	7 (39.0)	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	5 (33.3)	1 (6.7)	1 (6.7)	3 (20.0)	5 (33.3)	15 (16.8)
3.	MPTCMs	16 (23.9)	3 (4.5)	4 (6.0)	15 (22.4)	29 (43.9)	67 (30.5)
4.	GPSs	36 (30.0)	12 (10.0)	8 (6.7)	28 (23.3)	36 (30.0)	120 (54.5)
	Total	62 (28.2)	17 (7.7)	14 (6.4)	50 (22.7)	77 (35.0)	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

It can be noted that the first largest group of representatives emphasised on corruption followed by those, which focussed on lack of knowledge, official apathy, factional politics and caste politics in descending order in respect of percentage. The percentage of respondents who emphasised more on corruption are the Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members followed by Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members, Mandal Panchayat Presidents and Gram Panchayat Sarpanches in descending order.

The percentage of the respondents who emphasised on lack of knowledge is more in the case of Mandal Panchayat Presidents compared to that at the other levels. The Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members constitute the smallest percentage in this regard. The role of factional politics is focused by larger percentage of the respondents at the village level. Caste politics, though significant, is not pointed out by a majority of the respondents.

Corruption and official apathy seem to be the major problems. Absence of knowledge as a hindering factor is also a factor of negative influence. Commenting on official apathy, one Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Member says that “repeated requests to complete the sanctioned works in village have gone in vain and work delayed by the officials. The inferior quality works were done in many places. The officials try to swindle money from development works”. She laments that the bore wells laid in her village have failed with in four months. Repeated requests to repair the bore wells are neglected by the officials.

Manipulation of funds is found to be a great hurdle in the implementation of Rural Development Programmes. One Mandal Panchayat President says, “officials come for signatures of Mandal Presidents and keep women representatives in darkness precisely to swindle money”. Many women representatives were hesitant to speak about officials’ misdeeds and also requested to keep their names secret. The researcher’s observations made it clear that on many occasions, the officials dominate women representatives in the meetings. Surprisingly, the officials also give preference to interacting with the male members accompanying the women representatives.

7.8 Mobilizing People for Participation in Rural Development Programmes

Mobilising people to participate in the process of development is also associated with the role of people’s representatives. When women are holders of power positions, the possibility of mobilising women becomes easier. The mobilisation of people is done by the respondents through different means. These means are creating awareness about Rural Development Programmes, sincere implementation of these Programmes, working with development orientation and with honesty. The respondents’ views regarding factors

contributing mobilization of people for participation in Rural Development Programmes are analysed in table 7.8.

TABLE 7.8: Mobilizing People for Participation in Rural Development Programmes

Sl. No.	Level	Creating Awareness on RDP	Sincere Implementation of RDP	Honesty and Development Orientation	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	6 (33.3)	8 (44.5)	4 (22.2)	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	5 (33.3)	8 (53.4)	2 (13.3)	15 (16.8)
3.	MPTCMs	23 (34.3)	38 (56.7)	6 (9.0)	67 (30.5)
4.	GPSs	30 (25.0)	78 (65.0)	12 (10.0)	120 (54.5)
	Total	64 (29.1)	132 (60.0)	24 (10.9)	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

It can be noted from the table that a majority of women representatives expressed that sincere implementation of Rural Development Programmes helps to mobilise people in the participation of Rural Development Programmes. Slightly less than 30 percent of the respondents expressed 'creation of awareness' as the chief means. Slightly more than 10 percent of the respondents expressed that honesty and development orientation help in mobilizing the people.

A majority of Gram Panchayat Sarpanches said that sincere implementation of Rural Developments Programmes help to mobilise people followed by Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency members, followed by Mandal Panchayat Presidents and Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members in descending order of percentage. But a majority of Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members view that awareness of Rural Development Programmes helps to mobilise people for participation followed by

Mandal Panchayat Presidents, Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members with equal percentage and followed by Gram Panchayat Sarpanches at the village level.

Honesty and working with development orientation is higher at Zilla Parishad level, followed by Mandal Panchayat and Gram Panchayat levels. But a probe into the situation and correlation with other factor revealed great amount of exaggeration on the part of the respondents. These ways, when really adopted, would bring credit to the representatives as role performers and would result in meaningful gains in respect of mobilising people for participation in Rural Development Programmes.

7.9 Rural Development Activities of Women Members

As people's representatives, women members get involved in a number of activities. The women members' involvement in activities is analysed in table 7.9.

TABLE 7.9: Rural Development Activities of Women Members

Sl. No.	Level	Janma-Bhoomi	Drinking Water	Sanitation Works	Food for Work	Watershed Works	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	18 (100.0)	16 (88.9)	7 (38.9)	18 (100.0)	13 (72.2)	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	15 (100.0)	13 (86.7)	8 (53.3)	15 (100.0)	12 (80.0)	15 (6.8)
3.	MPTCMs	67 (100.0)	54 (80.6)	9 (13.4)	67 (100.0)	61 (91.0)	67 (30.5)
4.	GPSs	120 (100.0)	112 (93.3)	52 (43.3)	120 (100.0)	102 (85.0)	120 (54.5)
	Total	220 (100.0)	195 (88.6)	76 (34.5)	220 (100.0)	188 (85.4)	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

It is to be noted that the women members got involved in some Rural Development works. These are Janmabhoomi, forming of SHGs, providing drinking water facilities, sanitation facilities and works under the scheme of Food for work and watershed works.

Each respondent is invariably involved in at least two activities. Involvement in Janmabhoomi and Food for Work programmes is the highest in terms of the number of performers and the lowest in the case of sanitation. More percentage of respondents is seen at the Gram Panchayat level in providing drinking water facilities compared to those at the Mandal and District levels. At the Mandal level, the Mandal Panchayat Presidents form largest group in providing sanitation works and the Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members constitute the smallest group in this regard. Preference to watershed works is given more by the Members of Mandal Panchayat Constituency Members followed by Gram Panchayat Sarpanches, Mandal Panchayat Presidents and Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members.

7.10 Performance Satisfaction in Panchayati Raj

Satisfaction about performance adds strength to the role performer. The respondents' views in this regard are given in Table 7.10.

TABLE 7.10: Performance Satisfaction in Panchayati Raj

Sl. No.	Level	Yes	No	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	8 (44.4)	10 (55.6)	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	6 (40.0)	9 (60.0)	15 (6.8)
3.	MPTCMs	21 (31.3)	46 (68.7)	67 (30.5)
4.	GPSs	52 (43.3)	68 (56.7)	120 (54.5)
	Total	87 (39.50)	133 (60.5)	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

The table makes clear that a majority of the women representatives are not satisfied by their performance. According to them, lack of knowledge, lacks of experience, lack of

funds and official apathy are the obstacles. Some women members are given preferential treatment by the Chairperson belonging to the ruling Telugu Desam Party. The satisfied respondents are mostly those who received preferential treatment from the ruling party.

The largest group of women respondents receiving satisfaction is at the Zilla Parishad level and the smallest is at the Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency level. Among the dissatisfied, the Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members form the largest group followed by Mandal Panchayat Presidents, Gram Panchayat Sarpanches and Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members.

The above would suggest that at the grass roots level, dissatisfaction regarding role performance is the general trend. But they are hopeful of improving their performance and reach the goals and targets.

7.11 Suggestions to Improve Participation in Panchayats

Many factors help the people to improve their performance. Women members made suggestion to facilitate better performance in Panchayati Raj. These are Training, Awareness, Separate Funds to Women PR members and (iv) Visits to successful Panchayats for experience sharing. The suggestions made by the women PR members are analysed in table 7.11.

TABLE 7.11: Suggestions to Improve Participation in Panchayats

Sl. No.	Level	Training	Awareness	Separate Funds for Women	Visits to other PRIs	Total
1.	ZPTCMs	18 (100.0)	18 (100.0)	11 (61.1)	14 (77.8)	18 (8.2)
2.	MPPs	15 (100.0)	15 (100.0)	8 (53.3)	12 (80.0)	15 (6.8)
3.	MPTCMs	67 (100.0)	67 (100.0)	22 (32.8)	36 (53.7)	67 (30.5)
4.	GPSs	120 (100.0)	120 (100.0)	28 (23.3)	84 (70.0)	120 (54.5)
	Total	220 (100.0)	220 (100.0)	69 (31.4)	146 (66.4)	220 (100.0)

(Figures in brackets are percentages to the total)

The women representatives unequivocally emphasised on the need to provide training and to generate awareness to facilitate better participation and performance. A majority of the Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Members stressed on the allotment of funds for women representatives followed by Mandal Panchayat Presidents. Govidamma, ZPTC Member of Rayadurgam constituency says, "The Rural Development Programmes should come under the Zilla Parishad and the officials are dominating the procedures. So they should be under the control of Zilla Parishad". A minority of Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members and Gram Panchayat Sarpanches stressed on separate funds for women representatives. According to them, 'the allotment of special funds for women representatives are expected to get away from male manipulations'.

In respect of laying emphasis on study visits, the Mandal Panchayat Presidents stand first followed by Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency members, Gram Panchayat Sarpanches and Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members. In all the categories, a majority suggested study visits.

It can be concluded by that the level of participation has a bearing on the type of participation. And the dissatisfied representatives constitute a majority, though the representatives who have performance satisfaction do not form a negligible minority.

* * *

References

- ¹ Karl, Marilee. (1995), *Women and Empowerment: Participation and Decision-Making*, Zed Books Ltd, London & New Jersey, p. vii

- ² Buch, Nirmala. (2003), *Panchayats in India – Forum for Citizens Participation in Local Governance: Representation and participation of Rural Women – Experience and Challenges*, http://www.ciff.on.ca/Reference/documents/MX-936_1_files/Papers/Buch.htm, 1/9/03, p. 1.

- ³ United Nations Development Programme. (1993), *Human Development Report*, New York, p. 1.

- ⁴ Stan, Burkey. (1993), *People First: A Guide to Self - Reliant Participatory Rural Development*, Zed Books, London and New York.

- ⁵ Prachett, Lawrence. (1999), *New Fashions in Public Participation: Towards Greater Democracy*, Parliamentary Affairs, Vol – 52, Number – 4, October. New Delhi.

- ⁶ Beetham, D. (1994), 'Key Principles and Indices for a Democratic Audit', in Beetham, D, (ed.). *Defining and Measuring Democracy*, Sage Publications, New Delhi. p. 1.

- ⁷ Buch, Nirmala. (2003) op. cit., p. 1.

- ⁸ United Nations. (2002), *Development and International Economic Cooperation: Effective Mobilization and Integration of Women in Development*, Report of the Secretary – General, United Nations General Assembly, Forty - Sixth Session, Agenda Item 77 (i), para. 42 (A/46/464, 4 – 15, March, New York.

- ⁹ The Pioneer (1999) July 20, p. 1.

* * *

Chapter - VIII

Relationships

A study of the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables provides good insights into the empowerment process. The present chapter focuses on the relationship between age and awareness, perception and participation. The relationship between caste and awareness, perception and participation and educational qualifications and awareness, perception and perception are also detailed in this chapter.

SECTION - I

Age vs Awareness

8.1 Age vs Chief Source of Awareness About Panchayati Raj

An examination of the relationship between the age and source of awareness about Panchayati Raj reveals that for ZPTCMs, MPPs, MPTCMs and GPSs the local political leaders are chief source of awareness for the respondents in the age group of 36 - 50 and the respondents in the age group of 51 and above. The husband is the chief source of awareness for the respondents in the age group of 21 - 35. The study reveals that at the district and mandal levels, the middle aged group i.e., 36 - 50 is more active and at village level, the young group i.e., 21 - 35 is more active.

8.2 Age vs Awareness About RD Programmes

An examination of the relationship between age and awareness of Rural Development Programmes at all levels indicates that awareness of Janmabhoomi, Food for Work, DDP and Watershed activities is not directly related to age. All the respondents at all levels are aware of these programmes. TRYSEM is known to all except to some MPPs. Among MPPs in the age group of 21 – 35 form the first largest group who aware of this programme then followed by those in the age group of 36 – 50. Knowledge of other programmes which include SGSY, JGSY, IAY, DPAP, DDP, IRDP, EAS and JRY is found more among the respondents in the age group

of 21 – 35. The study reveals that younger generation are showing more awareness in Rural Development Programmes.

8.3 Age vs Awareness About RD Programmes for Women

An examination of the relationship between age and knowledge of rural development Programmes suggests that DWCRA Programme is known irrespective of the age factor. Similar is the position regarding knowledge about SHGs. The percentage of the respondents who are aware of the ICDS is seen more among those in the age groups of 21 – 35 at the ZP level. It is more among the respondents in the age group of 36 – 50 at the Mandal level compared to those in the age group of 21 – 35. Similar is the position relating to MPTCs. At the Gram Panchayat level, an equal percentage of the respondents in the age group of 21 – 35 and 36 – 50 is aware of the ICDS programmes. It can be said that knowledge is more among the youngsters. Knowledge is related to interest to obtain it, and the present study suggests an encouraging trend in that the young respondents are showing greater awareness of the rural development programmes.

Age vs Perceptions

8.4 Age vs Perception About Obstacles for Women to Enter in Politics

An examination of the relationship between age and obstacles for women to enter in politics reveals that the youngsters i.e., respondents in the age group of 21 – 35 and the middle aged i.e., respondents in the age group of 36 – 50 felt that lack of opportunity is the main obstacle for women to enter in politics. The respondent in the age group of 51 and above felt that lack of finances is the main obstacle for women to enter politics. The study also reveals that lack

of awareness of political process and lack of opportunity deprived women to participate in political process.

8.5 Age vs Perception About Women's Leadership at Grassroots level

An examination of the relationship between age and perception about women's leadership at grassroots level reveals that among MPPs, MPTCMs and GPSs, the respondents from all age groups felt that women would become good leaders at grassroots level. At the district level, few respondents in the age of 36 - 50 (22.2%) and one respondent (5.6%) in the age group of 21 - 35 and one respondent (5.6%) in the age group of 51 and above felt that women couldn't become leaders at grassroots level. But a large majority from all age groups felt that women would become good leaders at grassroots level.

8.6 Age vs Perception About Constraints to Women's Leadership at Panchayat level

An examination of the relationship between age and perceptions about constraint to women's leadership at Panchayat level reveals that the respondents in the age group of 21 - 35 and 36 - 50 felt that men's attitude and behaviour is the main constraint to women's leadership at panchayat level. The respondent in the age group of 51 and above felt that lack of family support and lack of courage and shyness are the constraints to women's leadership at Panchayat level.

8.7 Age vs Perception About Contributing factors to Women's Leadership at Panchayat level

A study of the relationship between age and factors contributing to women's leadership at panchayat level reveals that the respondents in the age group of 21 - 35 felt that hard work is the main factor contributing to women's leadership. The respondents in the age group of 36 - 50 felt that corruption free attitude is the main factor contributing to women's leadership. The

respondents in the age group of 51 and above felt that commitment and corruption free attitude contributes to women leadership at panchayat level.

8.8 Age vs Perceptions About Reservation for Women in Panchayats

An analysis of relationship between age and perceptions about reservation for women in panchayats reveals that the respondents in the age group of 21 - 35 and 36 - 50 felt that reservations for women in panchayats should be in proportion to their population i.e., reservation for women should be increased up to 50%. The respondents in the age group of 51 and above felt that reservation to women in panchayats should stand as it is i.e., 33%. But none of the respondents in all age groups at all levels felt that reservations should be withdrawn for women in panchayats.

8.9 Age vs Perceptions About Women's Empowerment through Reservation in PRIs

An examinations of relationship between age and perceptions about women's empowerment through reservations in PRIs reveals that the respondents in the age group of 21 - 35 and 36 - 50 felt that they were empowered through reservation in PRIs. The respondents in the age group of 51 and above at district level felt that she was not empowered. But the respondents in the same age group among MPTCMs and GPSs felt that they were empowered through reservation in PRIs. The study reveals that reservations opened up avenues for empowering women in PRIs.

Age vs Participation

8.10 Age vs Participation in Initiating Proposals for Rural Development

A study of the relationship between age and participation in initiating proposals for rural development reveals that MPPs and GPPs, irrespective of age initiated proposals due to chair position. A majority of the respondents in the ge group of 21 - 35 and 36 - 50 have initiated

proposals for rural development. The respondents in the age group of 51 and above among ZPTCMs and MPTCMs were not able to initiate proposals.

8.11 Age vs Participation in Discussion in Panchayats

A study of relationship between age and participation in discussion in panchayats reveals that the respondents in the age group of 21 - 35 and 36 - 50 participated in discussion. The respondents in the age group of 51 and above at district level was not able to participate in discussion. The same age group respondents among MPTCMs and GPSs participated in discussion. The study reveals that age is not a constraint to participate in discussion.

8.12 Age vs Decision Making Criteria in Panchayats

An enquiry of relationship between age and decision making criteria in panchayats reveals that respondents in the age group of 21 - 35 the majority decision is preferred. The respondents in the age group of 36 - 50 preferred party - wise decision. The respondents in the age group of 51 and above preferred majority decision. The study reveals that presence of collective decision is present only at the Gram Panchayat level. Among those who preferred collective decision, the young people i.e., the respondents in the age group of 21 - 35 stand first.

8.13 Age vs Role in Decision Making

A study of the relationship between age and decision - making at the district level reveals that central role is absent and equal percentage of respondents (38.9) in the age group of 21 - 35 and 36 - 50 played marginal role in decision making. The others are not able to play any role in decision making.

Among the MPPs those playing central role are more in the age group of 36 - 50 than those in the other groups. These form nearly 60% of the MPPs. The marginal role players among the MPTCs also more in the age group of 36 - 50 compared to those in the other groups.

Among the Gram Panchayat Sarpanches, the percentage of those in the age group of 21 - 35 is more than that of that of the presidents of other groups in respect of central and marginal role performance. None of the GPSs' role is nil.

8.14 Age vs Participation in RD Programmes for Women

As regards the relationship between age and participation in Rural Development Programmes, it has been noticed that at the Zilla Parishad and Mandal levels, the middle aged and at the Gram Panchayat level, the youngsters are found more enthusiastic than the others.

8.15 Age vs Mobilising People for Participation in Implementation of RD Programmes

The capacity to mobilise is seen in 50% of the members among the youngsters at the ZP level. The middle aged and those above the age of 51 together constitute 50% in respect of mobilisation of women for participation in Rural Development Programmes. The percentage of the middle aged is far more (73.4%) among the MPPs and less among the youngsters. Similar is the position among the MPTCMs (55.2%) middle aged and 43.3%) among the youngsters and 1.5% among the others.

At the GP level, youngsters are in more percentage (56.7%) than the others middle aged (40%) and 3.3% among those above 50 years of age.

8.16 Age vs Performance Satisfaction in Panchayati Raj

Performance satisfaction is seen more among the youngsters at the Zilla Parishad level than among the others. This is present among the middle aged MPPs. The young MPTCMs found in more numbers than the others regarding performance satisfaction. Similar is the position regarding GPSs.

SECTION - II

Caste vs Awareness

8.17 Caste vs Chief Source of Awareness About Panchayati Raj

An examination of the relationship between caste and source of awareness about Panchayati Raj at all levels reveals that the respondents belonging to Forward Castes (OC) and Other Backward Castes (OBC) got the knowledge through local political leaders and husband. The chief source of awareness from family members, SHGs and friends is less among the OCs and OBCs. Among the SCs and STs along with local political leaders and husband the family members, SHGs and friends are the chief source of awareness of Panchayati Raj.

The present study reveals that among the higher castes, chief source of awareness is local political leaders and husband and among lower castes along with local political leaders and husband the family members, SHGs and friends also are chief source of awareness of Panchayati Raj.

8.18 Caste vs Awareness About RD Programmes

The percentage of the respondents showing awareness about the Rural Development Programmes in general is given hereunder. The OCs form the largest group (44.4%) followed by the OBCs (33.3%) and followed by SCs (16.7%) and STs (5.6%) among the ZPTCMs. Similar is the position regarding MPPs. The largest group of them are in OCs (53.3%) followed by OBCs (26.7%). The position is thus of the SCs (13.3) and STs (6.7). Among the MPTCMs the OBCs constitute the first largest group (49.3%) followed by the OCs (25.4%). The SCs (22.4%) the STs (3.2%) occupy the next places.

As regards GPS's knowledge of the RD Programme, in general, it is seen more among the OBCs (55.0%) followed by the OCs (25.8%), SCs (11.7%) and STs (7.5%). The study made clear that knowledge of the RD Programmes is less among the STs and SCs.

8.19 Caste vs Awareness About RD Programmes for Women

An examination of the relationship between caste and knowledge of rural development Programmes for women suggests that DWCRA Programme is known irrespective of the caste factor. Similar is the position regarding knowledge about SHGs. The percentage of the respondents who are aware of the ICDS is seen almost in equal percentages among all castes at district and mandal levels. At the Gram Panchayat level, the SCs are more aware of ICDS and STs, OCs and OBCs in descending order. The present study reveals that all women representatives are enthusiastic of knowing about Rural Development Programmes.

Caste vs Perceptions

8.20 Caste vs Perceptions About Obstacles for Women to Enter Politics

The relationship between caste and perceptions about obstacles is studied. Among the ZPTC Members, the percentage of those emphasizing on lack of finances is the highest among the OBCs. The OCs had focused on lack of opportunity and lack of education. Lack of family support is mentioned by the OCs and OBCs but not by the SCs and STs. Lack of opportunity is emphasised more by the OCs among the MPPs also. Among the MPTCMs, lack of opportunity is frequently cited as the cause by all castes' representatives. Similar is the position regarding GPSs. It is clear that the women are feeling that opportunity for women's entry into politics are still very less.

8.21 Caste vs Perceptions About Women's Leadership at Grassroots level

The study has revealed that the need for women's leadership is found to be essential more by the OC women at the ZP and MP levels. At the MPTC level and GP level, it is seen more among the OBCs. The SCs and STs, at all the levels, are not clear about this.

8.22 Caste vs Perceptions about Constraints to Women's Leadership at Panchayat level

An examination of the relationship between caste and perceptions about constraints to women's leadership at panchayat level and district levels reveals made clear that men's negative attitude as a constraint is emphasised more by the OC ZPTCMs and Mandal Presidents. The proportion of OBCs considering men's negative attitude as constraint is more among the MPTCMs and GPSs. Lack of finance is emphasised by the SC and ST representatives.

8.23 Caste vs Perceptions About Factors Contributing to Women's Leadership at Panchayat level.

A study of the relationship between caste and perceptions regarding factors contributing to women's leadership has revealed that the OC women have laid greater emphasis on hard work than corruption free attitude, democratic culture, development orientation and commitment. The OBCs emphasised more on corruption free attitude. The SCs and STs have had similar views.

8.24 Caste vs Perceptions About Reservation for Women in Panchayats

It is noticed that the proportion of the respondents supporting an increase in the percentage of reserved seats is higher among the OCs, OBCs, SCs and STs in all the categories of members under study. But among the OCs, it is the highest at the MPP level (40.0%) and lowest at the MPTC level (17.9%). The proportion of the OBCs supporting increase of the percentage of reservation is the highest at the GP level (45%) and the lowest at the ZPTC level (16.7%). A very small proportion of the SCs and STs favoured the idea of increasing the percentage of reserved seats. At the MPTCMs level, this trend is seen more among the SCs and

among the STs, it is more at the MPP level. None of the respondents felt that the percentage of reserved seats should be decreased or that reservation should be given up.

8.25 Caste vs Perceptions About Women's Empowerment through Reservation in PRIs

Among the OCs the feeling that empowerment is possible through reservation is highest among MPPs (53.3%) and the lower among the GPSs (24.1%). This feeling is more visible among the OBCs at the GP level and far less at the ZPTC level. The proportion of the SC women having such view is the highest at the MPTC level and the lowest at the ZPTC level. Empowerment through reservation by equal proportion of ST women is preferred (6.7) at the GP and MPP levels. The study reveals that a majority of the respondents from all castes felt that they were empowered through reservation in PRIs.

Caste vs Participation

8.26 Caste vs Participation in Initiating Proposals for Rural Development

An attempt is made to study the links between caste and participation. Initiating proposals for rural development is seen higher among the OC Women compared to other castes' women. The percentage of the OC women initiating proposals is the highest (53.3%) at the MPP level and the lowest (13.4%) at the MPTC level. Among the OBC women, it is the highest at the GP level (55.0%) and the lowest (26.7%) at the MPP level. The SC & ST women did initiate proposals. Among the SCs it is highest at the MPTC level and lowest at ZPTC level. The proportion of ST women initiating proposals is the highest (7.5%) at the GP level and at the lowest (3.0%) at the MPTC level.

8.27 Caste vs Participation in Discussion in Panchayats

The study revealed a significant trend in respect of caste and participation. The participation of the OBCs, SCs, and STs is reasonably good in respect of numbers. Though these do not constitute a majority their voice is seen.

8.28 Caste vs Decision Making Criteria in Panchayati Raj

Reservation is meant to involve women in decision - making process. A study of the relationship between caste and decision making has shown that preference collective decision making is seen only among the SCs and STs and that too at the GP level only. Among the OC women, preference to majority decision is seen as the highest among MPPs and the lowest among the MPTCMs. This preference, among the OBCs, is noted as the highest at the GP level and the lowest at the MP level. Among the SCs, preference to majority decision is seen more at the MPTC level. It is the lowest at the GP level. Preference to this, among the STs is seen more at the MP level. Preference to party wise decision is the highest among the OCs at the MP level and the lowest at the GP level. The position regarding other castes is similar.

8.29 Caste vs Role in Decision Making

The OCs are found playing central role more (26.7%) at the MPP level compared to others. The OBCs' central role is found more at the GP level (21.7%) than at the other levels. The SCs and STs' central role is more at the MP level. In general the women are marginal role players in decision making.

8.30 Caste vs Participation in RD Programmes for Women

In the matter of involving women in Rural Development Programmes, the OBCs (33.3%) are found to be active at the ZP level (33.3%), OCs among MPPs, (40.0%), and OBCs among MPTCMs (49.3%) and at GP (55.0%) level.

8.31 Caste vs Mobilising People for Participation in Rural Development Programmes

It is found that the OBC women stood first in mobilising people for participation in RD Programmes. Among the MPTCMs and GPSs, the OBCs women stand first in mobilising people for participation in Rural Development Programmes. Among the ZPTCMs and MPPs, the OC women stand first in mobilising people for participation in Rural Development Programmes.

8.32 Caste vs Performance Satisfaction in Panchayati Raj

The performance satisfaction is seen more among OC women than others among the ZPTCMs and MPPs. Among the MPTCMs and GPSs, the performance satisfaction is seen more among the OBCs than the others.

* * *

SECTION - III

Educational Qualifications vs Awareness

8.33 Educational Qualifications vs Chief Source of Awareness About Panchayati Raj

A study of the relationship between educational qualifications and source of awareness about Panchayati Raj at all levels reveals that a large majority of respondents from primary and SSLC/SSC qualification got the knowledge through the local political leaders and husband. Then follow family members, SHGs and friends in descending order. The illiterates' and literates' sources of awareness include local political leaders and husband the family members, SHGs and friends. The lone graduate at the district level and lone graduate at mandal level the source of awareness is local political leaders. The study has not shown any specific connection between educational qualification and source of awareness.

8.34 Educational Qualifications vs Awareness About Rural Development Programmes

An examination of the relationship between educational qualifications and awareness of Rural Development Programmes at all levels indicates that awareness of Janmabhoomi, Food for Work, DDP and Watershed activities is not directly related to educational qualifications. All the respondents at all levels are aware of these programmes. Knowledge of other programmes which include TRYSEM, SGSY, JGSY, IAY, DPAP, DPIIP, IRDP, EAS and JRY is found more among the respondents having primary, SSLC / SSC, Intermediate and graduation qualifications. An equal number of respondents are aware of IAY and DPAP Programmes.

8.35 Educational Qualifications vs Awareness About Rural Development Programmes for Women

A study of the relationship between educational qualifications and knowledge of Rural Development Programmes to women suggests that DWCRA Programme is known irrespective

of the educational qualifications. Similar is the position regarding knowledge about SHGs. Among the ZPTCMs and MPPs the percentage of the respondents who are aware of the ICDS is seen more among respondents of SSLC/SSC, Intermediate and Graduation qualification. Awareness of programmes other than Janmabhoomi and SHGs is more among the higher educated. Relating to relationship between education and awareness and performance B. Lakshmi Devi, Bommalata Palli Gram Panchayat Sarpanch says, "If educational candidates elected as representatives of local government the panchayat system will be fruitful".

Educational Qualifications vs Perceptions

8.35 Educational Qualifications vs Perceptions Regarding Obstacles for Women to Enter Politics

It is noted through the study that the illiterates have identified lack of education, lack of finances, lack of opportunity as main obstacles for women's entry into politics. Similar are the views of those having primary educational qualifications. The more educated i.e., those with SSC, Intermediate and Graduation qualification have emphasised on lack of awareness of political process in addition to those mentioned by them.

8.36 Educational Qualifications vs Perceptions About Women's Leadership at Grassroots level

It is noted that the percentage of the respondents supporting women's leadership at the grassroots is more among the more educated than the illiterates and just literates. But interestingly, 46.7 percentage of the respondents have primary educational qualification among Mandal Presidents and 47.8 percentage of those having same qualification at the MPTC level have said that women can become and should become leaders at the grassroots level.

8.38 Educational Qualifications vs Perceptions About Constraints to Women's

Leadership at Panchayat Level

As regards constraints to women's leadership, the focus of the illiterates is more on men's behaviour and lack of finances. The more educated women, in addition to these, have stressed on anti women political culture, lack of courage also as impediments for women's leadership in Panchayati Raj.

8.39 Educational Qualifications vs Perceptions About Factors contributing to Women's

Leadership at Panchayat Level

It is noted that the illiterates, just literates and those with primary educational qualification have identified corruption free attitude and commitment as factors contributing to women's leadership at the panchyat level. Those with SSC, Intermediate and Graduation qualification have added some more factors, which include hard work, democratic culture and democratic orientation. Emphasis on hard work is laid by more SSC qualification holders than others.

8.40 Educational Qualifications vs Perceptions About Reservation for Women in

Panchayats

It is found that the percentage of the illiterates and semiliterate which favoured an increase in the percentage of reserved seats for women is the highest at the Gram Panchayat level and the lowest at the Zilla Parishad level. The highest percentage of the respondents, which favoured increase, is seen at the MP level among the primary educational qualification holders' (46.7). This is the lowest at the Zilla Parishad level. (15.6). Among those with SSC qualification, it is the highest at the ZPTC level and the lowest at the MPTC level. Those with intermediate and graduation qualifications have been less in favouring increased percentage.

8.41 Educational Qualifications vs Perceptions About Women's Empowerment through Reservation in PRIs

The feeling that reservation helps to empower women is seen in all the respondents. But the percentage of the respondents having this view is more among the better educated than the less educated. Referring to educational qualifications and performance satisfaction and empowerment the women in panchayats felt that better education empowers them. M. Chennamma, Mandal Panchayat President of Rapthadu Mandalam says, "Because of lack of education, I am not assertive".

Educational Qualifications vs Participation

8.42 Educational Qualifications vs Participation in Initiating Proposals for Rural Development

It is noted that higher the educational level, more is the percentage of the respondents in initiating proposals at the ZPTC level. But the Mandal Presidents and Gram Panchayat Sarpanches, though less educated have initiated proposals very often because of their position as chairpersons. Less than 25% of the respondents who are illiterates said that they have initiated proposals.

8.43 Educational Qualifications vs Participation in Discussion in Panchayats

The study revealed that those who participated in discussions are more among the better educated than those with less education. But, as noted before, the less educated, in the role of chairpersons, have been active in discussion. Interestingly a small proportion of illiterates and just literates have been involved in discussion at the ZPTC, MPTCMs and GP levels. But the Mandal Presidents and Gram Panchayat Sarpanches have participated in discussion because of their position as chairpersons.

8.44 Educational Qualifications vs Decision Making Criteria in Panchayati Raj

A study of the relationship between educational levels and decision making criteria has shown that at the district level those who did SSC constitute the first largest group (22.2%) who favoured majority decision. The percentage of those in other educational groups who favoured majority decision is equal (5.6%). Similar is the position regarding party based decision making.

At the Mandal level, the position is different. Those with primary education constitute the first largest group which preferred majority decision (26.7%) followed by the SSC qualification holders (13.3%) and Intermediate qualification holders (13.3%). As regards party based decision making among the MPPs those with Primary education and Intermediate education are equally divided (20% each) and the remaining (13.3%) are those with SSC qualification. 53.3% of the MPPs preferred party - wise decision making.

Among the MPTCMs, the first largest group preferring majority decision is that having Primary educational qualification followed by the SSC qualification holders (11.9%) followed by the illiterates (10.4%) and the just literates (7.5%) and the graduates (1.5%). Regarding party wise decision making, the primary education qualification holders form the first largest group (20.5%) followed by the illiterates (10.4%), SSC qualification holders (7.5%) and the just literates. Interestingly, a few of the GPSs (17.5%) preferred collective decision making and the first largest group consists of the SSC qualification holders. Among the GPSs who favoured majority decision the first largest group (15.8%) consists the primary educational qualification holders and the smallest group has those having Intermediate qualification.

The GPSs preferring partly wise decision constitute a minority i.e., 30.8%. The first largest group consists of the SSC qualification holders (9.2%) and the smallest group (1.7%) has intermediate qualification.

8.45 Educational Qualifications vs Role in Decision Making

The study has revealed that the relationship between educational qualifications and role in decision making has to be looked in the background of the position of the respondents. More percentage of the chairpersons have played central role irrespective of their educational qualifications.

At the district level, none of the respondents has played central role. Among marginal role players, those having SSC qualification constitute the first largest group (33.3%) and the smallest group consists of the graduates (5.6%). This reveals that education and role in decision making are not directly related always.

Among the MPPs, the central and marginal role players constitute 20.0% & 26.7% respectively. And the SSC qualification holders are equally divided in both the categories (13.3% each).

8.46 Educational Qualifications vs Participation in RD Programmes for Women

It is noted that interest and not educational levels that has led to participation in Rural Development Programmes. A conspicuous group of illiterates motivated women to participate in Rural Development Programmes and worked for their implementation.

8.47 Educational Qualifications vs Mobilising People for Participation in RD Programmes

It is very clear that at the ZP level, higher educational qualification holders are more than those with other educational levels in mobilising people for participation in Rural Development Programmes. Similar is the position regarding sincere implementation of Rural Development Programmes.

Among the MPPs, those with Primary education have been in more percentage compared to others (SSC& intermediate qualification holders in the present context) in mobilising people

for participation in Rural Development Programmes. Among the MPTCMs those with Primary education and intermediate qualification have been more successful mobilisers in respect of numbers. At the GP level no significant relationship is noted between educational levels and mobilisation.

8.48 Educational Qualifications vs Performance Satisfaction in Panchayati Raj

Performance Satisfaction is very essential for any position holder. Performance satisfaction and education levels are found to be positively related at the Z P level. Nearly 50% of the ZPTCMs with SSC qualification in the sample have been happy with their performance. Those with Primary education form the first largest group among the MPPs followed by the Intermediate and SSC qualification holders. Similar is the position of regarding the MPTCMs having SSC qualification. Performance satisfaction is seen in the SSC qualification holders among the GPSs. Hence the relationship between educational qualification and performance satisfaction is very much is visible.

The study made clear that age, educational levels, caste and other factors have bearing on awareness and perceptions. It is also the level that has considerable relevance.

* * *

Chapter – IX

Summary and Conclusion

The 73rd Amendment is considered as an event of far reaching importance for women's empowerment in decentralized governance. The statutory representation is the first step in promoting political participation by facilitating the presence of more women in Panchayati Raj Institutions. The mandatory representation encouraged women to come out of the age-old barriers imposed on them by social structure and to share power on an equal footing with men.

Studies on political participation of women in Panchayati Raj point out positive and negative aspects. A Sarpanch in Andhra Pradesh as noted, received international recognition in 1988. Jesu Mary, Sarpanch of Mikhale Gram Panchayat in Ramanathapur district in Tamil Nadu State, got the award from World Bank for hundred percent success in protecting rain water harvesting in her Gram Panchayat¹. This is a great example showing achievement of women in Panchayati Raj. There are many success stories explaining women's honesty and confidence in bringing out changes in political culture.

Women in Panchayati Raj faced death, rape, beatings, suicide attempts and humiliation for just being the women members of panchayats. Recently Kotnala Latha, MPP of Madugula Mandalam of Visakhapatnam district attempted suicide in her own office. The reason is that her own party members brought no confidence motion against her and a majority voted in favour of no confidence motion. This angered all women MPTCMs of the Mandal². Despite these happenings, an optimistic future is predicted by politicians, bureaucracy, academicians, and NGOs and women's organisations that women in Panchayati Raj would bring development and social change in rural areas.

The present study was conducted with four indicators of empowerment in decentralised governance. These are (i) socio – economic, political background, (ii) awareness, (iii) perception and (iv) participation. The following are the findings from the study.

Socio – economic Political Background

The study noted that the women in panchayats are mostly young and middle aged. Only a few of them are above fifty years of age. So the panchayats are showing the way for the young generation of women entering the political process.

Regarding caste, half of the respondents in the sample belong to Other Backward Castes (OBCs). The major aspect is that although women belong to different castes, on the issues relating to women, they expressed unity. So the panchayats brought different castes women into the same platform and facilitated trends of the unity among them. This is an achievement in caste-ridden society.

Regarding educational qualifications, the illiterate is 20.5%, literate are 14.0%, and primary qualification respondents are 31.4%. 33 percent had the qualifications of SSC and Intermediate (10+2). Only two graduates were found in the sample. A majority of the respondents are house – wives followed by farmers, agricultural labourers and others. The highly educated persons and professionals are not attracted by the panchayats. It is the less privileged like farmers, agricultural labourers and housewives that are attracted.

Regarding the economic status of the respondents, more than 50 percent of women members is below the poverty line, 38 percent from middle class and only 6.6% is from rich class. Personal observations by the researcher have revealed that most of the women members are dependent economically upon their husbands or on their family members.

Regarding political experience, a high majority of the women respondents are freshers. The reasons for limited political experience is political isolation of women for a long time. Regarding political affiliation, the first largest group at the Zilla Parishad level is affiliated to the Indian National Congress. A majority among the Mandal Panchayat Territorial Constituency Members is from the regional TDP. The Gram Panchayat Sarpanches are not elected, theoretically on party lines. A majority of them have not revealed their party identity.

Reservation is chief factor that elevated them to the present position. Then follows the husband's initiative as the main factor responsible for their induction into the present political roles. Except two women, all of them are married. Regarding the two – child norm, women are very frank in admitting the number of children in the family. This shows sincerity among women.

Awareness and Perceptions

The local political leaders are the chief source of awareness about Panchayati Raj and 73rd Constitutional Amendment in general. The other sources are husband, family members and Self – Help Groups. Regarding Rural Development Programmes, the programmes which were given wide publicity and where the Panchayats were involved, were known to most of the women members. The Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) programme and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are known to all women. But women members are partially aware of the objectives, guidelines and the procedure for planning, implementation and monitoring of RD Programmes. The husbands, officials and local political leaders exploit their ignorance and innocence.

Perceptions

About women entering in panchayats there is mixed response from men. Men expressed happiness because women got the opportunity to participate in the political institutions at village level. The unhappiness is because their opportunity was taken by women. Women representatives felt that it is a collective strength and helps to voice their needs from development perspectives. More than 50 percent of the men felt happy and encouraged wife to enter Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Regarding the obstacles to enter politics, a majority of the respondents expressed that lack of opportunity, lack of finances, lack of family support and lack of political awareness are the reasons. Regarding leadership at grassroots level, women members felt that “given the opportunity, women would prove themselves as good leaders and could reach higher levels”. But they mentioned that in general, men’s attitude and behaviour are the primary factors constraining the promotion of women’s leadership. About factors contributing to leadership of panchayats, a majority of them emphasized that corruption free attitude and behaviour helped women to become leaders. Regarding reservation to women in Panchayati Raj Institutions, a majority of them felt that it should be increased to 50 percent i.e., in proportion to women population and a majority of them felt that through reservations to women in Panchayati Raj Institutions, empowerment is being achieved.

Participation

All Mandal Panchayat Presidents and Gram Panchayat Sarpanches, who are in chair positions, initiated proposals for Rural Development. At Zilla Parishad, slightly more than 20 percent did not participate in initiation. At the Mandal level, slightly less than 35

percent did not participated in initiation. The factors for not participating in initiation include ignorance and hesitation i.e., a feeling that their views may not be taken into account.

A majority of the women members participated in discussion according to what they stated. For Mandal Panchayat Presidents and Gram Panchayat Sarpanches, it became a compulsion to initiate and participate in discussion. Proxy members' participation is also noticed in the meetings. The decision – making in Panchayats is mostly by majority voting and party wise. But the incidence of collective decision is seen at the Gram Panchayat level and absent at the other two levels. Collective decision, when a female is the chairperson, is a welcome feature for the smooth functioning of Panchayats.

The study reveals that a majority of women respondents support good decisions at all levels. The women members expressed that on women's issues and mitigating drought all women extend support. Regarding role in decision - making, a majority of the women representatives have marginal role and slightly more than 10 percent do not have any role in decision making. The factors responsible for playing central role, according to women representatives, are chair position and active cooperation from family members, mainly from husband. The women representatives who do not have any role in decision making are those who completely depend upon their family members. Here proxy members played a vital role in influencing the women representatives.

A majority of the women (78.2%) are involved in the implementation of Rural Development Programmes and some women (16.4%) are motivating women for their involvement in Rural Development Programmes. A small percentage of women

representatives also contributed to the formation of Self - Help Groups. Regarding obstacles for participation of women in implementation of Rural Development Programmes, a majority of them expressed that corruption, lack of knowledge, official apathy, factional politics and caste politics are responsible.

Regarding mobilisation of people to participate in Rural Development Programmes, a majority of the women representatives expressed that sincere implementation of Rural Development Programmes helps to mobilise the people in the participation in these Programmes. Other factors are creation of awareness, honesty and development orientation.

All the women members got involved in some Rural Development works. These are Janmabhoomiⁱ, providing drinking water facilities, sanitation facilities and works under the scheme of Food for Work watershed works and forming of SHGs. Each of the respondents is invariably involved in at least two activities.

A majority of the women representatives are not satisfied by their performance. According to them, lack of knowledge, lacks of experience, lack of funds and official apathy are the obstacles. Some women members are given preferential treatment by the Chairperson belonging to the ruling Telugu Desam Party. The satisfied respondents are mostly those who received preferential treatment from the ruling party. The study points out that at the grass roots level, dissatisfaction regarding role performance is the general trend. But women members are optimistic about improving their performance and reach the goals and targets.

Regarding suggestion to improve the women members' performance in panchayats, they unequivocally emphasised on the need to provide training and to generate awareness to facilitate better participation and performance. Some women members emphasised on the allotment of funds for women representatives. According to them, 'the allotment of special funds for women representatives are expected to get away from male manipulations'. At all levels a majority of them suggested study visits for observations and exposure.

Relationships

Age vs Awareness

The relationships between age and awareness reveals that at district and mandal levels, the middle aged group i.e., 36 – 50 is more active and at village level, the young group i.e., 21 – 35 is more active and younger generation are showing much interest in Rural Development Programmes.

Age vs Perceptions

The relationship between age and obstacles for women to enter in politics reveals that the youngsters and middle aged (21 - 35 and 36 - 50) felt that lack of opportunity is the main obstacle for women to enter in politics. The respondent in the age group of 51 and above felt that lack of finances is the main obstacle. The respondents of all age groups felt that women would become good leaders at grassroots level. Regarding constraints to women's leadership, the young and middle aged felt that men's attitude and behaviour is the main constraint to women's leadership. The respondent in the group of 51 and above felt that lack of family support and lack of courage and shyness are the constraints. Regarding the factors contributing to women leadership the young felt that hard work is

the main factor and middle aged emphasised on corruption free attitude. The respondents in the age group of 51 and above felt that commitment and corruption free attitude are the factors that contributes to women leadership

Regarding reservations for women in panchayats, the young and middle aged felt that reservations for women in panchayats should be in proportion to their population i.e., reservation for women should be increased up to 50%. The respondent in the age group of 51 and above felt that reservation to women in panchayats should stand as it is (33%). Regarding empowerment of women through reservation the young and middle aged felt that they were empowered through reservation in PRIs. The respondents in the age group 51 and above at district level felt that she was not empowered. But the respondents in the same age group among MPTCMs and GPSs felt that they were empowered through reservation in PRIs

Age vs Participation

Regarding relationship between age and participation a majority of young and middle aged have initiated proposals for rural development. The respondents in the age group of 51 and above among ZPTCMs and MPTCMs were not able to initiate proposals. The MPPs and GPSs, due to their chair positions, irrespective of age, have initiated proposals for Rural Development activities. Regarding participation in discussion the young and middle aged participated in discussion. The respondents in the age group of 51 and above at the district level were not able to participate in discussion. The same age group respondents among MPTCMs and GPSs participated in discussion. The study reveals that age is not a constraint to participate in discussion.

Regarding decision making criteria, the young and the respondents in the age group of 51 and above preferred majority decision. The middle aged preferred party – wise decision. The collective decision is present only at the Gram Panchayat level. Among those who preferred collective decision, the young people stands first. Regarding role in decision making the young (21 - 35 and 36 - 50) played marginal role in decision making. Among MPPs a majority (60%) of the middle aged played a central role in decision making. Regarding participation in Rural Development Programmes for women, the youngsters are found more enthusiastic.

Regarding mobilising people for participation in implementation of Rural Development Programmes, the capacity to mobilise is seen more among the youngsters (50%) and the middle aged and those above the age of 51 together constitute 50% in respect of mobilisation for participation of women in Rural Development Programmes. Regarding performance satisfaction, more youngsters among ZPTCMs, MPTCMs and GPSs felt satisfied and among the MPPs the middle aged felt satisfied.

Caste vs Awareness

The relationship between caste and chief source of awareness reveals that the OCs and OBCs got the knowledge through local political leaders and husband. Among the SCs and STs along with local political leaders and husband the family members, SHGs and friends are the chief source of awareness. Regarding awareness about the Rural Development Programmes among the ZPTCMs and MPPs, awareness is more among the OCs and OBCs. Among the MPTCMs, awareness is more among OBCs followed by the

OCs, SCs and the STs. But the RD Programmes which are more publicised are known to all caste groups.

Caste vs Perceptions

Regarding the relationship between caste and perceptions about obstacles to enter in politics a majority of the respondents from all caste groups felt that lack of opportunity is the main obstacle. Regarding women's leadership, a majority of all caste groups felt that women would become good leaders at grassroots level. Regarding constraints to women's leadership, men's negative attitude as a constraint is emphasised more by the OCs and OBCs. Lack of finance is emphasised by the SC and ST representatives. Regarding factors contributing to women leadership, the OC women have laid greater emphasis on hard work the OBCs, SCs, and STs emphasised more on corruption free attitude.

Regarding perceptions about reservation for women in Panchyats, all caste groups supported an increase in the percentage of in proportion to women's population. None of the respondents felt that the percentage of reserved seats should be decreased or that reservation should be given up. Regarding women's empowerment through reservation, a majority of the respondents from all castes felt that they were empowered through reservation in PRIs.

Caste vs Participation

A study of the relationship between caste and participation reveals that initiating proposals for rural development is higher among the OC Women compared to other castes' women. Regarding participation in Panchayats, the OCs participation is slightly more. The OBCs', SCs', and STs' voice is seen less in numbers. Regarding caste and decision making criteria, a significant trend is that preference to collective decision making is seen

only among the SCs and STs and that too at the GP level only. Among OC and OBC women, preference is for majority decision. But preference to party - wise decision is the highest among the OCs at the MPP level.

Regarding caste and role in decision making, the OCs are playing central role more at MPP level compared to others. The OBCs central role is found more at the GP level than at the other levels. The SCs' and STs' central role is more at the MPTC level. In general, the women are marginal role players in decision making. Regarding participation in Rural Development Programmes, the OBCs are active at the ZP level, the OCs among MPPs and OBCs among MPTCMs and at GP level. Regarding mobilising people for participation in Rural Development Programmes, the OBC women stand first in mobilising people for participation in RD Programmes among the MPTCMs and GPSs. Among the ZPTCMs and MPPs, the OC women stand first in mobilising people for participation in Rural Development Programmes. Regarding performance satisfaction, it is seen more among OC women than others among the ZPTCMs and MPPs. Among the MPTCMs and GPSs, performance satisfaction is seen more among the OBCs than in the others.

Educational Qualifications vs Awareness

The relationship between educational qualifications and awareness reveals that a large majority of respondents from primary and SSLC/SSC qualification got the knowledge through the local political leaders and husband. The illiterates' and literates' sources of awareness include local political leaders and husband the family members, SHGs and friends. The study has not shown any specific connection between educational qualification and source of awareness. The awareness about Rural Development Programmes at all levels indicates that awareness of Janmabhoomi, Food for Work, DDP

and Watershed activities is not directly related to the educational qualifications. All the respondents at all levels are aware of these programmes. Knowledge of other programmes is found more among the respondents having primary, SSLC / SSC, Intermediate and graduation qualifications. Regarding awareness of Rural Development Programmes, the study reveals that DWCRA and SHGs are known irrespective of the educational qualifications. Awareness of programmes other than Janmabhoomi and SHGs is more among the higher educated.

Educational Qualifications vs Perceptions

The relationship between educational qualifications and perceptions about obstacles for women to enter politics reveals that the illiterates, literates and primary educational qualification holders have identified lack of education, lack of finances, lack of opportunity as main obstacles for women's entry into politics. The more educated i.e., those with SSC, intermediate and graduation qualification have emphasised on lack of awareness of political process in addition to those mentioned by them. Regarding perceptions about women's leadership, the respondents supporting women's leadership at the grassroots is more among the more educated than the illiterates and just literates.

Regarding perceptions about constraints to women's leadership, the illiterate focused more on men's behaviour and lack of finances. The more educated women, in addition to these, have stressed on anti women political culture, lack of courage also as constraints to women's leadership in Panchayati Raj. Regarding factors contributing to women's leadership the illiterates, just literates and those with primary educational qualification have identified corruption free attitude and commitment as factors contributing to women's leadership at the Panchyat level. Those with SSC, Intermediate

and graduation have added some more factors, which include hard work, democratic culture and democratic orientation. The SSC qualification holders laid more emphasis on hard work than others.

Regarding perceptions about reservation for women in Panchayats, the percentage of the illiterates and literate' who favoured an increase in the percentage of reserved seats for women is the highest at the Gram Panchayat level. Respondents with primary educational qualification favoured increase of seats at the Mandal Panchayat level. Among those with SSC qualification, the percentage of such respondents is the highest at the ZPTC level and those with intermediate and graduation qualifications have been less in favouring increased percentage. Regarding perception about women's empowerment through reservation in PRIs, all the respondents felt the women are empowered through reservation. But the percentage of the respondents having this view is more among the better educated than the less educated.

Educational Qualifications vs Participation

The relationship between educational qualifications and participation has revealed that higher the educational level, more is the percentage of the respondents in initiating proposals at the ZPTC level. But the Mandal Presidents and Gram Panchayat Sarpanches, though less educated, have initiated proposals very often because of their position as chairpersons. The illiterates and literates also have initiated proposals for Rural Development. Regarding participation in discussion, it is revealed that those who participated in discussions are more among the better educated than those with less education. But the less educated, in the role of chairpersons have been active in

discussion. A small proportion of illiterates and just literate have also participated in discussion.

Regarding decision-making criteria, the SSC qualification respondents favoured majority decision. The other educational groups also favoured majority decision. Among the MPPs, the primary education qualification holders and those qualification of Intermediate are equally divided in supporting party wise decision. But a majority of the MPPs preferred party - wise decision making. Interestingly, a few of the GPSs preferred collective decision making and the first largest group consist of the SSC qualification holders. Regarding role in decision-making, more percentage of the chairpersons have played central role irrespective of their educational qualifications. But most of them played marginal role in decision making.

Regarding participation in Rural Development Programmes for women, irrespective of educational qualifications, all respondents participated in Rural Development Programmes. A small group of illiterates motivated women to participate in Rural Development Programmes and worked for their implementation. Regarding mobilising people for participation in Rural Development Programmes the higher educational qualification holders are more than those with other educational levels in mobilising people for participation in Rural Development Programmes. Similar is the position regarding sincere implementation of Rural Development Programmes. Regarding performance satisfaction, among the ZPTCMs half of the SSC qualification respondents in the sample have been happy with their performance. Among MPPs, with primary educational qualification respondents are the first largest group in expressing satisfaction. Among the MPTCMs and the GPSs, the performance satisfaction is seen

among SSC qualification respondents. In the study, the relationship between educational qualification and performance satisfaction is very much visible.

Empowerment

Isolation to Participation

Women started their journey from kitchen and fields to decision-making bodies, which can ultimately change their lives. Previously it was men who used to decide their fate. The representation to women in Panchayati Raj opened up avenues for women to become masters of their own destiny. The movement from

Isolation → Socialisation → Participation → Changes in their lives is visible.

The political empowerment through representation to women in Panchayati Raj resulted in psychological empowerment, cultural empowerment and social empowerment. Psychological empowerment is related to confidence and courage in dealing with men and political matters. In this aspect, the women can be divided into two categories. The first category is women with natural confidence. Even the illiterate women have exhibited this confidence. The study points out that the women in Panchayati Raj, even though they are illiterate, semi literate and belonged to lower castes exhibited confidence. Few women from upper caste are also dynamic in conducting the meetings and maintaining good rapport with officers.

Women in rural areas were afraid of sitting on the chair in front of men. As chair positions were reserved to women, they were compelled to chair the meetings of the Panchayats. Smt. Manjula, Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Member says, "I am not afraid of any thing. I will go to anywhere to participate in meetings and conferences. I

never take the help of my husband or any family person". Sharada Kolli, Mayor Guntur City reaffirms the confidence of women local government. She says, "The perception of women in politics has changed for the better, at least in India. After seeing women in local governance, people have become confident that women are good administrators".³ This can be called as a cultural empowerment.

Social empowerment means women from lower castes never used to stand in front of upper caste men and chair the sessions. As reservation provided mandatory representation in chair position to women of lower castes, they were compelled to chair the sessions. This facilitates social empowerment to the women from lower castes although these women face wrath from upper caste men in different parts of the country. But slowly the situation is changing.

Aspiration

The experience in Panchayats has led women to aspiring for participation in higher level political bodies i.e., state level bodies. Smt. Manjula, Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Member says "I am expecting the seat of M.L.A in next elections". Mahadevi, Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Member says, "with experience in Panchayats, I would like to move to state level politics".

Decentralisation

Decentralisation broadens democracy i.e., reaching of democracy from Lok Sabha to Gram Sabha. The distribution of powers and functions to the local bodies (Article 243 - G) has broadened democracy at grassroots level. Besides this, by providing representation to women, Other Backward Castes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes democracy is getting strengthened at grassroots level.

Governance

The women in Panchayati Raj have been trying to provide good governance at grassroots level i.e., participation, accountability, transparency and competence in Panchyati Raj. But there are impediments in relation to participation. The most conspicuous is proxy membership in Panchayats.

At present proxy membership is highly prevalent at the Mandal and Village levels. Most of the women representatives remained isolated from active political participation. In a recently held meeting in one of the Mandals in Dharamavaram division, among the six women Gram Panchayat Sarpanches, only one Sarpanch has attended the meeting and rest of them are absent. On behalf of them, either the husband or the son or the son-in-law attended the meeting. They sat in front row and participated in deliberations. This was silently accepted and tolerated by the officials without mentioning even a single word against to them.

The proxy system has a chain from village level to district level. At the village level, the husbands are proxies. The husbands in turn are proxies to the political leaders at the Mandal level. These Mandal level political leaders are proxies to political leaders at the district level. The district level political leaders are proxies to state and national level political parties. This way proxy system is having a chain either up to the state level or the national level.

Many factors contribute to the proxy system. Self – motivation is less among many women. Mainly women are not accustomed to be as equals treated to men. In many instances, the husband or family members or regional level political leaders have motivated women to sit on the chair. In some places, the Mandal Panchayat Presidents

from lower castes are reluctant to sit on chair in Mandal Panchayat meetings and have admitted that they feel uncomfortable to sit on the chair in the presence of males. Chennamma, President of Rapthadu Mandal says, “initially I was feeling discomfort to sit on the chair in front of male members. Later on, my husband and family members encouraged”.

Another factor is that women were afraid of character assassination. Laxminarayanamma ZPTC member says that “Women can participate alone in all the conferences or meetings. But women are afraid of character assassination. For this reason, husband or family member accompanies women to the meetings or conferences”. She also says ‘the proxy membership may not continue for long because the women are becoming independent in thinking and functioning’.

Gaps in Empowerment Process

The present study deals with political empowerment of women in Panchayati Raj. There are gaps in empowerment process at policy level and field level. At policy level, powers and functions relating to all the 29 items (Article 243 - G) of Rural Development Activities have to be transferred to Panchyats. The recent decision of the State Cabinet, relating to transfer same items is to be implemented with care and caution. This is a major draw back in empowerment process. The policy has not provided facilitation of awareness and capacity building of women members which can strengthen women's participation in decision making in Panchayats. At field level, the proxy participation is a major gap in empowerment process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The women have to go a long way to prove that they are equally capable as men. The policy of reservation provided for women is an entry into the process but is not an end in itself. It is a step forward in promoting women's participation in the grassroots of democracy.

The political empowerment is interrelated to social, cultural and psychological empowerment and leads to social, cultural and psychological empowerment. To create an enabling environment for empowerment necessary and sufficient conditions are needed. One necessary condition is training which can provide awareness and capacity building. Anantapur is an economically backward district and perennially drought prone. The situation in the district made people to concentrate more on their livelihood opportunities than political participation. In between hunger and participation, the people prefer to fulfil their hunger than participation. The economic incentives to like TA, DA and Honorarium is a sufficient condition for women members to participate in decision making..

Training

Training should be made compulsory to all women members of Panchayati Raj Institutions. It should be conducted every year. The training module should encompass 'three' aspects. These are (i) rights and responsibilities of women members, (ii) aspects relating to Rural Development and (iii) capacity building. The details are mentioned below.

Firstly, training should be helpful to get knowledge about Panchayati Raj, the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, rights and responsibilities. Secondly the objectives and guidelines for Rural Development Programmes, planning, implementation and monitoring

methods and other related matters should be made known to the women representatives through training. Thirdly capacity building in dealing with officials, other members of PRIs mainly the men and performing their role is important.

Besides the internal environment, the external environment also contributes to the political empowerment of women in Panchayats. These are (i) officials' cooperation, (ii) men's cooperation, (iii) encouragement of NGOs and (iv) encouragement of women associations and women leaders.

Officials Cooperation

The officials can play a vital role in acting as change agents and support women in panchayats. In fact officials can stop the proxy system. The researcher observed that the Mandal level officials, though are aware of women's potentialities, are requesting women to attend meetings of Panchayat. In Kudair Mandal a woman officer (MPDO) insisted that "women Mandal Panchayat President have to attend the meetings instead of her husband".

Men's Cooperation

Patriarchy rules the Indian society. The Panchayats are not exceptional to this culture. In Panchayats, men use un-parliamentary language to ridicule and discourage women to participate in panchayats. Particularly, dalit women face more wrath of upper castes men. Dalit women face exile from village, beatings and rape for just being women and member of panchayat. But the culprits were never arrested. Even though they are arrested, they are restored to the same positions due to higher level political influence.

For instance, in Betul district of Madhya Pradesh State, a dalit woman Panchayat member was raped by upper caste men and paraded naked with bells tied around her neck'. The punishment was given on the ground that she had relationship with a man. But

nothing was done to the men who raped her.⁴ In another instance, the Secretary of Gram Panchayat slapped a Sarpanch, because she unfurled the national flag on the Independence Day. The Secretary was suspended but was given posting.⁵ There are several unreported cases of such happenings.

Encouragement of NGOs

NGOs are friends of the people and are involved in social service as well as developmental activities. Already some NGOs had built partnership with Government to impart training to women in Panchayats. But the scope should be widened for more participation of NGOs. But they should not behave extra constitutional powers in dealing with Panchayat matters.

Encouragement from Women Associations and Women Leaders

Women's associations should play vital role in political empowerment of women in Panchayats. In fact, the mandatory representation in Panchayats is the result of women's movement. The women's associations should focus on changing the culture of patriarchy in Panchayats and bring women's issues in development. Women associations have a responsibility to make political participation as a way life to women in Panchayats.

The women leaders at state level should encourage women in Panchayats and become role models. As Sharada kolli, Mayor of Guntur City, Andhra Pradesh hailing from an active political family says 'the women leaders have the responsibility in promoting female participation in politics'.⁶

In conclusion it can be said that the political empowerment of women brings change in political culture promotes sincerity and honesty and discourages criminalisation in politics. As Sharada Kolli says, "women are sincere and committed to discharge their

duties and do not encourage criminalisation in the political arena".⁷ The women in Panchayati Raj are giving new direction to political culture and for development. The future of Panchayati Raj depends, mostly on the women in Panchayati Raj.

The political empowerment of women definitely leads to social, psychological and cultural empowerment. This can be best realised through purposeful implementation of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment with commitment to decentralised governance.

* * *

References

-
- ¹ *Hundred Percent Success in Rain Water Protection: World Bank Award to Woman Sarpanch*, Eenadu, 22.09.2003, p. 8.
 - ² *No Confidence by Own Party: Suicide Attempt of Mandal Panchayat President*, Eenadu, 22.09.03, p. 1.
 - ³ Sharada, Kolli. (2003), *Entering Local Politics*, <http://www.enescap.org/huset/women/files/kolli-html-11k>, 18.07.2003, p. 1.
 - ⁴ Mody, Anjali. (2002), *Their Tomorrow Never Comes*, The Hindu, 29.12.2002, pp. 16 – 17.
 - ⁵ Ibid.
 - ⁶ Sharada, Kolli. (2003), op.cit., p. 1.
 - ⁷ Ibid.

* * *

Bibliography

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

1. Abraham, D. (1974), *Dynamics of Leadership in Village India*, India International Publications, Allahabad.
2. Arthur, W. Macmillan. (1961), *Delegation and Authority*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay.
3. Bandura, Albert. (1986), *Social Foundation of Thought*, NJ. Prentice – Hall, Englewood Cliffs.
4. Beetham, D (ed.). (1994), *Defining and Measuring Democracy*, Sage Publications, New Delhi.
5. Bidyut, Mohanty. (ed.). (2000), *Women and Political Empowerment*, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi.
6. Bryce, James. (1962), *Modern Democracies*, Vol. 1, The World Press.
7. *Chambers 21st Century Dictionary* (2001), Allied Publishers, New Delhi.
8. Chaturvedi, Pradeep. (ed.). (2002), *Women and Food Security: Role of Panchayats*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi.
9. Chaturvedi, T. N. (ed.). (1981), *Panchayati Raj*, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi.
10. Easton, David. (1957), *A System Approach to the Analysis of Political System*, World Politics, Eagle Wood Cliffs, New York.
11. Government of Andhra Pradesh., (2002), *Handbook of Anantapur District 2001 – 02* (Provisional), Chief Planning Office, Anantapur.
12. Andhra Pradesh Gram Panchayat Act (1964), Hyderabad, Section 9, 3 (A).
13. Government of Andhra Pradesh. (1963), A.P Panchayat Samithies and Zilla Parishad Act as amended in 1963. Section 14, sub section 3. Hyderabad.
14. Government of Andhra Pradesh. (1987), Section – 5 sub section (2, b) the A.P Mandal Praja Parishad, Zilla Parishad and Zilla Pranalika Abhvrudhhi Sameeksha Mandals Act, 1986 as amended in 1987, Hyderabad.
15. Government of India. (1974), *Towards Equality - Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India*, New Delhi.

16. Government of India. (1988), *National Perspective Plan for Women 1988 – 2000 A.D*, Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Akashdeep Printers, New Delhi.
17. Government of India, Ministry of Health, (1957), *Proceedings of the Third Meeting of the Central Council of Local – Government*, New Delhi.
18. Government of India. (1992), *Lok Sabha Debates*, Vol. XVI, No. 9, 1 December, Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi.
18. Griffen, Vanessa. (ed.). (1987), *Women, Development and Empowerment: A Pacific Feminist Perspective*, Asian and Pacific Development Centre, Kuala Lumpur.
19. Grover, Virender. (ed.). (1997), *Foundations of Political System and Sociological Aspects*, Deep & Deep Publications, New Delhi.
20. Hasnat, Abdul Hye. (ed.). (2001), *Governance: South Asian Perspectives*, The University Press Ltd, New Delhi.
21. Hazel, D. Lima (1983)., *Women in Local Government*, Concept Publishing, New Delhi.
22. Howard, Gold Stein. (1981), *Social Learning and Change*, Tavi Stocks Publications, New York.
23. Hymavathi, Challa. (1998), *Women Leaders in Political Parties: Pattern of Recruitment, Perceptions and Performance in Andhra Pradesh*, Ph. D Thesis, University of Hyderabad, (Unpublished).
24. Jain, L. C. (1989), *Grass Without Roots*, Sage Publications, New Delhi.
25. Jain, S. P and Thomas, W. Hochgesang. (ed.). (1995), *Emerging Trends in Panchayati Raj (Rural Local Self - Government) in India*, NIRD, Hyderabad.
26. James C. Charlesworth. (1969), *Contemporary Political Analysis*, The Free Press, New York, 1969.
27. Karl, Marilee. (1995), *Women and Empowerment: Participation and Decision Making*, Zed Books Ltd, London & New Jersey.

28. Kaushik, Susheela. (1996), *Women and Panchayati Raj*, Har Anand Publications, New Delhi.
29. Leonard, Decohite. (1954), 'Decentralisation', Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, Vol. V, Macmillan Co., New York.
30. Manikyamba, P. (1989), *Women in Panchayati Raj Structures*, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi.
31. Mashe M. Czwd Nowski, (1957), *Comparing Political Behaviour*, Sage Publications, London.
32. Mathew, George. (1995), *Status of Panchayati Raj in the States of India*, Institute of Social Sciences, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi.
33. Mathew, George. (ed.). (2000), *Status of Panchayati Raj in the states and Union Territories of India*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi.
34. Mayer, N. (1984), *Neighbourhood Organisation and Community Development*, Urban Institute, Washington, DC.
35. Moser, Caroline O. (1993) *Gender Planning and Development: Theory, Practice and Training*, Routledge, London.
36. Murthy, Ranjani K. (ed.). (2001), *Building Women's Capacities: Interventions in Gender Transformation*, Sage Publications, New Delhi.
37. Nandal, Roshini. (1996), *Women Development and Panchayati Raj*, Spellbound Publications Private Limited, Rohtak.
38. National Institute of Rural Development. (2002), *India Panchayati Raj Report*, Volume – 1, NIRD, Hyderabad.
39. Niraj, Gopal Jayal & Sudha Pillai. (ed.). (2001), *Democratic Governance in India: Challenges of Poverty, Development and Identity*, Sage Publications, New Delhi.
40. *Oxford English Dictionary* (2001), Oxford University Press, New York.
41. Palanithurai, G. (ed.). (2002), *Dynamics of New Panchayati Raj System in India*, (Volume – II, Select States), Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi.
42. Pande, G. S. (2001), *Political Participation of Women in India: Implementation of 73rd and 74th Amendments*, New Royal book Company, Lucknow.
43. Pareek, Udai. (1988), *Organisational Behaviour Process*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur.

44. Patni, Sushila. (1994), *Women Political Elite*, Printwell, Jaipur.
45. Radha, S and Bulu Roy, Chowdhury. (2002), *Women in Local Bodies*, Discussion Paper No. 40, Kerala Research Programme on Local Level Development, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvanthapuram.
46. Rappaport, J. , Swift, C & Hess, R. (ed.). (1984), *Studies in Empowerment: Toward Understanding and Action*, The Haworth Press, New York.
47. Sinha, Kalpana. (ed.). (2000), *Empowerment of Women in South Asia*, Association of Management Development Institutions in South Asia (AMDISA), Hyderabad.
48. Stan, Burkey. (1993), *People First: A Guide to Self - Reliant Participatory Rural Development*, Zed Books, London and New York.
49. Subha, K. (1994), *Women in Local Governance*, R.B.S.A. Publishers, Jaipur.
50. Thapliyal, B. K., Sastry, K. R., Slater, R. P. (ed.). (1994), *Economic Development of Rural Women: Case Studies in Madhya Pradesh*, NIRD, Hyderabad.
51. The New International Webster's Student Dictionary (2001), CBS Publishers, New Delhi.
52. *United Nations Human Development Report*. (1993), Oxford University Press, Oxford.
53. United Nations Development Programme. (1993), *Human Development Report* ', New York.
54. United Nations. (2002), *Development and International Economic Cooperation: Effective Mobilization and Integration of Women in Development*, Report of the Secretary – General, United Nations General Assembly, Forty-sixth session, Agenda Item 77 (i), para. 42 (A/46/464, 4 – 15, March, New York.
55. Vaidya, V. C. (1997), *Political Empowerment of Women at the Grassroots*, Kanishka Publishers, New Delhi.
56. World Bank. (1992), *Governance and Development*, World Bank, Washington, D. C.
57. Young, Kate. (1993), *Planning Development with Women: Making a World of Difference*, Macmillan.

Journals and Articles from Internet

1. Advani May Head Panel on Good Governance, *The Hindu*, 29.08.2003.
2. Anderson Sara & Bohman Susanne. (2003), *Women's Political Participation in Kerala, South India – A Case Study Based on Obstacles Met When Entering the Political Sphere*, http://www.padrigu.gu.se/grundutbildning/uppsatser/Andersson_Bohman_I.html versions of documents, 1/10/2003.
3. Arun, Mehta. (2003), AIDE MEMOIRE, *Women and Political Participation: 21st Century Challenges*, <http://arunmehta.freeyellow.com/page108.html>. 10.01.2003
4. Azmi, Shabana. (2000), 'Women as Organised Agents for Poverty Eradication', in Bidyut Mohanty, (ed.). *Women and Political Empowerment*, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi, pp. 38 – 53.
5. *Backgrounds on UN's Conferences on Women*, <http://www.nineveh.com/uncon.htm>, 17.07.2003, p. 1.
6. Barker, R. L. (1991), *The Politics of Empowerment*, Social Work. Vol. 4, No.2, March.
7. Beetham D, (1994) 'Key Principles and Indices for a Democratic Audit', in Beetham, D, (ed.). *Defining and Measuring Democracy*, Sage Publications, New Delhi.
8. Bhargava, B.S and Subha, K. (1995), 'Political Empowerment of Women: The Case of Karnataka's Experience with Panchayati Raj', in Jain S. P and Thomas W. Hochgesang, (ed.). *Emerging trends in Panchayati Raj (Rural Local Self-Government) in India*, NIRD, Hyderabad, pp. 103 – 119.
9. Bhargava, B. S. (2002), 'Panchayati Raj in Andhra Pradesh', in Palnithurai , G. *Dynamics of New Panchayati Raj System in India: Select States*, (Vol – 2), Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, p. 187.
10. Biju, M. R. (2003), *Politics of Women's Reservation in India*, *South Asian Journal of Socio – Political Studies*, (SAJOSPS) Vol. 3 No. 2, June, Kollam, Kerala, India p. 28.
11. Buch, Nirmala. (2000), 'Panchayats and Women', in George Mathew (ed.). *Status of Panchayati Raj in the states and Union Territories of India*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, pp. 34 – 41.

12. Buch, Nirmala (2000) 'Decentralised Governance: Women's Participation and Poverty Eradication', in Bidyut Mohanty, (ed.). *Women and Political Empowerment*, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi, pp. 78 – 88.
13. Buch, Nirmala. (2003), *Panchayats in India – Forum For Citizens Participation in Local Governance: Representation and Participation of Rural Women – Experience and Challenges*, http://www.ciff.on.ca/Reference/documents/MX-936_1_files/Papers/Buch.htm, 09/01/2003).
14. Chandrakanth, W. (2002), *Silence Reigns as Fairer Sex is Dealt an Ugly Deal*, The Hindu, 10.03.02, p. 5.
15. Cynthia, Hewitt de Alcantara. (1998), *Uses and Abuses of the Concept of Governance*, International Social Science Journal, Vol. L, No. 1, Blackwell Publishers Ltd for UNESCO, March, p. 105.
16. Devi, Rama. V. S (2000), 'Towards the 73rd and 74th Amendments: Implications for Women', in Bidyut Mohanty, (ed.). *Women and Political Empowerment*, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi, pp. 18 – 28.
17. Dev, Ranjit. (2003), *Women Come To Power*, <http://www.undp.org/dpa/choices/2000/march/pg20htm>. 14.07.2003.
18. Dogra, Bharat. (2002), *Panchayati Raj: Women Justify Reservation Policy in Panchayats*, Grassroots Feature Network, http://www.reportpeople.org/issues_panchstory9.htm, 21.11.2002.
19. Donoghue, Aingeal O. (2000), 'Salute to Women Elected Representatives of Panchayati Raj', in Bidyut Mohanty, (ed.). *Women and Political Empowerment*, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi, p. 77.
20. Dutta, Prabhat. (1997), 'Political Empowerment of Rural Women in India', *Administrative Change*, Vol. XXIV, No.2, January – June 1997, p. 130.

21. *Fourth World Conference on Women: Platform for Action*, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/decision.htm>, 17.07.2003, p. 1.
22. Friedmann. (1992), in Anderson Bohman, '*Women's Political Participation in Kerala, South India: A Case Study Based on Obstacles met When Entering the Political Sphere*', (http://www.padrigu.gu.se/grundutbildning/uppsatser/Anderson_Bohman_I), p. 23.
23. Gopal, Joyal Niraja. (2001), 'Reinventing the State: The Emergence of Alternative Models of Governance in India in the 1990s', in Niraj Gopal Jayal & Sudha Pillai (ed.). *Democratic Governance in India: challenges of Poverty, Development and Identity*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, p. 132.
24. *Hundred Percent Success in Rain Water Protection: World Bank Award to Woman Sarpanch*, Eenadu, 22.09.2003, p. 8.
25. Hunger Project. (2003), '*Panchayati Raj: Local Democracy in Action*', <http://www.thp.org/india.main.htm>, 11.07.2003
26. Jagat, S. Mehta. (2003), '*Grassroots Democrats*', The Hindu, Sunday, 10.08.2003, pp. 4 & 6.
27. Jain, Devaki. (2003), '*Panchayati Raj: Women Changing Governance*', <http://www.sdn.undp.org/gender/resources/mono5.html>. 14.07.2003.
28. Jani, Ilaben. (1995), 'Gender Issues in New Panchayati Raj System', in S. P. Jain and Thomas W. Hochgesang, (ed.). *Emerging trends in Panchayati Raj (Rural Local Self-Government) in India*, NIRD, Hyderabad, pp. 127 – 129.
29. James, W. Fesler. (1965), *Approaches to the Understanding of Decentralisation*, Journal of Politics, Vol. XXVII, August, p. 7.
30. Jayalakshmi, K. (1995), 'Gender and Political Empowerment', in S. P. Jain and Thomas W. Hochgesang, (ed.). *Emerging trends in Panchayati Raj (Rural Local Self-Government) in India*, NIRD, Hyderabad, pp. 121 – 126.
31. Joan, Holmes. (2002), *Panchayati Raj: Local Democracy in Action*, <http://www.thp.org/reports/family/2000/sep/>, 11/21/2002, p. 1.
32. Joseph, Ammu. (2001), 'Grassroots Training Through Satellite Technology', in Ranjani K. Murthy, (ed.). *Building Women's Capacities: Interventions in Gender Transformation*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, pp. 157 – 171.

33. Kaushik, Susheela. (1998), *Women in Panchayats: Some Demystifications*, unpublished.
34. Kolli, Sharada. (2003), *Entering Local Politics*, <http://www.enescap.org/huset/women/files/kolli-html-11k>, 18.07.2003.
35. Kripa, A. P and Ganesh Prasad G. S. (2002), '*The Message of Panchayati Raj*', <http://www.mpinfo.org/english/policies/women/areas/htm>. 21.11.2002
36. Kumar, Ramesh. G. M (2001), 'Local Government for Good Governance: Experience in Andhra Pradesh', in Hasnat Abdul Hye (ed.). *Governance: South Asian Perspectives*, The University Press Ltd, New Delhi, pp. 247 - 268.
37. Manikyamba, P. (2003), *The Numbers Dilemma: Success Stories and Manipulative Mechanisms*, *South Asian Journal of Socio – Political Studies*, (SAJOSPS) Vol.3 No.2 June, Kollam, Kerala, India, pp 12 – 18.
38. Mathew, George. (2002), 'Panchayati Raj and Food Security: Opportunities for Women's Participation', in Pradeep Chaturvedi, (ed.). *Women and Food Security: Role of Panchayats*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, pp. 26 – 30.
39. Mody, Anjali. (2002), *Their Tomorrow Never Comes*, The Hindu, 29.12.2002, pp. 16 – 17.
40. Mohanthy, Bidyut. (2000), 'Panchayats, Women and Poverty Eradication: Some Issues', in Bidyut Mohanty, (ed.). *Women and Political Empowerment*, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi, pp 137 - 154.
41. *Naidu Calls for Civil Service Reforms*, The Hindu, 28.08.2003.
42. Narain, Iqbal. (1981), 'Democratic Decentralisation: The Idea, The Image and The Reality', in T.N. Chaturvedi (ed.). *Panchayati Raj*, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi, p. 15.
43. *No Confidence by Own Party: Suicide Attempt by Mandal Panchyat President*, Eenadu, 22.09.2003, p.1.
44. Palanithurai, G. (2002), 'The New Panchayati Raj System in Tamil Nadu', in Palanithurai. G (ed.). *Dynamics of New Panchayati Raj System in India*, (Volume – II, Select States), Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, pp. 131 – 155.

45. Parekh, Angana. (2003), '*Weighted Against Women*', The Times of India, 09.08.2002, http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/cms.dll/html/comp/articleshow?art_id=18491241, 10.01.2003.
46. *Perception*. (2003), <http://www.worldtrans.org/TP/TP1/TP1-9.HTML>, 28.07.2003, p. 1.
47. *Perception*. (2003), <http://www.selfknowledge.com/70236.htm>, 28.07.2003, p.1.
48. Poornima and Vinod Vyasulu. (1999), '*Women in Panchyati Raj: Grassroots Democracy in India: Experience from Malgudi*', <http://magnet.undp.org/events/gender/india/VYASULU3.htm>. 14.07.2003
49. Prasad, R. R and Sahay Sushma. (2000), 'Models for Empowering Women' in Kalpana Sinha, (ed.). *Empowerment of Women in South Asia*, Association of Management Development Institutions in South Asia (AMDISA), Hyderabad, p. 2.
50. Prema, Gopalam. (2003), *Developing Grassroots Women's Leader in Governance*, <http://sspindia.org/Developing%20Governance%20%20pdf>. 10.01.2003.
51. Premajam, A. K. (2000), 'Women as Decision – Makers', in Bidyut Mohanty, (ed.). *Women and Political Empowerment*, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi, pp. 133 – 136.
52. Purohit, B. R. Chaturvedi, Arun and Lodha, Sanjay. (2002), 'Status of Panchayats in Rajasthan', in G.Palanithurai, (ed.). *Dynamics of New Panchayati Raj System in India* (Volume – II, Select States), Concept publishing company, New Delhi, pp. 156 – 185.
53. Rahman, Syedur. (2001), 'Governance and Local Government System' in Hasnat Abdul Hye (ed.). *Governance: South Asian Perspectives*, The University Press Limited, p. 233.
54. Ranjan, Dutta Vijay. (1982), 'Decentralisation and Political Development in India', *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. XXVII, No.2, April-June, p. 2.
55. *Report of the World Summit for Social Development*. (2003), Copenhagen 6 – 12, March, [gopher://gopher.undp.org/oo/unconfs/wssd/summit/off/a..9.en](http://gopher.undp.org/oo/unconfs/wssd/summit/off/a..9.en), 17.06.2003, p. 1.

56. *Ruling on Two – Child Norm Criticised*. (2003), The Hindu, 02.08.2003, p. 13.
57. Sandip, Das. (2002), *Panchayati Raj: Women Panchayat Members Fight Against Rigid Values*, Grassroots Feature Network, http://www.reportpeople.org/issues_panchstory9.htm, 21.11.2002.
58. Sara, Anderson & Susanne Bohman. (2003), *Women's Political Participation in Kerala, South India – A Case Study Based on Obstacles Met When Entering the Political Sphere*, http://www.padrigu.gu.se/grundutbildning/uppsatser/Andersson_Bohman_I.html versions of documents, 1/10/2003.
59. Saxena, N. C. (2002), 'Land Rights to Women: Will Ensure Food Security', in Pradeep Chaturvedi, (ed.). *Women and Food Security: Role of Panchayats*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, pp. 15 – 17.
60. Shilpa, Jain. (2003), *Redefining the Politics of Presence: Women in Panchayati Raj Institutions in Rajasthan and Kerala*, http://www.wedo.org/fact_sheet_2.htm. 10/01/2003.
61. Sinha, Kalpana. (2000), 'Women: The Changing Organisation Dynamics' in Kalpana Sinha, (ed.). *Empowerment of Women in South Asia*, Association of Management Development Institutions in South Asia (AMDISA), Hyderabad, p. vi.
62. Sisodia, Yatindra Singh. (2002), 'Panchayati Raj System in Madhya pradesh', in G.Palanithurai, (ed.). *Dynamics of New Panchayati Raj System in India* (Volume – II, Select States), Concept publishing company, New Delhi, pp. 240 – 257.
63. Staples, Lee H. (1991), *Powerful Ideas About Empowerment*, Social Work, Vol. 14 (20)
64. Stephen, F. (2001), 'Empowering Women in Gram Panchayats Through Training', in Ranjani K. Murthy, (ed.). *Building Women's Capacities: Interventions in Gender Transformation*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, pp. 133 – 156.
65. Stoker, Gerry. (1998), *Governance as Theory: Five Propositions*, International Social Science Journal, Vol. L, No. 1, Blackwell Publishers Ltd for UNESCO, March, p. 18.
66. Swift, C. (1984), 'Empowerment: An Antidote for Folly: Foreword', in Rappoport, J., Swift, C & Hess, R. (ed.). *Studies in Empowerment: Toward Understanding and Action*, The Haworth Press, New York.
67. Thapliyal, B. K. (1994), 'Women in Rural India', in Thapliyal, B. k., Sastry, K. R., Slater, R. P. (ed.). *Economic Development of Rural Women: Case Studies in Madhya Pradesh*, NIRD, Hyderabad, p. 23.

68. Tiwari, Deepak. (2002), *Meek No More*, <http://www.the.week.com/98june07/life2.htm>, 31.10.2002
69. *Toolkit For Women*. (2003), <http://www.earthsummit2002.org/toolkits/women/un-doku/un-conf/nairobi.htm>, 17.07.2003, p. 1.
70. *Upholds Haryana Panchayat Law on Two – Child Norm* (2003), *The Hindu*, 31.07.2003, P. 13.
71. *UN Award - Winner Down in Dumps*. (2003), *The Hindu*, 12.01.2003, p. 4.
72. *UN Conferences on Women* (2003), <http://atdweb.soc.berkeley.edu/quest/herstory/Beijing.html>, 17.07.2003, p. 1.
73. UNDP. (2003), *UNDP Indian News - Special Training for Panchayat Women Members i.e., Voices of Marginalised Sections*, <http://www.undp.org.in/UNDPNEWS/Dec2k1/Dec2k1/pg08.htm>. 11.07.2003
74. *We will Save the People From Drought*. (2003), *Eenadu Supplement*, 06.06.2003, p. 14.
75. *Why Do We Celebrate Women's Day?*. (2003), <http://alumni.iatp.org.ua/publications/WHY%20DO%20WE%20CELEBRATE%20WOMEN.doc>, 17.07.2002, p. 2.
76. Women's Environment and Development Organisation (WEDO) Programme. (2003), *'Gender & Governance 50/50 Campaign: Women Making a Difference'*, http://www.wedo.org/fact_sheet_2.htm. 10.01.2003
77. *Women in National Parliaments*. (2003), <http://www.ipu.org/wmn.e/classif.htm>, 07.08.2003, pp. 1 – 5.
78. Women's Environment and Development Organisation (WEDO) Programme. (2003), *Gender & Governance 50/50 Campaign: Women Making a Difference*, http://www.wedo.org/fact_sheet_2.htm. 07.08.2003, pp. 1 - 5.
79. Yadav, Urmila. (1997), 'Women in Indian Politics: A Study of Their Participation in Democratic Process', in Virender Grover (ed.). *Foundations of Political System And Sociological Aspects*, Deep & Deep Publications, New Delhi, p. 677.

Appendices

Schedule

EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN DECENTRALISED GOVERNANCE: A STUDY IN ANANTAPUR DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

SCHEDULE

CHAIRPERSONS / MEMBERS OF ZP / MP / GRAM PANCHAYAT

1. BACKGROUND

01. Name (in Capital) : _____

02. Age : _____

03. Marital Status

Unmarried	Married	Widowed	Separated

04. Caste

Sl. No.	Caste	
1.	General/Other Caste	
2.	Backward Caste	
3.	Scheduled Caste	
4.	Scheduled Tribe	

05. Educational Qualifications

Qualification	
Illiterate	
Literate	
Primary	
Secondary/SSC	
Intermediate	
Graduation	
Post Graduation (PG)	
Any other (Specify)	

06. Primary Occupation

Occupation	
Farmer	
Teacher	
Lecturer	
Lawyer	
Doctor	
Farmer	
House – wife	
Any other (Specify)	

07. Economic Status

Sl. No.	Category	Annual Income	Economic Status
1.	Poor	Below Rs. 20,000	
2.	Lower Middle Class	Rs. 20,001 – 30,000	
3.	Middle Class	Rs. 30,001 – 40,000	
	Higher Middle Class	Rs. 41,001 – 50,000	
4.	Rich	Rs. 50,001 & above	

08. Experience in Politics (Please tick mark in appropriate column)

Years	Area			
	Village	Block	District	State
1 – 5 Years				
6 – 10 Years				
11-15 Years				
16 Years & above				

09. Political Affiliation

Level	TDP	INC	CPI	CPI(M)	Others/ Independent
ZPTCMs					
MPPs					
MPTCMs					
GPSs					
Total					

10. Experience in Social Service

Years	Area			
	Village	Block	District	State
16 – 25 Years				
26 – 35 Years				
36 – 45 Years				
46 Years & above				

11. Activities at Grass Roots Level

Village	
Mandal	
District	

12. Chief factor that Elevated to the Present Position

13. When did you get elected to Panchayat and at what level?

Level	Date	Month	Year
Zilla Parishad			
Mandal Panchayat			
Gram Panchayat			

2. AWARENESS

01. Kindly state from whom you became Aware about PR & 73rd Constitutional Amendment

Mother	
Father	
Brothers	
Sisters	
Friends	
Officers	
SHGs	
Political Leaders	
Any Other (Specify)	

02. What are the Rural Development Programmes you know?

03. What are the Rural Development Programmes for Women?

3. PERCEPTIONS

01. How did men respond to your entry into Panchayat: ZP/Mandal/Gram Panchayat
 - i)
 - ii)
02. How did women respond to your entry into Panchayat: ZP/Mandal/Gram Panchayat
 - i)
 - ii)
03. What would be husband's feeling about wife's entry into panchayats?
04. What are the obstacles for women to enter in politics?
05. Do you think that women can become good leaders at grass roots level: Yes / No

If Yes, Why?

If No, Why?
06. What are the constraints to Women's leadership?

07. What Factors would contribute to Women's Leadership?
08. Do you think that one-third (1/3) reservation to women in Panchayats has to be
- a) Increased
 - b) Decreased
 - c) As it is (1/3)
 - d) Given up

Why?

09. Do you think that women are empowered in Panchayati Raj?

Yes / No

If Yes, Why?

If No, Why?

4. PARTICIPATION

01. Have you participated in discussions?

Yes / No

02. How are decisions taken in Panchayati Raj Institutions?

03. Have you participated in decision making?

Yes / No

If Yes, how?

If no, what are the factors that hindered your participation?

04. What is your role in decision-making?

05. Have you initiated proposals for Rural Development in PRIs?

Yes / No

If yes, what are the factors that helped you in initiating proposals?

If, no, what are the factors that hindered you in initiating proposals?

06. What are the Rural Development works initiated by you for women?

07. What are the obstacles in the implementation of Rural Development Programmes?

08. Mobilising people for participation is very important for rural development. How do you mobilise the people?

09. What are the Rural Developmental activities performed / by you?

10.. Are you satisfied about your performance in Panchayat Raj?

Yes / No

If yes, what are the factors that helped for satisfaction?

If no, what are the factors that hindered satisfaction?

* * *

5. SUGGESTIONS

01. Please give suggestions to improve the performance of women in Panchayats.

Place: _____

Date: _____

Signature

Name & Address (in capital)

Annexures

Annexure - I**Number of Elected Women Members
(As on May 31, 1998)**

Sl. No.	States / Uts	Gram Panchayat			Block / Taluk / Mandal Panchayat			Zilla Parishad		
		Women	Total	%	Women	Total	%	Women	Total	%
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1.	Andhra Pradesh	78000	230529	33.84	5420	14644	37.01	363	1093	33.2
2.	Arunachal Pradesh*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3.	Assam	7458	24860	30.00	745	2486	29.07	-	-	-
4.	Bihar@	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5.	Goa	468	1281	36.53	-	-	-	-	-	-
6.	Gujarat	41180	123470	33.35	1274	3814	33.40	254	761	33.3
7.	Haryana	17928	54159	33.10	807	2418	33.37	101	303	33.3
8.	Himachal Pradesh	6013	18258	32.93	558	1661	33.59	84	252	33.3
9.	Jammu & Kashmir	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.	Karnataka	35305	80627	43.79	1343	3340	40.21	335	919	36.4
11.	Kerala	3883	10270	37.81	563	1547	36.39	104	300	34.6
12.	Madhya Pradesh	156181	474351	32.93	3169	9097	34.34	319	946	33.7
13.	Maharashtra	100182	303545	33.00	1174	3524	33.31	587	1762	33.3
14.	Manipur	576	1556	37.02	-	-	-	22	61	36.0
15.	Orissa	28595	81077	35.27	1870	5260	35.55	294	854	34.4
16.	Punjab	23892	78983	30.25	326	2441	13.36	89	274	32.1
17.	Rajasthan	38791	119419	32.48	1740	5257	33.10	331	997	33.2
18.	Sikkim	27	1827	1.48	-	-	-	1	145	0.6
19.	Tamil Nadu	31548	94304	33.45	2295	6499	35.31	225	648	34.7
20.	Tripura	1809	5427	33.33	67	196	34.18	24	70	34.3
21.	Uttar Pradesh	174410	682670	25.25	14002	58165	24.07	648	2551	25.4
22.	West Bengal	22014	62172	35.41	3202	9516	33.65	227	664	34.2
23.	A & N Islands	229	667	34.33	25	-	-	10	30	33.3
24.	Chandigarh	22	109	20.18	2	6	33.33	3	10	30.0
25.	D & N Haveli	46	135	34.07	-	-	-	4	16	25.0
26.	Daman & Diu	25	63	39.68	-	-	-	5	15	33.3
27.	Lakshadweep@	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
28.	Pondicherry@	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total		768582	2449759	31.37	38582	129871	20.71	4030	12671	31.8

Note* Act has not received President's assent. @ Elections have not been held.

Source: George Mathew 'Panchayati Raj and Food Security: Opportunities for Women's Participation' PP - 31 - 32. in Pradeep Chaturvedi (Ed) "Women and Food Security: Role of Panchayats", Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, -2002.

Annexure - II**TABLE: Details of seats reserved for women in Andhra Pradesh
(1994 -1999)**

Sl. No.	PR Institutions	No. of seats reserved for women			
		SCs	STs	BCs	Total
1.	Gram Panchayat				
	(a) Ward Members	12,882	3,194	2,4771	40,847
	(b) Sarpanches	1,247	300	2,537	4,084
2.	Block Panchayat	913	340	1,625	2,878
3.	District Panchayat	65	33	122	220

Source: M. Sarumathy, "Rural Local Government in Andhra Pradesh" in
 G. Pannithurai (Ed.). "*Dynamics of New Panchayati Raj System in India*",
 (Volume - I) Concept Publishing company, New Delhi - 2002, P - 272.

Annexure - III
Table: Women in Decision making in India and States

Sl. No.	India/States / Uts	Political						Administrative			
		Lok Sabha (1999)		Legislative Assembly (2000)		Panchayati Raj Institutions (1991 - 1997)		I.A.S (As on 1.6.2000)		I.P.S (As on 1..2000)	
		Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
	INDIA	49	494	229	3838	813676	1784134	535	4624	110	319
1.	Andhra Pradesh	4	38	28	266	83783	162483	33	281	11	17
2.	Arunachal Pradesh*	Nil	2	1	59	125	6890	38	194	9	14
3.	Assam	2	12	6	116	8203	19143	10	216	2	13
4.	Bihar	5	49	19	305	NA	NA	33	360	14	23
5.	Goa	Nil	2	2	38	468	863	X	X	X	
6.	Gujarat	3	23	4	178	42708	85337	23	225	3	13
7.	Haryana	2	8	4	86	18836	38044	32	180	4	10
8.	Himachal Pradesh	Nil	4	6	62	6655	13516	17	109	1	7
9.	Jammu & Kashmir	Nil	6	2	85	NA	NA	3	109	1	8
10.	Karnataka	2	26	6	218	35640	49246	35	213	4	13
11.	Kerala	1	19	13	127	4050	8067	21	157	2	11
12.	Madhya Pradesh	3	37	26	294	159609	324785	54	342	9	27
13.	Maharashtra	4	44	12	276	101943	206888	40	311	6	20
14.	Manipur	Nil	2	1	59	598	1019	5	193	3	9
15.	Meghalaya	Nil	2	3	57	Nil	Nil	XX	XX	XX	X
16.	Mizoram	Nil	1	0	40	Nil	Nil	X	X	X	
17.	Nagaland	Nil	1	0	60	Nil	Nil	1	63	1	3
18.	Orissa	2	19	13	134	30759	56432	17	185	7	12
19.	Punjab	2	11	7	110	31468	59089	28	165	6	14
20.	Rajasthan	3	22	14	186	40862	84811	29	231	6	14
21.	Sikkim	Nil	1	1	31	115	860	5	45	Nil	2
22.	Tamil Nadu	1	38	9	225	35315	69230	37	288	7	17
23.	Tripura	Nil	2	2	58	1900	3793	XX X	XXX	XX X	XX
24.	Uttar Pradesh	9	76	20	404	189060	554326	51	484	10	38
25.	West Bengal	5	37	20	274	21168	38479	23	273	4	25

UNION TERRITORIES

27.	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	Nil	1	##	##	296	493	X	X	X	
28.	Chandigarh	Nil	1	##	##	27	98	X	X	X	
29.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	Nil	1	##	##	50	101	X	X	X	
30.	Daman & Diu	Nil	1	##	##	101	48	X	X	X	
31.	Delhi		6	8	61	NA	NA	X	X	X	
32.	Lakshadweep	Nil	1	##	##	8	93	X	X	X	
33.	Pondicherry	Nil	1	1		Nil	Nil	X	X	X	

X: Included included under Arunchal Pradesh

XX: Inculded under Assam

XXX: Included under Manipur

Source: Women in India (A statistical Profile), Planning Commission (Social Development & Women's Programmes Division), Government of India.

Annexure - IV

REGISTERED No. DL-33004/93

The Gazette of India**EXTRAORDINARY**

PART II – Section 1

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY

No. 69]

NEW DELHI, TUESDAY, APRIL 20, 1993/CHAITRA 30, 1915

Separate paging is given to this Part in order that it may be filed
as a separate compilation

MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS**(Legislative Department)***New Delhi, the 20th April, 1993/Chaitra 30, 1915 (Saka)*

The following Act of Parliament, after having been ratified by the Legislature of not less than one-half of the States by resolutions to that effect, received the assent of the President on the 20th April, 1993 and is hereby published for general information:-

THE CONSTITUTION (SEVENTY – THIRD AMENDMENT) ACT, 1992*[20th April, 1993.]***Short title and commencement.**

An Act further to amend the Constitution of India.

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Forty-third Year of the Republic of India as follows:-

1. (i) This Act may be called the Constitution (Seventy-third Amendment) Act, 1992
- (ii) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.
2. After Part VIII of the Constitution, the following Part shall be inserted, namely:-

Insertion of new Part IX

PART IX

THE PANCHAYATS

243. In this Part, unless the context otherwise requires, -

Definitions

- (a) “district” means a district in a State
- (b) “Gram Sabha” means a body consisting of persons registered in the electoral rolls relating to a village comprised within the area of Panchayat at the village level;
- (c) “Intermediate level” means a level between the village and district levels specified by the Governor of a State by public notification to be the intermediate level for the purposes of this part;
- (d) “Panchayat” means an institution (by whatever name called) of self-government constituted under article 243B, for the rural areas;
- (e) “Panchayat area” means the territorial area of a Panchayat;
- (f) “population” means the population as ascertained at the last preceding census of which the relevant figures have been published;
- (g) “village” means a village specified by the Governor by public notification to be a village for the purposes of this Part and includes a group of villages so specified.

Gram Sabha.

243A. A Gram Sabha may exercise such powers and perform such functions at the village level as the Legislature of a State may by law, provide.

Constitution of panchayats.

- 243B. (1) There shall be constituted in every State, Panchayats at the village, intermediate and district levels in accordance with the provisions of this Part.
- (2) Notwithstanding anything in clause (1), Panchayats at the intermediate level may not be constituted in a State having a population not exceeding twenty lakhs.

Composition of Panchayats.

243C. (1) Subject to the provisions of this Part, the Legislature of a State may, by law, make provisions with respect to the composition of Panchayats:

Provided that the ration between the population of the territorial area of a Panchayat at any level and the number of seats in such Panchayat to be filled by election shall, so far as practicable, be the same throughout the State.

(2) All the seats in a Panchayat shall be filled by persons chosen by direct election from territorial constituencies in the Panchayat area and; for this purpose, each Panchayat area shall be divided into territorial constituencies in such manner that the ratio between the population of each constituency and the number of seats allotted to it shall, so far as practicable, be the same throughout the Panchayat area.

(3) The Legislature of a State may, by law, provide for the representation-

- (a) of the Chairpersons of the Panchayats at the village level, in the Panchayats at the intermediate level or, in the case of a State not having Panchayats at the intermediate level, in the Panchayats at the district level;
- (b) of the Chairpersons of the Panchayats at the intermediate level, in the Panchayats at the district level;
- (c) of the members of the House of the People and the members of the Legislative Assembly of the State representing constituencies which comprise wholly or partly a Panchayat area at a level other than the village level, in such Panchayat;
- (d) of the members of the Council of State and the members of the Legislative Council of the State, where they are registered as electors within-
 - (i) a Panchayat area at the intermediate level, in Panchayat at the Intermediate level;
 - (ii) a Panchayat area at the district level, in Panchayat at the district level.

(4) The Chairperson of a Panchayat and other members of a Panchayat whether or not chosen by direct election from territorial constituencies in the Panchayat area shall have the right to vote in the meetings of the Panchayats.

(5) The Chairperson of -

- (a) a Panchayat at the village level shall be elected in such manner as the Legislature of a State may, by law, provide; and

- (b) a Panchayat at the intermediate level or district level shall be elected by, and from amongst, the elected members thereof.

243D (1) Seats shall be reserved for –

- (a) the Scheduled Castes; and
- (b) the Scheduled Tribes,

in every Panchayat and the number of seats so reserved shall bear, as nearly as may be, the same proportion to the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in that Panchayat as the population of the Scheduled Castes in that Panchayat area or of the Scheduled Tribes in that Panchayat area bears to the total population of that area and such seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat.

- (2) Not less than one-third of the total number of seats reserved under clause (1) shall be reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes or, as the case may be, the Scheduled Tribes.
- (3) Not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat shall be reserved for women and such seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat.
- (4) The offices of the Chairpersons in the panchayats at the village or any other shall be reserved for the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and women in such a manner as the Legislature of a State may, by law, provide:

Provided that the number of offices of Chairpersons reserved for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in the Panchayats at each level in any State shall bear, as nearly as may be, the same proportion to the total number of such offices in the Panchayats at each level as the population of the Scheduled Castes in the State or of the Scheduled Tribes in the State bears to the total population of the State:

Provided also that the number of offices reserved under this clause shall be allotted by rotation to different Panchayats at each level.

- (5) The reservation seats under clauses (1) and (2) the reservation of offices of Chairpersons (other than the reservation for women) under clause (4) shall cease to have effect on the expiration of the period specified in article 334.
- (6) Nothing in this Part shall prevent the Legislature of State from making any provision for reservation of seats in any Panchayat or offices of Chairpersons in the Panchayat at any level in favour of backward class of citizens.

Duration of Panchayats etc.

- 243E. (1) Every Panchayat, unless sooner dissolved under any law for the time being in force, shall continue for five years from the date appointed for its first meeting and no longer.
- (2) No amendment of any law for the time being in force shall have the effect of causing dissolution of a Panchayat at any level, which is functioning immediately before such amendment, till the expiration of its duration specified in clause (1).
- (3) An election to constitute a Panchayat shall be completed-
- (a) before the expiry of its duration specified in clause (1);
- (b) before the expiration of a period of six months from the date of its dissolution:

Provided that where the remainder of the period for which the dissolved Panchayat before the expiration of its duration shall continue only for the remainder of the period for which the dissolved panchayat would have continued under clause (1) had it not been so dissolved.

Disqualifications for membership.

- 243F. (1) A person shall be disqualified for being chosen as, and for being, a member of a Panchayat-
- (a) if he is so disqualified by or under any law for the time being in force for the purposes of elections to the Legislature of the State concerned:

Provided that no person shall be disqualified on the ground that he is less than twenty-five years of age, if he has attained the age of twenty-one years;

- (b) if he is so disqualified by or under any law made by the Legislature of the State.
- (2) If any question arises as whether a member of a Panchayat has become subject to any of the disqualifications mentioned in clause (1), the question shall be referred for the decision of such authority and in such manner as the Legislature of a State may, by law, provide.

Powers, authority and responsibilities of Panchayats.

243G. Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, the Legislature of a State may, by law, endow the Panchayats with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as institutions of self-government and such law may contain provisions for the devolution of powers and responsibilities upon Panchayats at the appropriate level, subject to such conditions as may be specified therein, with respect to-

- (a) the preparation of plans for economic development and social justice;
- (b) the implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice as may be entrusted to them including those in relation to the matters listed in the Eleventh Schedule.

Powers to impose taxes by, and Funds of the Panchayats.

243H. The Legislature of a State may, by law, -

- (a) authorise a Panchayat to levy, collect and appropriate such taxes, duties, tolls and fees in accordance with such procedure and subject to such limits;
- (b) assign to a Panchayat such taxes, duties, tolls and fees levied and collected by the State Government for such purposes and subject to such conditions and limits;
- (c) provide for making such grants-in-aid to the Panchayats from the Consolidated Fund of the State; and
- (d) provide for constitution of such Funds for crediting all moneys received, respectively, by or on behalf of the panchayats and also for the withdrawal of such moneys therefrom.

As may be specified in the law.

Constitution of Finance Commission to review financial position.

243-I. (1) The Governor of a State shall, as soon as may be within one year from the commencement of the Constitution (Seventy-third Amendment) Act, 1992, and thereafter at the expiration of every fifth year, constitute a Finance Commission to review the financial position of the Panchayats and to make recommendations to the Governor as to-

- (a) the principles which should govern-
 - (i) the distribution between the State and the Panchayats of the net proceeds of the taxes, duties, tolls and fees leviable by the State, which may be divided between them under this Part and the allocation between the Panchayats at all levels of their respective shares of such proceeds;
 - (ii) the determination of the taxes, duties, tolls and fees which may be assigned to, or appropriated by, the Panchayats;
 - (iii) the grants-in-aid to the Panchayats from the Consolidated Fund of the State.
- (b) the measures needed to improve the financial position of the Panchayats;

- (c) any other matter referred to the Finance Commission by the Governor in the interests of sound finance of the Panchayats.
- (2) The Legislature of a State may, by law, provide for the composition of the Commission, the qualifications which shall be requisite for appointment as members thereof and the manner in which they shall be selected.
- (3) The Commission shall determine their procedure and shall have such powers in the performance of their functions as the Legislature of the State may, by law, confer on them.
- (4) The governor shall cause every recommendation made by the Commission under this article together with an explanatory memorandum as to the action taken thereon to be laid before the Legislature of the State.

Audit of accounts of Panchayats.

- 243J. The Legislature of a State may, by law, make provisions with respect to the maintenance of accounts by the panchayats and the auditing of such accounts.

Elections to the Panchayats.

- 243K. (1) The superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of electoral rolls for, and the conduct of, all elections to the Panchayats shall be vested in a State Election Commission consisting of a State Election Commissioner to be appointed by the Governor.
- (2) Subject to the provisions of any law made by the Legislature of a State Election Commissioner shall be such as the Governor may by rule determine:

Provided that the State Election Commissioner shall not be removed from his office except in like manner and on the like grounds as a Judge of a High Court and the conditions of service of the State Election Commissioner shall not be varied to his disadvantage after his appointment.

- (3) The Governor of a State shall, when so requested by the State Election Commission, make available to the State Election Commission such staff as may be necessary for the discharge of the functions conferred on the State Election Commission by clause (1).
- (4) Subject to the provisions of this constitution, the Legislature of a State may, by law, make provision with respect to all matters relating to, or in connection with, elections to the Panchayats.

Application to Union territories.

243L. The provisions of this Part shall apply to the Union territories and shall, in their application to a Union territory, have effect as if the references to the Governor of a State were references to the Administrator of the Union territory appointed under article 239 and references to the Legislature or the Legislative Assembly of a State were references, in relation to a Union territory having a Legislative Assembly, to that Legislative Assembly:

Provided that the President may, by public notification, direct that the provisions of this Part shall apply to any Union territory or part thereof subject to such exceptions and modifications as he may specify in the notification.

Part not to apply to certain areas.

243M. (1) Nothing in the part shall apply to the Scheduled Areas referred to in clause (1), and the tribal areas referred to in clause (2), of article 244.

(2) Nothing in this Part shall apply to-

(a) the State of Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram;

(b) the hill areas in the State of Manipur for which District Councils exist under any law for the time being in force.

(3) Nothing in this Part-

(a) relating to Panchayats at the district level shall apply to the hill areas of the District of Darjeeling in the State of West Bengal for which Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council exists under any law for the time being in force;

(b) shall be construed to affect the functions and powers of the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council constituted under such law.

(4) Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution,-

(a) the Legislature of a State referred to in sub-clause (a) of clause (2) may, by law, extend this Part to that State, except the areas, if any, referred to in clause (1), if the Legislative Assembly of that State passes a resolution to that effect by a majority of the total membership of that House and by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members of that House present and voting.

(b) Parliament may, by law, extend the provisions of this Part to the Scheduled Areas and the tribal areas referred to in clause (1) subject to such exceptions and modifications as may be specified in such law, and no such law shall be deemed to be an amendment of this Constitution for the purposes of article 368.

Continuance of existing laws and Panchayats.

243N. Notwithstanding anything in this Part, any provision of any law relating to Panchayats in force in a State immediately before the commencement of the Constitution (Seventy-third Amendment) Act, 1992, which is inconsistent with the provisions of this Part, shall continue to be in force until amended or repealed by a

competent Legislature or other competent authority or until the expiration of one year from such commencement, whichever is earlier:

Provided that all the Panchayats existing immediately before such commencement shall continue till the expiration of their duration, unless sooner dissolved by a resolution passed to that effect by the Legislative Assembly of that State or, in the case of a State having a Legislative Council, by each House of the Legislature of that State.

Bar to interference by courts in electoral matters.

243-O. Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution,-

- (a) the validity of any law relating to the delimitation of constituencies or the allotment of seats to such constituencies made or purporting to be made under article 243K, shall not be called in question in any court;
- (b) no election to any Panchayat shall be called in question except by an election petition presented to such authority and in such manner as is provided for by or under any law made by the Legislature of a State;

Amendment of article 280.

3. In clause (3) of article 280 of the Constitution, after sub-clause (b), the following sub-clause shall be inserted, namely:-

“(bb) the measures needed to augment the Consolidated Fund of a State to supplement the resources of the Panchayats in the State on the basis of the recommendations made by the Finance Commission of the State,”.

Addition of Eleventh Schedule.

4. After the Tenth Schedule to the Constitution, the following Schedule shall be added, namely:-

ELEVENTH SCHEDULE

(Article 243G)

1. Agriculture, including agricultural extension.
2. Land improvement, implementation of land reforms, land consolidation and soil conservation.
3. Minor irrigation, water management and watershed development.
4. Animal husbandry, dairying and poultry.
5. Fisheries.
6. Social forestry and farm forestry.

7. Minor forest produce.
8. Small scale industries, including food-processing industries.
9. Khadi, village and cottage industries.
10. Rural housing.
11. Drinking water.
12. Fuel and fodder.
13. Roads, culverts, bridges, ferries, waterways and other means of communication.
14. Rural electrification, including distribution of electricity.
15. Non – conventional energy sources.
16. Poverty alleviation programme.
17. Education, including primary and secondary schools.
18. Technical training and vocational education.
19. Adult and non-formal education.
20. Libraries.
21. Cultural activities.
22. Markets and fairs.
23. Health and sanitation, including hospitals, primary health centres and dispensaries.
24. Family welfare.
25. Women and child development.
26. Social welfare, including welfare of the handicapped and mentally retarded.
27. Welfare of the weaker sections, and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.
28. Public distribution system.
29. Maintenance of community assets.

Annexure - V

TABLE: Anantapur District at a Glance

Sl. No.	Item	
1.	Geographical Area	19,130 Sq Km.
2.	Cultivable Area	10.15 lakh hec
3.	Revenue Mandals	63
4.	Municipalities and Towns	11 (7 M + 4 T)
5.	Gram Panchayats	1005
6.	Revenue Villages	964
7.	No. of Assembly Constituencies	14
8.	No. of Parliament Constituencies	02

Source: District Profile - 2001

TABLE: Population (2001 Census Provisional in lakhs)

Sl. No.	Item	Population (in lakhs)	Population (in %)
1.	Population (Total)	36.89 (lakhs)	100%
2.	Urban Population	8.67	23.5%
3.	Rural Population	28.22	76.5%
4.	Schedule Caste Population	5.24	14.2%
5.	Schedule Tribe Population	1.29	3.5%
6.	Literates	21.02	56.99%
7.	Total Main Workers	16.01	43.4%
8.	Cultivators	5.68	15.4%
9.	Agricultural labourers	6.27	17.0%
10.	Other workers	4.17	11.3%
11.	Marginal workers	1.03	2.8%
12.	Density of Population	192 per sq km	
13.	Decennial growth rate of population (1981 – 91)	15.86%	

Source: Census Provisional - 2001