



Roles And Challenges Of Women In Panchayati Raj Institutions In India

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Abstract : Women consist of half the population in India, so there should be nearly half of women as well in the political sector. Women's political participations is an essential precondition for equal opportunities and actual democracy. It promotes Women's direct involvement in public decision – making process. That is why we should encourage Women in India to participate largest democracy in the world. Women's participations in Panchayati Raj System has significantly increased since the 73rd Amendment of the Indian Constitution in 1992. This change has bought valueable experience from civic society into local governance, addressing issues like poverty and inequality. Despite progress women face challenges such as proxy politics, male influence and gender based discrimination.

Index Term: Panchayati Raj, Democracy, Amendment, Political empowerment, Participation.

Introduction : Panchayati Raj was hailed as one of the most political innovation in Independent India. It was also considered as a revolutionary step. Panchayati Raj is a system of local self government wherein the people take upon themselves the responsibility for development. It is also a system of institutional arrangement for achieving rural development through people's initiative and participation. Mahatma Gandhi advocated in Panchayati Raj as the foundation of India's political system, as a decentralized form of government in which each village would be responsible for its own affairs. In India Panchayati Raj now functions as a system of governance in which Gram Panchayats are the basic units of local administration. Local rural population are effectively involved in the process of development through the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Review of Related Literature : S.P. Jain's (1976) in his studied Panchayati Raj in Assam' is have a look at of the panchayat institutions below the Assam Panchayat Act, 1959.

H.D. Malaviya, (1956) conducted his study approximately the historic background in village panchayat in ancient India. He has additionally defined how the village panchayats within the country had developed into a legitimate machine of democracy in accordance with indigenous traditions and cultures.

M. Francis Abraham's (1974) Dynamics of leadership in Village India, studies the changes brought to the leadership in village India inside the wake of the network development and Panchayati Raj.

Sudipta Biswas, (2006) studied the Empowerment of women through Panchayati Raj establishments: a vital analysis in her studies she based that Empowerment of women is efficiently the process of upliftment of political, social and monetary fame of women, the traditionally poor ones, in the society.

Giri Mohini V. (2007) in her work at the social transformation Federation of female panchayat in India, for the motive her have a look at, offers with six state women panchayat of India

Kwabidhu Singh, (2009) assesses to decide in his important assessment of involvement of Manipuri women in Elections.

Manuka Khanna, (2009) studied on Political partaking of women hip India enumerates the factors to facilitate enjoy resulted at domestic associate quick open breach regarding the 'De jure' for this reason 'de facto' popularity of following sharing of ladies all of the rage India.

Prasad C.H. (2005) - Empowerment of ladies in Panchayati Raj institutions (report) author emphasizes that elected women participants need to be capacitated to understand their roles, for you to characteristic successfully.

Dak T.M. and Purohit (2008)-Empowerment of women through participation in Panchayati raj institutions: some structural impediments and tanning strategy (take a look at record) writer observes in his examine that extra female now contesting elections, moving into panchayats, feeling advocated to participate in meetings, taking element in selection making and their views receiving greater attention

73rd Constitutional Amendment Act 1992: The 73rd Amendment Act of 1992 to the Indian Constitution reinstated Panchayats as entities of local self-governance, conferring upon them a constitutional status and integrating them into the justiciable framework of the Constitution. This Act became effective on April 24, 1993. The 73rd Amendment concerning Panchayat Raj in India introduced a new Part IX to the Constitution, designated as "Panchayats." This section encompasses provisions from Article 243 to Article 243(o) and includes a new Eleventh Schedule that outlines 29 Operational item within the scope of panchayat, encompassing like regional development, agriculture, education and infrastructure.

The 73rd Amendment pertains to the governance of rural bodies in India, specifically the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), while the 74th Amendment addresses municipalities. Central to this analysis is the 73rd Amendment, which mandates a 33 percent reservation for women in both membership and chairperson roles within the three-tiered PRI system subjects relevant to the functions of the Panchayats.

Contribution of Elected Women Representatives : Women representatives are acquainted with social issues and try to prioritise the welfare of their communities concerning housing, drinking water, sanitation and education for benefit of the local peoples specially women and girls. Women representatives have impacted of policies related to health service, childcare, poverty alleviation, dowry problems, violence against women and girls so on. Women members of Gram Panchayats have been able to settle family disputes. They also have participated in Salish and of them presided over that informal adjudication. Women in local population feel more comfortable to converse about their day-to-day problems and vital issues like marriage, divorce, domestic violence, dowry or polygamy with women representatives. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a sharp impact throughout West Bengal – supplementary to health-related concerns and the subsequent economic impact, the state also experienced the return of migrants from other parts of India. Women representatives have played a pivotal role as first responders. They helped in distributing essential medical items, arranging rations, hospital beds for patients, providing urgent medical support for pregnant women, door to door survey, awareness programme etc. Though there are limitation and disparity in the system which hinder women participation in the effective decision making in the local bodies. There are some positive sides where the women are making great strides and governmental policies are being outlined and executed so as to build up them economically, socially, empowering them to fight the prevent inequalities imposed by patriarchy.

From the prescription of some villagers there are some against voice but majority of the people informed that women members are more comfortable than male members to discuss their personal issues and their ability to confer and influence decision have impacted tenacious gender norms. Their participation reported a change in confidence level, and in status in within their family, and in the community after getting elected. The aspiration of their families got motivated, as parents invest more in girls' education when there are female role models in politics. In addition, EWRs are role models for other in their communities and often stimulate women to participate in politics. Governance is also a process by which government programmes can be monitored to ensure the effective delivery of public services to citizens. The notion of effective rural governance pertains to the establishment of a competent government, which encompasses the provision of essential services such as food, healthcare, education, and security to the inhabitants of rural areas, particularly in contexts where such governance is lacking. The term refers to structures and processes designed to ensure accountability, transparency, responsiveness, the rule of the law, stability, inclusiveness, equity, empowerment, and broad-based participation (UNESCO 2009).

Women in local governance frequently emerge as community leaders, addressing pressing issues such as underdevelopment and corruption. These leaders dedicate themselves to effecting change, often encountering considerable obstacles, including discrimination and illiteracy. Upon being elected to local government positions, many women actively engage with their communities and collaborate with local interest groups, as well as women's organizations. Women are good community mobilizers and having a strong initiative as well as well community-based activities and projects aimed to support political parties.

Owing to this involvement women are aware of problems and issues that other women face in their communities, and they can communicate these problems to their coworkers in government and find solution through policy decisions. Women members are motivated to address women's issues and bring a gender perspective into policies because of gaining support of the voters, mainly women voters. This policy agenda gives advantage getting them re-elected. Women representatives lead to Panchayats in the process of creation of gender sensitive budgets. This type of budget is gender perspective budget, which ensures both men and women benefit equally from social policies and public goods. Furthermore, the presence of women in local government positions acts as an inspiration for other women to pursue political careers, challenging the stereotypes associated with women's roles in both society and the public sphere. Due to presence of women representatives the nexus of officers and male elected representatives are breaking, which has a direct impact of reducing corruption. The role of local muscle power significantly reduced due to active participation and awareness of women about their rights and power. Women Pradhan or Upa-pradhan have helped to reduce domestic violence considerably. These women representatives come forward to deal with bad situation. The victims are encouraged to express their concerns to female representatives.

Challenges of Women Representatives in Gram Panchayats: 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992, the Panchayati Raj Institutions have played a vital role in economic and social growth empowering women and participation with remarkable advancements in grassroots democracy and local development. During the performances of work for development related resolving issues, implementing schemes and programmes, women representatives experience a number of difficulties. Particularly the rural women are mostly illiterates or low literates and new participants in election process. They are unknown the rule and regulation of office with different development programmes running under the Panchayat. Women representatives encounter a number of difficulties, including financial dependency capacity building, administrative interference, persistent social biases, a lack of knowledge, training, leadership ability, cooperation etc..

Conclusion : After the implementation of 73rd Amendment Act the position of rural women have been changed in the society. Women's actual status in politics is demonstrated by their involvement in local government. In West Bengal, women's involvement in panchayats tends to have a dynamic impact on women's overall social and political empowerment. Emphasis should be given on ensuring the active participation of women in the meetings of Panchayats. It is required to promote and enhance their leadership qualities and self-confidence This would certainly facilitate the women's effective participation to bring changes in existing patriarchal norms of procedure in governing committees.

The Constitution of India declares equal rights for all citizens without taking into account of their socioeconomic status. But such provisions left to the imagination for millions of disadvantaged people of the country. In our country women are in significantly less favourable position than men not just with regards to gender ratio, level of literacy, economic activity, longevity, but also in respect of their evaluation of hierarchy which directs and supervises the advancement programmes of the community. As entry to political feasibility and involvement in policy-making process are significant factors of potency and leadership. Inequality in this matter leads to misuse of women's ability and performance which are needed for holistic development of the country.

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