



**PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS IN
INDIA**

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Abstract

Panchayati Raj Institutions have always been considered as an instrument of good governance and the 73rd Constitutional Amendment was effected in the hope that it would improve governance and provide political space to the underprivileged sections of the society such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women. The representation of women in village administration has brought about a strategic change in the functioning of grassroots democracy. The changing state of power structures has created opportunities for the Indian woman to take an active part in Panchayati Raj. Now, women are not confined to home and hearth but are entering various fields and proving their abilities. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, which gives 33% reservation for women in Panchayati Raj, has encouraged women to participate in the development of their villages and plan the future of their villages. At the level of development of the village the priorities have changed health, child education, sanitation, socio-economic development for the better. Women's participation in discussions and decision-making processes in an open environment creates an understanding and meaning for rural women. Nevertheless, her position in the family is quite tense – countering oppressive forces, working as a second fiddle in the public sector and limited by the stereotypical attitude of a society dominated by men.

Keywords: Panchayati Raj, Women, Constitution, Society, Democracy, Development.

Introduction

It is well known that the Panchayati Raj system exists in India today, its credit goes to BalwantRai Mehta. The Panchayati Raj system was started on 2 October 1959 on the basis of the recommendations made by the study team under whose chairmanship, Community



Development Program and National Extension Service. The report of BalwantRai Mehta Committee has been of utmost importance in the field of Panchayati Raj system, because the Mehta report which fixed the basic principles and nature of institutions, which has not been abandoned yet. The form of Panchayati Raj established after the 73rd Constitutional amendment is generally based on the same basic principles which were given by the Mehta Committee. On the basis of these principles, the three-tier Panchayati Raj system has been established in the various states of India according to the 73rd Constitutional amendment with slight differences in the nature. Establishment has been done according to the format of this three-tier structure. In which the planning, implementation and evaluation of programs are done through selected officials and bureaucrats/government officers and employees.

From the BalwantRai Mehta Committee to the 73rd Constitution through various committees, there are many ups and downs regarding the participation of women in these Panchayati Raj Institutions. The Mehta Committee submitted its report on the Panchayati Raj Scheme in November 1957. This committee had recommended the inclusion of two women in the ZillaParishad to oversee the implementation of programs related to women and children. In 1974, the committee constituted to study on the subject "Status of women in India" recommended that such Panchayats should be formed in which there are only women. In 1978, a committee constituted under the chairmanship of Ashok Mehta recommended that the two women who got the most votes should be made members of the ZillaParishad. There was a provision of twenty five percent reservation for women in the Karnataka Panchayat Act. The same was the arrangement in the Panchayat Act of Himachal Pradesh. The "National Perspective Plan for the Women 1988" recommended reservation of thirty percent seats from Gram Panchayat to ZillaParishad. In Madhya Pradesh, in the Panchayat Act of 1990, there was a provision of twenty percent for women in gram panchayat and ten percent in district panchayat. The provision of thirty percent reservation in Maharashtra Panchayat Act and 1/3rd reservation in Orissa Panchayat Act was there even before the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. The 64th Constitutional Amendment Bill was presented to the Parliament in 1989 with the aim of giving positive constitutional status to Panchayati Raj Institutions, but due to political reasons this amendment bill could not be passed.



P. V. The Narasimha Rao government amended the bill related to Panchayati Raj Institutions prepared by the Rajiv Gandhi government and got it passed by the Parliament in December 1992 as the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. This 73rd Constitutional Amendment came into force from 24 April 1993. By this amendment a new part Chapter nine has been added to the Constitution. 16 Articles and an Eleventh Schedule have been added to the Constitution by Chapter 9. Its title is 'Panchayat'. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act 1992 not only gave a new direction to the Panchayati Raj system, but it also provided an opportunity to women to participate in the Panchayats by providing thirty percent reservation.

Here we need to look at the legal framework of Panchayati Raj Institutions in India and the place of women in it. According to Article 40 - According to Article 40 of the Constitution, one of the Directive Principles of State Policy was established and it was arranged that the State would give such rights and powers to the Village Panchayats by taking necessary steps to enable them to self-government. Be able to function smoothly as units of In compliance with this, Panchayati Raj Institutions were formed in many states. But it had many drawbacks such as lack of timely elections and no real power development roles.

Challenges faced by women

The origin of Panchayati Raj system in India is not an accidental event but evolutionary in nature. Village Panchayats, as institutions of self-government, have their roots in ancient India. Active women sarpanches have given importance to social development activities like health, sanitation, old age pension and welfare, but misuse of agenda of panchayat meetings across the country shows a pattern of priority work in line with infrastructure issues like construction of roads and roads. Is. Social sector development issues like community building, health and education lag behind. Even the discussion of infrastructure issue is found to be limited to new constructions. Repair and maintenance of existing structures is often overlooked. An unfortunate observation that has come to the fore is that most of the women are elected chief sarpanches, but still, they are dependent on others, eg, secretaries, husbands, children, etc., due to lack of education. High monetary expansion from corrupt government officials and threats of physical violence, rape and abuse from upper castes often prevent them from performing their duties.



One of the major efforts for the empowerment of women in India is to empower them politically and more specifically at the grassroots level. And for this purpose, Panchayati Raj system provides a suitable platform for rural women. Such an approach provides a constitutional platform for women to stand up for their men, raise their voices on female oppression, subjugation and related issues and thus, in effect, give them an identity in the conservative socio-political set-up ; Also, providing a much needed platform to directly influence them for redressal of problems, which is the true essence of empowerment. The Panchayati Raj system has emerged as a boon for women. There is no doubt that the condition of women has improved a lot with the advent of Panchayati Raj in India. The efforts of Panchayati Raj have been successful in bringing social and economic changes in women in the right direction and giving them new life. In order to make women a special position in the society, many efforts were made to make women helpers in rural development. Our country has an early social and cultural background as evident from the emergence of ancient cultures. The concept of Panchayati Raj was developed with the aim of accelerating community development programs and getting desired public cooperation. Panchayati Raj came into existence in 1959 when the BalwantRai Mehta Study Group presented its report. Presently, Panchayati Raj system has proved to be a boon for women. Panchayati Raj has made women aware today and has awakened a new light especially among rural women. At present we feel the lack of women in every field. Because women have been carrying out their responsibilities very well. In this race of globalization, women are walking shoulder to shoulder with men.

The condition of rural women has improved a lot under the Panchayati Raj system. But still those women have not become empowered enough to play their strong role in this system. For this, women will have to draw attention to many measures. First of all, rural women will have to be educated, as well as a training arrangement will have to be made for them to face each situation. A special program for rural women would be organized once a week. Rural women should be encouraged to contest elections.

Efforts by the government to promote women's participation

A perfect initiative taken by the government includes raising the limit of reservation in Parliament from 30% to 50% for women in decision-making. Even though India has managed



to make representations, it is only the first step in moving forward to have women at par with men as decision-makers. Representation alone is insufficient and unless it is manifested as participatory, it is limited in its ability to empower women in the public sector. The government has implemented many schemes in the Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra, which will empower rural women through community participation. Create an environment in which they realize their full potential. Ministry of Women and Child Development also organizes training of trainers of elected women representatives of Panchayati Raj to deliberate on issues related to empowerment of women and functioning of PRIs; Describe the processes of participatory planning in local governance; And enable women to identify their own leadership potential in order to contribute effectively to change agents.

Due to the poor condition of the backward castes and women in the Panchayati Raj system, the villages cannot develop properly. Therefore, reservation has been provided to women in the Panchayati Raj system. Reservation has been provided in pretty much all areas especially to the women belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Castes. Considering women as a part of the weaker sections, they have been given reservation in two ways - one is the reservation of total seats for all the women of the village. Second, reservation for women belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes. In this way, women are coming to the Panchayati Raj Institutions in large numbers by electing them. This is a revolutionary change in the rural system.

In order to ensure the participation of women in rural development, by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act of India, a system of reservation has been made in the Panchayati Raj Institution. As a result, a large number of women are coming elected to the Panchayat. In many backward states also a large number of women public representatives have come out. Especially the number of women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes communities is encouraging. The basic spirit behind providing reservation to women is to improve the social, economic and political status of rural women.

It is important for women to pay attention to these three things for fulfilling their role - self-efficiency, attitude and cooperation of men and society, work of women and men in harmony. To empower women, it is very important to increase their capacity. Training is an important medium for this. Women will have to adjust to work with men, for which everyone



will have to make special efforts. However, the reality is that even today women are not so empowered, aware and active in Panchayat Raj. But in the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, he has been given an opportunity to come forward, lead and develop his village or area. The role of the Pradhan is very important in the Panchayat. In such a situation, the role of a female lead is very responsible and challenging.

In view of the need for capacity building of elected women representatives in Panchayati Raj in the country, the Ministry of Women and Child Development, in collaboration with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, on April 17, 2017 issued an advisory regarding capacity building of women and training of women Panchayat leaders across the country. Started a detailed module. The objective of this training program is to empower and empower the elected women representatives of Panchayats by developing their capabilities, competencies and skills in the field of village governance and administration.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development has started a countrywide program of training women heads, women sarpanches and other women representatives in different areas at the lowest level of the society. This training will help women sarpanches to implement schemes and programs for the benefit of common man, neglected and disputed people. Apart from this, the training program will help these women to reach the next level of leadership.

Conclusion

Panchayats are the soul of democracy. Panchayats have existed in our country since time immemorial. Their history is as old as our civilization but they were not democratic panchayats and women's voice was not heard in them. The energy hidden within her and her potential has not been properly utilized till date, considering the woman to be weak and weak. Even after the independence of the country, no special importance was given to women in these Panchayati Raj Institutions. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment was done with the aim of getting women out of this situation to bring their status to a respectable level and to accelerate their social, political, economic development and to pave the way for their all-round development. Through this constitutional amendment, participation of women in Panchayats has been ensured.



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