

# Role and Functioning of Mahila Gram Pradhan

## (A Socio-Political Study in the Empowerment and Rural Leadership Style under Panchayati Raj System)

### Chetna Bisht

Associate Professor,  
Dept. of Economics  
D.B.S. (P.G) College,  
Dehradun, Uttarakhand,  
India

### Paritosh Singh

Assistant Professor,  
Dept. of Sociology  
D.B.S. (P.G) College,  
Dehradun, Uttarakhand,  
India

### Abstract

Constitution makes reference to that Gram Sabha activities such powers and performs such capacities at the town level as the Legislature of a State may, by law, give. For example, they affirm of the plans, projects and tasks for social and monetary improvement previously such plans, projects and ventures are taken up for usage by the Panchayat at the town level (Panchayat at the town level is also called Gram Panchayat). Each Panchayat at the town level are required to get from the Gram Sabha a confirmation of use of assets by that Panchayat for such plans, projects and ventures executed. The Seventy third (73<sup>rd</sup>) constitutional Amendment is considered to be a revolutionary step in more ways than one. But the most important aspect is the reservation of 33% seats for women. Not only the Panchayat have become a constitutional obligation but the jurisdiction of Panchayat and its power have been raised to a high stature. Self-governance is being given new resonance through new legislation endeavor.

**Keywords:** Panchayati Raj, 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment, Women Empowerment, Self-Governance.

### Introduction

The Panchayati Raj system was formalized in 1992 as local self-government in India. In India, the Panchayati Raj presently works as an arrangement of administration in which gram panchayats are the fundamental units of nearby organization. The framework has three levels: Gram Panchayat, Mandal Parishad or Block Samiti, and Zila Parishad. It was formalized in 1992 by the 73rd amendment to the Indian Constitution. It was formalized in 1992 by the 73rd amendment to the Indian Constitution. But the most important aspect is the reservation of 33% seats for women. This measure is considered to be a milestone in the socio-political visibility, activism and empowerment of rural women.

In traditional rural society, women have been exploited and relegated to a lower position than that of men. The patriarchal social structure, male hegemony were not socially and culturally sanctioned behavior-pattern but they were in gained into the psyche of rural people. However, the new social forces have created new social situations in rural community. Expansion of female education, enhancement of employment opportunities, extension of democratic structure and the rural development programmes have all contributed to a change in status and role of rural women. They are becoming aware of socio-political and economic changes.

After independence rural community have witnessed completely new political and social scenario. Adult Franchise, periodic elections for Lok sabha and Vidhan sabha, involvement and identification of political parties, the Panchayat election at grass-root level have made the rural community vibrant and hot. In this politically surcharged atmosphere women are no mute witness to the high political drama. The itinerate and poor women may not be aware of the sordid reality and intricate game of power happening all around them, yet they do have a feel of political maneuvering and political game.

In this context, the Panchayat amendment and the reservation of seats possess deep significance. Theoretically, the more empowers the women to exercise equal political power to that of men. Though the Panchayat election under the amended law with the reserve quota of women have recently been held and women have been elected as Gram Pradhans, yet many apprehensions and doubts are being raised against women's entry into Panchayat organization. This can be understood at grass-root level.

#### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To explore the new roles of Mahila Gram Pradhan after 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment.
2. To explore the roles of NGO's as connecting link between Government and Rural people.
3. To explore power shifting of Mahila Gram Pradhan to Male.
4. To explore the difficulties facing by Mahila Gram Pradhans
5. To analyze the tradition status of women of rural community

#### **Methodology**

The Methodology of this study is based on exploratory and explanatory research design. It is an empirical study, which includes observation and interview conducted in 44 villages of Chakrata Tehsil of Dehradun district by purposive sampling. In this study Mahila Gram Pradhan's role, their work style, share of administrative responsibilities and their participation in rural development work have been explored.

#### **Findings of the Study**

Data concerning the role performance of Mahila Gram Pradhans, it has been found that most of them (63%) have no fixed duration of work for the performance of their duties as Gram Pradhan. If and when then arises the need they devote something to it. Only few of them have stated that they devote up to 4 hours daily in discharge of their duties.

Only in 22.35% cases Mahila Pradhans discharge their duties all alone. Most of them receive help from family members/relatives or social workers.

The visit of Pradhans to Panchayat and other Government offices has been turned very irregular. In 81% cases only when the situation compels the visit is made. It is strange to know that at the time of field work 5% Mahila Pradhans could not make visit to Panchayat and other Government offices.

In the sample, 55.35% have regularly participated in Panchayat meeting 24.65% cases Panchayat meeting conducted by The Secretary and 20% are conducted by the members of Mahila Pradhan's home. In 30% cases reported that their husband, father-in-law help to conduct the meeting. Most of the Pradhans have stated that in such meetings discussions are very open on every important issue even women members of Panchayat participate in deliberation.

As regards the programme implemented in the Panchayat area during the tenure of Mahila Gram Pradhans construction and repairing of road, wells, hand pumps, nalkoop are very important. Child and

maternity services have attracted their attention but not much could be done in this fields or self employment schemes for woman. Lack of funds has been the main difficulty and delay in administrative process has created many difficulties in the implementation of development programme.

As regard the rural development programmes most of the Pradhans feel that their programmes are not solely Government programmes, people's representation should also be consulted on different stages. Village functionalism has been considered as another hurdle in the implementation of programmes. Vested interest of the powerful elites, caste dominance, village rivalry, faction and opposition of defeated candidates are considered to be major hurdles.

As regards the evolution of benefit from development programmes, the Mahila Gram Pradhans considered if as not very substantial. Even some of them are very critical and have stated that no real benefit has accrued to the villages because of poor implementation and lack of funds. Moreover, the middle man have squeezed benefit and stopped percolation down to the rural beneficiaries. The respondent also believe that illiteracy, lack of articulation, dominance of male in village life have precluded the Mahila Gram Pradhans to become effective instrument of change and development

The respondents have informed that so far the amended Panchayat regulations regarding tax imposition and adjudication have not been implemented. Caste factor is the dominant factor in the political and social process in the village life. However, most of the respondents have reported that they received cooperation not only from their own caste but from the members of other caste. Non-cooperative and critical attitude have been reported by few Mahila Gram Pradhans with regard to caste feeling.

Analyzing the attitude of Mahila Gram Pradhans towards some important issues of women and development at the grass root level it has been found that there are 51.55% respondents are of the opinion that reservation should be provided to educated women only. As regards the allocation of funds 56.65% respondent have suggested that funds should be transferred to village Pradhans by government directly. Some of the respondents suggested ways of improving the resources of Panchayat, such as fish farming, regulation of weekly market etc.

To improve the planning and implementation of Panchayati Raj institution the respondents have suggested that delaying tactics of official be strictly curbed, need based planning should be encouraged and more financial power to Pradhans should be given and policy formulation at government level should always be with the consultation of non-officials.

#### **Suggestions**

1. Study has very clearly revealed that the awareness of Mahila Pradhan regarding the reservation provisions, election process, rules and obligation, duties of developmental administration are very hazy and scanty. To

overcome this, intensive training programmes on continuous basis should be carried out to enhance the awareness, knowledge and skill up gradation.

2. Study exploration as indicated that the political socialization of Mahila Gram Pradhans is rather weak neither in the family nor in the community. They have the opportunity to interact politically or exercise the power they have achieved through Panchayat Election.
3. Study has also revealed the development status of women candidates for financial support to fight the election. They have no resources of their own. Therefore, some sort of grass root credit system through organization like Gramin Mahila Sangh should be constituted.
4. The exploration has come to know the fact that the elected Mahila Gram Pradhans are shadow Pradhans. They are marginalized and separated. To bring them in main stream, it requires a lot of political and social will and administrative efforts to empowerment them and this power should emerge into the traditional power structure.

#### References

- Ambedkar S. N. and Nagendra Shilaja (2015 ed.): Women Empowerment and Panchayat Raj, ABD Publishers, ISBN 10-8189011499, ISBN 13-978-8189011499*
- Bansode Chandrashekhar C. (2016) : Role of Women in Panchayati Raj Institution, Manas Publishers and Distributors, ISBN 10-8192174328, ISBN 13-978-8192174327*
- Joshi Ygnesh M. (2016): Women Leadership and Panchayati Raj System, Manas Publishers and Distributors, ISBN 10-9380033702, ISBN 13-978-9380033709*
- Makwana Ramesh H. (2017): Women Empowerment through Panchayati Raj, ABD Publishers, ISBN 10-8183763758, ISBN 13-978-8183763752*
- Meenakshi J. (2017): Women in Panchayati Raj, Omega Publication, ISBN 10-8189612964, ISBN 13-978-8189612962.*
- Singh Pamela (2017): Women's Participation in Panchayati Raj: Nature and Effectiveness, Rawat Publication, ASIN: 3071X2FLPR*