Chapter- I
INTRODUCTION

India is a land of villages. Rabinder Nath Tagore gave a poetic touch to the description of Indian villages:

“Villages are like Woman in their keeping is the cradle of the race. They are nearer to nature than towns and in closer touch will fountain of life. They possess a natural power of healing. It is the function of the village like, that of woman, to provide people with their elementary needs, with food and job.”

India, being the largest democracy in the world, has emarked upon the greatest decentralization process for strongest empowerment of the people with deepest implications for democratic development at the grassroot level. An ideal democratic system is that in which people are directly involved in the affairs of the state and the local community democracy can be real when it maximises the amount of popular participation. The local communities are the best judges of their problems as they only can devise suitable ways and means for their solution. The idea behind democracy is that it will ensure decisions made by the largest number of people in the polity and Gandhiji wanted that the people must be associated with the decision-making at every step, right from the grass-roots level.

India is one of the very few developing countries with a functioning democracy. In the year 1997, we have celebrated not only the golden jubilee of

4 Ibid, p. 82.
our independence, but along with it, the golden jubilee of our democracy. In a survey of 165 countries of the United Nations applying strict standards of democratic principles and practices, hardly 60 countries qualified to be genuine democracies and most of them were western countries. We can be proud of the fact that our country was one of the few outside the group of the western block which could be counted as genuinely democratic nation in the world.\(^5\) The one achievement, which is usually highlighted as an important outcome of democracy in the country, is the growing sense of empowerment and breaking the shackles of marginalization by the weaker sections of the society.\(^6\) Democracy happens when people voice. It happens when people speak about their needs, wants and desires.\(^7\)

To make the political structure of democracy effective and meaningful to a common citizen, it is necessary that every citizen should, as far as possible, get an opportunity to take part in the day to day affairs of the state in general and of the community to which he or she belongs, in particular. Such a system would be possible only by adopting a scheme of democratic decentralization in different spheres of administration, policy formulation, its implementation, financial management, etc. Such a concept of democratic decentralisation in Indian political system was first enunciated in the report of the committee on plan project headed by late Shri Balwant Rai Mehta appointed by the Government of India in 1957 while the 2\(^{nd}\) five year plan was in progress.

**Panchayat and Democracy**

Panchayati Raj Institutions the grassroot unit of self government has been playing an important role in democracy and rural development since the

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\(^6\) Badri Narayan, “*Democracy and Marginalities*”, Yojana, August 2013, p. 61.

\(^7\) Pradeep Bhargava, “*Peoples, Voice, Development and Democracy*”, Yojana, August 2013, p. 37.
earliest times in India. They are proclaimed as vehicles of socio-economic transformation in rural India. Panchayati Raj represents grass root democracy. The success of democratic process depends largely on the active involvement and participation of the people at the village level. Various studies regarding participation revealed that involvement and participation of rural people and their representatives was not forthcoming.\(^8\) Panchayats or rural local governments have been in existence in India from time immemorial. Interestingly it finds mentions in Manusmriti and also in Kautilya’s Arthshastra to 400, B.C. So, the village communities in India almost every one of them, did maintain some type of Panchayats and were responsible for overall judicial, legislative and revenue work of the area.\(^9\)

The Panchayati Raj is a South Asian political system mainly in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. The word “Panchayat” literally means “assembly” of five wise and respected elders chosen and accepted by the local communities.\(^10\) The Panchayati Raj System is avowed model for participation of local people in the developmental administration at village level. The system serves as a mechanism to involve people in their own development and train local leadership to assume higher responsibilities and serve people with efficiency.\(^11\)

Panchayati Raj as the concretised form of democratic decentralisation in modern India is a creation of the colonial rulers. They had taken interest in democratic decentralisation essentially to protect, promote and consolidate the colonial rule. Ripons attempt, though different from the earlier approach in the

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sence that he looked at local self-government as the school of democracy and as an instrument of political education of the masses was also guided by the leader who were posing challenges to the colonial rule.  

12 Panchayati Raj is as rural local self-governing bodies are the vehicles of economic and political development of village community. Without economic development political democracy bears no fruits. Hence real democracy aims not only at political but more so at an all round economic development. Thus “Panchayati Raj is the vehicle of democratic community development.”

Grassroot level democracy stands for political structure in which democracy is not merely confined to the national and regional levels but is extended to local levels in a real and large measure. It is a medium of people’s participation, which is not remote and intermittent not limited to elected representatives for a distant government working of national or regional level for the two, three or five years, but is based on their participation in day-to-day affairs of their own local area, village or town as the case may be. Grass root level democracy is thus essentially decentralised-democracy in which the management of public affairs does not begin and end at the top but operates through a wide network of people participating units in the local area, which forms more or less a miniature government in themselves and are real centre of power and democracy in action.  

14 In the context of Panchayati Raj Institutions, participation implies involvement of people in the process of decision-making, implementation and evaluation and the present work look at the topic of research from this very perspective.

In the celebrated words of Mahatma Gandhi, the future of the nation, “true democracy could not be worked by twenty men sitting at the centre”. It had to be worked from below, by the people of every village.\textsuperscript{16} Hence local government is an essential attribute of democracy. It can be described as that form of government under which the people of locality possess certain responsibilities and direction in the administration of local affairs and raising of the required finance to meet their expenses. Local government is at the bottom of a pyramid of government institution with the national government at the top and intermediate government occupying middle range.\textsuperscript{17}

**Women and Democracy-From Political Perspective**

Democracy is founded on reason, law and freedom of choice but the position of different social groups in the social and political space where power is located is not always equal in practice. This is particularly so in the case of women. The nature of society or state has a decisive impact on the extent and effectiveness of women’s political presence and participation. Notions of democracy, governance and the state are often not gender neutral constructs but result from both historical factors and experiences.\textsuperscript{18} Women participation in mainstream political activity has important implications for the broader arena of governance in any country. Governance relates to a set of rules, institutions and values that are involved in the management of state and society. Governance institutions and processes include political parties, parliaments, government and their interactions with society.\textsuperscript{19}

Although women constitute half of the world’s population, their participation in political life has been negligible all along. Today, at the global

\textsuperscript{16} M.P. Dubey, Muni Padalia, op.cit., 2002, p. 58


\textsuperscript{18} Pooja Singh, *“Representation of Women in Indian Politics”*, Third Concept, Vol. 28, No. 327, May, 2014, pp. 48-49

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid, p. 48.
level only 10 percent of parliamentary positions 6 percent of cabinet ministerial positions are occupied by women. Only a few European nations like Sweden (40 percent), Norway (39.4 percent), Finland (35.5 percent) and Denmark (33 percent) have crossed 30 percent representatives of women in their parliaments.20 In any political system, right from the developed to the developing countries, presence of the percentage of women is very low compared to men. In many countries women had to fight long battles to get their right to vote. Today the percentage of women as voters has increased noticeably, but their political participation is not equal to men and therefore women are unable to get an equal share that require in decision making process.21

Earlier, women were not allowed to participate in the political process of the country. Later, demand for political equality of women started in 18th century. In Western Europe and North America, where the idea of equality of the sexes first took root, a change in status preceded legislation and with the important exception of suffrage, was often not dependent on law. New Zealand was the first country to enfranchise women in 1893 Australia and Canada in 1908. In Britain, attempts to enfranchise women before World War I were unsuccessful, but during the war women did such responsible work in such a variety of fields that by 1928, all women over 21 were enfranchised. In many countries like U.S.A. and France women had to wage relentless struggles for equal political rights. In U.S.A. Women's suffrage was secured in 1920 and 1944 in France.22

In Western Europe, after the World War II, many countries enacted legislation enfranchising women, these included Greece, Italy and France. In

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20 D. Sunder Ram, op. cit., 2007, p.163.
Germany, Women were enfranchised by the Weimer constitution of 1919. In Norway, in 1913, Danish women in 1915 and in Switzerland, women were enfranchised in 1971. In Union of Soviet Socialist Republic, it was stipulated in the 1936 constitution that no legislation or agreement should deviate from the principle of women’s equality with men. Same was with others like Poland, Bulgaria and Hungary. In the Middle East, in Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Yemen women have no voting rights. Other Arab states granted either limited or total suffrage to women by the late 1960s. In South Asia, the position of Hindu, Muslim and Chinese women has not been high, though in Burma, Thailand, Malaya women have had much greater freedom than in, for instances, India, the Middle East, China or Japan.\(^{23}\)

In Pakistan the emancipation of women has had to combat traditional Muslim practice. However, women have been legally able to reach the highest office since the 1949 constitution. In 1960, Ceylon became the first country have a women Prime Minister. In Burma, female enfranchisement was achieved in 1935 and Thailand in 1932. Chinese women received the vote in 1947 and Japan also in 1947. All the states of Latin America have universal suffrage. In Africa, women acquired the suffrage by the 1960, Liberia in 1947, Eastern and Western regions of Nigeria in 1960, Uganda in 1958 and Botswana and Lesotho in 1966. The South-African women like the men did not have the right to vote until recently, but for the first time in April 1994, the blacks were given the right to vote.\(^{24}\) And by the end of the twentieth century, more than 95 percent of the countries in the world had granted the two most fundamental democratic rights to its female section.\(^{25}\)

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\(^{23}\) Ibid, p. 2.

\(^{24}\) Ibid, p. 3.

These rights were not easy to achieve because women had to fight strongly for their rights at various forums. When the UN charter was being discussed for adoption, the draft neither contained the phrase “the equal rights of men and women” nor paragraph prohibiting the discrimination on the basis of sex. Women participants fought very hard against such discrimination and demanded that the rights for all human beings irrespective of their gender should be included. The ardour and initiative of the women delegate to bring to light such exclusion of women and their demand that the UN charter should reflect gender equality resulted in the incorporation of the idea of equality of men and women in the UN charter. It is said that the UN charter became the first ever international document in the history of mankind to have underlined the rights of all human beings irrespective of gender. In a similar way references such as “All men are brothers” in the universal Declaration of human rights were changed to reflect the equal rights of men and women. This struggle for human rights and women empowerment reached the high point when in 1995 the Beijing World Conference of women adopted the historic declaration that “women's rights are human rights.” This is a profound statement, the significance of which surpasses Declaration of Rights of Men and Citizens of 1789 and the American Declaration of Independence, both of which confined only to the civil and political rights of the male component of population.  

In 1975, (UNO) the initiative for the development of the women, especially in the third world countries, it labelled the ten years period from 1975 to 1985 as the “Decade of Women's Developmental Issues,” some resolutions were adopted. One of the proposals was the ‘Right to Women’ to participate and thereby to be elected in a democratic electoral system. A good sign was noted. As an outcome of the deliberations in these conferences, the

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representation of the women was seen increasing in various political institutions in many countries.\(^{27}\)

**Indian Women from Political Perspective**

Indian society has been vaunting its glooming heritage of the sublime status of women's culture of tolerance at the normative and idealistic level. But in everyday life she has been treated with utmost in tolerance, contempt and discrimination restricting her role to sex gratification reproduction and domestication within the family. Whenever there were attempts by women to challenge the male hegemony by demanding the share for equal space in family, economy and politics, the Indian male society has put it down with a heavy hand. They have used the ignominious weapons of social humiliation and individual and group violence. The men's world is sure that once the honour of women is violated the female identity want get mutilated and their voice stifled.\(^{28}\) While the Indian democratic state is committed to the protection of individual rights within the context of citizenship a closer look at how it operates for the women reveals that these rights are not accessible in the public and private spheres in their full potential to all the women in India. There are historical, social and cultural factors that have limited women's participate in the political processes.\(^{29}\)

From the Indus valley civilisation till Early Vedic period women had an important role to play in the decision-making process. The deterioration began from the later Vedic period and worsened in the medieval period. However, the late nineteenth and early twentieth century’s produced new educated women in India whose interests went beyond house-hold activities. Women started

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\(^{29}\) Pooja Singh, op. cit., 2014, p. 49.
organising themselves into groups and formed associations initially with the help of men, especially from the Brahmo Samaj of Bengal, Arya Samaj of Northern India and Prathana Samaj of Western India. However, gradually in the late nineteenth century, organisations like Bharatiya Mahila Parishad, Arya Mahila Samaj, Stri Zarhosti Mandal was set up by women for philanthropic and charitable work for up-liftment and enlightenment.\textsuperscript{30}

Looking back upon the past role played by women in politics and society in our country, we can be proud of the contribution women have made in the past. In-spite of the innumerable handicaps, discrimination and the oppression they have been subjected to, women have been the unacknowledged movers and shakers of our society. Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest feminist in history understood during the freedom struggle the importance of drawing women into the thick of it. He had observed, “here was a reservoir of intelligence and skill which had never been tapped for the national course.” He said that, not great cause could be achieved unless the power of women is harnessed to it and that all our schemes and programmes would fall half-way through unless women participate in them. This is true of our democracy and our social and economic development. They have only half succeeded so far an account of the absence of women’s participation.\textsuperscript{31}

The traditional “Womanhood” of India is tied up with home and family roles. She is treated as a sex object and a child begetting machine. Her world is limited to the “domestic world” and all the knowledge, skills and accomplishment have to find a place in the “narrow domestic walls” and not outside it. So women’s role have been constructed and defined in terms of


cooking, serving, cleaning and other domestic chores along with nurturing of children and caring of husbands, other kins in the family. This social construction of gender roles has to be reversed to speed up the process of social empowerment.\textsuperscript{32}

Women in India raised the issue of representation in politics first in 1917.\textsuperscript{33} In India, from its inception in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century the INC (Indian National Congress) had included women and in 1917, even elected a women President, Annie Besant. The demand for the vote was put forward by a group of women to the Montague-Chelmsford committee on constitutional reform. Madras was the first province to grant limited franchise to women in 1921, followed by other provinces, the Government of India Act of 1935 extended the franchise.\textsuperscript{34} By 1930 women had gained the Right to Vote. The 1935 constitution set the trend for the participation of women in Indian politics in the following decades through the method of reserving seats, whereby women were accepted as part of the Indian parliamentary culture. The provision of reserved seats for women was abolished at independence.\textsuperscript{35} Women involvement in struggles for political and civil rights in India has however sought to be linked to nationalist movements in alliance with males against the common foreign enemy.

The 1920’s also witnessed a second generation of feminists who were advocates of women's rights. Women who were strong leaders in the independence movement were Sarojini Naidu, Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay, Aruna Asaf Ali and Basanti Devi. A strong supporter of women's rights, Sarojini Naidu worked with the congress and the Muslim League. She was instrumental in the passage of a resolution to support women's franchise and became the

\textsuperscript{32} R. Indira, Deepak Kumar Behera, op. cit., 1999, p.100.
\textsuperscript{33} Pooja Singh, op. cit., 2014, p. 49.
\textsuperscript{34} K.C. Vedya, op. cit., 2007, p. 3.
first Indian women to become the first elected President of the Indian National congress. Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay participated in the Satyagraha movement of the 1930s. Aruna Asaf Ali’s first major political involvement was in the salt march at which she was arrested and prosecuted. She was also active in the Quit India Movement, edited Inquilab magazine of the congress and established the National Federation of Indian Women. She came to be known as the Grand Old Lady of the Independence Movement and heroine of the 1942 movement. Basanti Devi took active part in anti-british activities and was arrested for picketing foreign goods shops and in 1922 presided over the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee.36

The entire history of the freedom movement is replete with the saga of bravery, sacrifice and political sagacity of hundreds and thousands of women of our country. While on the one hand women's organisations were fighting for the political and economic rights of women and trying to secure their position by education and social reform.37 Women participated in the Salt Satyagraha in the Civil Disobedience Movement, in the Quit India Movement and in all the Gandhian satyagrahas. Women's organisations such as Desh Sevika Sangh, Nari Satyagraha Samiti, Mahila Rashtriya Sangh, Ladies Picketing Board, Stri Swarajya Sangh and Swayam Sevika Sangh came to forefront at this time to organise the mass boycott of foreign cloth and liquor.38

Beyond any doubt the active participation of women in the political struggles for independence consummated in a constitution based on the principles of equality and guaranteeing equal rights to suffrage for women in the year 1947 itself, because, it is mainly after Independence that the Indian

37 Subrat Biswal, op. cit., 2014, p.11
38 Ibid, p.12.
women gained considerable importance within the social and political spheres. After Independence in 1947 and with the constitution of 1950 all the women above 21 years were given the right to vote and the constitution clearly stated that “the state shall not discriminate against any citizens on grounds only of religion, race, sex, place of birth or any of them. In India, women’s franchise has been described as “easy victory”. The constitutional framers in granting women’s franchise were more influenced by the world history and the Gandhian Philosophy, rather than of any wide-spread demand from Indian women.39

Many women’s organisations like National Federation of Indian Women (1954), the Smajwadi Mahila Sabha (1959) were formed to work for championing the cause of Indian women. Since the country was facing a social, political crisis after the British rule many demands of the women activists were not supported by the Government. But during this period from 1945, the Indian women got an opportunity to participate in confrontational politics.40 In any case women's involvement in nationalist struggles changed their lives in that even though they were denied equal opportunities to shape the new state, they gained constitutional and legal rights. But even after the right to vote became a reality for all women, their representation in the Parliament, political parties and other decision-making bodies remained low even after independence, and after the Indian constitution came into force in 1950.41 Women’s disproportionate absence from the political process would mean that the concerns of half the population cannot be sufficiently attended to or acted upon as it denies their viewpoints sufficient opportunity to be integrated in the political system.42

39 K.C. Vedya, op. cit., 2007, p. 3.
40 Subrat Biswal, op. cit., 2014, p.12
42 Ibid, p. 49.
India, the largest democracy of the world emerging powers of the 21st country, the ideals of democracy especially for the women are yet far from being realised. Women in our country are still struggling hard for equal participation in every sphere including politics.\textsuperscript{43} India got its first women Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi about for decades back in 1966, and her daughter-in-law Mrs. Sonia Gandhi is following her footsteps and leading the INC (Indian National Congress).\textsuperscript{44} India got its first President, Pratibha Devi Singh Patil in 2007. In this respect, we are at least ahead of America, where till date, there has been no women President or Prime Minister in its long history of political democracy. In India many women have held berths in the union council of Ministers and also important positions of Governors and Chief Ministers in the states. The notable Women Chief Ministers who have led their governments successfully include Sucheta Kriplani and Mayavati (U.P.) Nandini Satyapathi (Orissa), Sashikala Kakodar (Goa), Saida Anvara Thuimur (Assam), Janki Ram Chandran and J. Jayalalita (Tamilnadu), Rajender Kaur Bhattal (Punjab), Rabri Devi (Bihar), Sushma Swaraj and Sheila Dikshit (Delhi), Uma Bharti (Madhya Pradesh), Vasundhra Raje Scindhia (Rajasthan) and Mamta Banerjee (West Bengal).\textsuperscript{45}

The women governors includes Sarojini Naidu (UP), Padmja Naidu (West Bengal), Vijay Lakshmi Pandit (Maharashtra), Sharadha Mukherjee and kumud Ben Joshi (Andhra Pradesh), Jyoti Vanketchaylam and Ram Dulari Sinha (Kerla), Sarla Grewal (Madhya Pradesh), Chandrawati, Rajendra Kumari Vajpei and Rajni Rai (Pondicheri), Sheila Kaul, B.S. Rama Devi, Prabha Rao and Urmila Singh (Himachal Pradesh), Justice M. Fatima Bibi (Tamilnadu) and

\textsuperscript{44} Subrat Biswal, op. cit., 2014, p.12.
\textsuperscript{45} Bhavana Jharta, op. cit., 2011, p.1.
Pratibha Patil (Rajasthan). Not only this, the leadership of some of the national and state political parties like the Congress Bahujan Samajvadi Party, AIADMK and Tamilnadu congress is in the hands of women like Soina Gandhi, Mayavati, Jaya Lalita and Mamta Banerjee respectively. Where women constitute half the population in a political system which supports equality and where both women and men are legally eligible for political office, women's participation should be equal to that of men. If this is not the case, it signifies deep flaws within the political system.46

**Women in Panchayati Raj- A Pre-Reservation Picture**

After independence, the women were given constitutional guarantees of justice, liberty, equality and dignity in the form of Fundamental Rights and Directive Principle of Constitution. In-spite of these rights and provisions few elite women were participated in the electoral process.47 The Indian constitution specifically provides for the protection of the rights of the women. The constitution makers knew that within the given socio-cultural order, it might not be possible for women to get gender justice. They suggested special provisions for women on the lines of other weaker sections of our society, especially in the Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles of State Policy of the Indian Constitution. Various important articles have accordingly been introduced to provide protective discrimination and to promote and protect the interests of the new protagonist the women.48 The clause of equality, provided by Article 16 has helped to ensure the Indian women a significant position and status.

As far as the Panchayat are concerned, the constitution only provided in Article-40 that the state should endeavor to organise village panchayats and ‘endow them with powers and authority as may be necessary for them to function as units of self government’. The question of representation was left to the state legislatures. However, in accordance with the prevailing practice of national level consultation, deliberation and consensus which was to be then reflected in the states legislation, the subject was discussed in various factors at the national level. Thus, the Central Council of Local Government in its third meeting held in Srinagar in 1957 recorded that the elected representatives, about 20 in number in each Block Panchayat, will co-opt two women who are interested in work among women and children. It was the same time that the Balwant Rai Mehta study team was making a similar recommendation in its report.\textsuperscript{49} The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee in 1957, marked the second major step involving the rural population in development endeavor. The recommendation of “democratic decentralisation” which led to the system of Panchayati Raj has provided yet another important channel for women’s involvement in their own development as well as that of the rural community.\textsuperscript{50}

One of the silent features of Mehta committee report was the provision to co-opt two women in all the three tiers after the elections had been held. The committee also specified that the selection of the two women could be based on the interest they took in activities relating to welfare of women and children. This indeed was the first occasion when women were able to have a role in the Panchayati Raj system, though not as elected members. Therefore, in many

\textsuperscript{49} Nirmala Buch, “Panchayats and Women, Status of Panchayati Raj in the States and Union Territories of India”, Institute of Social Sciences, Third Concept, Publishing com. 2000, p. 35.

parts of India women were nominated into Panchayat by co-option rather than election and their representation became one of more tokenism.\textsuperscript{51}

Panchayat to be a real representative body of the people should have women as about half the number of members. But till we reach the stage, the fourth meeting of the Central Council of Local Self-Government in 1958 noted, it is imperative that we ensure adequate representation of women, on the panchayat. Some states have reserved one seat for women but, in practice it is found that a solitary woman is unable to express herself freely on the aspects touching women's life in the villages. It is, therefore, felt that at least two seats must be reserved for women. Some states are revising their legislation and incorporating reservation of at least two seats for women. This step would go far in enabling Panchayat to assess total needs of village development from a fuller angle.\textsuperscript{52}

The Maharashtra Zila Parishad and Panchayat Samiti Act of 1961 followed the recommendation of B.R. Mehta and providing for the nomination of one or two women to each of the three bodies if no women candidate was otherwise elected. In 1978, there were 320 women representatives in the Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad in Maharashtra, out of which only six were elected, demonstrating if any evidence was required that the provision of co-option or nomination was a little more than an opportunity for patronage and, at best, an expression of tokenism. Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan used such provisions at convenience with broadly similar results. The Andhra Pradesh Gram Panchayat Act, 1964 effectively provided reservation between 20 and 25

\textsuperscript{52} Nirmila Buch, op. cit., 2000, p. 35.
percent for women.\textsuperscript{53} The prevalent practice during 1960's and 1970's was the co-option of two women at best for each Panchayati Raj bodies, as women could not come through direct elections, even though the requirement of co-option of women was not followed uniformly for all Panchayati Raj in every state, for instance Uttar Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir did not follow the scheme.\textsuperscript{54}

The question of women's participation in rural development process merited attention in 1974 through the upliftment of the status of women in India. It considered the question of establishment of statutory All Women Panchayats at the village level with real democracy.\textsuperscript{55} The committee on the status of women in India (CSWI) very strongly recommended that, the women should be provided with special opportunity for participation in the representative’s structure of Local Government.\textsuperscript{56}

The committee believes that the active involvement of women in the decision-making process will best be achieved by providing them with special opportunities for participation in the representative structure of local Government. The necessity for such association of women representatives is already accepted in the country and provision for reservation of seats for women through either election, co-option or nomination in these bodies has been made in their constitutions. The committee feels that as the statutory local self-governing institutions do-not pay much attention to the subject of women's development women's representation on Panchayat bodies should lead to a greater participation of local women in the political process and thus it would be

\textsuperscript{53} Study of EWRs, in Panchayati Raj Institutions, Based on a Nationwide Survey by AC Nielsen ORG-MARG, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India, 2008, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{56} S. Wasseem Ahmad, Nilofer, Gazala Parveen, op. cit., 2008, p. 662.
easier to press for special programmes or schemes for women's development.\textsuperscript{57}

The decision making power of the women was first obtained by women in the Ashoka Mehta Committee of 1978.\textsuperscript{58} The Ashoka Mehta committee on the Panchayati Raj Institutions presents a detailed analysis of not only of rural institution but also of comprehensive rural development itself. It recommended reservation of two seats for women in Panchayat and co-opt women in case they did not come through elections. Thus, the committee considered women as the most important component of the population and they should not however become the loosers of the benefits of development.\textsuperscript{59} The committee also analysed that, women representation, in all the Gram and Zila Panchayats remained very low and their participation in the meetings and decision-making was also in proxy.\textsuperscript{60}

A committee on (PRIs) set up by the government of Andhra Pradesh in 1979 discussed the question of reservation in favour of women. The committee examined the recommendation of the Ashoka Mehta Committee regarding co-option of women members from the defeated women candidates from general seats securing highest number of votes. The committee found this recommendation “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 Ashoka Mehta Committee is implemented. The committee, therefore, did not recommend cooption of defeated women candidates and instead recommended reservation of 5 percent of the posts of sarpanch’s in

\textsuperscript{57} H’azal Dilma, op. cit., 1983, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{60} S. Wassem Ahmad Nilopher, Gazala Parveen, op. cit., 2008, p. 662.
each block for women. This reservation may be made in Panchayat where the percentage of women electors is comparatively higher. The committee did not favour reservation of offices of Presidents of Panchayat Samitis in favour of women who should contest along with men for general seats. With a view to improve the role and status of women in India, the National Perspective Plan (NPP) for women 1988-2000 A.D. clearly recommended 30 percent reservation of seats in favour of women at village Panchayat to Zila Panchayat level and at the municipal bodies. It took nearly 40 years for women to find political representation in the formal political institutions.

The 64th constitutional Amendment Bill, which was aimed at strengthening and revitalizing the Panchayati Raj Institutions, was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 15 May, 1989 the then Prime Minister late Mr. Rajiv Gandhi. It must have been for the first time in the world that a Prime Minister proposed a Constitutional Amendment on a subject of local self-government in a federal democracy. The special feature of the bill was that of reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and also 30 percent reservation for women. After the 64th amendment fell through and before the 73rd amendment was finally passed, a number of states initiated changes in their Panchayat laws to spring reservation for women, in a way, trying to anticipate these developments and claim to be the pacesetters. Thus, Orissa introduced 30 percent reservation for women in the membership of the Panchayats. Similarly, Maharashtra made a change in 1991 by introducing a 30 percent reservation for women in the membership of the Panchayats. Both the states also held elections on this basis to their Panchayats. Kerala also introduced 30

61 Nirmala Buch, op. cit., 2000, p. 36.
63 Ibid, p. 663.
percent reservation for women in Panchayats on the same lines. In this regard, Karnataka state had become a model to other states by giving a better statutory representation (25 percent) for women in its Panchayati Raj bodies. This was raised to 33.3 percent by the Act of 1993 in tune with the statutory provisions specified in the 73rd of the constitution.

National Commission for Women (NCW) which was basically a statutory body, was constituted in January 1991. Its purpose was to investigate and examine all matters relating to the safeguards provided to women under the constitution and other laws. It was constituted with a specific mandate to study and legal safeguards provided for women; to review the existing legislation to suggest amendments whenever necessary; and to look into complaints involving deprivation of the rights of women. Similar commissions have also been set up in nine states.

**Women in Panchayat-Post Reservation Picture**

The Government of India, noting the low participation of women in politics; acknowledging the recommendations of the committee for Status of Women Report, 1974; and drawing from the pioneering experience of Karnataka which provided reservation for women in its three tiers Panchayati Raj System (institutions of local self-governance) in the year 1983; adopting an affirmative action for providing reservation for women in these institutions in the year 1992.

When the congress party came back to power after the elections of 1991, a new amendment bill was introduced in the Parliament which finally became the 73rd amendment to the constitution.

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64 Nirmala Buch, op.cit. 2000, p. 36.
68 Nirmala Buch, op. cit., 2000, p. 36.
The Constitutional 73rd Amendment has laid down in Article 243-D (3) that not less than one-third of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayats be reserved for women and that such seat may be allotted by rotation and to different constituencies in a Panchayat.69 While article 243-D (4) provides that the offices of the chairpersons in the Panchayats at the village or any other level shall also be reserved for women and such reservation shall not be less than one third of their total number of offices of the chairperson in the Panchayat at each level.70

Women participation in PRIs was governed by two inter-related subject: representation of women in these bodies and effectiveness and outcome of their participation. Co-option of a few women was the only available option for women to participate and it was a pretense for it could not construct the desired and verify no results at all. The co-option system of course provided one convenient scope for the dominant caste/ class leaders to mount their family women such as wife or mother as their yoke and the very rationale of the policy was laid to rest. It took 43 years to realise and recognize that women are yet another disadvantaged group and they also require a solution to their discrimination. Women have received preferential consideration and that too only in the sphere of political representation and that again in local government.71 The 73rd Amendment Act constitutes a watershed in the gender relations of rural India for it offers a legitimate opportunity for women to share powers and influence the process of decision-making in their own right. In a backward, traditional and patriarchal society like ours this measure merits serious attention and deep appreciation.

In the immediate present it awakens the women towards new opportunity for political power. Right now there may not be any striking impact on the structure of men-women power relations. But it certainly acts as a signpost, beckowing the long journey which Indian women have to undertake along the road to future freedom and equality. The journey is not easy and smooth. It is best with problems, tensions and violence. In the Context of women's representation at the grassroot organisations, one must mention the National Policy for Empowerment of Women (1996). It has suggested elaborate strategies and action plans to actualise the prescribed goals. It has an action plans to be initiated at the village, district/sub-district state and national levels. It also suggests that all the central and state ministers would have the gender component in their action plans. It suggests elaborate action for the executive and legislature in all the areas related to physical, social, cultural and economic and livelihood security of women.

The status of women in India has been undergoing a sea-change. Supported by constitutional guarantee to ensure dignity and equal opportunity, their active participation in all walks of life including education, politics, support, etc., has been growing. Taking not of women’s role in the nation building activities, the Government had declared 2001 as the year of ‘Women's Empowerment’ by adopting a national policy to offer “Swashakti” to women. The National Policy on Women 2001, which informed the 10th five-year plan, articulated a series of goals towards women’s empowerment. The main objective of this policy is equal access to participation and decision-making of women in social, political and economic life of the nation and the de-jure and de-facto enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by women.

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on equal basis with men in all-spheres-political, economic, social, cultural and civil.\(^{74}\)

Having provided for women’s reservation in Panchayats and municipalities, it was felt that reservation for women on the same lines should be provided in the House of the People and in the Legislative Assemblies of the states by amending the constitution.\(^{75}\) From a reservation of 33 percent seats at various levels including the Parliament, it has also been suggested that political parties reserve 33 percent of their seats for women in the elections. The issue as far as reservation for women in Parliament and State Legislature is concerned: it has already been debated for quite some time. When there are already quite a number of women present in a very impressionable position, the hurdles should have been easily crossed. The shark in the waters of women empowerment needs to be weeded out. But different political parties are playing the clearest case of a self-fulfilling prophecy outside Greek mythology. The passing of the bill is turning out to be a spectacular failure.\(^{76}\)

**Women Reservation in Himachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Institutions**

The 73\(^{rd}\) Constitutional amendment by the Himachal Panchayati Raj Act was a step to involve women in the working of grassroots institution. Himachal Pradesh adopted the Punjab Village Panchayat Act, 1939. The state legislature passed the Himachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, in 1952 in order to bring the working of Panchayats in tune with the local conditions and with the growing aspirations of the people for democratization. It came into operation in 1954

\(^{74}\) Dr. Deepali Singh and Dr. Nafees A. Ansari, “The Empowerment of Indian Women with Reference to Five Year Plans”, Kurukshetra, September, 2008, p. 15.

\(^{75}\) Chaitali Basu, op. cit., 2004, p. 92.

when the Panchayats were established in the states. The Himachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act was repealed in 1968 when the state legislature passed a new Panchayati Raj Act. The Act provided for a uniform system in the entire state. This act was introduced in November 1970 and provided for three tier system of Panchayati Raj having Gram Panchayat at village level, Panchayat Samiti at Block level and Zila Parishad at district level. The 1968 Act also provided for representation of women in case where there were no primary members in the Panchayat Samiti. The Amendment Act of 1991 also provide twenty five percent of total number of seats of Panchs, other than Pradhan and Up-Pradhan, which were reserved for women, including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the Schedule Caste.

With a view to bring law relating to the Panchayats in conformity with the provisions of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, the Himachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, 1994, was enacted w.e.f. 23rd April, 1994. The Act 1994, repealing the earlier State Panchayati Raj Act of 1968, the various provisions with regard to reservation to the different sections of the society like reservation of SCs, STs, OBCs and women in the democratic decentralization process have done great Justice to the deprived section of the society of Himachal Pradesh. In Himachal Pradesh reservation was not only at the level of members of PRIs, but also 1/3rd seats for the chairpersons of all the three tiers of PRIs.

The Government of Himachal Pradesh has further amended 73rd Amendment Act and raised reservation for women in all tiers of the Panchayati Raj system from 33 to atleast 50 percent on April 8, 2008 the Himachal

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Pradesh Panchayat (Amendment) Bill was presented and passed in the house, and then Himachal became the third state after Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh to give 50 percent reservation to women in Panchayat and local bodies. In 2010, the elections to PRIs were held as per the provisions laid down in the Himachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Amendment Act, 2008 vide which 50 percent reservations of seats have been for women in PRIs. After that the Indian Government also passed a bill of 50 percent reservation for women in PRIs. The union cabinet presided over by then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, cleared a proposal to amend Article 243 (D) of the constitution for his purpose on August 27, 2009. Apart from Bihar, which was the first state to after 50 percent reservation for women in Panchayats in (2005), others states i.e. Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Kerala have also announced 50 percent reservation for women in Panchayats and other local bodies.

The provisions of reservation for women in PRIs are certainly long awaited and essential for the up-liftment of women. The Panchayati Raj System, being a state subject, makes it the prerogative of states, where the quota for women is less than 50 percent, to formulate their own rules to implement the provision once it is made part of the constitution. The increased participation of women in PRIs leadership will enhance the transparency and accountability of PRIs in India. It is believed that planning initiatives for achieving goal of increasing participation of women through the recently introduced Panchayati Raj Acts could be an important instrument measure for empowering women and bringing desirable improvements in their socio-economic and political status.

Review of Literature

Review of literature is an important aspect in the process of research. Review of literature is imperative to analyse the relevant studies which already have been conducted on various aspect of the problem under study, so as to understand the problem and final out the inadequacies of earlier research.

Rao, (1980)\textsuperscript{83} in his book, “Panchayats and Rural Development” the writer emphasized that rural development is a theme of major interest to the institute for social and economic change. Success of rural development through democratic decentralisation largely depends on two basic factors, (a) the emergence and growth of egalitarian power structure in democratic institutions at the grass-roots and (b) the economically viable size of these institutions. The author examined that the power structure in Gram Panchayats was heavily in favour of the ‘locally dominant castes’ and upper classes in the society. The emergence of such a type of power structure defeats not only the basic implications of democratic decentralization but also the aims of rural development with social justice.

D’ Lima, (1983)\textsuperscript{84} “Women in Local Government” the author has described that the women can make in the important task of nation-building, the subject of women’s development has been of great interest to the researcher. The awakening of women in India towards a society where justice and brotherhood prevail can best be achieved by women to women contact. Even though men have played a pioneering role in the cause of women in India, their role has been effective in bringing about constitutional and legal changes in the status of women. For these change to affect the life pattern of the vast majority of women in this country, women leaders must be found who can penetrate into

streets and villages, homes and hearths in order to create awareness and motivation for action. The cultural pattern of Indian society is such that social progress among women can be promoted effectively through the media of personal relationships among them. Hence, effective leadership among women must come from the ranks of women themselves.

The presence of women in the Panchayati Raj structure is an indication of the collaboration that is desired of them in the rural development of the country. Women’s presence on panchayat bodies opens a way for them to make their voice heard and thus bring to the fore the rich content of feminine thought and action in the development of a people. There is need to investigate the impact of this statutory presence of women in Panchayati Raj.

Sinha, (1984) in his book “Women Right: Myth and Realty”, emphasized on the legal status of women. It is, therefore, consider desirable to study the awareness of women in rural and urban areas about their rights. The author analysed and inferred that the social and political outlook of people regarding women representatives in main obstacle in political participation of the rural women. The author looks at ancient spastic Hindu Law in matters of right of women, sati practices, the involvement of the British in eating laws to protect women’s social status.

Kapoor, (1986) in this book “Women and Family Life Education in India” the author has made a diligent and exhaustive study of certain selected programmes which impart family life education to women. Women have an important and unparalleled role to play in the nation’s development. The potential is there undoubtedly, but sadly, it has not been exploited. Today women are excluded, or at best only marginally included in most developmental

processes. Pushed into the dark abyss of malaise, inertia and ignorance for centuries, they lack the skills and the awareness to become active participants in, rather than mere passive recipients of, the developmental effort. Manifestation of the potential within is possible only through education. Apart from the formal stream of education, efforts have been made by various socio-religious organizations and national leaders to awaken the vast masses of stupefied Indian women. These efforts, commendable as they are, have been put a drop in the ocean. The programmes of the Government, though sound in philosophy, laudable in their objectives and enshrined in the principles of the constitution, too seem to have made little impact.

Sharma, (1994)\(^87\) in her book on "Grassroot Politics and Panchayati Raj", has described the working of Panchayati Raj Institutions at the grass root levels. The book has been divided into seven chapters in which she has tried to give the genesis and growth, the rise and down fall of Panchayati Raj Institutions from ancient time to till today. He has also examination the development activities of Panchayats that no system of local self government can function successfully unless it is provided with adequate finance.

Vidya, (1997)\(^88\) book “Political Empowerment of Women at Grassroots”, has described the role of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions and political life. In some years there has been a remarkable change in the attitude of Indian women towards education and employment. The study shows that women participation in decision-making is them more conscious and aware for their right.


Devi, (1998)\textsuperscript{89} in her book on “Women and Development”, has described women and their status. The Government of India giving them laws and right for improving their status. In the last she takes into account the various educational, economic, political and social factors which have changed the world of work in India since independence. The reservation policy is providing development oriented for rural development and political empowerment of women in India.

Menon (ed.), (1998)\textsuperscript{90} “Women Empowerment and challenges of change” the authoress stress that a country is not fully developed where the women are denied full legal status and social excellence. The present book is an attempt to furnish the basic parameters of issues on women’s development issues in the context of democratic decentralisation of power, awareness for their own social status, sexual liberation, facilities, and professional achievement. The women’s society, empowerment and government’s current efforts to improve the social position of women are well analysed in her work.

This study is also related to the demographic experience of women in the third world countries including the main themes of demography such as mortality, fertility and migration, the main theme is that action based upon a better understanding of the demographic situation would greatly improve life and the advancement of development. As women have been defined entirely in terms of their reproductive role and told that ‘anatomy is destiny’ their contribution to development has been hampered and devalued and that so much of the effort devoted and to forward the reduction of fertility levels has gone to waste. The final chapter of this book discusses the life style of female headed household and women work.

**Narsimhan, (1999)** the book “*Empowering Women, An Alternative Strategy From Rural India*”, has analysis the women condition in India. Many unattached young women may be politically active, but once married, the disappear from the political scene. The role of money, the corruption of politics and growing violence against women has also constrained many potential activities. It must find a way not only to respect the diversity of India but also to establish itself as an important part of that diversity.

**Wignaraja, (1999)** in this book “*Women, Poverty and Resources*” the author specifically addresses the issue of alleviation of women’s poverty. The issues of gender and equity point to the double burden women have to bear: that of being poor and being women. For Ponna Wignaraja, the solutions to women’s poverty can only come from actions by women’s groups and by their better organization. Individuals cannot address the problem of their powerlessness; this can only be done through collective action. The organization of women around issues of common concern is a prerequisite for effective and sustainable economic and social development. The writer further states that provision of credit in the absence of this organization is not developmental, but further erodes self-respect, dignity and collective action and leads to depletion of even the resource and assets already available to poor women.

**Seksena, (2000)** in his book “*Women and Politics*”, compilation of essay’s which are contextual as well theoretical. The fact is that the women have been sidelined in all political systems of the world. And in reality, it is true that at present democratic politics is unable to establish a democratic society in real sense and the presence of women in the political process in the most

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Many issues relating to women and socio-political economic set-up have cropped up which led to many discourses. There are some issues which unite women and some divide them. To understand the problematic of women’s questions world-wide, the context social relations has to be taken into account. Further, the author says that the perspective of women’s movement in developed countries would be different from those of the developing countries. The differences reflect inherent contradictions in the established social order of which women are integral part. Women like men can take equal part in political processes and can participate in all political activities, can vote, contest elections, be associated with political parties, be members of legislative bodies, head of executive, be in judicial system, be in bureaucracy and everywhere, they have a right to reach at the top without legal hindrances the constitutional political rights in all democratic are a case in point. The democratic constitutional stipulations guarantee equality of sexes in the political field.

Mehta, (2002)94 “Participation of women in the Panchayati Raj System” is a book containing 205 pages divided into eight chapters. The study is an attempt to examine various issues related to the implementation pattern of reservation policy and its awareness among rural women, nature of socio-economic status of elected women, extract of participation of women representatives in all levels (District, Block and Panchayats) of PRIs during the implementation of development programmes and welfare activities. The introduction of reservation policy for favour of women in (PRIs) has been an important government intervention for maximizing the participation of women in different activities at all levels and as a result to improve their socio-economic status. The study has also visualized that there were other related fundamental

elements and factors which equally determine the scope of bringing changes in the status of women.

Mandal, (2003)\textsuperscript{95} “Women in Panchayati Raj Institutions” the author examined the all aspects related to women Panchayat members i.e. their background, perception, nature of panchayat role performance problems they confront impact of their participation on policy dispensation of Panchayats specifically in the front of women’s development and nature of their social reception. The book is basically a report of a fact finding mission on women Panchayat members of a district and much a theoretical discourse. The author explain that after 4\textsuperscript{th} Panchayat Elections, 1993, in West Bengal thousands of women all of a sudden literally, were elected uniformly in Panchayat Institutions because of statutory reservation of seats. The induction and prominence of so large number of women members in every panchayat body caused stirrings in society.

Vyasulu, (2003)\textsuperscript{96} “Panchayats, Democracy and Development”, this book brings together a number of papers written at different times during the last six years on issues connected with the implementation of 73\textsuperscript{rd} Constitutional Amendment. The 73\textsuperscript{rd} Amendment is now barely a decade old. It has already brought about a silent revolution in the Indian country side thought its provisions of reservation of seats for women. They are today visible, and their voice cannot be indefinitely ignored. Yet, there have been social and gender problems in the ability of women to function as full members of these bodies. That is only to be expected in a decisive and inequitable society like ours. But this Amendment has provided an institutional and legal framework within. Which women have begun to fight for a fair share in the fruits of development.


In this book the author pointed out some hurdles i.e. lack of financial resources, corruption in the society, lack of information, lack of training and so many others. At last the author concludes that there is much to be done at the local level and much to be learned. Conscious efforts will have to be made by all concerned.

Mukherjee, (2004) this book “New Issues in Panchayati Raj” is one of the outcomes of the project entitled “Strengthening Panchayati Raj System” of the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, funded by the Ford Foundation, New Delhi. The papers in the book are written by outstanding authorities on the subject. These papers record the experiences and thinking of these authorities on some of the newer issues that confront the Panchayati Raj System in India. Assessment of the current situation in Panchayats, particularly relating to participation of women in the process of local governance; the story of implementation and deviations of 73rd Constitutional Amendment; analyses of the role of new community-based institutions such as Self-Help-Groups in rural development; analyses of the tactics adopted by the legislators, bureaucracy and the rich to appropriate power to themselves, against the letter and spirit of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment; ways and means to integrate community-based organizations with the Panchayati Raj System and several “Dos and Don’ts” have all been included in the book.

Narasaiha, (2006) “Women and Development” in this book the author explain the major issues relating to the women participation and their equality. Women’s rise to power and their participation in politics are the vital signs of a healthy democracy. Women in positions of power must constantly prove that they can behave like men. Actually, the situation of women has changed

completely in the last 30 years. The presence of women in the Panchayati Raj structure is an indication of the collaboration that is desired of them in the rural development of the country women, in the panchayat structure today, has her roots in the rural past. Her present position symbolises both an achievement and an aspiration. The achievement is the acceptance of women acquires greater significance in the traditionalism of the rural context. The aspiration is the hope embodied, to draw forth in full, the feminine contribution to national development.

Dahilerup, (2006) \(^99\) has carried out a study on “Women, Quota and Politics”, this book emphasized on the fact that the use of electoral gender quota increases the strength of women in parliament or legislature. He has explained the performance of Panchayati Raj Institutions besides the working of Panchayati Raj. He has tried to examine the socio-economic background of the leaders, their attitudes towards problem and the working of whole system.

Wal & Banerji, (2007)\(^100\) “Women and Globalization” in this book the writers covers the different aspects related to women i.e. women and globalization, the notion of equal treatment, girl child labour in North America, women in Israel, valuing women’s work, challenges of education, television and video flow in India, income generation programmes and women in development. The writer says that, there has been a worldwide awakening about the rights of women. The United Nations has been doing commendable work in this direction. There is more and more awareness about improving the work conditions of women and for providing them proper place in political field. In this book the authors also described the different issues and problems related to women’s development at micro as well as macro level.

Ganesamurty, (2008)\textsuperscript{101} “Empowerment of Women in India: Social, Economic and Political” this book related to the socio-economic status, women entrepreneurship, women in politics, role of information and communication technology in empowering women. The importance of this book is that it describes the Panchayati Raj System and the participation of the people in decision-making. The development of rural region like Himachal Pradesh can be achieved if people participation in the decision-making process of the PRIs is ensured.

Sekar, (2008)\textsuperscript{102} book “Panchayati Raj and Financial Resources” the writer traces the evolution of Panchayati Raj System in the states of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. It critically evaluates the various methods adopted by the above state governments in devolving financial resources to the local bodies with particular reference to Panchayati Raj System. The book begins with a historical perspective of the Panchayati Raj System in India and gives an overview of the evolution of the Panchayati Raj System in the state of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. The book goes on to give an account of the efforts made by these state government in strengthening the Panchayati Raj System not only due to their own initiatives but also on the basis of the stipulations made in the 73\textsuperscript{rd} and 74\textsuperscript{th} Constitution Amendment Act, 1992. The author has examined the financial resource position of Panchayati Raj System vis-à-vis state finances. He has also examined the level of financial decentralization that the above state governments have actually delegated to the Panchayati Raj System in their respective states. This volume would provide valuable information on the Panchayati Raj System. It would throw light


\textsuperscript{102} Dr. S. Chandra Sekar, “Panchayati Raj and Financial Resources”, Regal Publications, New Delhi, 2008.
on the pertinent issues involving methods of revenue devolution from state to local bodies, which would be of immense use to the students, researcher’s, academicians and policy-makers.

Kumar (ed.), (2009) 103 “Women and Science in India” this book is related to women and their actual role in the field of science. Gender profoundly influences scientific activity and the professional lives of women. What are the underlying factors that cause gender gap in institutions of science in India? Has the scenario improved or have new factors of discrimination increased the divide? Women and science in India examines the scientific, engineering, and medical professions in India from these perspectives. In this book the writer explores the history, epistemology, as well as quantitative and qualitative aspects of the position and careers of women in sciences. The first section investigates the historical background while the second provides the contemporary context and sociological explanations and deals with the economic parameters that determine the status of women in scientific professions. The essays probe the challenges faced by women in science and the impact of globalization on their careers. The first three essays trace the historical linkages and explore the discourses and institutions that have shaped the lives of women in colonial times. The book also analyses the applicability of western theories of gendered science and feminism for women in India.

Badal, (2009)104 “Gender, Social Structure and Empowerment” the book focuses on the mutual interdependence of gender relations, development levels, and social stratification without underestimating the full significance of each in Indian society. The earlier narrow focus that considered status as a

103 Neelam Kumar (ed.), “Women and Science in India”, Published by Oxford University Press, YMCA Library, Building, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi, 2009.
unitary construct and sought a universal explanation of the low status of women has been replaced in this work by a multidimensional view that argues for conceptualizing status broadly in terms of its economic, social and political dimensions. The contrasting performance of specific states/districts on each dimension clearly indicates that the dynamic and variable nature of women’s status cannot be captured by any one dimension. It is observed that women’s status is affected by kinship structures, development levels and social stratification, which vary over space and time individually and interaction with each other. It is this variation that leads to differences in women’s position from one region of India to another.

Devgan, (2010)105 “Women, Media and Politics”, in this book the author discussed about the major aspects of women involvement in the American politics. He says that, gender is one of the primary fault lines running through contemporary politics. The political agenda has become deeply polarized by such issues as affirmative action, abortion rights, and welfare reform. In short, gender politics, once regarded as marginal, has emerged as one of the core dividing lines in identifying politicians, parties, issues, and voters in America.

No surprising, the way media covers gender politics has long been a matter of contention. The issue at the heart of this book is whether as critics suggest, media coverage of women in America reinforces rather than challenges the dominant culture, thereby contributing towards women’s marginalization in public life. In this book the author has systematically examine the impact of the media on women’s power in America. It focuses on how the role of American women as citizens, political leaders, and feminist activists has been influenced by the media, for better or worse, in recent decades. Using

multi-method approaches involving surveys, content analysis, focus groups, interviews, and personal experience, the author analyse the role of women as journalists, the impact of campaign coverage images of women in power and coverage of women’s movements and feminist policy issues.

**Sharda, (2010)** the book “Evolution of Panchayati Raj in India From Traditional to Constitutionalize Panchayats” the author examine the various aspects of Panchayati Raj Institutions from traditional to modern India. Since Vedic times these were the most stable institutions in the field of governance. The institutions had organic unity and they served the masses on the bases of principles of good governance. This system of governance remained in practice till the Britishers came to India. Britishers for their own interest damaged these institutions. Gradually they lost their vigor and vitality which they failed to revive after independence. Government made some efforts at union and states level but outcome was not effective. Finally 73rd Amendment passed in 1993 gave PRIs a constitutional backing like that of the Parliament and State Legislature. Besides the constitutional status the PRIs after fifteen years of 73rd Amendment are not able to gain the status, as the institutions of people’s participation. The main reason behind these developments is our socio-ecology in which the traditional institutions are still dominating.

**Hooja and Dutt, (2010)** “Fifty years of Panchayati Raj and Decentralised Development” in this book the authors says that Panchayati Raj started in India from self-sufficient and self-governing village communities that survived vicissitudes of history and has emerged today as institutions of governance at the third tier provided with constitutional support. The constitution visualises


Panchayats as institutions of self-governance. The 73rd Amendment to the constitution gave constitutional status to local self-governments and provided a new, better defined, universalised platform for decentralized planning from below. The author says that these institutions for grassroots democracy are in a deplorable condition. For the sake of upholding expectations of the people it is essential that clearly demarcated roles are assigned to Panchayats, through activity mapping. The most important area that requires sustained focus will be the capacity building of the Panchayats, in the widest sense of the term to empower them to perform their responsibilities effectively.

Annamalal & Suresh (ed.), (2011)108 “Resource Management and Village Panchayats, Experience and Emerging Concerns” the book contains twenty-six papers presented and discussed in a two-day national seminar on “Resource Management and village Panchayats: Experiences and Emerging Concerns”, organised by the Mahatma Gandhi National Institute of Research and Social Action on 28 and 29 November 2008. The papers cover such aspects as Natural Resource Management, Financial Resource Management and Human Resource Management. The management of natural resources is one of the most critical aspects in the economic development of any country. Under Indian conditions it assumes more importance, because the limited natural resources have to be judiciously used to feed the ever-increasing population. The overall objective of natural Resource Governance System is to facilitate improvement in livelihood of the rural poor through rational use of natural resources. It can be effectively handled only when the rural communities are made directly, and not to be proxy, responsible to own control, revive and govern their resources. In

this context, the observations made by the authors of the papers, may be relevant to the academic community and useful to the policy makers.

Srivastava, (2011)\textsuperscript{109} “Decentralised Governance and Panchayati Raj” the present book is based on the study on decentralised governance and problems of elected women representatives in Panchayati Raj. For the success of democracy decentralised governance is must and for that the Panchayati Raj Institutions are the best example. The 73\textsuperscript{rd} Amendment has been hailed as a major landmark in the history of Local Self-Government in India. In this book the author also discussed about the some of the salient features of the Amendment are: grant of constitutional status to PRIs, reservation of one third of seats for women in Panchayat bodies, holding of elections to Panchayats after every five years under the direct supervision of the Chief Electoral Officer, setting up of Finance Commission to review the financial position of Panchayats. In the context of reservation policy for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions, it becomes pertinent to analyze their socio-economic status along with political accountability which was entrusted by constitution to them.

Singh and Dodh, (2013)\textsuperscript{110} the book “Gender Justice and Women Empowerment- An Integrated Approach” attempts to analyse various dimensions of gender justice, gender equality and women empowerment by applying a multidisciplinary perspective. Gender equality and empowerment of women play an important role in development through a multiplier process; an empowered women not only empowers her family but empowers the society as well. Women hold up half the sky in demographic sense but their visibility in various spheres continues to be ignored and underestimated. Gender justice


entails to eliminate man-made inequalities and discrimination, and extend equal opportunities to women. The book also focus on transforming the status of women through enhancing socio-economic security supported with effective statutory and political enforcement and ensuring greater participation of women in decision-making process based on the universal values of equality, justice and honour.

**Dutt & Jha, (2014)**\(^{111}\), in this book, “Women and Politics” the authors provides an excellent overview of gender politics in comparative perspective. Women’s participation in politics goes far beyond their numbers in elected bodies. In all major political movements of this century, in all movements of social change, women have played an extremely important role. But despite participation and mobilization of women in politics in this broad sense of the term, we have not seen a commensurate increase in the number of women in different levels of decision making. Indeed, the higher you go the fewer women you see. The question of women’s representation in elected bodies and in other decision making committees, needs to be seen in the light of this blatant imbalance due to gender discrimination.

Women’s participation in mainstream political activity has major implications for the broader arena of governance in any country. The limited nature of female participation and representation in national decision making institutions has important consequences for women and for the legitimacy of the institutions. Where women constitute half the population in a political system which supports equality and where both women and men are legally eligible for political office, women’s participation should be equal to that of men.

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\(^{111}\) Nandita Dutt, Sumitra Jha, “*Women and Politics*”, Published by Pacific Books International, New Delhi, 2014.
Paxton & Hughes, (2014)\textsuperscript{112} “Women Politics and Power: A Global Perspective”, the second edition of this book by outlining the theoretical and practical reasons to incorporate women in politics formally descriptively, and substantively. This book explains the forces that contribute to such gender inequality in politics. But the story of women exclusion from politics is changing. Increasingly, women are holding political positions around the world, and in some countries, women’s political power has increased dramatically in recent years. Thus, in addition to exploring barriers to women’s political access, this expanded second edition devotes even more attention to where and how women have been gaining ground. The authors focus largely on women’s participation and representation in formal political positions. The authors also emphasize the importance and power of women’s informal political activities, such as participation in social movements. Although, much of the book focuses on national level politics, the second edition includes expanded coverage of women in local governance.

**Articles**

Sharma, (1998)\textsuperscript{113} in “Transformative Politics: Dimensions of Women’s Participation in Panchayati Raj”, discusses a new meaning and dimension to the political empowerment of women. The 73\textsuperscript{rd} Amendment has to be viewed in a larger context as opening some doors for women at the grassroots level to participate in the democratic process. In this article there is the debate on reservation to women, women participation in Panchayats and women’s experiences after 73\textsuperscript{rd} amendment, etc. Author has given an example of Sutra, an NGO in Himachal Pradesh, which actively campaigned amongst the


members of Mahila Mandal to contest Panchayat elections. The elections were fought hotly and closely. People elected “mild and soft” women. The area of political socialization of women and men needs serious exploration. The author concludes that on the one hand there is the decline in the accountability and credibility of the institutions of governance in the polity at the present juncture has led to cynicism, on the other hand, there is a strong feeling that a large participation of women in PRIs can reverse the process of deterioration in public life. Building on this fragile foundation is the real challenge for women.

Pathak, (1998)  114 “Looking beyond Reservation: Need For the Feminization of Politics” the author discussed the issue of reservation for women in legislative bodies. According to the author, reservation has got the symbolic sense and can inspire women to participate more actively and assertively in the process of nation building. However, the reservation has been reported to lose its original purpose if is politically hijacked and used for immediate and temporal gains. Also in the name of reservation the collectivities are used and invented for political mobilization. He has emphasised the need to think beyond the reservation and to feminize the culture to have a long-term perspective. It has been advised to initiate a mass movement by women activist.

Shukla (1999)115 in his article “Reservation for Women and Multi Member constituencies” the author felt that male members for fearing right of power on one side do not prefer reservation for women and another political career is not based on meritocratic considerations but it is attributed by agitation organisational and even physical muscle capabilities. Thus, the author apprehended capabilities and capacities of women activists in politics in lieu of

their domestic and social responsibilities and delivering goods in competition with male elders. The author stressed that reservation may help distribution and deployment of power but the question of giving respondent to disadvantaged groups be given special attention. These women leaders to emerge as success stories will be in need of attitudinal changes, sensitivity training and moreover time to settle as real representatives of their constituents which appear to be difficult. Therefore, author suggested multiple or double member constituencies in order to give representation to males and females, on other socio-economic variable considerations.

Subha & Bhargava, (2000)116 “Panchayats and NGOs in Social Change” in this article the authors discussed about the NGOs role in the strengthening the Panchayati Raj Institutions. There is no doubt that NGOs play an important role in influencing the Panchayati Raj Institutions in crucial areas of development. But there is no proper linkage between NGOs and PRI s and very few opportunities are there for constructive cooperation. On the one hand, NGOs could play a significant role in strengthening the local self governance while on the other, by interacting with the government, they could play a major role in formulation of policies regarding PRIs. Further the author says that, the PRIs should adopt a positive approach and attitude towards NGOs and vice versa. It is necessary to establish a forum that provides for some interchange of ideas and ways and means of talking issues between the PRIs and the NGOs. So, there is an urgent need to appreciate the role of the NGOs in realizing the significance of democratic decentralisation. A close understanding and coordination between the PRIs and NGOs is vital for development from below. The collaborative relationship can be promoted and sustained only if the

prevailing distrust and suspicion is replaced by trust and understanding, dignity and respect.

Pal, (2000)117 “Panchayats and Human Rights” in this article the author says that there is no doubt that the Panchayats have potential to promote and guarantee human rights at their levels. However to accelerate this process, Panchayats have to be strengthened further by awarding functional, financial and administrative autonomy at different levels enabling elected representatives to have full freedom to play their role effectively. The issues involved in this process are power decentralization, establishment of democratic culture and transforming existing unequal order into more equitable order. For promoting and guaranteeing human rights in the countryside’s transformation of unequal social order into more egalitarian social order is a sine qua non. This is not a simple task. It could happen only after a long struggle and sacrifice by people. Panchayats have the potential to achieve such a social order in villages. Experiences of marginalized sections such as SCs, STs and women as members and chairpersons of Panchayats during the last three/four years reveal that they have been struggling and sacrificing a lot to weaken the hold of established forces in their areas. Further, the author suggests that, besides developmental functions, policing should also be brought under the control of Panchayats. And, as developmental work have been assigned to Panchayats, the judicial system should also be decentralized at local level for settling the disputes arising in the implementation of the different schemes and programmes connected with 29 subjects listed in the 11th Schedule of the constitution at grassroots level. This would enable the weaker sections of rural society to get speedy and inexpensive justice at their door steps.

Jyanti, (2001) in her article “Empowering Women”, she says that women rights needs to be safeguard in every country of the world cannot be overemphasized. The government of India has made special effort to increase its support for social sectors and started a number of schemes aimed at the poor, particularly, poor women and women in the informal sectors. These include the Rashtriya Mahila Kosh and the Mahila Samakhyā Programmes. It is the duty of state to remove inequalities in the personal laws of various religious.

Datta, (2001) “Women in Panchayat”, this article contains a review of research studies in the different states of Indian regarding participation of women in Panchayats. Women constitute half of the world’s population. But they are the largest excluded category in almost in all respects. They have only $1/10^{th}$ of the global income, nearly 70 percent of the women below the poverty line. Two third of them are illiterate. They are in minority among those holding elected office. The 73$^{rd}$ Amendment of the constitution may be regarded as a watershed in the history of the state initiatives in regard to political empowerment of rural women. It has indicated a noticeable shift in the approach of the Indian state towards women. This Amendment made women the subject to development. However, the Amendment provides reservation not less than one third of the seats for women in all Panchayat bodies.

Subrahmanyam, (2002) “Empowerment of Women and Marginalised Groups in Panchayats” in this article the author highlights the main provisions and achievements of 73$^{rd}$ Amendment Act. The significant achievement of this act is reservation of seats for women in political offices. This 73$^{rd}$ Amendment Act to Indian Constitution has greatly contributed to political empowerment of

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women and marginalized communities in rural societies. Author suggested some measures for effective participation of women in the decentralization process. There is a great need for positive attitudinal changes and mental make-up of the men-folk in favour of women. The political empowerment of women and weaker sections demands that they must be able to think and act according to their conscience, education and training being the source from which they can access knowledge and understanding. Government may provide functional literacy to the illiterate elected women members of Panchayats after their election. Training programmes exclusively for women chairpersons of Panchayats of different level must be organised. The method to be adopted at such training programmes may be made as simpler as possible.

Mishra, (2003)\textsuperscript{121} “Women Representation: Some Reflections”, the present article deals with the women’s representation in local bodies, state and national level politics. The author discuss about the role of women. The role of women cannot be overlooked as she has to discharge her duties as a daughter, as a wife, as a mother, as a sister and so on and so forth. Our society is patriarchal, sociologists hold that in course of the evolution of society. The present patriarchal pattern of society emerged from matriarchal society. It is said that where a women is worshipped, there visit Gods. Even today when we recite their names, we find that names of the consorts of Gods have been prefixed to their names such as Sita Ram, Radhe Shyam, Gauari Shankar etc. Even in day to day matters, the role of women is increasing, whether it is a town or a remote rural area. With regard to women’s representation in India it is said that the 73\textsuperscript{rd} and 74\textsuperscript{th} amendment to the constitution have ensured a 33 percent reservation of seats for women in local self governance. Anyway, women’s representation

at the village and district level will definitely increase in India but at the highest level it is still absent.

Basu, (2004)122 “The Women’s Reservation Issue in Retrospect” in his article author says that the legislation providing for reservation of one-third seats for women in local self-governing bodies was enacted in the last decade of the 90s. The Panchayat and Nagar Palika Bill, embodied in the 73rd and 74th (Article 243 D and 243 T respectively) Amendment Acts to the constitution and providing for 33 percent reservation of seats for women in the Panchayati Raj Institutions in rural areas and Municipal Bodies in towns and cities, was passed by Parliament without controversy in December 1992, during the Narasimha Rao Government. Having provided for women’s reservation in Panchayats and Municipalities, it was felt that reservation for women on the same lines should be provided in the House of the People and in the Legislative Assemblies of the states by amending the constitution.

Ultimately, it must be admitted that the degree of the emancipatory promise of women’s reservation cannot be foretold because ‘reservation’ does not translate into ‘empowerment’. The issue of women’s reservation must be accompanied by the adoption of proactive, sustainable measures that would help create a socio-economic order based on gender justice. The empowerment that the reservation issue envisages for women would be feasible only with the implementation of a long-term, multidimensional ‘levelling’ process in which cultural and socio-economic realities are gradually rendered conducive to the exercise of ‘equal opportunities’ as guaranteed by the Indian constitution.

More, (2005)\textsuperscript{123} “Breaking Barriers in Panchayats”, the present article deals with participation of women in PRIs after 73\textsuperscript{rd} Amendment Act. In this article author covered three states i.e. Haryana, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh. The main focus of this article is on the provision of reservation for women and highlights barriers in Panchayats. Studies in Haryana, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh show that reservation has empowered women in Panchayats and a new leadership has emerged among women. Since their performance largely depends upon their level of education, exposure and understanding the situation levels. In Himachal Pradesh Women, who organised rallies against the illegal distillation of liquor and protection of environment, have a tremendous potential for participating in development activities. In Punjab, women have taken stand on issues relating to girl child, nutrition, drinking water and sanitation. They have organised literacy courses and ensured increased attendance of girl and boys in schools. Elected women have created a niche for themselves in the Panchayats, mostly a male bastion. Today women are ready to challenge the feudal traditions in all areas of their socio-political life. The studies in Haryana, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh show that reservation has empowered women in Panchayats.

Deep, (2007)\textsuperscript{124} “For Rural Women, the Husband Decides” in the present article author examines the decision-making power of women in Chamkaur Sahib Constituency of Punjab State. Author finds that women in many villages of this reserved constituency have to caste vote in favour of particular candidate chosen by their husbands in consultation with Panchayat. In this area many women belong to landless dalit families and work as labor in the fields. Deprived of education, they have no time to even to think about the major issues raised by various political parties. Author finds that more than 40

\textsuperscript{123} Dharampal More, “Breaking Barriers in Panchayats”, The Tribune, 4\textsuperscript{th} September, 2005.
\textsuperscript{124} Kiran Deep, “For Rural Women, the Husband Decides”, The Tribune, 19, Jan. 2007.
dalit families have no land and they have to struggle every duty to earn their livelihood. The author concluded that the women of this constituency have no time to attend the political rallies and have no knowledge of their agenda. They are not aware of their rights and all decisions given by their husbands. They have right to vote but they have to caste vote in favour of particular candidate chosen by their husbands. There is male domination on the women.

**Singh and Ansari, (2008)**

“The Empowerment of Indian Women with Reference to Five Year Plans” in this article the authors discussed about the women’s rights, empowerment of women and their problems. Empowerment of women involves many things-economic opportunity, social equality and personal rights. Women are deprived of these human rights, often as a matter of tradition. In rural areas, women are generally not perceived to have any meaningful income generation capacity, and hence, they are relegated mainly to household duties and cheap labor. Without the power to work and earn a good income, their voices are silenced. The basic provisions of the Indian constitution that guarantee justice, liberty and equality to all citizens and the specific articles and amendments that have been enacted to ensure that women enjoy the constitutional rights that ensure their participation in society as equal partners provide the framework for women development in India. But mere legislation and constitutional provision are not enough; true emancipation is required at individual levels. And every effort should be made for women empowerment in the various administrations, political and economic perspectives in this era of feminism.

**Vyas, (2008)**

“Women Empowerment, Remedy for Social Elevation”, in this article the author has discussed that empowerment is a continuous process for realizing the ideals of equality human liberation and freedom for all. The

important politics which have vital implications for women are national policy for empowerment of women 2001. The enactment of the 73rd and the 74th Amendments to the Constitution of India provided for 33 percent of reservation for women in local Government at all the three levels of rural and urban bodies. There is need for 33 percent reservation of women in parliament and state assemblies to give fillip to the empowerment and leadership of women.

Chibber, (2009)\textsuperscript{127} “Empowerment of Women: 50 percent Quota in Panchayat a Major Step” in this article the authoress observed that constitutional amendment to reserve 50 percent of seats for women in all three tiers of PRIs will increase the political participation at grass-roots levels, and empower women in decision-making process. It is interesting to note that five states- Bihar, Chhatisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand have already reserved 50 percent seats for women at the grass-roots levels. No doubt, women are making use of power and resources but still they are facing many obstacles such as poverty, lack of education, patriarchal mode of society, lack of financial independence, lack of awareness of political rights, and caste discrimination which hamper women’s decision-making ability. Political participation is not merely a symbol of women development and empowerment but it also creates further awareness and mobilizes other women to be a part of the political arena to promote their societal interests at large.

Sarkar, (2009)\textsuperscript{128}, in her article “Female Representation in Indian Panchayats” the author says that a number of studies on political participation and representation have shown that women in general are less participative in politics than men. It is true that this gender gap in health, education and political participation is gradually decreasing. The Indian constitution specifically provides for the protection of the rights of the women. Article, 10 of

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our constitution ensure equality of women and their equal protection before the law. A significant step in this direction obviously is the 73rd Amendment which has been introduced to the constitution of India to ensure the representation of women in the various statutory bodies of local-self government. All the states adopted the new panchayat legislation by 23 April 1994. It is true that with the reservation policy for women, the formal participatory aspect has definitely been fulfilled. Women in different parts of the world the tending to shed their traditional role and entering the political sphere both at the urban and rural sectors. They are frantically trying to open different windows in their minds. Movements for women’s empowerment in different parts of the world are playing a prominent role in this regard. But there is a lot yet to be achieved by women.

Jain, (2010) “Women’s Reservation Bill and Gender Justice”, in this article the author discuss about the women’s reservation bill and gender justice. Rajya Sabha passing the women’s reservation bill by a 186-1 majority which seeks to grant 33 percent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies. The passage of the women’s reservation bill in the Rajya Sabha is surely a historic and giant step and assumes significance due to the prevalent gender discrimination and increasing marginalisation of women on the one hand and their under representation in political bodies on the other. It is said that the proposed bill has been on the book for 14 years and have seen many ups and downs and undergone many hearings. Now the time has come to fulfill the hope. It has taken so long a time because the governments have come and gone without dealing with the hurdles. No doubt, in the Panchayati Raj women have made a mark but one should look at the nature of the work of the Panchayat and of Parliament. At the Panchayat level it is not a question of

policy-making and law-making but of management of allotted resources. Perhaps, the women shall be more sensitive to the needs of the common man and see to it that the Panchayat funds and the Panchayat programmes work to the satisfaction of the people.

Chhibber, (2010)\textsuperscript{130} in her article “Women and the Indian Political Process” she emphasised the women participation in politics and reservation for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions as well as centre and state legislative assembly. The Indian women have been associated with politics since the pre-independence period. They were part of the freedom movement both as volunteers and leaders.

Though the Indian Constitution guarantees equal rights to all citizens, women are still, marginally represented in the Indian political arena. It is said state of affairs that about half of India’s population has only 10 percent representation in Lok Sabha. At the societal level male dominance in Parliament, Bureaucracy, Judiciary, Army, Police all point towards gender inequality, notwithstanding the fact that it is often argued that women’s political leadership would bring about a more cooperative and less conflict-prone world. Lack of political and economic powers add to the subservient and unequal position of women. The authoress says that there are a number of obstacles which come in the way of participation and representation of women in politics. It is high time that we give women their due share in the political process. It not only empowers women but empowers the whole society and nation.

Malyadri, (2010)\textsuperscript{131} in this article, “Empowerment of Rural Women through Panchayati Raj Institutions”, the author has attempts to throw a light on the empowerment of rural women, their stand in decision-making. Author is of the view that the empowerment for women is fundamentally about changing social institutions and practices, about changing rules, norms and rights, and about changing the balance women’s obligations and responsibilities and their command over the resources needed to discharge these obligations and responsibilities. The goal of women empowerment are to challenge patriarchal ideology, to transform the structures and institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and social inequity and to enable poor women to gain access to and control of both material and informational resources.

Chatterjee, (2011)\textsuperscript{132} in his article entitled “Women in Panchayats: A Review” identified certain hindrances in the path of functioning of women members and functionaries. He found that a very small percentage of first time women members/pradhans get elected for the second/third time. As all these states were previously held by male members, they often manage to fix these up in favour of one of their women relatives. Hence most women representatives scarcely had previous experience of being associated with political or social organizations and majority of them got elected to the seats to which their family members were previously elected. Thus this rational aspect of reservation begets a short-term gain mindset, leading to a lack of accountability among the PRI members. Women who have got in simply through family connections are also not effective in asserting themselves and bringing about meaningful change.


Kujur, (2011)\textsuperscript{133} in this article “Women in Panchayats: A Partnership that Works”, the author described about the participation of women in Panchayati Raj Institution of Jharkhand. Participation of women, which has been growing in all fields of activity, was felt to be imperative at the level of the most basic unit of governance, our Panchayats. The reservation of 33 percent seats for women in local governance began in the early 90’s was a step to concretise this intent. It is in the election results that a convergence became clear, between the role of women, evolved over generations with a more direct opportunity to influence and impact governance at the local level.

Elections have shown that women across Jharkhand are poised to play a role which would help them improve their skills and capabilities in participatory democracy, to make development processes more expansive, more inclusive. The policy flowing out of the 73\textsuperscript{rd} Amendment, followed by steps taken by the state government to reserve 50 percent of seats in Panchayati Raj for women has served to concretise this role. In this tribal dominated society, in the social, economic and political system that has evolved over time, the role of women has always been significant.

Chatterjee, (2013)\textsuperscript{134} in “Political Empowerment of Women: Pathway to Inclusive Democracy” the author discussed about the concept of ‘inclusive democracy’ stands for participation of all in the democratic process and ensuring that no one should be left outside that very process. The Indian society tended to exclude women from political life by defining political activity as a typically male dominated vocation. Tangible progress has been made in the last twenty years towards a more inclusive democracy whereby women and


\textsuperscript{134} Madhushree Dasgupta Chatterjee, “Political Empowerment of Women: Pathway to Inclusive Democracy”, Yojana, 2013.
men can enjoy equal and balanced participation in public life. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1993 has played a significant part in achieving the goal of inclusive democracy in India. The 73rd Amendment has greatly contributed to the political empowerment of women from marginalized communities in the rural areas who were not initially very confident of their abilities to assume leadership role at the grassroots level as the male-dominant rural power structure did not budge to lose its traditional grip over the political institutions. Political empowerment for women is regarded as a key driver for achieving the goal of inclusive democracy. Further she says that ‘Inclusive Democracy’ works when people from all sections of the society are empowered to participate in governance, raise objections, take decisions and ensure social and political accountability.

Singh, (2014) in her article “Representation of Women in Indian Politics” stressed that women’s participation in mainstream political activity has important implications for the broader arena of governance in any country. The nature of society or state has a decisive impact on the extent and effectiveness of women’s political presence and participation. The author further says that the percentage of women in politics and decision-making positions always remained low. Women do not share the power of decision-making and are not involved in policy making in Indian democracy in proportion to their numerical strength. Women in India have lesser opportunities of public influence or for entering politics. While dwelling on the theme of women’s participation and representation in politics in India, the author contends that the effectiveness of women’s participation largely depends on the local configuration of power and cultural environment apart from problems of poverty, illiteracy, lack of economic

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resources, negative social and legal environments, family and household pressures, male dominated bureaucracy and politicians that the women face. She suggest that in policy formulations, planning and implementation of various welfare and development programmes pertaining to women, instead of adopting a top down approach as is being done now, the approach should be bottom-up, and the macro should be a conflation, a fusion or aggregation of many micros.

**Research Papers and Journals**

**Mishra, (1997)**

“Women and 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act: A Critical Appraisal” paper begins by briefing about the marginal position occupied by the Indian women in the society and also in the political process due to socio-economic constraints. It examined the probable role of women in the context of the 73rd Amendment Act. Panchayati Raj Institutions which aim at democratic decentralization constitute the backbone to the democratic process. The constitutional 73rd Amendment Act 1992 provided constitutional sanction to democracy at the grassroots level.

**Gowda, (1999)**

“Reservation for Women in Panchayati Raj Institutions” the author discussed about the reservation for women and their problems in Panchayati Raj Institutions. The author also discussed different committees view related to Panchayati Raj Institutions. In 1957, Balwant Rai Mehta Committee recommended for the establishment of Panchayati Raj Institutions at three levels. On the basis of Mehta Committee report, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh established Panchayati Raj System for the first time in 1959.

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The committee felt that as the statutory local self-government institutions do not pay much attention to the subject of women’s development, women’s representation on Panchayati Raj bodies should lead to a greater participation of women in the political process and thus it would be easier to press for special progress for women’s development. The committee of the Status of Women (1974) viewed that the active involvement of women in the decision-making process will best be achieved providing them with special opportunities for participation in the representatives structures of local government. The committee also suggested the establishment of statutory all-women panchayats at the village level. The Ashok Mehta Committee recommended reservation of two seats for women in Panchayats and co-opt women in case they did not come through elections. It also suggested that a committee of women be set up within Panchayats to operate specific programmes for women and children. The author emphasized that the participation of women in Panchayati Raj bodies enables them to emerge as effective leaders and also act as catalytic agents by inspiring confidence and providing stimulus for social change among rural women.

**Chattopadhyay & Duflo, (2003)**\(^{138}\) “The Impact of Reservation in the Panchayati Raj: Evidence from a Nation-Wide Randomized Experiment”, in this paper the authors discussed about the Panchayat system, reservation for women, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and impact of reservation in the Panchayati Raj. The Panchayat system has existed formally in most of the major states of India since the early 1950s. However, in most states, the system was not an effective body of governance until the early 1950s. In 1992, the 73\(^{rd}\) Amendment to the constitution of India established the framework of a

three tier panchayat system with regular elections throughout India. In 1992, the 73rd Amendment provided that one-third of the seats in all panchayat councils, as well as one third of the Pradhan positions, must be reserved for women. Reservations for women have been implemented in all major states. A necessary condition for the efficiency of the reservation policy is that the elected representatives have independent power and autonomy, over and above not only the direct control of the villagers (exerted through voting or through the Gram Sabhas), but also above the control of the bureaucracy, the parties, hierarchies, and the local elites.

Narayan, (2003)\(^{139}\) “Empowerment through Participation, How Effective is this Approach?” the present essay examines the concept of participation and describes how issues of power can be a constant for achieving authentic participation. On the one hand participation is presented as the rightful claim of excluded sections, on the other hand it is also used to perpetuate and disguise continued top down approaches. The space for participation created from above through actions of government and non-government organisation or those the people create for themselves through movements alone may not guarantee voice, unless the participation prevents the existing patterns of power from being reproduces. Therefore, there is a need for delineating authentic participation from among the various notion of participation prevalent in development literature.

Throughout this paper author has emphasized two main issues. Firstly, the use of participatory tools in themselves falls short of bringing about real participation as it, instead of challenging the power relationship, may promote participation in the existing power structure. Of course, this does not mean that these tools have to be discarded, but they have to modified and supplemented

with mobilization of people in still awareness and confidence in them to take part in an automatic manner. Secondly, the state led participatory approaches may provide institutions and mechanism of participation but their effectiveness depends on the proper understanding of local community level power structure. 

Ahmad, (2008)\(^{140}\) in his essay “Women’s Political Participation and Changing Pattern of Leadership in Rural Areas of U.P.” the author emphasized women’s political participation in rural areas. The constitution of India guarantees to all men and women the right to equality and political participation through universal adult franchise. From this it follows that while there can be no discrimination in general on the ground of sex, special favourable provisions in case of women and children are permissible. However, the constitutional equality for women and also the provision of affirmative action could not be translated into action during 57 years of India’s Independence.

Women, who constitute half of the population, could not be neglected for long. Their exclusion from mainstream of social and political life is bound to create hindrance in the development progress, and prosperity of the nation is bound to be adversely affected. Without reservation the reluctant lot of women, who remained suppressed for centuries, cannot come out to have their share in power. The reservation alone can, however, not solve the problems. It may rather create its own problems. It is therefore, necessary to examine all aspects, which affect participation of women in political process.

Hushenkhan, (2008)\(^{141}\) “Political Empowerment of Women Through Self Help Groups”, the present paper intends to discuss the impact of self help groups programme for the political empowerment of women in Anatapur district. The paper also focuses on the relationship of independent economic activities and

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earnings of women in respect of their political participation in village Panchayats, Mandal Praja Parishad and Zila Parishad. After 73rd Amendment Act, 33 percent of reservation for women was provided. Though the act facilitates the reservation to women, the positions were managed by male members of the family. However, the impacts of SHG’s on poverty eradication and opportunities for taking up independent economic activities have changed the conditions of women in rural areas. In view of this the paper focuses on how women political empowerment has taken place in Gorantala Mandal, Anantapur district by the implementation of public policy.

Kumar, (2009)\textsuperscript{142} in his research paper “Patterns of Political Participation: Trends and Perspective”, he described the state-wise level of people participation in the electoral process. Elections are a key activity around which a representative democracy evolves. The success and legitimacy of elections hinge on citizen involvement in voting, and also in the overall election process. But participation of people in the election-related activities has declined because of less interest. The author mentioned that 60 percent of the voters have been exercising their franchise in different elections, about 40 percent not vote. The voters in some states took a greater interest in the elections activities than those in others. Voters in Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamilnadu took a greater interest in campaign activities, while in Bihar and Maharashtra had taken little interest in the election activities. Participation in the electoral process did not seem to be entirely guided by people’s interest in the election campaign.

However, political parties are successful in connecting to the voters during the election time. This, in conjunction with the Media, ensures that information flows to the voters reasonably well; that voters take at least a

passive interest in elections; and the elections function as a bridge between the political class and the masses.

**Buch, (2009)**\(^{143}\) “Reservation For Women in Panchayat: A Sop in Disguise?”, is based on reservation for women in PRIs. The decision by the union cabinet to raise reservation for women from one-third to 50 percent of seats at all three levels of Panchayats is a welcome step. Many states like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan have amended their Panchayat laws to provide 50 percent reservation for women. There is no doubt that women have benefited from reservations due to the competitive politics of the various political parties. Women participation in Panchayats is still not accepted by large sections of society. The author also suggested the reservation for women in Parliament and State Assembly. It will enhance their inner ability in a great range. Representation of women in the centre and state level also enables them to take part in different development activities without any traditional barriers.

**Banerjee, (2009)**\(^{144}\) “Reservation Policy: A Controversial Affair in Island’s Society”, in this research paper the authoress says that ours is a country of great social and cultural diversity often we take pride in the country’s colorful cultural diversity. The author also discussed about the reservation of women in politics in South Asia. It is known that South Asia has more powerful women politicians than any other set of countries in the world. Women had been prime ministers, leaders of major parties, heads of state and regional governments. Chandrika Kumaratunga in Sri Lanka, Sonia Gandhi in India, Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan and Khaleda Zia in Bangladesh are examples, as well as powerful women in India such as Mayawati, Jayalalita, Uma Bharti, Sushma Swaraj and


others. Yet, overall women’s political participation is dismal. The membership of women in the Parliaments of these countries has ranged between 6-8 percent during the last few decades.

Further, author says that the obstacles to women equal participation in governance are great and deeply embedded in South Asian and cultural patterns. Most of these countries are among the most patriarchal in the world. It was Mahatma Gandhi’s call to women to join the freedom struggle that a new era dawned. He recognized the importance of women’s participation in the freedom struggle. The major problem for the women coming forward to contest and function successfully in leadership positions is that of the patriarchal value.

De, (2010)\textsuperscript{145} “Women and Electoral Representation: The Indian Experience”, in this paper the author discussed about the women representation in electoral process, the nature of women’s representation in different democratic institutions like Parliament, State Legislative Assemblies and Panchayati Raj Institutions- the problems and prospects of their participation. Attention is also given to the recent debate on the reservation of women for their better representation. The enactment of the constitution Amendment (73\textsuperscript{rd} and 74\textsuperscript{th}) Acts 1993 providing 33 percent reservation in favour of women to local self governing agencies like Panchayati Raj System (rural) and Municipality System (urban) representatives open up a new challenge for the participation of women in local politics. The women representatives in Panchayats generally interview actively on various local issues like education, self-employment, employment, prohibition of liquor, roads, water facilities, etc. They are very active in mobilizing women and women related issues like dowry and dowry death, early marriage of girls, wife-beating, domestic violence, rape, etc. Women’s representation in a large number may challenge the traditional culture of public-

private sphere, where male and female render gender specific roles and where women’s proper role is viewed in the private/domestic sphere.

Rai (2011),146 “Electoral Participation of Women in India: key Determinants and Barriers”, this paper is broadly divided into six sections. Section 1 provides the definition and markers of female participation in electoral competition in India. Section 2 assesses female participation in elections from a historical point of view to understand the beginning from limited electoral activities to more intensive participatory activities in recent times. Section 3 is about the thematic patterns of gendered interactions in electoral competition at various levels—under representation of women in the Lok Sabha since the first general elections, systemic exclusion in allotment of seats as candidates in national elections by political parties, increasing participation of women in electoral campaigns in the beginning of 21st century and the electoral urge of Indian women as voters in the 1990s. Section 4 is the focal section of the paper as it tries to quantitatively find out the main determinants that lead to higher participation of women in the electoral process as voters and as campaigners separately. Section 5 probes factors that act as barriers and obstacles in female participation and women’s issues in electoral politics quantitatively. Section 6 is the last section that concludes the paper and suggests the way ahead for enhanced participation of women in an intensive electoral process that will pave the way for correcting the present gender inequalities in Indian politics.

Jharta, (2011)147 “Women in the Politics of Himachal Pradesh: An Analysis”, in this paper, an attempt has been made to analyse the nature and extent of women’s participation in politics in the state of Himachal Pradesh and to know the main factors which are responsible for relegating them to the secondary

position in politics. Further, some measures have also been suggested to bring women to the centre-stage of the politics of the hill state. Although not much in numbers, yet Himachal women remained an integral part of the national freedom movement and various Praja Mandal Movements. Some prominent women activists who took active part in these movements were Durga Bai Arya and Mera Ben in Una, Lalita Kumari, properly known as Rani Kheragarhi in Mandi, Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur, a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi in Shimla; Naura Richard wife of Phillip Richard; Sarla Sharma, Sushela and Ram Rakhi, a niece of Phari Gandhi Baba Kanshi Ram in Kangra; Dev Vati in Theog (Shimla); Sunahri Devi, Sakno Devi and a Harijan women Almo Devi in Sirmour, etc. Thus women remained on the forefront of freedom movement in the state but their number was very small. The author also emphasised that the women who took active part in these movements were either from royal families or were wives or daughters or relatives of some revolutionaries. Although, women as voters are playing a very important and decisive role in the formation of governments in the state, yet their representation in the State Legislature, Parliament and decision-making bodies have been very disappointing.

Nagaraj, (2011)\textsuperscript{148} “Women Empowerment and Panchayati Raj Institutions”, in this journal the author has discussed that the empowerment of women appears to be a much published and clichéd concept of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century. Empowerment in its simplest form means the manifestation of redistribution of power that challenges patriarchal ideology and the male dominance political. Participation means not only using the right to vote, but also power-sharing, co-decision-making, and co-policy-making at all levels of governance of the state.

\textsuperscript{148} Nagaraj “Women Empowerment and Panchayati Raj Institutions”, Published by Babuddin Khan, LB-14, Prakash Deep Building New Delhi, 2011.
Bhumaiah and Kumar, (2011)\textsuperscript{149} “Panchayati Raj in India A Review”, this journal is related to the historical background, capacity building of Panchayati Raj Institutions and Panchayati Raj in Andhra Pradesh. Panchayati Raj Institutions which aim at democratic decentralization constitute the backbone to the democratic process. The author’s says that the Andhra Pradesh is one of the first state which has taken the lead in introduction of Panchayati Raj system. Further, he says that the Panchayati Raj has not been so successful as expected to create new hope and confidence amongst the rural people. 

Kumar and Kumari, (2013)\textsuperscript{150} “Dynamic of Socio-Economic and Political Background of Women leadership in Panchayati Raj Institution”, the authors says that the women in India have been playing an important role in social life, since time immemorial. The role of women in every sphere of socio-economic and political field etc. has been remarkable. In the political field women are contributing a lot as a leader at the grassroots level. In this research paper the authors an attempt has been made to find out the participation and involvement of women in the grassroots politics. The authors also explain about the 50 percent reservation for women in the State of Himachal Pradesh. The study seeks to do this in the context of the socio-economic and political profile of these new ‘representatives’ of rural women especially related to district Kangra of State of Himachal Pradesh. Reservation as a principal mode of affirmative action is intended to give a share to the members of the society who have been denied such opportunities in the past by antagonised those sections of the


society which had been traditionally privileged as per the caste and community hierarchies.

**Selection of the Problem**

Moreover many studies have been done on the PRIs but hardly there has been any effort to make an in depth study related to women reservation. It was interesting to note that the role of women in PRIs had not attracted much attention by the political scientists, especially in the context of changing socio-economic and political scenario of the country. It remains unexplored as a subject of academic investigation. In a democratic set up, where the local bodies are playing a dominant role, no study can be complete without taking women into account. Women for centuries have received unequal treatment in almost all the spheres of life because of patriarchal setup of Indian society. Since India became independent many policies and measures have been adopted to improve the condition of women but women in general have not been in position to avail benefits from this measure, mainly due to their political backwardness. Women are considered as dependent, poor, kitchen object, reproductive machine and less of human beings. In India, however, there is no such clear-cut approach to women studies. Efforts to uplift the standard of women in our society is done by securing for them economic independence and by integrating them into our political process. This is done through various acts and Legislations with our constitution acting as the main guarantee of their rights.

The main focus of the study was on “Women Reservation and its Impact in Panchayati Raj Institutions, because reservation is one of the important instrument of political upliftment of women. Reserving seats for women in the political institutions will provide them an opportunity to raise their grievant and other related social and economic problems in a formal manner. Representation of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions will enable women to
take part in the public life, interact with different sections of population, develop personal and higher level relations without the consideration of traditional barriers. Through reservation, the presence of women in these institutions can be ensured which in turn may encourage other women to slowly come out of the age old barriers imposed on them by social structure and share political power on an equal footing with men.

Implementation of reservation policy in PRIs will definitely make them to come out of the coma of social bondage. The ongoing debate of reservation for women in the Parliament and State Assemblies speak volumes of women organization movement that gained importance in political spheres. The women reservation bill pertaining to State Legislative Assemblies and Parliament is lying pending in the Parliament and still gathering dust. The low representation of women indicates the low participation of women in political decision making. But, at the level of PRIs also, hardly any progress could be noticed. The main motive to selects this problem to find out various problems of PRIs women to discharge of their duties. In most of the cases women have become a rubber stamp of their husbands in the discharge of their duties. The Influential elder openly and latently dominate the PRIs and they do not let educated and confident women get elected in PRIs who could challenge their power. They support such women representatives (generally members of their family or castes) who would let them do everything on their behalf. Others members do not oppose either because of fear or because they themselves pursue their own selfish ends. Lack of interest, lack of education, low confidence level and unawareness were some of the apparent reasons that to hamper women representatives to perform their role effectively. Even, most of the women representatives are like puppets in the hands of influential male people in the Panchayats. More political participation is not enough for bringing women's equality but their place in the family and society should be treated at par with
their male counterparts. With the above as backdrop, an attempt was made to study the women reservation and its impact in PRIs with particular reference to the two districts i.e. Shimla and Solan of Himachal Pradesh.

After 73\textsuperscript{rd} constitutional Amendment Act 1994 the BJP Government of Himachal Pradesh in (2008) made a ‘bold step’ by reserving 50 percent of the seats in the PRIs for the women. Himachal Pradesh has been the third state in the country to take such a decision which is undoubtedly an ‘historic’ one. The Himachal Pradesh Act of (2008) clearly mentions about the reservations for women in the all three tiers of PRIs.

**Significance of the Study**

Panchayati Raj Institutions have become the most powerful institutions. Women Reservation is one of the most important aspects of Public Administration. Reservation of seats in all position at all levels in local body institutions to women is a land-mark in the history of women-movement in India. Empirically it is evident that women all one of the most vulnerable section of the society. 50 percent reservation of seats to women in local bodies will provide enough opportunity to the women folk to express their long felt needs.

It was right time to evaluate the effectiveness of reservation policy for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions. The study had also immense importance in the present context, when the women issues are dominating the national and international scenario. Local bodies are affected by female representatives directly or indirectly. The family responsibilities, social backwardness and others hurdles were the reasons in proper functioning of women in the Panchayati Raj Institutions. In a male dominated society, custom ridden society, and illiteracy in the social-sphere have contributed towards this kind of role of women in the grass-root institutions. Hence, it was very important to analyses the role played by women in (PRIs) after 50 percent reservation.
Objectives of the Study

India probably became the first country to reserve 50 percent seats for women at local self government lend after the union cabinet approved a proposal for a constitutional amendment bill for increasing quota for women in Panchayats at all tiers. Himachal Pradesh is one of three states in the country to start with this reservation. A recent study conducted by the Panchayati Raj Ministry shows that reservation played a significant role in bringing women into mainstream. Therefore, this study was intended to assess the current level of participation of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions and the failures affecting women’s participation. The main objective of the study was:

- To know the extent of the women participation in the grass-root institutions after 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act.
- To study the various constitutional provisions with regard to reservation for women in Himachal Pradesh.
- To study the socio-economic background of women leaders in the PRIs.
- To know the opinion of women representatives regarding 50 percent reservation to women in PRIs.
- To know the extent to which level the women were aware about their powers, functions, responsibilities under the Himachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Acts, and the extent to which they participate in them.
- To understand the constraints and problems being faced by women the effective to participation in the PRIs.
- To examine the perception of general public about the role of women members at the three tiers of PRIs.
- To analyse the general view regarding women reservation in PRIs, Parliament and State Assemblies.
- To suggest measures for making women representatives more effective in Panchayati Raj Institutions.
Area of Study

The study was conducted in the state of Himachal Pradesh, which is one of the small states of India. Himachal Pradesh was carried out of erstwhile Punjab and came into existence as the chief commissioner’s province on 15 April 1948. Thirty princely states (26 Shimla hill states and 4 Punjab hill states) were merged to form Himachal Pradesh. It became a fully fledged 18th state of Indian union on January 25, 1971. It is located between 32°22’ to 33°12’ north latitude and 75°47’ to 79°04’ east longitude. It is bounded on the North by Jammu and Kashmir, on the South-East by Uttar Pradesh, Haryana on the south and Punjab on the West. On the East it forms India’s border with Tibet. It covers an area of 55,673 square Kilometers, spreading over twelve districts namely, Kinnaur, Bilaspur, Chamba, Hamirpur, Kangra, Kullu, Lahaul-Spiti, Shimla, Sirmour, Solan, Mandi and Una. According to the census of 2011, the total population of the state is 68,56,509. It represents almost 0.57 percent of the India’s population, and ranked 20th in India. The density of population is 123 per sq. kms. in the state. The sex ratio is 974 female per 1000 males. The literacy rate of the state is 83.78 percent (males 90.83 and females 76.60). Administratively, it has 3 divisions, 55 sub-divisions, 85 tehsils, 38 sub-tehsils and 78 blocks. Since, it was not possible for the researcher to cover up all the 12 districts of the state, so two districts namely Shimla and Solan had been selected for the proposed study.
**Shimla**, the Capital of Himachal Pradesh has been associated with many important events of Indian history. Shimla was originally part of Mahasu district formed in 1948 by integrating 26 Shimla hill states into 11 tehsils. It was the summer capital of the British Government in India and witnessed many important events and conferences at which important decisions were made. The independent Act, 1947 was signed in Shimla by the then Governor General Mountbatten. The famous 1972 Shimla Agreement between India and Pakistan was also signed in Shimla. It is highly urban district among all the 12 districts of the state. Total geographical area of district Shimla is 5,131 sq. kms. According to the 2011 census, total population of district Shimla is 8,13,384, out of which 4,24,486 are males and 3,88,898 are females. The sex ratio of the state is 916 female per 1000 males. The density of population in the district is 159 persons per sq.kms. The literacy rate is 84.55 percent (males 90.73 and females 77.80 percent). Shimla consist of total 10 development blocks viz. Mashobra, Basantpur, Chopal, Chhohara, Rohru, Jubal Kotkhai, Theog, Rampur, Nankhari and Narkanda.

**Solan**, district came into existence at the time of the reorganisation of the districts of the state on 1st September, 1972. The district was carved out of Solan and Arki tehsils of the then Mahasu district and tehsils of Kandaghat and Nalagarh of the then Shimla district. Solan district is famous for city of Mashroom. It is a big Industrial hub in the state. The total geographical area of the district is 1,936 sq, kms. According to the 2011 census, total population of the district is 5,76,670 (3,06,162 males and 2,70,508 females). The sex ratio of the district is 884 females per 1000 males. The density of population in the district is 298 persons per sq.km. The literacy rate of the district is 85.02 percent (91.19 males and 78.02 females). District Solan consists of total five developmental blocks viz., Solan, Nalagarh, Kunihar, Dharmpur and Kandaghat. The present study had been conducted on two districts i.e. Shimla
and Solan. Further, it had been divided into two blocks from each district i.e. (Mashobra and Basantpur blocks from Shimla district and Solan and Kunihar blocks from Solan district).
Note: ZP female members has been taken 50 percent from out of total seats of the Shimla and Solan districts, PS members has been taken 50 percent from out of total seats of selected blocks, Pradhan, has been also taken 50 percent from out of total seats of selected blocks, Ward member of Panchayat has been taken 25 percent from out of total seats of selected blocks. General public = 25 male and 25 female (only Gram Sabha) member from each block.
Tools for Data Collection

A comprehensive questionnaire was structured to seek the information from the respondents. In order to administer the questionnaire we classified it into two categories: (1) For elected female representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions, and (2) General Public (Only members of Gram Sabha). The number of respondents to whom the questionnaire were administered are given in Table 1.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Gram Panchayat Female Members</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Panchayat Samiti Female Members</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Zila Parishad Female Members</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table- 1.1
Questionnaire Administered to the Elected Female Representatives in Shimla District

Table 1.2
Questionnaire Administered to the Elected Female Representatives in Solan District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Gram Panchayat Female Members</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Panchayat Samiti Female Members</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Zila Parishad Female Members</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.3
Questionnaire Administered to the General Public

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Shimla</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Solan</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Elected female members from three tier structure of Panchayati Raj Institutions i.e. Panchayat Pradhan, Ward Members of Panchyat, Chairpersons and Members of Panchayat Samiti and Chairpersons and Members of Zila
Parishad, all had been taken into consideration for questionnaire. Since, the study mainly focused on women reservation, its impact in PRIs and challenges faced by women members, the questionnaires prepared were quite extensive to get detailed information regarding their socio-economic and political background; their attitude and perception with regard to reservation, its effectiveness and various hurdles faced by PRIs women members. The observation technique was adopted by attending various meetings of Panchayat level and meeting of elected women members personally at their home or work place. General public were chosen through purposive representatives sampling and were contacted in the same way in their homes and fields like the elected women representatives.

Limitation of the Study

Though the subject matter of the study, “Women Reservation and its Impact in Panchayati Raj Institutions”, was relevant and important for entire country, yet the study of that magnitude was beyond individual efforts, hence at the first stage we had limited the study to the state of Himachal Pradesh. It had been further limited to two districts of Himachal Pradesh i.e. Shimla and Solan selected purposely. Further, two blocks from each district were selected. The limitation of our research was that, it was confined only to elected women representatives of Zila Parishad, Panchayat Samiti and Gram Panchayat of selected two-blocks from each district. Elected male members had been excluded.

Tools of Data Analysis

There are several tools of data analysis i.e. computerization, use of statistical and mathematical formula like reading techniques content analysis etc. But, in the present study, the researcher used the fundamental tool of data analysis i.e. manual tabulation. Simple percentage method had been applied to
analysis the data prepared under various heads of tables. Interpretation of the analysis of data had been done according to the response of the respondents.

**Chapterisation**

1. Introduction
2. Panchayati Raj in Himachal Pradesh
3. Socio-Economic Profile of Women Leaders in Panchayati Raj Institutions
4. Women Participation with Special Reference to Reservation
5. Problems of Women Leaders in Panchayati Raj Institutions
6. Perception of General Public regarding Reservation of PRIs Women Representatives and Other Aspects of Panchayati Raj
7. Conclusion and Suggestions