Chapter - I

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INTRODUCTION

Local government system has existed in India in every phase of its history. The grassroots system had shown a peculiar identity and stability despite frequent changes of power at the super structural level. Local self-government is the fulfillment as well as the foundation of democracy. It is at once the home and the nursery of democracy. It can nurture people's interest in their community and provide a channel of participation in the management of local affairs. In fact, Local self-government occupies an important place in the political system. It not only takes care of the primary needs of citizens but also enables them to learn the basics of governance. It is for this reason that it is an inevitable part of modern democracies. Local government is an integral part of the three-tier system of government in our country, being at the bottom of a pyramid of governmental institutions with the national government at the top and the state government occupying the middle position. Local government operates both in rural and urban areas. In fact, local government is more important in the daily life of a citizen than the state or central government. Thus, it is important here to know some historical background of these institutions in our country.

Historical Background

In the early history of Indian civilization, we find some evidences of villages being the basic units of social and economic life and the existence of some kind of village government. The local affairs of each village were carried out in an open assembly. And subsequently in the medieval period,
the system of local self-government continued to be more or less the same. However, the system was quite different in the Mughal period. The representative character was abolished and the whole administration of a city was placed in the charge of a nominated government official known as the 'Kotwal', magisterial functions, including the control over police and intelligence. As a result, the local self-government institutions remained stagnated throughout this period. The modern system of local government owes its origin to the British Raj. Lord Ripon’s Resolution on local self-government of 18th May, 1882 marks the beginning of a new chapter in the history of local self-government in India as it laid the foundation of the system that exists even today. His resolution envisaged a network of local bodies for the administration of both rural and urban affairs. It recommended local boards throughout the country divided into two-tiers, district boards and tehsil panchayats.

The institutions of local government established in the early period which included institutions like Municipal Corporations, Municipal Boards in the urban areas and Panchayats and District Boards in rural areas find their entry in article 40 of our Constitution Article 40 of the Constitution clearly lays down that the, “States shall take steps to organize village panchayats and to endow them to function as units of self-government. As a result, all the state governments have established both the urban and rural self governing institutions in their respective states.

There are two types of local government units in the country. These can be grouped into two broad categories i.e. Rural and Urban. The Rural
Local Government consists of a three tier structure of local bodies popularly known as Panchayati Raj. It operates at three different levels including the Districts, the Blocks and the Villages. These bodies have their own organization and area of operation. In the urban area, we have bodies which are termed as Municipal Corporations for bigger cities and municipal boards/councils/committees for small cities and towns. For cantonment areas and notified areas, there are separate boards/committees. Now we will discuss in brief the forms of local bodies in the rural and urban areas separately. And also the position of these institutions in Haryana.

**Panchayati Raj Institutions:**

Panchayat has deep roots in Indian history. It was in existence since ancient period having an effective control over the administrative, civic and judicial matters of the village community. In Mughal period, each panchayat was autonomous in its own sphere and exercised powers of local taxation, administrative control, justice and punishment. However, in between ancient, medieval and modern periods, the growth of panchayats had ups and downs. It was only with Mayo's Resolution of 1870 which gave impetus to the development of local self institutions by enlarging their powers and responsibilities. In 1873, Charles Trevelgan advocated building up a 'pyramid' pattern of representative councils, from village to councils. Then came the famous resolution of Lord Ripon in 1882, which provided the much needed democratic framework to these institutions. After independence, Panchayati Raj system was accepted in our constitution under Article 40, which gives directions to the states for the establishment of panchayats.
Article 40 of the Constitution enjoins on State Governments the desirability of organizing village panchayats and endowing them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government. Almost all the states were quick to introduce these bodies in their respective states.

In 1952, the first organized effort to tackle the problems of rural India was made through Community Development Programme. The major objectives of this programme were to promote self-help and self-reliance among the rural people and to generate and direct a process of socio-economic change in villages. However, the programme failed in mobilizing the rural masses to participate in the programme. As a result in the year 1957, a committee headed by Balwant Ray Mehta was constituted to study the whole problem and suggest ways and means for implementing the scheme of Panchayati Raj on some uniform lines throughout the country. The committee gave the details of organizations, functions, resources and relations of one with the other. As a result of the recommendation of this committee a three-tier system of Panchayati Raj: the gram panchayat at village level, panchayat samiti at block level and Zila Parishad at district level was introduced. All the three units were organically linked together. The committee remarked that Panchayati Raj system establishes a linkage between local leadership enjoying confidence of local people and the government and translate the policies of the government into action.

When the Janata Party formed the government at the centre, a committee was appointed in December 1977, under the chairmanship of
Ashok Mehta to suggest measures for strengthening the Panchayati Raj Institutions. The committee in its report submitted in August, 1978 recommended a two-tier system with Mandal Panchayats at the base and Zilla Parishads at the top to make panchayat bodies effective and efficient instruments of rural development. The committee recommended that two women who get the highest number of votes in Zila Parishad elections should be the member of Zila Parishad. In case no women come forward for election, two women might be co-opted. Similar provision and procedures were recommended for the Mandal Panchayat.  

Again in order to consider the ways to reinvigorate and revitalize Panchayati Raj Institution, the government of India appointed G.V.K. Rao Committee 1985 and L.M. Singhvi Committee 1986. The G.V.K. Rao committee recommended to make ‘district’ as the basic unit of planning and also for holding of regular elections to the Panchayat Raj Institutions. The L.M. Singhvi committee recommended for devolving more financial resources to panchayats so as to make them more viable. The committee viewed panchayats as the base for democratic and republican operations of the nation.

After Independence, the need for popular local self-government in the Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic of India was duly recognized by the constitution in Chapter-IV as a Directive Principle of State Policy. This led to the passing of various state legislations vesting administrative and judicial powers in the Panchayats. The Panchayati Raj system was adopted by the State of Haryana when it came into existence as a
separate state on 1st November, 1966. Haryana also adopted the three-tier structure of Panchayati Raj Institutions, namely Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad, at village, block and district levels respectively. Besides these three tiers there was one more statutory body called the Gram Sabha which was the general body of all the adult residents of a village. It has a defined legal status under the law. The Gram Panchayat was a representative and elective body consisting of elected and co-opted members. Panchayats constitute the base of the pyramid of Panchayati Raj. Panchayat Samiti was the middle tier in the hierarchical set-up of Panchayati Raj Institutions. Panchayat Samiti was the pivot round which most of the activities of Panchayati Raj revolve. The Zilla Parishad at the district level was essentially an advisory body whose main function was to maintain general supervision over panchayats and panchayat samitis and was to maintain co-ordination into different panchayat samitis of the district.

In 1973, however, an amendment was made in the Punjab Act of 1961 through the Haryana Act No. 22 of 1973, on the basis of the recommendations of an ad-hoc committee constituted by the Government in 1972. By this amendment the Zila Parishads were abolished, leaving the Haryana panchayati Raj system with only two tiers at the village and block level respectively. But now, the three tier system has been re-established with the enforcement of the Haryana Panchayati Raj Act (HPR Act), 1994, passed in the light of the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution of India.

Before the 73rd Amendment, the Rajiv Government at the centre decided to move a comprehensive amendment in the constitution of India to
give a firm basis to the essential features of the Panchayati Raj. This bill was the brain child of the late Rajiv Gandhi, who strongly believed in strengthening panchayats by giving them constitutional status. This was done in the form of 64th Constitution Amendment Bill, in 1989. The bill, however, could not be enacted as it was not approved by the Rajya Sabha. In December 1989, the Parliamentary elections led to the Janata Dal ministry being formed at the centre under V.P. Singh. The Janata Dal government again moved the above bill in Lok Sabha with some changes here and there in September, 1990. Unfortunately, the Janata Dal government could not survive its full term and fresh elections to Lok Sabha were held in June 1991 which brought Congress(!) back to power under P.V.Narasimha Rao. The Panchayati Raj received the attention of the new government also and it introduced on September 16, 1991 the Constitution (Seventy-second Amendment) Bill, 1991. The Bill was referred to a joint committee of Parliament having 30 members drawn from both houses. The committee reported back to parliament in July 1992. There upon it was unanimously passed by the Lok Sabha on December 22 and Rajya Sabha the next day of the same year 1992. Within four months 17 states had ratified it. The Bill got the President’s assent on April 20, 1993 and the constitution 73rd Amendment Act came into effect from April 24, 1993. The Amendment inserts a new part IX in the Indian Constitution containing 12 Articles – Art. 243 to Art. 2430 and 9 new schedule, the Eleventh Schedule. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1993 on Panchayati Raj is a historic event in the evolution of our grass-root democracy. It will strengthen the roots of Indian Federation
and also contribute to better planning and implementation of the programmes for economic development and social justice. The enactment of the new legislations on Panchayati Raj in almost all the states and Union Territories by April 24, 1994 is a significant landmark in the history of Panchayati Raj.19

The Amendment provides for certain far reaching steps to strengthen Panchayati Raj Institutions. The Amendment envisages the establishment of uniform three tier system of strong, viable and responsive panchayats at village, intermediate and district levels. The Amendment has also laid down necessary guidelines for the structure of panchayats, composition, powers, functions, devaluation of finances, regular holding of elections, reservations of seats for the weaker groups including women. With such a blue print, the Amendment has been hailed as a revolutionary step towards establishing grassroot democracy; specifically it has given constitutional guarantee for people’s participation and self governance.20 The salient features of the 73rd Amendment Act, 1993 are as follows: A three-tier structure of Panchayati Raj with a few exceptions; Continuous existence – the gap allowed being only six months; A five year term; Disqualifications of members of panchayats; Direct election of member of panchayats; Indirect election of chairpersons of the intermediate and district-level panchayats; Not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to SCs/STs) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every panchayat shall be reserved for women and such seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in Panchayat; Seats shall be reserved for the SCs/STs in proportion to their population; Provision for the devolution of
powers and responsibility upon Panchayats at the appropriate level with respect to the preparation/implementation of plans for economic development and social justice; The legislature of a State may authorize the panchayats to levy, collect and appropriate such taxes, duties, tolls and fees in accordance with such procedure and subject to such limits as may be specified in the law; Constitution of a Finance Commission to review the financial position of the panchayats every five years; Conduct of all elections to the Panchayats shall be vested in the State Election Commission.  

**Panchayati Raj in Haryana**

In the light of 73rd Amendment, Haryana Panchayati Raj Bill was passed by the Haryana Vidhan Sabha on March 17, 1994. The new Act, called Haryana Panchayati Raj Act, (1994) has come into effect replacing the earlier Acts (Punjab Gram Panchayat Act, 1952 and Punjab Panchayat Samiti Act, 1961). The Haryana Panchayati Raj Act (1994) incorporates almost all the essential features of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act. These include:

1. The three-tier system of Panchayati Raj will have Gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishads at the village, block and district level, respectively; The Act has made the gram sabha the soul of the Panchayati Raj System; It provides representation of women (including scheduled castes women) equal to one third seats of the total seats in each panchayat at each level. As a result, women and persons belonging to other weaker sections of the society who used to be co-opted in the Panchayati Raj Institutions earlier, will now directly be
elected, representing 1/3rd of the all offices in the three-tier system of Panchayati Raj Institutions. After the enforcement of the 1994 Act on Panchayati Raj, the number of women that have been elected to the different offices The 1994 HPR Act specifies the functions and powers of the Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad under Chapter IV, Chapter X and Chapter XVI respectively; Fix tenure of five years of Gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishads and in case of dissolution to hold election with in six months; Disqualify persons for election of panchayats at each level, having more than two children; The Act provides for direct election of members to the Panchayati Raj Institutions; Constitute a Finance Commission to review the financial position of panchayats; Constitute a State Election Commission and vest in the State Election Commission the Superintendence, direction and control of election of the Panchayati Raj Institutions and Municipalities. 22

Functions of Panchayati Raj

As per Section 21 of the Haryana Panchayati Raj Act 1994, prescribes the functions/duties of Gram Panchayats (Annexure B), Section 75 prescribes the Functions and duties of Panchayat Samities (Annexure-C) and Section – 137 prescribes the duties and functions of Zilla Parishads (Annexure-I).

Functions of Gram Panchayat

The functions of the village Panchayat include: Preparation of annual plans for the development of the Panchayat area; Power for mobilizing relief’s in natural calamities; Organizing voluntary labour and contribution
for community works; Promotion and development of agriculture and development of waste lands; Promotion of Animal Husbandry, dairying and poultry improvement of breed of cattle, poultry and promotion of dairy farming, poultry and piggery; Development of fishes in the villages; Social and farm forestry, minor forest produce, fuel fodder – planning and preservation of trees on the side of roads and other public lands under its control, fuel plantation and fodder development, promotion of farm forestry and development of social forestry; Promotion of rural and cottage industries; Rural Housing – Distribution of house sites within its jurisdiction and maintenance of records relating to the houses, site and other private and public properties; Construction, repairs and maintenance of drinking water wells, tanks and ponds. Prevention and control of water pollution and maintenance of rural water supply schemes. Rural electrifications including distribution of electricity providing for and maintenance of lighting of public streets and other public places; Promotion of public awareness and participation in primary and secondary education and ensuring full enrolment and attendance in primary and middle schools and its management; Promotion of Adult Literacy; Establishment of Village library and reading rooms; Promotion of social and cultural activities; Regulation of fairs excluding cattle fairs and festivals other than religions; Implementation of family welfare programme and prevention and remedial measures against epidemics; Participation in the implementation of women and child welfare programme and promotion of child health and nutrition programmes; Participation in the implementation of the social welfare programmes
including welfare of the handicapped mentally retarded and monitoring of the old age and widows pension scheme; Promotion of public awareness with regard to welfare of scheduled castes and other weaker sections; Maintenance of community assets; Construction and maintenance of dharamshalas and similar institutions; Maintenance of public parks, play grounds etc. and such functions as may be entrusted by the Government from time to time.

**Functions of Panchayat Samitis**

As per Section 75 of the Haryana Panchayati Raj Act, 1994, it shall be the duty of a Panchayati Samiti to provide for and make arrangements for carrying out the requirements of the area under its jurisdiction in respect of the matters which include:

Preparation of the annual plans in respect of the schemes entrusted to it by virtue of this Act and those assigned to it by Government or the Zilla Parishad and submission thereof to the Chief Executive Officer within a period of two months of its receipt for the consideration of the District Planning Committee constituted under this Act; Consideration and Consolidation of the annual plans of All Gram Panchayats in the block and submission of the consolidated plan to the Zilla Parishad; Preparation of annual budget of the block and its submission within such time, as may be prescribed into the Zilla Parishad; Providing relief in natural calamities; Promotion and development of agriculture and horticulture, maintenance of agriculture seed farms, storing and distribution of fertilizers, propagation of improved methods of cultivation and promotion of cultivation and marketing of grains; Maintenance of improvement of breed of cattle, poultry and other
livestock and promotion of dairy farming; Promotion of fisheries
development; Establishment, repairs and maintenance or rural water supply
schemes; Maintenance of any buildings or other property vested by the
panchayat samiti; Promotion and development of non-conventional energy
sources; Implementation of poverty alleviation programme; Promotion of
primary and secondary education, construction repair and maintenance of
primary schools buildings and promotion of social education through youth
clubs and mahila mandals; Promotion of participation of voluntary
organizations in women and child development programmes; Distribution of
essential commodities; Securing or removing dangerous building or places
and Construction, repair and maintenance of relief works houses and other
measures of relief on account of famines, floods, earthquakes and natural
calamities.

Functions of Zilla Parishad

As per section 137 of the Haryana Panchayati Raj Act, 1994, Without
prejudice to the generality of the provision of sub-section (1), a Zilla Parishad
shall have power to: Give advice to panchayat samitis on its own motion or
on the requirement of the Government or at the request of a panchayat samiti;
Co-ordinate and consolidate development plans prepared in respect of
panchayat samitis; Secure the execution of plans, projects, schemes or other
works common to two or more panchayat samitis in the district; Exercise and
perform such other powers and functions in relation to any development
programme as the Government may, by notification, confer or entrust to it;
Advise Government on the allocation work among Gram Panchayats and
Panchayat Samitis and co-ordinate their work; Examine and approve the budget of panchayat samitis in the manner laid down in section 102 of this Act; and the Zilla Parishad may, with the prior approval of the Government, levy contribution from the funds of the panchayat samitis in the district.

Municipal Institutions

The first statutory enactment relating to municipal administration in India is section 158 of the Charter Act, 1793, which established municipal corporation in the three presidency towns. This enactment authorized the appointment of justices of peace and to levy and collect taxes on houses and lands for the provision of sanitary services. Although there were no statutory municipal bodies, there were voluntary associations in all the provinces. Lord Ripon's resolution 1882, introduced a new era in the constitution, powers and functions of the municipal bodies. According to it, the actual municipal administration was to be transferred to the elected representatives of the people. The system of election for the municipal bodies was introduced with a limited franchise. The Government of India Act, 1919, established a responsible government in provinces by introducing the system of diarchy. Under the Government of India Act, 1935 a fully responsible government was provided for each province with certain restrictions.

Even after the attainment of Independence, the conditions of the urban local bodies remained without any radical change. The municipal bodies did not have adequate financial resources at their disposal to carry out their tasks. The constitution of India, when it came into force on 26 January 1950, directed the States, through Art. 40, to organize village panchayats, but
no such direction was given to the States regarding urban local bodies. The only reference to urban local bodies is to be found in the form of its mention in the state and concurrent lists. Entry 5 of the state list reads “Local Government, that is to say, the constitution and powers of Municipal Corporations, Improvement Trusts, District Boards, Mining Settlement Authorities and other local authorities for the purpose of local self-government or village administration.” Entry 20 of the concurrent list mentions “economic and social planning” which obviously includes urban planning as well.

Nevertheless, prior to the 74th Constitutional Amendment, the urban local bodies included Municipal Corporations, Municipalities, Notified Area Committees, Town Area Committees, Cantonment Boards and Townships. Municipal Corporations were meant for big cities having a large population. The Municipal Corporation consisted of a council, headed by a Mayor. The council comprised members, called councilors, elected on the basis of adult franchise by people inhabiting the Municipal Corporation area and for this purpose the city was divided into wards. The Mayor was elected by the councilors for a one-year term. Each state had its own criteria for establishing a municipality. The municipality consisted of a council, a chairman or president and an executive officer. The Municipal council consisted of members elected by the people on the basis of adult suffrage. Notified area committees, existed in the states of Haryana, Bihar, Gujarat, M.P., U.P., Karnataka, Punjab, J & K, Himachal Pradesh. A Notified area committee was created in an area which was otherwise important but could
not fulfil the conditions laid down as necessary for the constitution of a municipality. All the members of the committee were nominated by the State Government. The Town Area Committees were based on laws passed by respective state legislatures. The committees were either wholly elected or wholly nominated or partly elected or partly nominated. In Haryana, the Town Area Committees, recommendations of Rural-urban Relationship Committee Report (1966), were merged with Panchayati Raj bodies. A cantonment board is established for the administration of the local affairs of an area where military is stationed such as Delhi Cantonment. A cantonment is always under the Ministry of Defence of the Government of India. The Cantonment Board consists of half nominated and half elected members. However, most of the urban local bodies were in bad shape and were helpless in forming of their duties. It was Rajiv Gandhi’s government which responded for the improvement of their conditions by introducing the constitution (Sixty-fourth Amendment) Bill in Parliament in August 1989. It was passed by the Lok Sabha but was rejected by the Rajya Sabha in October of the same year. The succeeding National Front Government under V.P. Singh again introduced a revised Bill, namely the constitution (74th Amendment) Bill 1990 incorporating the provisions relating to panchayats as well as municipalities. The Bill, however, lapsed on account of the dissolution of the Lok Sabha.

The Congress government headed by P.V. Narsimha Rao came to power in 1991, drafted the Constitution (74th Amendment) Bill, 1991 pertaining to municipalities and introduced in the Lok Sabha in September
1991. It was passed by the Lok Sabha in December, 1992 and by the Rajya Sabha the same month. Following the ratification by more than half the state Assemblies, it received the assent of the President on 20th April, 1993 and is known as Constitution (74th Amendment) Act, 1992. This Act inserts a new part, IX A, in the Indian Constitution which contains 18 articles from Art 243 P to Art 243 ZG – along with a new schedule. The Amendment Act is basically related to the municipal administration.27

As far as urban local bodies are concerned the constitution 74th Amendment Act, 1992 touches their structures, composition, elections, powers and finances. The main features of the Act include: All the members of Municipal Councils and the Municipal corporations are directly elected. Each seat represents a ward in the area. The term of these bodies shall be five years; Reservation of seats in these bodies for SC and ST shall be in proportion to their population of the total population in Municipal area. Out of these seats one-third shall be reserved for SC/ST women. These reserved seats will rotate among the various constituencies in the Municipality/corporation; One-third of the total number of seats shall be reserved for women including SC/ST and these seats will rotate among the different constituencies of the municipal area; Ward Committee for one or more wards with a population of three lakhs or more. Elected members of the wards in the area shall be members of the committee and amongst them they will elect their chairman; A State election commission for the conduct of elections after every five years for Municipal Bodies; State legislatures, for sound financial positions of Municipal Bodies may authorize them to levy,
collect and appropriate taxes, duties, tolls fees and grant-in-aid from the consolidated fund of the state; Establishment of Finance Commission to review the finances of the Municipal Bodies; Establishment of a District Planning Committee, for the consolidation of plans prepared by panchayats and Municipal Bodies in the district; The state government shall also devolve power to the municipal bodies to prepare plans for economic development and social justice and for Metropolitan areas a Metropolitan Planning Committee shall be created for the preparation of development plans.28

**Municipal Administration in Haryana**

74th Amendment has been considered a landmark in the history of urban local government in the country. The provisions of the Act have been implemented in most of the states including Haryana. Haryana Municipal Act was passed by the Haryana Vidhan Sabha in 1994. It was amended by the legislature of the state of Haryana in 1999. Haryana Municipal act incorporates all the essential features of 74th Constitutional Amendment Act 1992. These include: The Haryana Municipal Act 1994 provides three types of urban local governments in the state which are: Nagar Panchayats for a transitional urban area; Municipal councils for smaller urban areas; Municipal corporations for larger urban areas; The term of Municipal Bodies shall be five years; All the seats shall be filled by direct election. The territorial constituencies in a municipal area for the purpose of elections shall be divided into wards; Provision has been made for the constitution of ward committees in all municipalities; Reservation of seats in Municipal Bodies has been made for SC/ST in proportion to their population; One-third of total
number of seats in all Municipal Bodies has been reserved for women; Finance Commission has been constituted for these bodies by the state government under Article 243 of the constitution of India; A State Election Commission has been constituted for conducting the elections of Municipal Bodies in the state; Addition of the Eleventh Schedule for the purpose of plans for economic development and social justice; Powers and functions of municipal committees and District Planning Committees have been constituted to consolidate the plans prepared by the Municipal Bodies in the district.

Powers and Functions of the Municipalities

The Municipal Bodies in the state have been empowered with such powers and responsibilities as may be necessary to enable them perform their functions as effective institutions of local self-government. These functions include: Preparation of Urban planning including town planning; Regulation of land use and construction of building; Preparation of Planning for economic and social development; Construction of roads and bridges; Water supply for domestic, industrial and commercial purposes. Maintenance of public health, sanitation, conservancy and solid waste management; Fire services; Urban forestry, protection of the environment and promotion of ecological aspects; Safeguarding the interests of the weaker sections of the society including the handicapped and the mentally retarded; Slum improvement and upgradation; Urban poverty alleviation programmes; Provision for urban amenities and facilities such as parks, gardens, playgrounds; Promotion of cultural, educational and aesthetic aspects;
Construction of burial grounds, cremation ghats/grounds and electric crematoria; Cattle pounds, prevention of cruelty to animals; Virtual statistics including registration of births and deaths; Public amenities including street lighting parking lots, Bus stops and public conveniences; and Regulation of slaughter houses and tanneries.29

After the discussion of Panchayati Raj Institutions and Municipal Bodies, now, we will discuss the women leadership of these bodies in the State of Haryana. The focus of our study is on the women leadership of the grassroot level, both rural as well as urban in the state of Haryana in the light of their involvement, contribution and participation in these bodies30 The 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments provide compulsory and minimum one third reservation for women through elections including of the position of chairpersons of all local bodies both rural and urban. As a result, of these historic amendments hundreds of thousands of women have entered into public offices both in the rural and urban areas of the state of Haryana. Now there is a sense of involvement as well as commitment among the women on the issues related to them.31 These amendments are the milestone in the way of women assuming leadership and decision making positions, as it makes such a role mandatory and universal for the whole of India.32 It became necessary to help develop proper leadership at the local level by the devolution of powers and by making it democratic in its functioning by ensuring a proportionate representation for different sections of society, including women.33 "Let women compete and came up through reservation to
active participation in the socio-economic and political process” seems to be the accepted principle.\textsuperscript{34}

Despite their vast numerical strength, women occupy a marginalized position in Indian society because of several socio-economic constraints. This has inhibited the effective participation of women in the political processes and institutional structures of democracy. As a result the women’s role in political processes has virtually remained unchanged, despite the rapid growth of their informal political activities. A broad-based political participation of women has been severally limited due to various traditional factors. Gender discrimination is a universal phenomenon. Both inside and outside the households women are excluded from positions of powers. They are denied opportunities to participate in the decision making process.\textsuperscript{35} It is unfortunate that though India is one of the largest democracies of the world, her women are still in the category of second class citizen.\textsuperscript{36} As a result, women have been left on the periphery of political life. However, after the 73rd and 74th amendment to the Constitution of India, the position of women in local governance has undergone a substantial change. The political status of women now has been duly recognized and they are fully involved in shaping and sharing of power at the grass-root level.

These Amendments may have great historical significance for grant of greater autonomy for the third tier of the government. The urban government which lacked importance in comparison to the Panchayati Raj Institutions has gained rightful legislative support. There had been a reference to village panchayats in the Directive Principles of the state policy, but no mention of
urban self-governing institutions except by way of Entry No. 5 of the 7th Schedule.³⁷ Reservation of seats for women in the Panchayati Raj Institutions and Municipal bodies will provide them with an opportunity to ventilate their grievances and to take active part in the formal political arena which deals with social and economic problems. These amendments have streamlined the structural configuration of the local bodies in general throughout the country. For the Rural sector, these shall be constituted in every state, panchayats at village level, intermediate level and district level.³⁸ Similarly, 74th amendment provides constitution of Nagar panchayats for a transitional area from rural to urban areas, Municipal councils for smaller urban area and municipal corporation for a larger urban area.³⁹

The 73rd and 74th Constitution Amendment Act, were the form of affirmative action to reserve 33 per cent of the total seats for women in all three tier of panchayati raj institutions and municipal bodies. The idea was to facilitate women's participation in grassroot politics, thereby empowering them to become partners at the decision making process. Bidyut Mohanty queries whether this participation will actually empower them. In her views, it may be too early to evaluate the impact, but the presence of one million women in the political arena, some of whom are political activists, will undoubtedly usher in a new era in Indian polity and society.⁴⁰ These amendments brought an overwhelming change in the political scenario. It was realised "that women could be extremely helpful in politics, for changing bad conditions into good conditions and to advise on vital issue such as sanitary conditions and morality."⁴¹ These amendments have ensured women's
representation in local self-government institutions. Participation of women leaders in the political process of decision making will help women to assert concerns and causes. Now women can regularly participate in meetings help the local administration in decision making.

The participation of women at local level will not only bridge the gap between the state and parliamentary level of democracy, but will alter the very character of decision making. Any democracy is deeply flawed if it fails to bring about meaningful and equal participation of women in social and political affairs. A democracy will fail in its objective if a vast number of citizens (women) lack equal opportunity to participate in the governmental decision-making process. They are an equal partners in the national building and political development.

It is an acknowledged fact that political participation is the hallmark of any given democratic set up. Therefore, in order to inject a new life in such a set up it becomes imperative that women's participation in politics is given due recognition. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts of 1992 provide for effective participation of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions and Municipalities Bodies respectively through reservation of seats for them. Let us hope that these amendments in the constitution will usher in a new era of women's leadership in social, economic and political spheres of our national life.

Keeping in view the importance of women leadership in Local Self Government Institutions, we have made a modest attempt here to examine the socio-economic and political background of woman leaders and their
awareness. With the introduction of local self Government Institutions, there has been a corresponding change of attitudes and behaviour of leaders giving birth to different pattern in the emerging leadership in these institutions. Leadership has a pivotal role in the working of local-self Government Institutions. Thus, the effective functioning of these institutions will depend to a great extent on the quality of leadership emerged at the grass root levels. Moreover, it is widely believed that leadership plays a significant role in promoting political development and democratic growth. Now we can hope that it may bring a chance for women to be participative forces in the governance of Indian society. National development will be more effective if every citizen, man and woman, has an active share in all activities of local governance. Since women leaders are still not in the forefront of such activities, women leaders have a major role to play in activating such citizens. However, it must be remembered that a change cannot be brought about overnight and by legislation alone.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Before embarking upon a full scale analysis of the data, it is important that we have a glimpse of the relevant literature that will provide a historical as well as theoretical perspective on the problem under study. In view of the importance of the role of the women leaders in the process of socio-economic and political development, the problem of women leadership has attracted the attention of several scholars, resulting into an impressive output of studies.

The rising concern and interest in the changing role and position of women in society has inspired a considerable number of innovative,
important and scholarly works in the fields of sociology, anthropology, economics and legal systems. Consequently, a large number of studies have appeared on the status of women in family and society, marriage system, education, women in labour force etc. While a good deal of attention has been devoted to the study of social and economic position of women in India, very little attention has been paid to the role of women in politics. It still remains a least researched area despite the fact that no study in political arena in a democratic set-up can be complete unless women are taken into account. As women comprise about half of the population, this segment of society requires attention.\textsuperscript{51}

The women political leadership as a subject for research is recent origin in India, and as a result literature on women’s participation in politics as well as studies on women’s attitudes towards politics are rare. There are few studies of women’s role in the nationalist movement. However, these works on the national movement mostly fail to examine the significance of women’s participation in the struggle.\textsuperscript{52} These studies touch upon various aspects and dimensions of women’s participation in the national struggle for freedom. There are some factual accounts; most standard histories of the nationalist movement mention women’s entry into civil disobedience movement. Of course, these studies by and large relate to women of elite section of society. The life and conditions of a large majority of women and their responses to changing historical forces have remained unexplored. There are few autobiographies of women leaders mostly from elite groups, we know very little about the lives, the beliefs and the social background of those
women who entered the movement in the different regions. However, the local level women leadership of Local self-government governing institutions has been completely ignored. Moreover, most of the studies of women’s role in national movement are descriptive. Kamla Devi Chattopadhyay in her book entitled, “The Status of Women in India” has traced the evolution of women’s role in Indian society from ancient to modern times. In her views the women in Vedic period enjoyed a high status and participated equally in the social, religious and political affairs of the country. Vina Mazumdar in her book entitled, “Status of Women in India” describes the status of women in India. In the study “Women and Indian Nationalism”, Vina Mazumdar and Leela Kasturi discusses the various issues relating to women in the context of British rule, social reform and Indian National Movement and Women’s participation in it.

Sebasti L. Raj in the study “Quest to Gender Justice” a critique of the Status of women in India highlights the problems of women, status of Indian women in comparison with the status of women in other countries. Premlata Pujari and Vijay Kumari Kaushik in their study “Women Power in India” describe the women’s development in various parts of India. Vijay Agnew, in his book “Elite Women in Indian Politics” describes the historical background of women in Nationalist Movement and Women’s organisation. Manikyamba, P. in her book “Women in Panchayati Raj Structures” discusses the achievements and shortcomings in the working of Panchayati Raj since 1959. The author identifies the factors responsible for rural women’s marginal visibility in development programmes.
Robert N. Kearney, focuses on the “Women in politics in Sri Lanka” and concludes that the opportunities for women to obtain political office, do not appear to be markedly different from those of women in most other contemporary nations.\textsuperscript{61} Marine S. Shaul, while making an international assessment on the status of women in local governments comments that there is no country in the world today where women have equal status with men in all of the major areas of life. Few women like Indira Gandhi, Golda Meir Margaret Thatcher etc. have held important positions but often, the women who have held national office are from upper class families with a history of political participation, one highly educated or single. In most developing countries, low level of education has led to women not being aware of their rights.\textsuperscript{62}

“Symbols of Power” by Vina Mazumdar contains several articles on the political status of women in India. The general view which emerges is that women in India are showing signs of political awakening but their progress is hindered by illiteracy, domestic pressures, dependency on men. By and large, a few women who have emerged significantly into political prominence are those who are economically well off”, and who belong to the upper strata of society. A few references to women in panchayati raj institutions have been made. However, majority of women are found to be nominated and hardly any woman stands for elections.\textsuperscript{63} Hazel D’Lima’s study on “Women in Local Government in Maharashtra” traces the social emergence of women and their socio-economic and political background.\textsuperscript{64} “Women in Politics” by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung found that women in India,
are very poorly represented in various policy and decision making bodies. \textsuperscript{65} “Women in Contemporary Indian Society” by Ashok Kumar highlights the political participation of women in local bodies, empowerment of rural women, welfare programmes for women, and social evils in the society. \textsuperscript{66} “Women Development and Panchayati Raj” a study of Rohtak district in the state of Haryana by Roshni Nandal highlights the basic objective of her study has been to examine the women participation in Panchayati Raj Institutions and the related operational and administrative constraints and the need for essential support service to make it meaningful. \textsuperscript{67} “Women and Empowerment” by Jaya Kothai Pillai discusses with empowerment of women in general and empowerment of women professionals, the existing status of female child, the legal rights of women, suggestions for liberation of women in Indian context and their political participation. \textsuperscript{68} “Women in Local Governance” by K. Subha focuses on the role of women in electoral process and emerging pattern of women leadership at grass-root level. \textsuperscript{69} “Changing status and Role of Women in Indian Society” by C. Chakrapani, and S. Vijaya Kumar, highlights the role of women in the changing society their changing roles and increased participation in politics. \textsuperscript{70} “Women and Politics in India”, by Bhawana Jharta, focuses on the political participation of women in Indian politics and impact of family on women political leaders. She points out that the family and education are two points which influence the women’s participation in politics. \textsuperscript{71}

“Political Empowerment of women at the grass-roots level” by K.C. Vidya, focuses on various aspects of women’s role in Panchayati Raj
Institutions and its impact on the overall development of women, especially in the rural areas and environmental setting after entering into Panchayati Raj Institutions and emerging pattern of women leadership, their perception about social values and their involvement in decision making process.\textsuperscript{72} Campbell in his book, "The American Voter", found the average American women to be lower in political efficacy, lower in political involvement and less in political concept formation than the average male.\textsuperscript{73} Gabriele Dietrich in the book "Personal is Political: Women and the Process of Political Participation." points out that the politico-legal framework in India is much favourable as far as women's opportunities are concerned. However, women's participation in the parliamentary process does not contribute to significantly improve the position of women in society.\textsuperscript{74} Studies carried out by UNESCO in Seven South East Asian Countries, i.e., Australia, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Thailand, Malaysia and Philippines, indicate that in terms of awareness, party membership contesting elections, voting and decision-making, women's participation has not been impressive. Women remain in the periphery of the spheres of power and influence. Women leaders at local, state and national levels generally come from well educated, well to do and influential families. A large number of women have either husbands or other relatives already in politics which provide them with readymade network of connection and support.\textsuperscript{75} Linda K. Richter, in her article "Exploring Theories of Female Leadership in South and South-East Asia", found the highest form of women participation. However, despite the prominence of several women leaders in the region, opportunity for female leadership have been rare.\textsuperscript{76}
Bhargava and others conducted a study on "Panchayati Raj System in Karnataka" and found the role of women in these institutions, practically very poor.\textsuperscript{77} Another empirical study "Panchayati Raj Reforms and Rural Development" by N. Sivanna found the involvement of women members in these institutions below the expected mark and their socio-economic conditions were not conducive to their effective involvement."\textsuperscript{78}

Niroj Sinha in his book "Women as Marginals in Politics" describes an international experience that despite loud proclamations of constitutional equality between men and women, the few women who enter in politics seldom enjoy political power or are involved in decision making process.\textsuperscript{79} Lakshmi Menon, in her book, "From Constitutional Recognition to Public Office" found the general attitude towards politics as an obstacle in women's participation in public life. Politics is regarded as "dirty" and education does little to encourage women to take the stigma attached to politics.\textsuperscript{80} Manikyamba, P. in his book, "Women Presiding Officers at the Tertiary Political Levels" points out that a trend of revitalization in the context of political participation of rural women is evident and that the development psyche can be noticed in them. Men's attitudes towards women's entry into politics and leadership positions have also been changed. The situation has moved from one of total rejection to limited objection and in some cases active encouragement too.\textsuperscript{81}

Geeta Balachandran, in her book, "The Women who made it to the top at the Grassroot" found government action for women's emancipation or equality neither effective nor adequate unless women themselves become
more aware of their rights and responsibilities. Despite their numerical strength women occupy a marginalized position in society and their role in political structure has virtually remained limited. G. Palanthurai in his book, "New Panchayati Raj System at Work in Tamil Nadu" discusses that the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution for achieving economic development and social justice by performing planning exercise at the grassroots levels will be possible with the active participation of the women. The work brings out the details of the mind set of the elected local body leaders and the bureaucrats who are working in the local body institutions. Sushila Kaushik, in her study "Participation of Women in Panchayati Raj in India" found highly traditional, feudal and patriarchal norms with the features of child marriage, purdah system, casteism and violence against women and their impact on the functioning of panchayat system and the elected women leaders. Bharti Tekchandani, Kiran Jyoti and Priti Sharma in their study, "They call me member Saab, Women in Haryana Panchayati Raj" discusses the socio-economic and political background of women leaders and the decision making power, their functioning in the Panchayati Raj Institution and the difficulties faced by them.

Neeta Tapan in her book, "Need for Women Empowerment" found that the right of women on the basis of equality in all spheres of society is fundamental to the advancement of human rights, social justice and sustainable development. Sukanya Nihal Singh in her book, "Prospectus for women's Empowerment Dynamics of Enablement" discusses the development and empowerment of women in all areas social, economic,
political, legal and the principle of equal opportunity. Kiran Saxena in her book "Women and Politics" explores women's struggle for political power which is one of the most important gestures through which women could achieve their rightful place in society. Neena Joseph in her study "Gender Related Problems of Women, Women's Empowerment and Panchayati Raj" has made an attempt to assess the role of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions, women as leaders, representation of women in local bodies, history of women in political life, problems of women as a leader and problems of women in domestic sphere.

From the above mentioned studies, we can conclude that not much attention has been paid to the studies of women leadership. Moreover, the role of women of grass-root level institutions by and large remains unexplored Hence the importance of the study of women leadership in local self-governing institutions becomes very important. Therefore, the investigation into the working of these institutions and to throw some light on the actual role played by the women leaders and their influence in the decision making process is important and significant. As stated earlier the foregoing analysis of the available literature reveals that hardly there has been any effort to make an in-depth study on the role of women in local self-governing institutions. Keeping in view the 73rd Constitutional Amendment which has provided 33 per cent reservation to the women, we thought it is important to study the women leadership in these institutions. In this study an attempt has been made to examine and investigate the role of elected
women leaders in the functioning of local-self-governing institutions in the state of Haryana.

CONCEPTUAL FRAME

Leadership plays an important role in administration and in political institutions. Today the crisis of political institutions in India is the crisis of leadership. The dynamics of leadership, its socio-economic origins and social consequences have always attracted sociologists, social psychologists, political scientists and historians. But there is no unanimity on the precise meaning of the term leadership among the social scientists. Hence the concept of leadership has been variously defined by various social scientists. Literally, leadership means to lead, to excel, to be in advance, to guide others, to be the head of an organization, to hold command, etc. For example Fairchild defines leadership as "the act of organizing and directing the interests and activities of a group of persons, as associated in some project or enterprise, by a person who develops the co-operation through securing and maintaining their more or less voluntary approval of the ends and methods proposed and adopted in their association." Bernard Bass chooses to define leadership in these words: "Leadership is a kind of interaction between or among people. Any attempt on the part of a group member to change the behaviour of one or more members of a group is an attempt of leadership." According to E.S. Bogaurds, "Leader is a person who exerts special influence over a number of people." Katz and Kahn maintain that the concept of leadership generally understood in social sciences, has three major meanings: the attribute of a position, the characteristics of a person,
and a category of behaviour. Lasswell and Kaplan argue that "the leaders of a group are its most active power holders, effectively and in the perspectives of the group. The rank and file are the non-leaders." Tead defines leadership "as the activity of influencing people to co-operate toward some goal which they come to find desirable." Paul Pigors has also taken similar position in his definition of leadership. He says: "Leadership is a process of mutual stimulation which by the successful interplay of relevant individual differences controls human energy in the pursuit of a common course." A leader is a person who is more than ordinarily efficient in carrying psychological stimuli to others and is thus effective in conditioning collective responses. In the political context village leadership has been defined on the basis of reputation, action or position. The leadership is essential in interactional phenomenon between the leader and the followers. The relationship between the leaders and the followers is one of the several forms of interpersonal relationship which are formed to satisfy some of the defined goals of the leaders and followers belonging to the same social system. Encyclopedia of the social sciences defines it in these words, "A leader, however, is one who is respectively perceived to perform acts of leading." "One who leads is a leader" is the general definition of a leader. According to Dubin, "Leadership is the exercise of authority and the making of decisions." Hemphill defines "Leadership as the initiation of acts which result in a consistent pattern of group interaction directed towards the solution of a mutual problem."
Homans maintains that "A leader is the man who come closest to realizing the norms of the group values highest. This conformity gives him his high rank, which attracts people and implies the right to assume control of the group." Reuter, however, holds that "Leadership is an ability to persuade or direct men without use of the prestige or power of formal office or external circumstance." Hunter defines leaders as "related to power" because "they are in positions to make decisions having major consequences." According to Koontz, "Leadership is the activity of persuading people to cooperate in the achievement of a common objective." Terry defined leadership as "the relationship in which one person or leader, influences others to work together willingly on related tasks to attain which the leader desires."

From all these definitions of leadership it is clear that the leadership process is a function of the leader, the follower and the other situational variables or factors. Leader has four elements which distinguish him/her from non leaders. These include: (a) He/she is a member of a group (b) He/she influences the members of a group (c) He/she is voluntarily accepted by the members of the group and (d) He/she leads the group toward the common goal.

The brief overview of various studies on leadership and its theoretical frame indicate that most of the studies done so far have their focus on traditional leadership based on caste, rituals, inherited positions and ascribed status. Further, most of these studies are confined to single village or a group of villages. Very few attempts have been made to study the local leadership
and that too women leadership in its political aspects. However, these theoretical formulations and empirical studies indicate that situational, structural and cultural elements are important in determining the selection of leaders in any community. Inspite of some systematic studies in the area, there is a continuing need to understand more about the factors associated with leaders particularly emerging women leadership patterns at the grass-root level. Moreover, very little work has been done so far on women empowerment through political processes. Hence the focus on women leadership at the grassroot level institutions where they have been provided an opportunity through reservation of seats to hold political offices in the self-governing institutions becomes of utmost importance.

FOCUS OF THE STUDY

With these studies and conceptual frame of leadership our focus has been directed to the study of women leaders in local self-government institutions in the state of Haryana. Our major concern here is to examine the role perceptions and value orientation of women leaders and which socio-economic backgrounds these leaders come from. What is the social, economic and cultural frame from which women political leadership emerges? What are the social background and interest affiliation of these women leaders? We are attempting here to study or analyse the socio-economic bases of the women leaders and their knowledgeability, their awareness and the socio-economic and political values of these women leaders. In addition, our focus is on the real role of women leaders in the decision making process at the grassroot level. We feel it is important to
study these grass-root level women leaders who have been provided power positions in Panchayati Raj and Municipal Institutions. Moreover, the study of women leadership at local level also carries a great political relevance since it may throw some light on national politics and democracy at operational level. Therefore, we have chosen as the focus of our study, the women leaders who are the members of Panchayati Raj Bodies and Municipal Institutions in the state of Haryana.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of our study are in brief to examine and analyse:

- The socio-economic and political background of women leaders.
- Knowledgeability and Awareness among women leaders.
- Value attitudes and value perceptions of women leaders on various socio-economic issues.
- Participation of women leaders in socio-economic development of the country.

METHODOLOGY

The study is primarily based on empirical evidence calculated by conducting interviews with selected women leaders in the state of Haryana. The present study conducted in Faridabad district covers five Blocks of the District. Random Sampling was used for the selection of women leaders. We have selected 360 women leaders out of which, 332 from the Rural areas and 28 women leaders from the urban area in the District who were elected in the election of 1995 to 2000. In this way we have selected the women leaders of the study from the following categories:
1. We have selected twenty Panchayats, from each Block, and from each panchayat one women Sarpanch and two women panch were selected through random sampling. However, in New Industrial Town of Faridabad the number of women Sarpanches were 13 and therefore, the total number i.e. (279) of women sarpanches and panches were choosen.

2. All the 47 elected women members of Block Samiti.

3. All the 6 elected women members of Zila Parishad.

4. All the 28 elected women members of Municipal Corporation and Municipal Committees/Councils were also included in our sample. The respondents have been grouped into two categories viz., Rural and Urban women leaders. The division of respondents into Rural and Urban categories was made for the purpose of making a comparative analysis.

The data for this study have been collected both through secondary as well as primary sources. Among secondary sources we used the Statistical Abstract of Haryana, official records of the Election Commission of India, official documents of Local Bodies of Haryana, written records of village panchayats, tehsil offices, B.D.O. offices, Municipal Corporations and Municipal Committees/Council offices, Census Report, 1991, published and unpublished reports, Journals, Books and Newspapers. The primary source of the data collection of the study was interview schedule. The chosen women leaders were interviewed through structured as well as non structural questions included in the questionnaire. The questions broadly related to the socio-economic background of leaders, political background and awareness, and their attitudes towards various socio-economic and political issues. After the completion of interviews a code manual was prepared to quantify the data.
and all data from the questionnaire were coded on code sheets. The simple tabulation plan was prepared which has been given in the main body of the report. Our short study is exploratory in nature. We hope to develop certain hypotheses for further, study rather than to give firm conclusions.

Since the study of women leaders is an unexplored phenomena, the present study is largely exploratory in nature and the conclusions are tentative. In terms of its scope, the study seeks to provide an initial step towards understanding the various dimensions of the women involved in political activities at various levels.

**Chapterization**

The data of the study have been classified into seven chapters including the concluding chapter.

The First Chapter is an introductory which describes the emergence of Local Self Government Institutions in India in general and Haryana in particular. Beginning with the nature of the problem, it covers review of literature, conceptual frame, the focus and the main objectives of the study. The Second chapter discusses the historical background of women leaders. The Third Chapter deals with the socio-economic background of women leaders. The Chapter Fourth, examines the political background, knowledgeability and awareness of women leaders. The Chapter Fifth analyses the socio-economic values of women leaders. Sixth Chapter analyses the political orientation of women leaders. The last i.e. the seventh chapter of the thesis summarizes the major findings of the study.
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