CHAPTER-II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
CHAPTER-11
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The present chapter is devoted to make a detailed review of the selected existing literature on the plights of women with special reference to the rural women, on decentralized planning, development administration, participatory democracy, rural society, the institution of Panchayati Raj with special thrust on the reservation and participation of women in the institutions and the elite theory which directly pertains to the topic. The detailed review on the forgoing aspects is expected to unfold the scenario in which the Panchayati Raj Institutions operate and how effective is the participation of the so-called Women Elite representing themselves in the Panchayati Raj Institutions. The review takes into consideration some books, articles in journals, periodicals popular writings and the statistical surveys made by the Government.

Rural women constitute the main target of the reservation under 73rd Amendment Act, 1992. So it becomes pertinent here to make a review of their plights in general with special reference to their role in decision-making process and power structure in grassroot level democracy. In this context, Mathur & Narain¹ (1969) record the proceedings of a seminar held at Jaipur from 6th to 11th Dec., 1964 on the problems and issues of Panchayati Raj. To the authors, Panchayati Raj is a facilitator of people's participation in designing development in rural areas. So, planning and development will become failure until the Panchayati Raj system is well established.

Bhargava² (1979) makes an analysis of some crucial aspects of problems relating to leadership in Panchayati Raj Institutions on the basis of theoretical and empirical considerations. To the author, the issues of leadership in Panchayati Raj Institutions depend a lot on the training of the office bearers which is very much lacking in our country. This lack of training prevents people from becoming effective leaders in the Panchayats.

Khan & Sharma ³ (1982) make an indepth study of the organization and working of a Nyaya Panchayat and its functions. The study provides a comprehensive assessment of the performance and potential of the Nyaya Panchayat basing on the information collected from the members, litigants, villagers and official sources. To the authors, the Nyaya Panchayats in many villages are governed by the principles of hierarchy and holism which do not justify the name of the institutions. The victims many times are reluctant to approach the Nyaya Panchayat. So, the authors suggest that some democratic and secular principles should govern such institutions to make them really effective.

Jain ⁴ (1985) makes a study of the institutional arrangements of poverty alleviation programmes and rural development made for the poor in the past three decades covering over a thousand households in seven development blocks of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka. The study gives an understanding of development planning in India with special reference to Community Development, district administration, decentralized and development planning. In conclusion, the author is shocked at the findings and has branded that development programmes are launched without any trained personnel recruited to engineer them for public interest.

Shiviah, Subrahmanyam, Naidu, and Sastry⁵ (1986) make a study on Panchayati Raj elections in rural India. The authors view that panchayat elections are irregular, infrequent and lack a democratic spirit. To these authors, panchayats in rural India still lack democratic principles and so far as, decentralization is concerned, they clearly observe that it does not serve the purpose. Plans rarely evolve at these institutions and whatever does emerge is the resultant of a centralized effort made by an elitist male group of people.

---

Manikyamba (1989) visualizes that women are the most economically marginalized section, socially handicapped and political backward segment of the rural society. This is not only the situation in Andhra Pradesh but also a country-wide scenario. So, to the author, the revival strategies undertaken for the democratic decentralization at the grass root level with a particular thrust on elevating women's level of participation in the decision-making process is no doubt a welcome attempt made by the government. A proper representation of women in the Panchayati Raj Institutions along with growing awareness among them for this political body, their successful transaction of political issues will no doubt make them vital resource for rural women's development. The structural, functional, attitudinal and environmental constraints for women's entry into this political body are analyzed by the author and the ultimate observation at which she lands upon is that a participatory role in decision making process will gradually eliminate these constrains and will pave the way for better participation of women in politics.

Banerjee and Jain (1990) make an analysis of the concept of Panchayati Raj Institutions in theory and in action after the recommendations of Balwant Rai Mehta and Ashok Mehta Committee with various causes of the weaknesses of this institution. To them, prescription without a preparation of the people, institution without efficiency of the personnel will never make Pananchayati Raj a success.

Zamora (1990) makes a case study of the government directed political innovation made in the village of Senapur of Uttar Pradesh. In her study, she briefly traces the historical transition of the Panchayats from Vedic age to modern period. To her, the concept of Panchayat is not a totally a novel creation of modern India. It was prevalent in the Vedic era in the country. But since then, it has undergone a lot of transformations and has become the socio-economic and political institution of considerable significance to India's rural

Singh ⁹(1990) makes a study of emerging patterns of higher caste leadership in village Panchayats in a brilliant manner, basing on an investigation of 178 sample of higher caste members of Gramin Panchayat drawn from 36 village Panchayats. The study visualizes before independence, the rural Panchayats were dominated by higher castes and after independence a rational change has come into the society. To the author, reservation of seats for the lower castes has contributed for bringing a change in the leadership pattern. The declining status of the higher castes on the one hand and the elevation of the lower castes on the other has brought new castes, occupation groups and income categories into this decision making process.

Desai¹⁰ (1990) makes a study on the devolution of power to the people through the Panchayati Raj Institutions. The author has divided his study into three parts. The first part consists of rural environment and the earlier experiments in village administration with the structure, coverage, functions, the role of Panchayats, the various problems faced by the Panchayats and their impact on rural development. The second part of his study provides an insight into the evolution, growth and performance of Panchayati Raj Institutions from the report of the various committees on Panchayati Raj Institutions. The third part of his study contains data relating to various facets of Panchayati Raj and other related issues. Finally, the author concludes that the Panchayats have a significant role in rural reconstruction and effective participation of the people can ensure efficiency to this organization.

Das ¹¹(1990) makes a study about Panchayati Raj (PR) and Community Development Programme (CDP). The aim of Panchayati Raj is to link the Gram Sabha with Loksabha in an interconnected system of democratic administration. His study also covers a wide range of topics and issues

---

concerning Panchayati Raj and Community Development and its structural and functional aspects in India with some textual significance and critical commentary.

Sivanna 12 (1990) makes an empirical study on the theme of Panchayati Raj Institutions with many institutional and functional constraints that impair the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions. The institutional constraints include the caste, family, patriarchy and property, while the functional constraints emerge from the prevalent structural distance between the castes, gender discrepancies and social taboos. They are not only marked with judicial but also they are assigned with development functions which combine planning, legislations relating to local issues, their implementation and monitoring aspects. To the author, not only the structural changes are marked with these Panchayati Raj Institutions today but also functional changes are also traced out.

Thakur & Singh13 (1991) make a triangular study between democracy, decentralization and development. To them the Panchayati Raj Institutions can best combine these three ideals. In a developing democracy like India, where democracy becomes one of the goals and also a means for development, one of the important reasons for decentralization is to develop more effective popular participation in local affairs and to trickle down the fruits of development from the center to the local areas and avoid the possibility of lop-sided development. By making such a study, the authors establish a close nexus between democracy and district planning. The authors give importance to the Panchayati Raj Institutions as the instrument of grass root democracy and as the agencies to formulate and implement planned development at the local level. They clearly assert that through the Panchayati Raj system popular participation can be ensured and local specific plans can emerge to make development better suited to the needs of the ruralites.

Chorpada\textsuperscript{14} (1991) makes a detailed study of the basic objectives of rural development and community development programmes and the success and failure of Panchayati Raj Institutions. By making such a study, the author concludes that Panchayati Raj Institutions can launch and accelerate programmes which will develop both the economic and cultural standards of village folk and make their thinking more progressive. This developed vision of the ruralites will be a positive input for strengthening the Panchayati Raj Institutions in future.

Prusty\textsuperscript{15} (1992) explains Panchayati Raj Institutions as instrumental for systematizing the rural life and porcolating the democratic values to the grassroot level. To him, Panchayati Raj Institutions are never a modern innovation for the Indians. It has been there since the beginning of traditional Indian society. Even the Muryan and Gupta dynasty had adopted the Panchayati Raj Institutions under the banner of Gram Tantra and village republic. The institution to him had evolved through the ages. Thus to Prusty, Panchayati Raj Instituion is historically very much associated with the country and therefore it should be revitalised and strengthened as a cultural heritage of India.

Nambiar\textsuperscript{16} (1992) makes a study of the Indian poverty scenario and highlights the various anti-poverty programmes. To him, decentralised planning through a healthy Panchayati Raj system is the key factor for poverty elevation in rural India and there is no alternative to it.

Krishnan\textsuperscript{17} (1992) observes that the failure of the administrative system and centralised planning have caused disappointment among people. His study provides a thoughtful well researched analysis of Panchayati Raj system and its linkage with rural development and social change. This particular work is the first major attempt to study the system of Panchayati Raj in Karnatak.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14} M.Y. Chorpada. 1991, Development Ethos and Experience. A Southern Economist Publication, Bangalore.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Jitendra Kumar Prusty, 1992, “Panchayati Raj and Prasasanika Byabastha”. Utikal Prasang. Vol 49(8).
\item \textsuperscript{17} M.G. Krishnan, 1992, Panchayati Raj in India (An Anlytical Study of Kornatak). Mittal Publications, New Delhi.
\end{itemize}
Jahagirdar* (1992) makes a comprehensive study of changing rural leadership in Panchayati Raj system. To the author, the introduction of Panchayati Raj system and the decentralisation system of local administration are the major steps towards development. The objectives of these measures are to involve people of all strata in the development process. The age old institution of traditional leadership and also various socio-economic factors are the obstacles in the process of development. The major objective of this work is to study the process of distribution of power, decision-making process, role and interaction of traditional leaders and new emerging leadership in relation to the new democratic set-up and development process in rural areas.

Singh (1993) in his study advocates the needs of decentralisation and people’s participation. He has delved into the historical mooring of the Panchayati Raj Institution and has depicted its new functional role after the introduction of the 72nd constitutional Amendment Act of 1992. The author perceives some key inputs to be earnestly initiated to make the Panchayati Raj Institution translated into a real programme of action. These inputs include creating a reorientation among the people for a better participation, integrating village level programmes within the activities of the Panchayats and creating better supportive mechanism for the Panchayats from the Government departments.

Singh (1993) in his study provides a coverage to the concept, growth and coverage of the Panchayati Raj Institutions in the country. In his study he discusses the structural component, financial resources and the administrative roles of the Panchayati Raj Institutions as discussed by various committees. To him, the structural components and the administrative roles of the PRIs as prescribed by the Government is really praiseworthy. But to bring them into practice is a difficult task due to mass illiteracy, traditional hierarchy and taboos prevalent in Indian rural society. Financial resources as prescribed by the Government may become difficult to be generated by the PRIs.

Pal\textsuperscript{21} (1994) analyses that in order to make the Panchayats institutions of self government, the leadership of the grass root level has to be strengthened. This cannot happen when Panchayat Acts, as in Haryana, accord a major role to the centralized bureaucracy. So, the author concludes that a process of de-bureaucratization is a basic pre-condition for decentralization.

Oomen & Annamalai\textsuperscript{22} (1994) make a comprehensive analysis of the provisions made in Panchayati Raj bodies regarding their structural uniformities in consonance with the 73\textsuperscript{rd} constitutional Amendment Act, and visualize the need for a uniform structural pattern of these bodies for a realistic decentralization of power.

Mukherjee\textsuperscript{23} (1999), Khanna\textsuperscript{24} (1994), Lakdawala\textsuperscript{25} (1994) and many other scholars have dealt with the evolution, growth and change in Panchayati Raj system- its institutions, functioning and personnel particularly, leadership personnel. Financial position of the Panchayats has been dealt by the authors like Panth & Bhora (1995)\textsuperscript{26} and M.A. Oommen and Abhijit Dutta\textsuperscript{27} (1995).

Singh\textsuperscript{28} (1996) highlights the socio-historic-cum-legal aspects of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. The author has given importance to the origin, development and decline of traditional Panchayats, the legislative dimensions of this institution and its functioning. The author realises that the salient developments at the national level is responsible for the constitutional

amendments on the issues promoting people’s participation.

Palanithurai\(^{29}\) (1996) makes a cross-cultural study of the varieties of views and ideas of intellectuals, administrators, rural development functionaries and Gandhians about the new Panchayati Raj system contrary to the established conventions. The author has also studied the interaction among the rural people’s representatives, leaders of voluntary organizations and constructive Gandhian workers about the new Panchayati Raj system.

Mathur\(^{30}\) (1997) visualises that the Panchayati Raj Institutions are being seen as one of the agencies that can pick up various functions by reorienting the role of government and reducing its direct involvement in social and economic activities. To the author, Panchayati Raj system can not be conceived in isolation from decentralisation at the level of center-state relationship.

Pal\(^{31}\) (1997) opines that with the absence of adequate administrative and financial power, the smooth functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions would be impossible and the system will be a hollow slogan stretching from national to the village level. The author is still in doubt about the smooth and successful functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions even after 73\(^{rd}\) Amendment of the Constitution for which he proposes a further amendment of Constitution is needed to make Panchayats vibrant and pulsating institutions.

Chaturvedi\(^{32}\) (1997) describes, the Panchayati Raj Institutions can be utilized for ensuring food security to the poor. Panchayati Raj Institutions have taken shape at districts, blocks and village levels after the 73\(^{rd}\) Constitutional Amendment. Panchayats have the mandate to plan and implement development schemes at the village level and to create conditions for the growth of equity. So in this regard, Panchayats can play their role in ensuring food security for the poor if they have sufficient finance and the


capacity to develop village level micro-economic plans. If ensuring food security and implementing them will be taken as a primary aim of the Panchayati Raj institutions, it will draw both public interest and participation of the villagers.

Narayanasamy33 (1998) observes the role and significance of Gram Sabha in rural progress in the new Panchayati Raj system, particularly after the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. To him, Gramsabhas have the sustaining ability to make the Panchayats active and effective as they can stir mass participation in the rural areas.

Bhagyalaxmi34 (1998) describes the main features of new Panchayati Raj Institutions after 73rd constitutional Amendment Act. She presents the number of Panchayats, number of elected members and functionaries and number of break-up of elected members into SC/ST/Women by 73rd reservation Act in various states and union territories. To the author, Panchayati Raj Institutions are constitutional entities having a great significance in the empowerment of people, particularly the weaker sections.

Singh35 (1998) explains that Panchayati Raj Institutions could not acquire the status and dignity of viable units of self government and responsive people’s body even after being in existence for about four decades. Several factors which are responsible for impeding the growth of Panchayats, include the absence of regular and periodic elections; prolonged supersessions, variation in structure, power and functions from state to state, insufficient representation of weaker sections such as SCs/STs/Women, inadequate devolution of power, lack of financial resources and lack of political will. Finally, the author concludes that, if these problems are removed, decentralization can become a step in the direction of a more integrated polity, a better performing economy and a model of social reconstruction for the smooth functioning of democracy and a genuinely socialist state.

Vithal\textsuperscript{36} (1998) highlights in his study an impressive list of twenty-nine developmental activities which could be entrusted to the Panchayats mentioned in the eleventh schedule of the Constitution. The author also discusses the reflection of various states about the twenty-nine developmental activities and concludes that the functions assigned to the Panchayati Raj do not cover all aspects of rural life and the state governments frequently make interventions in their day-to-day functioning which impede their role performance.

Sinha\textsuperscript{37} (1999) visualizes the importance of Panchayati Raj Institutions. To the author Panchayati Raj Institutions are gradually making their presence felt. However there is a scope for improving their working mechanism and functional procedures. For the successful working of Panchayati Raj Institutions, the lacunae regarding the transfer of subjects to Panchayati Raj need to be removed, training for the elected representatives may be initiated and infrastructural facilities must be improved.

Singh and Mohanty\textsuperscript{38} (1999) present their study which is the outcome of national workshop on the role of 73\textsuperscript{rd} and 74\textsuperscript{th} Constitutional Amendment in the scheduled areas, organized by the Jigyasu Tribal Research Centre in collaboration with the Tribal Development Division of the Ministry of Welfare, Government of India. The study deals with the 73\textsuperscript{rd} Amendment Act, the 1996 PESA (Panchayati Raj Extending to Scheduled Areas) Act, the role of Panchayati Raj Acts in the Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) areas, the role and participation of women in Panchayats, the background of the constitution (74\textsuperscript{th} Amendment Act) and extension of the Act to scheduled Areas, the status of women in the north-east area. The authors conclude that unless the tribal men shed their gender bias, it will be extremely difficult to empower tribal women to play an effective role in the local bodies.

\textsuperscript{38} Bhupinder Singh and Neeti Mohanty (ed.) 1999, \textit{Role of Democratic Decentralisation (Panchayati Raj in TSP Areas)}. Inter-India Publications. New Delhi.
Lima\textsuperscript{39} (1983) makes a study on the participation of women in the local government in the state of Maharashtra. To her, provisions for women in the local government will enable the rural women to emerge from the shadows of being labelled as 'tradition-bound', 'passive' 'backward'. It will equip them with the ability to make policy decisions in crisis-ridden situations and will remove the age old belief that effective role can alone be played by men in making policy decisions. The study also traces out factors or forces, that affect the status and role of the women and their active involvement in local affairs. To the author, in the local government too, the participation is limited to a few women belonging to the higher socio-economic group and their active participation is covered in the name of social prestige.

Sachidananda & Sinha\textsuperscript{40} (1984) make a cross-cultural study on the women to examine the level of their awareness on different constitutional provisions enacted for their wellbeing at different times. Their study is based on the response of a total number of 960 women and 960 men drawn from different cultural zones in the state of Bihar, viz. Magahi (Gaya district), Bhojpur (Bhojpur district), Maithili (Madhuban district) and Theibal (Ranchi district). They have also attempted to show the resources needed for generating awareness among the women, creating a healthy attitudinal perspective towards such women, and the reaction of men on the provisions made for the empowerment of the women. The authors clearly express that in the educationally backward states, the awareness of women about the constitutional provisions is quite thin and their attitude for the betterment of their status is quite pessimistic. Further, patriarchy is at its height where the males make a clear demarcation between the domestic and the outdoor roles on the basis of gender. They never consider the woman as active actor in the outdoor affairs which block their awareness and activities.

Jeffrey\textsuperscript{41} (1993) makes a pioneering study in the state of Kerala and tries to explain that the combination of politics and the autonomy of women


\textsuperscript{40} Sachidananda & P.P Sinha, 1984, \textit{Women's Right : Myth and Reality}. Printwell, Jaipur.

have produced the supposed ‘well being’ associated with the ‘Kerala Model’. The author perceives that there is a gradual disintegration of matrilineal social order and the rigidity of the class structure. In this process, though the women have lost their predominance in the domestic field as it was there under the matrilineal system, yet have made much gain by getting a strong footing in politics and making their autonomous position felt in a broader forum. Thus, autonomy in the family has now been substituted by empowerment in the greater society.

Jharta\(^{42}\) (1996) makes a micro-level study in the state of Himachal Pradesh about the role and impact of family and education on women’s participation in politics. Basing on the prevailing situation of Himachal Pradesh, the author has described that family and education can be taken as two major factors that can boost political participation of women and sometimes hinder their participation in politics. The study seeks to explore how and to what extent these variables affect the nature and scope of women’s participation in politics.

Kulkarni\(^{43}\) (1997) analyses the experiences and issues of women in the Panchayats of Madhya Pradesh. In Madhya Pradesh, the agenda of politics is much better handled by the common people themselves not only in the elections but also on day-to-day basis. So to the author, if women are given more power, politics and governance in India can have a humanizing effect and not a feminizing effect.

Hiremath\(^{44}\) (1997) makes a study of political participation scenario of women in Karnataka with special reference to Gulbange Division. The survey was conducted in ten villages with forty elected women members in Karnataka to know about their participation and decision-making powers and to detect to what extent women meaningfully participate in politics. To her, the women

---

participating in local politics are basically young or middle aged coming within the age group of 35 to 50 years. But most of them are illiterates for which they fail to understand their role as elected representatives and are propelled by the dictates of their male counterparts.

Mandal\textsuperscript{45} (1997) makes an analysis of the gender biased attitude based on a survey of ninety women Panchayat representatives of selected Gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samities, Zilla Parishads in Cooch Bihar district of West Bengal in 1995. In this survey, gender-bias is taken in somewhat non-conventional sense, bias against denoting injustice, indicating favourtism to exclusive women's issues/problems in their role performance.

Palanithurai, Dwaraki and Narayanswamy\textsuperscript{46} (1997) through their study touch the major issues of new Pancyati Raj system in the context of Tamil Nadu. To them, the major issues cropping up before the revamped Pancyati Raj system include meeting the rising demands of the rural population; forming the rural economy to coop up with the process of globalisation, mobilization of non-conventional resources, redefining rural women's power along with an attempt to deliver them in reality and designing local specific development plan.

Gowda\textsuperscript{47} (1998) makes a survey to understand the role of women members, their socioeconomic background, political status, role performances as leaders in Mandal Panchayat which is the lowest tier of Panchayati Raj system in Karnataka between 1987 and 1992. The survey is confined to the Mandal Panchayats of the developed (Nelamangalo & Doddaballpur) taluks and a backward (Kanakpur) taluk in Bangalore. The author concludes that women in developed rural Karnataka get adequate scope to participate effectively in political and developmental process at par with male members in accordance with constitutional provisions in comparision to the women in the backward taluks.

\textsuperscript{45} Amal Mandal, 1997, "Gender Bias in Panchayati Raj : Observations from a District", Kurukshetra, Vol. XLV (2), June.
Purushothaman\textsuperscript{48} (1998) makes a case study on the day-to-day functions of a woman's NGO namely Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) in the state of Maharashtra. The author in her study is hopeful about the effective role and relevance of women's representation in the Panchayati Raj Institutions. To her, NGO participation is a breeding ground for the political socialisation of the women. Initiating activities equip her with political outlook which she can use when represented in a policy making body.

Raju\textsuperscript{49} (1999) makes a comprehensive study of devolution of authority and responsibility in the decentralization process in Tripura. All the three tiers in Tripura have been allocated substantially higher funds to take up developmental works in comparison to other states. The decentralization process has brought tremendous changes in Tripura. The author concludes that women in Tripura are gradually asserting their positions and are becoming political reference groups for the women who have hither to accepted male dominance.

Chathukulam\textsuperscript{50} (1999) describes the experiences of Panchayats in the UT of Lakshadweep where there are ten village Panchayats and one district Panchayat. Out of the ten village Panchayats, four are headed by women. Lakshadweep has the unique record of having opposed to the reservation of seats for women. The Centre for Rural Management in Kottayam in Lakshadweep under the aegis of the Department of Planning has organized training for the Panchayat members and Chief Executive officers which have made the women potential members of the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Saini and Singh\textsuperscript{51} (2001) report that a study conducted in Kapurthala district reveals that a large majority of Panchayat members are above the age of forty years which indicates the rural youth are either reluctant to own responsibility or they are not given opportunity to participate in this process.


Very few of members are aware of the agricultural development and forest development in the village and almost all women Panchayat members are unaware of their functions, powers and duties which indicates their ornamental representation and participation in this political forum.

The Report Towards Equality\(^{52}\) (1974-75) prepared on the eve of the declaration of the women’s year and the decade for women, appears as the most comprehensive report on the status of women ever prepared in the country. This report thoroughly reflects the lagging condition of the women in social, economic and political field and concludes that this lagging contributes for relegating them to a secondary status in the society. This report no doubt was a supportive document for the Government to make the strategies for the political empowerment of women. This report strongly advocated that the status of women cannot be elevated in a conservative patriarchal society like India unless and until women are brought into the decision-making process.

Sharma\(^{53}\) (1978) makes a detailed and critical survey of the three tier system. The author concludes that all the Committees on the working of self governance so far appointed have made it a point that decentralised planning becomes meaningless unless and until women are associated with it. As, the women constitute almost half of the population, governance by males becomes parochial in character.

Mackley and Boutilier\(^{54}\) (1978) make a study of the socialization and role-conflict faced by the women. In their study, they describe the various factors related to political socialization and political mobilization of women. To them, political socialization and political mobilization take an added momentum with a higher level of education among the women and with a gender neutral social system.

---

Rajalakshmi55 (1985) empirically observes the role and participation of women in politics. In her study, she visualizes that; though the Constitution has provided political equality for both the sexes, women are grossly under-represented in the legislature.

Desai & Krishna Raj56 (1987) make an empirical observation of the status of women in the country. To them, the traditional patriarchial model on the one hand, and the modern capitalist development on the other have debarred majority of women from enjoying the rights in the field of education, family and politics in the Indian situation.

Somjee57 (1989) asserts that there is a tremendous need for assimilating women in the workforce to make them economically self sufficient and through that to ensure a significant change in their status. By making a comprehensive study of the western and eastern philosophies on the status of women, she focuses on the position of women in the family both from the Indian traditional perspectives and modern contexts. She also makes an empirical study of the trends in the mobility of women in both the rural and urban areas and also the interaction of class and caste structures of Indian society with women's vocational mobility. The author clearly spells out economic empowerment of women is a gateway to their political empowerment.

Arora58 (1990) makes a multidimensional analysis of women elite in India from the point of their role and status, motivation, their challenges to the other half of the society, their role playing and role conflict. She derives a picture from a study which project that the women elite have increasingly developed confidence, new insight into their new role in the power structure. Women today make a striving to overcome the barring of patriarchy, to avoid the role conflict by bringing a nice blend between their traditional domestic role and emerging outdoor roles. All these, the author perceives will no doubt set a new trend for women's empowerment and development in the country.

Pandey\textsuperscript{59} (1990) makes a critical survey in the city of Jaipur regarding the changing roles of women in politics. Basing on the survey, she traces the low political status of women in India and arrives at a conclusion that they should understand their own rights and adjust to the new needs and demands of a modern era both socially and practically. It will be a step forward in the understanding of the better political status of women in India.

Prabhavathi\textsuperscript{60} (1991) makes a critical analysis of the active participation of women in politics and their meaningful role as legislators and ministers at par with their male counterparts. The study finds that their involvement, identification, effectiveness, courage and capacity to face the challenging situation in such varied political activities are limited compared to their male counterpart. To the author, women for this reason lack vitality in the decision-making process.

Ranjana Kumari\textsuperscript{61} (1992) thrusts upon women's participation in policy and decision making process. The author bisects participation into two levels; one at the grass root level and the second is at national level. To her, women's participation in politics is basically limited as voters than as candidates. Further, the number of women electoral representation is quite meager and confined to an elitist section. So it needs a realization to bring women to the forefront of the political arena and to her it is high time to summon the NGOs, the activists, the academicians to pressurize the government to make right policies and implement them properly to make participation among women vigorous and mass oriented.

Ahuja\textsuperscript{62} (1992) makes a critical study in eight rural villages of Jaipur district in Rajasthan basing on a total sample of 753 women and 753 men. The main objective of this study is to make the women aware about their social and constitutional rights and the actual status they have in their respective

\begin{itemize}
\end{itemize}
societies. From the study, he arrives at a conclusion that though the Constitution has provided various protectional measures, most of the women and also men are not aware of these measures of the government which finally culminate in presenting a subjugated status to the women and depriving both the sexes to assert their basic human rights.

Chandra\textsuperscript{63} (1993) defines briefly the concept and strategies of women empowerment. To the author, through women's participation in decision-making, association in the development process, representation in governance, the gender discrimination can be curtailed.

Chopra\textsuperscript{64} (1993) makes a case study of the women parliamentarians over a period of forty years stretching from 1950 up to 1989 i.e., up to the 9\textsuperscript{th} Lok Sabha elections. To him, Indian women's participation in politics is the resultant of the ideological framework set forth for them by the Indian women's movement in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} century. The impact of social legislation for the women no doubt triggered their participation in politics, but to him, the political representation of the women in the union parliament is quite meager, confined to certain elitist, educated, affluent group. And their participation in the debate is rarely quite vigorous and forceful. The author hopes when political representation will be mass oriented among the women, it will create a significant lobby group and can expedite the passing of women friendly legislations for the betterment of women's status in the country.

Beate\textsuperscript{65} (1993) makes an analysis of the issues and ideas relating to the status of women in India. Women constitute almost half of the population and have provided a great deal of inspiration for significant social and political development including their empowerment in the closing decades of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. To the author, the women's movement considers the involvement and participation of women in politics as a critical factor in bringing gender issues into the political agenda of the country.

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\end{thebibliography}
Kaushik66 (1993) makes a comprehensive study on the women representatives in the Panchayati Raj Institutions. The author through her study detects mass illiteracy and lack of consciousness as the chief impediments for the real participation of women in these public bodies. Therefore, the author has emphasized for imparting political training/consciousness programmes and education to the women by different political parties. Extension of these services by the political parties can bring better political socialization and generate political articulation among the women to make them potential resources for decision-making.

Ramchander and Lakshmi67 (1993) make a detailed study about the participatory aspects of women and also women in politics and electoral process. The study explores in detail the participatory level of women and the status of these women with their socio, economic and political profile. The authors perceive low participation and physical representation without vocal communication as the chief characteristics among many women associated with the political process. Political apathy clothes majority women minds because of social conservatism, less access to education, vulnerability and uncertainty in the employment market, lack of command over property and the absence of any kind of political socialization.

Pal68 (1994) makes a study of the objective of decentralized plan for women's development and various components of such women's development plan. The author observes after more than four decades of planning in India women are far below their male counterparts because they are not being involved as participants and decision-makers in development process. As women are not literate, assertive and politically motivated counterparts, women's development has remained far behind the expected level. The author concludes that if these inherent weakness can be removed, women development plans can become successful.

---

Sahu⁶⁹ (1994) sketches the picture of participatory position of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions in different states, particularly after the various recommendations like the committee on Panchayati Raj Institutions (1976), the National Perspective Plan for Women (1988) and the 73rd constitutional Amendment Act, 1992. The author observes that the participation of women was thin till the enunciation of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act. But he says that the mere introduction of reservation for women is not sufficient to make women politically active. Special training is needed for them to provide them political knowledge and make them active leaders.

Mohanty⁷⁰ (1995) critically analyses the 73rd constitutional Amendment Act and the perspective of women’s political participation. To the author, reservation in Panchayati Raj Institutions for women are meant for their empowerment. So, the author opines that it is necessary to create the socio, economic and political conditions which would facilitate and encourage their participation.

Kanango⁷¹ (1996) discusses women’s leadership in the Panchayati Raj with special reference to the state of West Bengal. The author has divided his subject matter into two parts. The first part deals with the historical perspective to understand the involvement of Indian women in the national political process as it has laid the foundation for women’s wider involvement at the national level. In the second part, the author discusses the prospects of women’s leadership in the political arena in the background of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1993 as well as various movements including the movements spearheaded by women during the last three decades.

Samantaray⁷² (1996) discusses about the 73rd Amendment Act which reserves one-third of the Seats for the women, SCs / STs, and at the same time, it entrusts 29 responsibilities to the local Panchayats. She visualizes

---

that this reservation is expected to spearhead development among the women in the rural society through the women agents. To her, making institutional provisions and legal specifications are however, not sufficient enough to make the women active participants in the forum of the Panchayat. It needs the generation of awareness in the entire community, the implementation of reservation policy in true spirit, a change in the attitude of the male folk towards female and the rapid spread of education among the women to make them true political representatives of the people.

Samantry\(^7\) (1996) portrays the empowerment of women in Orissa can come to women only with their socio political advancement and an increase in their number in decision making positions and political role. The author has also suggested various innovative strategies for the empowerment of women.

Rath and Mallick\(^4\) (1996) critically analyse the introduction and implementation of 73\(^{rd}\) Amendment Act, 1992. The present article explains the society’s response towards the reservation of women, women’s response towards such responsibility and to what extent the women are well equipped with required education, experience and skill to discharge the function smoothly. The authors also highlight the existing problems related to the reservation for women.

Narayanan\(^5\) (1996) has given much stress to the comprehensive training programme for the women representatives in Panchayati Raj Institutions. The training programme should highlight the programmes on poverty alleviation, health and family welfare, education, literacy, drinking water supply, housing and road facilities for better and greater involvement of women representatives.

---

Mishra\textsuperscript{76} (1997) outlines the evolution of Panchayati Raj Institutions and gives a brief account of the position of women in the Panchayati Raj Institutions before the 73\textsuperscript{rd} constitutional Amendment Act. Finally she examines the probable role of women in the context of the 73\textsuperscript{rd} Amendment Act and whether women will be able to exercise political power through this system, what hurdles are there on their way, and how they can overcome these hurdles.

Lelithabhai\textsuperscript{77} (1998) highlights the provisions and reservation of women and weaker sections in Panchayat bodies and state legislatures. To the author, the new system of Panchayati Raj which gives importance to women’s participation in formal institution will definitely help to rectify the gender imbalances and to promote the interests of women. The author is optimist in his attitude that women’s participation in the village level politics can bring sweeping changes at social, economic and political levels.

Agarwal and Grover\textsuperscript{78} (1999) visualize in their study the various reasons for the low participation at the grass root level and the strategies to make women aware about their rights. To the author, the participation and governance of women have been severely limited due to the nexus of traditional feudal and family status. As a result, women are left on the periphery of the political process. So the author concludes that there is a need to make women more aware of their rights, be it social, political or economic. By gaining political rights, they can put across their views among the people. Political participation and governance would give women a sense of dignity as individuals.

Narayanan\textsuperscript{79} (1999) advocates for the political empowerment of women and women’s involvement in public life and decision-making process. To the author, political participation constitutes the first and the foremost step in

\begin{itemize}
\end{itemize}
women's struggle for gender justice and equality. Political empowerment of women to be real and effective must be coupled with social, cultural and economic rights, enjoyed by them in society. So it is necessary to break the barriers that hinder women's access to education, health and economic self-sufficiency. To the author, if we intervene in areas which enable women to stand on their own feet then we are sure that they are being prepared for greater responsibility in public life.

Panigrahi\textsuperscript{80} (1999) makes a cross-cultural study of humanistic and cultural interpretation of the paradox of human empowerment in the context of male dominance and female subordination. To the author, female power as a creative and natural force lies dormant in the unconscious depths of the women's psyche.

Pillai\textsuperscript{81} (2001) makes a study of political empowerment of women. After independence, the urban areas somehow or other have witnessed the entry of women in the field of medicine, administration, science, law and arts but the life of rural women have not undergone any change. Now the political empowerment of women through the 73\textsuperscript{rd} Amendment Act of the Constitution is crucial when almost a million women occupy positions as members and chairpersons in the three tier structure of Panchayati Raj institutions. The author opines that, this is a significant development to ensure transformation of the rural society. Without political empowerment of women, the country cannot hope for any sustainable development.

Annapurna Devi\textsuperscript{82} (1988) makes a study of representation and participation of women in Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad in the state of Orissa. The number of women representative is insignificant compared to the numerical figure of females who constitute half of the state's population. The goal for better representation of women is not an end in itself. The author concludes that greater representation for women

\textsuperscript{80} Meera Panigrahi, 1999, “Paradox of Women Empowerment: Some Humanistic and Cultural Observation”, Mainstream, Vol. XXXVII (44). October
\textsuperscript{81} Sudha Pillai, 2001, “Panchayati Raj Improve the Scene?” Yojana. Vol. 45. August.
in power politics must be allied with a greater effort to create awareness of their role and responsibility as members. Women need to acquire necessary self-confidence before they undertake to contribute effectively to the decision-making process of society. It is important to initiate the development training for women at the grass-root level.

Rath and Panda1* (1993) have examined the Community Development Programme implemented through the Gram Panchayat in Athagarh Block of Cuttack District and concluded that people’s participation in Gram Panchayat can bring rural development and a change in the rural situation. Without a proper will of the rural people, rural development will become a myth than being a reality.

Das* (1994) makes a study on the active and organized participation of women in politics collectively and focuses on participation of Orissan women in elections as candidates to various legislative bodies. To the author, to achieve a decisive role in politics, women have to become aware of power and their interest accordingly. Women must be convinced that there can be no better advocates of their interests than themselves. It would surely make a difference in polity as well as in society.

Rout5 (1994) describes Panchayati Raj Institutions as a new dimension in the post independent political development of the country. However, his description bears a pessimistic depiction of the working of Panchayati Raj Institutions. To him, though Panchayati Raj Institutions was initiated with the noble intention of Gram Swaraj and carried with it the Gandhian ideology, it could not function with proper spirit due to the whimsical attitude of the state government. Excessive bureaucratisation and lack of proper decentralization make the system totally dysfunctional. The author hopes that the pioneering attempt of Mr. Biju Patanaik will open a new vista in the history of Panchayati Raj Institutions in the state of Orissa.

---

Acharya\textsuperscript{86} (1994), Mohanty\textsuperscript{87} (1994) present the salient features of the Orissa Gram Panchayat Act, 1964, the Orissa Panchayat Samiti Act, 1959, which were amended in 1991, 1992 and 1993 and the Orissa Zilla Parishad Act, 1991 which was also enacted in 1991 to constitute Zilla Parishad at district level. These Acts have brought reservation policy for Socially and Economically Backward Classes (SEBC) including women in the Panchayati Raj institutions. Instances are not rare where the Gram Panchayats are dominated by higher Caste groups in the state of Orissa. Besides, the influence of M.L.A.s and M.P.s and the interference from local party leaders having much gender biased attitudes bring frequent conflicts in the day-to-day management of Panchayati Raj Institutions. Sometime lack of coordination among different functionaries of Panchayati Raj Institutions also creates bottlenecks in the administration.

Panda\textsuperscript{88} (1998) sketches the rural power structure after the induction of women into the Panchayati Raj Institutions and the pattern of decision making in rural local government in selected Panchayats of Orissa. For the purpose of the study, sixteen Panchayats located in a contiguous zone near Berhampur and Chhatrapur towns of Orissa were selected. Out of forty six respondents, only two belonged to families where their husbands were active in politics as member of CPI and Congress. All the rest had no political experience. The author finds that even after getting elected to the PRIs, the women find no spectacular change in their status. Women who were labourers continued the profession even after getting elected to the Panchayati Raj Institutions. So he concludes that this type of power position does not change the status of the women in the society.

Mohanty\textsuperscript{89} (1994) analyses the panorama of Orissa Panchayat Administrative system and its working which was introduced along with other


states of India in 1952. The study has also observed the constitution, power, functions and election of Gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishads.

Mohanty\(^9\) (1998) evaluates the role of elected women representatives in Panchayats in three districts of Orissa representing the three district zones, Jagatsinghpur the coastal Zone, Nuapada the Western Zone and Rayagada the Southern zone which are predominantly tribal in their composition. In the present study, the author has given more stress to capacity building of elected women representatives. In this regard, the role of voluntary organizations is more vital for women representatives as well as general women to re-enact their role as catalytic agents. In her opinion, the political institutions at the grass root level have enormous potential for initiating the process of participatory development in which gender plays an important role.

Pasayat & Barik\(^1\) (1998) vividly describe the problems which are creating obstacles in the smooth functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Orissa. From their discussion it is revealed that even after the adoption of reservation policy for socially and economically backward classes (SEBC) including women in the Panchayati Raj Institutions, instances are not rare where the Grampachayats are dominated by higher caste groups in the state of Orissa. Besides the influences of M.L.A.s and M.P.s, the interference from local party leaders bring frequent conflicts in the day-to-day management of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Panda\(^2\) (1999) portrays an empirical picture on the performance of ninety two women representatives elected to Gram Sabha and Panchayat Samiti levels in Orissa. To the author, the performance of women representatives like their success in election, political socialization and political participation are influenced by their socio-economic and political background.

On the basis of the foregoing review of literature, it becomes quite clear that a number of studies have been undertaken in the country as well as in the state on the general condition of the rural women, evolution and functioning of the Panchayat Raj Institutions, women's representation in the legislative bodies ranging from the grass root to the national level. The various problems reflected through the existing literature no doubt form the points of query of the present study. Further, the study noted that studies on women elite and leadership in the Panchayati Raj Institutions are quite scanty in the state. This has propelled the scholar to make a venture to study the awareness, perception and participation of the women elite in this grassroot level decision-making body and its impact on the status of rural women in general.