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CHAPTER – II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
This chapter reviews the available literature relating to the present study. The main purpose of this review is to give orientation and perspective to the present work.

Rajni Kothari in “Perspective of Decentralization” (1960)\(^1\) stated that a structure of democratic participation necessarily involves changing the structure of the state. This involves a change in the power relationships between the Centre, the States and lower down. Without such change, Indian democracy is bound to run into a deadlock and sooner or later flounder. Decentralization is the only way of ensuring radical change through the democratic process and not in violation of it. Instead of conceiving of Panchayat Raj as an agent of development, one has to conceive of development as an agent of Panchayat Raj institutions that is people’s power. The earlier concept grew out of the failure of the community development administration to involve people in the development process and hence, following the Balwant Rai Metha Committee report, the concept of Panchayat Raj institutions as better instruments for the same development replaced the concept of viewing development as an instrument of the people.

Chalinvedi, T.N. in his research study titled “Resources Mobilization at Panchayat Level” (1972)\(^2\) observed that the resources of the Panchayat Raj bodies were meager when compared to the functions assigned to them. The author is of the view that moderate expansion of resources is not a problem if there is not much resistance from the elected representatives to tap the available resources. More resources, pointed out
by the researcher should be placed at the disposal of Panchayats to discharge their functions.

Seshadri, K. in his book titled “Political Linkages and Rural Development” (1976) analysed the interdependence between the local and the higher levels of administration in Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat. The author projected the general citizens as participators and moulders of the political policies and their interconnection with local leaders. Seshadri concluded that the setting up of structures of democratic functioning is not in itself an assurance of democratic functioning.

Gaur, M.K. in his article entitled “Political Stability and Good Governance” attempted to study the stability, which provides the canvas for creativity. In the political context the term ‘stability’ refers to political stability irrespective of the form of government. Political stability lies on the following four pillars:

a) Machinery of government, comprising its three wings, that is, political executive, legislature and judiciary, b) bureaucracy, c) army, and d) the people which includes media and opinion leaders.

Data from United Nation’s Survey (1980) of member Governments indicated the levels of elected women officials at the local level and improvements have taken place in a few cases. (i) In the German Democratic Republic, women in local office increased from 32.3 per cent in 1970 to 36 per cent in 1977, (ii) In the USSR in 1978, 49 per cent of
the deputies to the local Soviets were women, (iii) In Kenya 20 per cent elected to office were women, (iv) Romania increased local women representatives from 30 to 33 per cent from 1975 to 1978, (v) In Denmark women in local government increased from 12.1 to 17.7 per cent from 1975 to 1978, (vi) In Sweden, women in local government increased from 17 to 23 per cent during 1975 to 1978, (vii) Lebanon reported 10 per cent of elected local government positions were held by women in 1975 and (viii) In New Zealand, urban women increased their position in local government from 11.9 to 16.4 per cent from 1975 to 1977.

Robert, N. Kearney carried out a study on Women in Politics in Sri Lanka (1981)⁵. In this research, the author has viewed that the traditional political role of women has been seen as originating in patterns of childhood socialization that defines women’s role and concerns as limited to the private sphere at home and family, and that assigns the public sphere within which politics is located to men. From 1947 to 1977 only four per cent of the members of Sri Lanka’s Parliament had been women. Kearney concluded that however, the opportunities for women to obtain political office, while meager, do not appear to be markedly different from those of women in most other contemporary nations”.

Shaul, S. Marine (1982)⁶ commented that there is no country in the world today where women have equal status with men in all of the major areas of life while making an international assessment on the status of women in local governments. Few women
like Indira Gandhi and Golda Meir had held important positions but often, the women who have held national office are from upper class families with a history of political participation, are highly educated or single. In most developing countries, low level of education has led to women not being aware of their rights.

Hazel D’ Lima in his study entitled ‘Women in Local Governments in Maharashtra’ (1983), dealt with the role of women in Panchayat Raj Institutions, particularly in local bodies of Maharashtra covering 4 divisions namely Vidarbha, Marathwada, Pune and Bombay. Attention has been focused on the role of women in the higher tiers namely, Zilla Parishad and Panchayat Samiti. The sample covers 24 rural districts and the total women members were 320, but the researcher took a sample of 50 per cent of the regional population; the district-wise stratification and calculation led her to choose 153 women-member. The study traces the social emergence of women in the country, socio-economic political background of women members in the Panchayat Samities and Zilla Parishads. She has not studied the perception of officials and non-officials (Male-members) on the role of women members in the Panchayat Raj and the participation of the women members’ in the meetings of the institutions she has covered. Her attention has been only on women members social background, social awareness and their outlook.
Bose, A. in his book entitled “The Movement for People’s Planning Process” (1986) studied the movement for people’s planning process in Midnapore District of West Bengal. It revealed that the starting point of decentralization from the bottom should be the village and the framing of rural development plans should start with listing by villagers themselves.

Padmanabhan, C.B. in his article on “Resource Mobilization and Participatory Planning” (1987) stated that there will not be adequate resources for human development if Government funds alone are to be depended upon. It is imperative to use local resources and community resources will have to be mobilized. Also the interdependence between education, health, sanitation and other social development sectors has to be taken care of, because all of them jointly promote rural development. The mobilization of local resources also promises the simultaneous attainment of other objectives which are special to rural development, like greater decentralized planning, increasing popular participation and ensuring a greater degree of self-reliance on the part of local communities. Micro planning, embodied in the Ninth Plan, alone cannot cope with the highly particularized and localized problems of identifying development potential in the rural communities.

Bookman and Morgan in their work on “Women and the Politics of Empowerment” (1987) is filled with pictures of women whose lives the masculinity ideology of disciplines has said are not worthy of our interest. Bookman and Morgan
awaken all kinds of ideas about where to go from here. “Women and Politics” are
drawing together an excellent compilation of case studies of community and workplace
organizing. Bookman and Morgan redefined the political arena and process.

Department of Women and Child Development of the Government of India
conducted a study which had been published in the form of a report\textsuperscript{11} titled ‘National
Perspective Plan for Women 1988-2000’ (1988), which has come out with some
significant recommendations on the role of women in the PRIs. They are: (a) 50 per cent
of all grassroots functionaries must be women (b) 30 per cent reservation at Zilla
Parishad levels (c) 30 per cent of executive heads of all bodies from Village Panchayats
to district level and certain percentage of Chief Executive of Panchayat Raj bodies at
lower, middle and higher levels must be reserved for women, (d) to declare a certain
percentage of constituencies, in the lower tiers of PR as exclusive women
constituencies, and (e) all political parties must ensure that at least 30 per cent of the
candidates fielded for election are women.

Manikyamba, P. conducted a study on ‘Women in Panchayat Raj Structures’
(1989)\textsuperscript{12}, is an examination of the working of Panchayati Raj in general, the role of
women as beneficiaries and benefactors in the socio-economic and political processes
of development, assessing the role of women presiding officers of the PR. The sample
includes one Zilla Parishad (30 members) two Panchayat Samithies (5 members), five
Mandals (34 members) and five Gram Panchayats (19 members) in the State of Andhra
Pradesh. The sample of 88 women members covered the period from 1956 to 1989, looked into the socio-economic background. Among other findings, the study revealed that education and participation are inter-related. Economic status gives a sense of confidence and encouragement to participate. Caste plays an important role in selecting members. The study covers a long period that is from 1956 to 1989, leaving many other important researchable aspects untouched. Manikyamba was of the view that given the opportunity, talented and interested women could play very effective leadership role in politics.

Alma, T. Junsay and Tim B. Heaton (1989) have emphasized that most developed countries have experienced rapid transformations in their labour market structures in recent years. Of particular importance is the dramatic increase in female labour-force participation. Traditionally, women lagged behind men in joining the labour force for gainful employment; but the last three decades have witnessed an upsurge in female economic participation outside the home. In the words of Ralph E. Smith it was highlighted that ‘The workplace is no longer a man’s world’ along with the expansion in size, the female labour force has also changed considerably in composition. In the past, single woman (which includes the widowed, divorced, and separated) joined the labour force much more frequently than married women. But married women are now in an increasing proportion of the working population. In an international seminar on the Employment of Women, sponsored by the organization for Economic Cooperation and
Development, the general report recognized the changing economic activities of married women.

Sivanna, N. in his study dealing with the Panchayati Raj System under the Act of 1959 on ‘PR Reforms and Rural Development’ (1990)\textsuperscript{14}, has focused on the role of the PRIs in the formulation and implementation of rural development programmes. While discussing the role of scheduled castes and women in Panchayati Raj Institutions, at the Taluk Development Board meeting the author observed that “the involvement of women members in these organizations was not up to the expected mark. Although, there are statutory provisions under the earlier PR System to ensure their representation; their socio-economic conditions are not conducive to their effective involvement”.

Muniyandi, K.A. in the article on “Strategy of Working with Rural People” (1992)\textsuperscript{15}, stressed that the basic approach of the Gandhian model of development requires active involvement and participation of man, building his own destiny. In his opinion, this is possible if some belonging to the so-called rich and middle class, voluntarily, instead of moving towards consumerism, are willing to sacrifice and share their pleasures in the interests of the downtrodden of society. For rural India, time is running out and it must adopt strategies and methods to transform the socio-economic life of the people to suit Indian ingenuity and culture. Integrated development sets forth
a strategy of working with rural people – a strategy in which participation by all is both
the means and the end.

Krishnan, M.G. made an analytical study on ‘New Pattern of Panchayati Raj
System in Karnataka’ (1992)\textsuperscript{16}. The study dealt with the evolution of local government
institutions in India in general and Karnataka in particular. In analyzed the various
provisions of the 1985 Act, functions of the Zilla Parishad and Mandal Panchayats.

Palanithurai, G. in his article on “Needing Social Action for Effective Panchayat
Raj Functioning” (1993)\textsuperscript{17} has indicated the fact that, in the process of democratic
decentralization of powers, initiatives are from the centre and not from the people. But
to ensure success to this dispensation, initiatives have to come from the people. Social
action, community participation, owning the institutions and taking responsibilities are
the imperatives for the success of the Panchayat Raj Institutions. In the process of
devolution of powers, people have to come to the forefront by pushing the Government
to the backgrounds. He has underlined the importance of couscientization of the people
on the role of the people in governance at the grassroots.

Palanithurai, G. in his article entitled “Empowerment of Women – A Novel
Exercise” (1994)\textsuperscript{18}, is based on an exercise done in villages with the rural women. This
exercise was done before the enactment of the Tamil Nadu Panchayat Act. In this
article, the perception of women of the institutions involved in development, role of
development functionaries and the people has been analyzed. Further the missing link
between the people and the government is identified. It clearly demonstrates to what
extent women can take up the responsibilities under the new dispensation. The capacity
level of the women has also been highlighted in this article.

**Palanithurai, G.** in his article on “Empowering People or Bureaucracy” (1994)\(^1\), is
a review of the Tamil Nadu Panchayat Act, 1994. The author has critically evaluated the
main provisions of the Panchayat Act in terms of the basic framework developed by the
Central Government for devolution of powers through the 73\(^{rd}\) Amendment to the
Constitution of India. The article has indicated the major deviations of the Tamil Nadu
Act from the spirit of the Constitution. The bureaucracy has been given the power of
control over the Panchayat Institutions. People should have been given supervisory and
control power over the Panchayats. It indicates the overriding power of the District
Collector. It makes a fervent plea for changing such provisions.

**Bhargava, B.S. and Raphad** have conducted a study of the “Working of Gram
Sabha in Karnataka” for a period of five years (1987-92) in Bangalore (Rural) and
Darwad Districts (1994)\(^2\). The study brought out the fact that the structural
arrangements for people’s participation in the decentralized planning process through
Gram Sabha at the grassroot level became almost a defunct mechanism or a non-starter
in the study area. The discussion with higher officials in the concerned department at
the state headquarters revealed that the performance of the Gram Sabha was not up to the expected extent at operational level all over Karnataka State though it was reported that the Gram Sabha functioned better in certain pockets of the State, especially in the coastal districts.

**Barbara Wilson and Nama Chowdry (1994)** defined political participation as “Citizens Active Engagement with Public Institutions” including voting, campaigning and pressuring either individually or through a group. There is consensus in the literature that the more highly educated are more likely to participate in politics. If women are perceived to lack the necessary skills for a political career, their representation will be lower. Empirical evidence suggests that to those females face higher costs of voting than males, for example traditional gender roles that place the boarded of child rearing on female’s decrees the time available to devote to the political market. Female support for female candidates arises from a concern that gender issues are over looked due to the lack of women in office. In the United Kingdom married women participate more than single women.

**Palanithurai, G.** in his work titled “Empowering People for Prosperity: A Study in New Panchayat Raj System” (1994), examined the realistic scope for establishing a governing system at the grassroots to deliver services and goods with the active participation of the people. It also examined the reasons for the establishment of the New Panchayat Raj System. Palanithurai further analyzed the difficulties involved in the
process of establishing the first government at the grassroots. The study suggested a variety of means to overcome the problems and hurdles in the process of decentralization of power. It analyzed the people’s perception of grassroots of democracy. On the whole it envisages a new economic scenario in the rural areas if decentralization is perceived properly. In the orbit of governance, it maintains that the establishment of institutions at the grassroots for governance creates a new scenario in Indian federalism. The likely relationship among the three tiers of governance has been discussed.

Palanithurai, G. in his article in tamil titled “Role of Women in New Panchayat Raj System” (1995)\(^{23}\), says that his work is the result of an experiment conducted in a village near Dindigul. This exercise indicated the possible roles to be taken up by the women in the rural areas both individually and collectively in the Panchayat activities by which women and Dalit issues can be effectively solved. An array of activities have been indicated which have no financial implications. The Panchayats can make use of such resources for administering development.

Merile Karl’s compendium (1995)\(^{24}\) focused on the statuses of working-class and low income women from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, thereby giving attention to women who have been largely ignored as actors in the political arena. These rich and varied case materials are useful for the scholar-researcher, the activist, and for the teacher in women’s studies. The book is devoted to bridging the gap between theory
and practice, between feminism and working class women. And it succeeds, through fourteen widely disparate, yet complementary essays about working-class women, Black, Latina and White, struggling on the job and in their communities for social change.

**Bidyut Mohanty** (1995) argued that if reservation for women in Pachanyat Raj Institutions are to lead to their empowerment in real terms social economics and political conditions which facilitate and encourage their participation need be created. In April 1993, the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act came into force and accordingly. All the states have amended their laws relating to local body since it is for the first time in the political history of India that one third of total seats in the local self government institutions have been statutorily reserved for women the legislation has several important implications for empowerment of women it has created a silent revolution in the country however in one’s view the reservation itself can only be regarded as the first step in this direction it is necessary to create proper social economic and also political conditions to enable women to participate effectively in the local government institutions without endangering their positive value of prevailing family systems.

**Mishra, S.N.** (1996) reviewed the interface between the Gram Sabhas and the Panchayats in an article entitled “An Interface between Gram Sabha and Panchayats”. While supporting the idea of Mahatma Gandhi one may hope that the devolution of funds for development work in the Panchayat Raj system should first come to the Gram
Sabha to decide its needs according to its priorities, how much to keep for itself, how much to contribute to the intermediate level Panchayat and how much to the district level Panchayat.

**Palanithurai, G.** in his book titled “Empowering People: Issues and Solutions” (1996)27, presented the outcome of a national workshop on the New Panchayati Raj System. The author mentioned the various issues overclouding the new system and the solutions for such issues along with an outline for participatory planning in the New Panchayati Raj System, its various stages, techniques and imperatives.

**The Rajiv Gandhi Foundation** at New Delhi (1997)28 stated that revitalization of Panchayati Raj is an invaluable resource for research on people’s perception of the State Panchayat Acts, administrative fiats of State Governments and the response of the bureaucracy and the existing power elite. It also points to what needs to be done to realize the concept of self-governance at the district level and below to generate a Panchayat-friendly atmosphere.

**Palanithurai G.** in his article in tamil entitled “New Panchayati Raj and Rural Economy” (1997)29 has narrated the existing economic conditions of the rural areas and suggested ways and means to reconstruct the rural society through the new Panchayati Raj System. A new system has been created which has to be perceived as a system for development and not for politics. By playing a critical role both the leaders and the
people can improve the rural economy drastically, for which Local Body institutions have to be perceived properly.

An article by Palanithurai, G. “Empowering People: An Agenda for Immediate Action” (1997) has underscored the implications of people’s participation in the process of development of the rural areas. Article has outlined the framework of devolution of powers in which the author has indicated the main thrust area. Empowering people is the focus of this new dispensation. Further, to realize the basic objectives and spirit of the 73rd Amendment, the steps to be taken have been indicated.

Nira Yuval-Davis (1997) discussed some of the major issues which need to be examined in the reading of citizenship however; its basic claim is that a comparative study of citizenship should consider the issue of women’s citizenship not only by contrary to that of men. But also in relation to women’s affiliation to dominant or subordinate groups their ethnicity, origin and urban or rural residence. It should also consideration global and transnational positioning of these citizenships article challenges the gender-blind and west centric character of many of the hegemonic theorization of citizenship focusing in particular on the questions membership in the community group rights and social difference and the public private and active passive have been constructed to difference between different kinds of citizen.
Palanithurai, G. in his article titled “Planning in Peoples Panchayat” in Tamil (1998)\textsuperscript{32} explained the importance of empowering people. The Panchayat brings powers to the people. Now Panchayats are under the clutches of the bureaucracy. This position has to be change. Development activities are being carried out in a supply driven mode demand driven mode, people cannot own the responsibility. To perform this task, planning has to be done at the grassroots where their needs and priorities will be finalized and their vision protected. Hence the article indicates planning as an instrument to empower the people.

Palanithurai, G. in his another article in tamil titled “New Panchayati Raj System in the Development Process” (1998)\textsuperscript{33}, has explained the process of development at present and indicated the opportunities available for panchayats to make use of them for the benefit of the people. Panchayat leaders should enhance their capacity and understand the process and take initiatives at their level to tap these opportunities. The Panchayat, by its proactive function, poses a challenge to globalization.

Palanithurai, G. his article on “Planning for Village Development” (in Tamil) (1998)\textsuperscript{34} highlighted the steps to be followed in plan preparation. It indicates the essential conditions for effective involvement of the people and the officials in the process of preparation of perspective plan. It explains the two-way process in this exercise. It should be both an annual and a five year integrated plan. The article
underlines the importance and the implication of the process and pleads for such an initiative.

Palanithurai, G. in his book on “Perception of Grassroots Democracy and Political Performance” (1999)\textsuperscript{35} consists of two sections. The first section deals with grassroots democracy. It argues that the stakeholders and the elites who are at the helm of affairs have to conceive the concept properly for proper implementation of the concept. So this study examines the perception of the elites comprising of both leaders and functionaries of the administrative system who handle power. While analyzing the perception of the leaders and functionaries the author has analyzed the factors which are responsible for the formation of the perception. He has suggested the needed perception for proper positioning of the institutions are the grassroots.

Santha, E.K. in his work carried out a comparative study of the Political Participation of Women Leaders in Three States namely, Haryana, Kerala and Tamil Nadu (1999)\textsuperscript{36}. It analyzed to what extent the representatives are exercising their power, how they tackle their problems, how effectively they provide leadership in the Panchayat system in attacking the problems. By taking samples from two districts in each state the study addresses the above said questions in the light of the position and problems of the womenfolk in the respective states. This study suggested the ways and
means of improving the conditions of the women and elected women representatives. It provides lead questions which can be investigated by research scholars in due course.

Mehta, A. observed in his article the “Report of the Committee on Panchayati Raj Institutions” (1999)\(^{38}\) that people’s participation has been very low in Gram Sabha meetings due to the large area of the Panchayat. Hence, Mehta suggested that, in order to ensure effective people’s participation in the gram Sabha meetings, meetings should be organized at village level and these may be designated as Sub-Gram Sabha meetings. After holding Sub-Gram Sabha meetings, a meeting of all Sub-Gram Sabhas may be held at the village which has the highest population in the Gram Panchayat. And if a Village Panchayat has only one village having a large population where participation of the entire village is not practicable, Sub-Gram Sabha meetings at ward level may be held.

Palanithurai, G. (2000)\(^{39}\) analyzed the present scenario of governance in India and its implications for the society from the perspective of people’s participation in the process of development. It is a collection of essays touching upon a wide variety of subjects, namely, election, governance, people’s participation, development, devolution of powers, reconstruction of the political structure, planning exercise done by the leaders at the grassroots. It focuses mainly on the positive aspects of the devolution of
powers and people’s participation in the process of economic development and social justice.

Mandakranta Bose conducted a study of “Women in India” (2000) explored some of the less frequented areas in the field. In recent years, studying women’s issues or reevaluating literature by and about women has been a major activity in the academic enterprise and the world, and lives of Indian women have been fertile ground for both fieldwork and theorizing. The reason for undertaking it is to provide a path to many untapped primary sources of information about women’s lives. To examine India’s three-thousand-year-old culture, including vast bodies of literature spanning every area of public and personal life, is, indeed, a daunting task. Not surprisingly, although valuable contributions have been made in some areas, a scholarly sense of the entire domain awaits development. Our incomplete knowledge of sources affects both research and pedagogy.

Anna Arent’s (2001) work revealed that education has a large influences on participation decisions, historically, female have had lower educational attainment than males on average. Once educational differences are controlled for working women appear to vote more offer than males it women are socialized to believe that politics is male domain in which they should play a limited role: active participation may generate large costs. Women constitute a large group whose members needy are satisfied through the political participation.
Anipama Roy (2001) articulated about women as citizens in India was imprecated within a web of discourses of liberation and equality which made the national political and religions culture communities the primary and often contesting source of a person’s identity as citizen. The primary given to community membership, and the manners in which women were implicated in it. It has had important ramifications for giving voice to women as citizen and for carving out a space for women’s politics.

Palanthurai, G (2001) in his study of Tamilnadu observed that women have come to positions in the local bodies as provisions have been made in the constitution. The outlook of the society towards the women has started changing. Author from his experience suggests that women need orientation, sensitization, capacity building, and information and counseling continuously through organizations. The ongoing experiments and experiences suggest that periodical training; orientation and sensitization can help the women leaders to perform the assigned role in a better way. He argues that the Government will respond to the needs of these women leaders only when social organization and groups support them.

Datta in his book entitled “Panchayats, Rural development and Local Autonomy: The West Bengal Experience” (2001), has made an attempt to study the functioning of Gram Panchayats in two districts of West Bengal, viz., Birbhum and Jalpaiguri. Data has rigorously analyzed the data relating to socio-economic features of the Grain Panchayat
population, villagers' perception as well as leaders' perceptions about the working of the system, people's initiative and resource mobilization etc. The study has revealed some of the anomalies in the working of the Panchayat systems in West Bengal. For instance 46.33 per cent of villagers in Birbhum and 23 per cent in Jalpaiguri are not aware of Gram Sansad meeting. Regarding resource mobilization the finding is that neither the party members nor the Panchayat members have taken up the issues of resource rising seriously. The research deserves commendation for presenting a vivid picture of the real life situation pertaining in the area under study.

Bhattacharya in her book “Panchayati Raj in West Bengal: Democratic Decentralisation or Democratic Centralization” (2002), discusses the over the last few years. Bhattacharya argues that the earlier enthusiasm among the rural population of West Bengal about Panchayats and their activities has subsided. The books attempts to find out the reason for this gradual change in the people's attitude towards Panchayats. In this study different indicators of democratic decentralization used for developmental activities being pursued, actual participation of elected representatives as well as villagers in the decision-making process and the extent of control exercised by political parties in the decision-making act ivies of Gram Panchayats have been studied. A key message of this book is that a strong and centralized party organization of CPI (M) that could bring about discipline in Panchayats and promote rural development activities should also encourage people's participation and their involvement in local
governmental activities in line with the commitment to democratic decentralization. Both people's participation and their development can be considered the prerequisite for successful self-governments at local levels for rural areas.

Malik in his book entitled “The New Panchayati Raj: Rural Transformation in the state of Haryana” (2002) examines the structure and functioning of Panchayati Raj system in Haryana under the Haryana Panchayati Raj Act, 1994. This book is the first systematic attempt to study the 'new' Panchayati Raj in Haryana. It presents a comprehensive overview of the organizational structure and democratic functioning of PRIs in Haryana. The book highlights not only the socio-economic background of Panchayat leaders but also projects their views and perceptions on a very wide gamut of issues ranging from empowerment of women to bureaucracy and prospects and problems of resource mobilization.

According to Khanna and et. al. (2002), empowerment is a process, conscious and continuous, comprising enhancement of capacity building, gaining confidence and meaning full participation in decision making. Empowerment enables them to participate in development as a democratic process. It is a process that emancipation women from their subordination and lack freedoms and it enable to gain the vital capabilities for decision making and participation with democratic process.
Menon and Bakshi in their book entitled “Panchayati Raj in Scheduled Areas” (2003) have made a critical evaluation and comparative analysis of the implementation of the provisions of the Panchayats (Extension of the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 and Conformity State Panchayat Act with special reference to the powers of Gram Sabha. Based on field studies in the States of Maharashtra, Orissa and Rajasthan it examines the nature, functions and the role of the Gram Sabha. The authors have observed that out of eight states the provisions of the even States Panchayat Acts in the Scheduled Areas (Except Bihar) have been amended in Pursuance of the extension Act of 1996. The Rajasthan Ordinance lacks direction and does not fully reflect the contents and spirit of the Extension Act. All these aspects have been evaluated in this study.

Pal’s article entitled “Gap between Needs and Resources of Panchayats in India” (2003), is a result of an empirical quantitative research conducted in Saharanpur district of Uttar Pradesh. The book consists of eleven chapters. He points out life devolution of power and functions to the Panchayats and the developmental role being played by the Panchayats at various levels. Though they have a role to play in the implementation of the centrally sponsored schemes but they have no say in formulation of these schemes. The author suggests restructuring of the entire culture of plan formation and implementation for meaningful bottom-up planning. He has investigated the basic needs like drinking water, sanitation, primary education, health care, roads and paths, and electricity, and has examined the existing status of these services in the selected
villages and the adequacy of financial resources of Panchayats. He has also studied the existing and potential income of Gram Panchayats and has given recommendations useful for policy makers and practitioners. According to him, Panchayats should put in practice their legal powers of raising financial resources.

Amal Mandal in his article entitled “Women in Panchayati Raj Institutions” (2003) emphasized that with the statutory reservation provision; more than one million rural women have now assumed Panchayat seats as members and one-third of them as Chairpersons in almost all states and Union Territories. The induction of women in Panchayat institutions is in sharp contrast to their representation in other political strata as well as in earlier Panchayat institutions. But the very integration of women has evoked conflicting waves-elation, euphoria particularly in print and public pronouncements and apprehension and even enmity in social and political parlance. This empirical study cited above assesses social and political background of woman members in one district of West Bengal, evaluates various facets of their participation and role performance in Panchayat institutions, ascertains the nature of their social acceptability and informs both the positive and negative aspects of reservation policy for women. The study has brought forth few exclusive and absorbing features: woman members are not dummy or docile; their participation both at formal Panchayat process and informal levels is no less exalting. The study contents in the main that appraisal of women member’s Panchayat role performance and expectation of women’s
development drives essentially to be posited on the given social situation, political
dynamics and functional expanse of Panchayats which are not pointedly propitious for
women to realize any fervent social expectation.

Neema Kudya in his article on Engineering Elections through Gender Quotas
(2003) stated that it is a crucial component of strategic that seeks to empower women
through increased participation in the political system. In the south Indian state of
Karnataka this experiment has seen mixed results. It has made women more visible.
Decreased levels of corruption in Panchayat Raj institutions and increased self efficiency
of women representatives it is more difficult. However to claim a substantive change in
institutions priorities and state accountability as important is the fact that non-
governmental organizations often provide significant training and support in successful
cases.

Baluchamy’s investigated a study of the “Functioning of Panchayati Raj
Institution in Dindigul District of Tamil Nadu” (2004). The study reveals that
participatory democracy will become a reality under the Panchayati Raj System only if
the people really and actively participate in the affairs and the activities of the
Panchayat. The mechanism which facilitates community participation is the Gram
Sabha. So strengthening and widening the functioning of the Gram Sabha is the best
means of ensuring community participation. Only when the people, in their role as Gram Sabha Members participate become a reality and the Panchayati Raj will become a system of the people, by people and for the people.

Singh in his book titled “Panchayati Raj Finances in Madhya Pradesh has provided an account of the financial position of Panchayats in Madhya Pradesh” (2004), in general and Raigarh district in particular. The book examines the fiscal relations between the state and Panchayats gives a description of the additional functions assigned by the State Government after the Constitution general and Raigarh district in particular. The book examines the fiscal relations between the state and Panchayats gives a description of the additional functions assigned by the State Government after the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act 1992 to all three levels of Panchayats.

The roles which were not performed by majority of the women members were namely eradication of corruption and gambling (49 percent) participating in village community work (47 percent) construction and maintaining Godown 46 percent followed by 43 percent of the respondents performing the role viz. participating in village development programme bringing follow land under cultivation (43 percent) and inspiring women towards formation of Mahila Mandal (43 percent) and recovering
house tax and utilizing for village development work (38 percent) and prohibiting the liquor production and consumption (35 percent) and controlling crop menace (24 percent).

Surya Narayana and Nagalakshmi (2005) highlighted that the government has implemented many development programmes through five year plans. They were found to be unfruitful due to social and cultural constraints of the rural population. The major factors which hinder the development activities are low level of literacy lack of exposure and conduct with the outside world immediate to their environs. Development programmes in the form of benefits are not reaching the large human population at the grass root level. Time bound nature of these programmes is a limiting factor to implement it to the full extent and to get the expected results. Big communication gap exists between the different stages of implementing the programmes. Lack of commitment by the implementing officers lastly one can say that if the work of the rural women in off farm activities are accounted are recognized their power can be utilized for improving their socio economic conditions.

Rajput Ahuja Khan has studied the “Role of Women in SHGs” (2005). View points at Panchayat level in a district of Uttaranchal, it is clear that recommendations emerge from the study includes systematic sensitization of members of SHGs regarding multiple roles. They can play their short term and long term trainings, capacity building among SHGs in the village motivational strategies for their active participation in Gram
Panchayat for taking up children and women’s developmental programmes for their support of village families and their overall development. Need for such interventions at Gram Panchayat levels to be recognized and gram Panchayat agenda should also incorporate such discussion is their open meeting.

Palanithurai, G. and Ragupathy, V, in their book titled “Functional Efficiency of Gram Sabha” (2006), have evaluated the performance and efficiency of the Gram Sabha in Tamil Nadu, in the light of the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution of India. Evaluating the functioning of Gram Sabha meeting in terms of assigned roles and responsibilities as per the Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, it studied the trends of people’s participation in the meeting, efforts made by Panchayat Presidents to ensure their active participation, perception of the leaders and people about the role of the Gram Sabha, implications of the Gram Sabha meeting, and the difficulties faced by the Panchayat leaders. It also suggested the ways and means to bring efficiency to Gram Sabha functions. The book will be useful for researchers, Panchayat functionaries and development workers.

To sum up, the present research works reviewed the availability of a wide range of studies, each focused on specific themes at different locations. In the above reviews various scholars, researchers, academicians and agency have given their opinion, views
and perceptions about the women representatives of Panchayat Raj Institutions. Elected women representatives have the following components: political awareness, political socialisation, participation and decision making and responsible participation in a political process. The above studies reviewed have not attempted to study the above dimensions on micro-level. Similarly, the details of empowerment have not occupied much place in their views. Empowerment is not only holding authority on matters but exercising prudent decision makings in matters of importance. Unfortunately, women are deprived of this. Hence, this research is designed in such a way as to touch the above vital areas in district level. Thus, the present study mainly revolves within the ambit of studying the past background of the elected women representatives’, present position, their future aspiration and how much their contribution for the rural development. The research will also throw light on various salient points of the set up of Panchayat Raj Institution and elected women representatives. This study will fill the gap.
REFERENCES


