CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Overview

The important objectives of review of literature are to acquire information about what has been done in the field of study, to gather up-to-date information about previous researches in the area, to obtain information on the topic of investigation, to avoid duplication of the work that has already been done in that area and to help the investigator to study the various aspects of the concept in its multi-dimensional perspective. The scholar has reviewed the available literatures on the Panchayati Raj Institutions in India for proper understanding of Dalit women empowerment in the Panchayati Raj Institutions in this chapter.

Amal Mandal has written a book titled, “Women in Panchayati Raj Institutions”. In this book he says 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 posted 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.¹

G.Palanithurai’s, “Empowering People: Issues and Solutions” is an edited work containing a number of articles. “NGO and Grassroots Democracy”, by an NGO, Pradhan, contextually has examined the relationship between the NGOs and the Panchayats. It has suggested ways to improve the relationship between the Panchayats and the NGOs. N.D. Mani and P. Arumugam have clearly explained the need for geographic information system for grassroots level planning. A Rajeswari in her article “Panchayati Raj Institution and Women,” has examined the role of Panchayat institutions in empowering women. N. Narayanasamy and R. Ramesh, in their article “Participatory Planning in the New Panchayati Raj System,” have explained the scope for participatory planning at the grassroots and projected the steps to be followed in this exercise. S. Narayanasamy has explained the scope for establishing a participatory governance at the community level through Gram Sabha in his article “Gram Sabha in the new Panchayati Raj System in India: Major Issues”. In another article, “Issues of New Panchayati Raj System” he has extensively analyzed the major issues that are emerging in the process of the establishment of institutions at the grassroots for governance.²

“The Panchayats of the Scheduled Areas” by B.R. Purohit explains the distinct characteristics of the tribals in India and the system of Panchayats to be established in the tribal areas through this new

provision of the Constitution. M.P. Boraian, in his article “Governance from the Grassroots,” succinctly explains the nexus between the people and the Government in the new context. Prabhat Datta and Chandan Datta examine the functioning of the Panchayati Raj System in West Bengal. Sunny George and K.N. Lalithabhai analyze and evaluate the performance of the Panchayati Raj System in Kerala. N. Sivanna, in his article has taken Karnataka as a case for analysis and evaluated the current status of the Panchayati Raj System in Karnataka. M. Sarumathy, in her article has brought out the details of the working of the Panchayati Raj System in Andhra Pradesh. Scholars who have written articles on the States have touched upon the history, structure, functioning and performance of the Panchayat Institutions of the respective States.

G. Palanithurai’s article on “The Genre of Women Leaders in Local Bodies: Experience from Tamil Nadu”, explains the process of recruitment of women leaders to the local bodies and how they handle power in their institutions. It analyzes the problem of the women leaders while performing their roles and responsibilities. Different types of leaders with varying backgrounds and intentions have come to these positions. In the given environmental setting how they struggle to perform their functions has been analyzed in this work. It indicates that the need of the hour for the women leaders has been to perform their roles efficiently. At the end of the five years’ tenure how the women leaders look at their space and how they design their public life have also been analyzed in this article.³

G. Palanithurai’s, “Women Leadership and Women Empowerment,” stresses the need of leadership training before taking up the training on Panchayat Raj. Given the environmental backdrop of the women leaders in the Indian rural setting, the mindset of the leaders

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has to be changed. It requires a clear understanding of the conditions of women in Indian society and the role expectations of the women leaders. Specific programs have to be evolved, modules have to be developed and thereby their leadership quality has to be developed. Empowerment of women can be made possible only by bringing the right kind of women leaders to the institutions at the grassroots.

G. Palanithurai’s “Glittering Women Leadership” is a study of the impact of the training program conducted for women leaders of Gram Panchayats in five Districts of Tamil Nadu. While evaluating the impact of the training of the women leaders it is found that how they are conscious about their roles and responsibilities and that how they are serious about the issues of women and the poor. More particularly there are certain skills they have acquired very fast while performing their roles in Panchayat administration. It indicates that there is partiality for women in managing the institutions at the grassroots.4

State Planning Commission’s, “Report of the Working Group on Decentralized Planning and Panchayati Raj” is the report of the working group constituted under the leadership of K.V.Sundaram in the State Planning Commission, Government of Tamil Nadu, for evolving guidelines and methodological nuances to prepare plans at different levels through the Panchayati Raj System in Tamil Nadu under the new dispensation. The report has twelve chapters, which deal with different aspects of the planning process. Keeping the history and the devolution of powers in Tamil Nadu in the backdrop, the working group evolved the framework to prepare plans in Gram Panchayats, Block Panchayats and District Panchayats. Further it has also developed the approach for planning at the micro level. Apart from the above there are three important major aspects included in the report, namely, the creation of the needed administrative structure, building the capacity of the leaders

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and the officials involved in the planning process and devices to mobilize the people for their participation in the planning process.⁵

State Planning Commission’s report on “Entrustment of Responsibilities to Panchayat Institutions” submitted to the Government of Tamil Nadu by a Committee constituted by the State Planning Commission has suggested ways and means of entrusting responsibilities to rural Local Bodies. In this report an analysis has been made of the existing position of Panchayat structure and a new one has been suggested in conformity with the legislation, indicating the possible problems that will emerge in the process of operationalization. It is one of the best reports available in India on devolution of power to Local Bodies.⁶

P. Jeyabal and K. Dravidamani in an article on “Women Panchayat Presidents” analyze the level of awareness of the women Panchayat leaders of Lalgudi Panchayati Union against the backdrop of their social, economic and political conditions. Their performance is evaluated. The study concludes that their motivation and awareness is low and their husbands or males of their families are guiding them.⁷

A. Celine Rani’s, “Emerging Pattern of Rural Women Leadership in India” is a study of the process by which the women leaders are emerging in the political front to manage the Panchayat system. By evolving a framework suitable to this study, the process of emergence of the leaders has been analyzed. In this work, it has been established that the socio-economic status is a significant factor in determining the emergence of rural women leaders. Different kinds of

categories of leaders have been identified, and it reflects the conditions in Tamil Nadu.⁸

E.K. Santha’s, “Political Participation of Women in Panchyati Raj: Haryana, Kerala and Tamil Nadu”, is a comparative study of the political participation of women leaders in three States namely, Haryana, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. It analyzes to what extent the representatives are exercising their powers, 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 above said questions have been analyzed. Further the author has analyzed all these questions in the light of the position and problems of the women folk in the respective States. This study suggests 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.⁹

R.C. Prasad in his book, “Democracy and Development” has studied the twin process of democratization and development in village Awa of Bihar. He concluded that while the Village Panchayat has stimulated the process of political democratizations, it has not accelerated the pace of economic development in the villages.¹⁰

S.R. Maheswari’s book, “Local Government in India” describes the structure, personnel, finance and functioning of rural as well as urban local governments. He concludes that inadequate financial resources, low pay scales, incompetent personnel, excessive interference by the State Government in the day to day administration, wide spread corruption, nepotism and favoritism in the local civil service are cited as

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the major causes of ineffectiveness of local government’s development. He suggests that there should be a deliberate policy to encourage experimentation and allow variation to suit local government so that they may develop their lots.\textsuperscript{11}

S.K. Sharma in “\textit{Panchayati Raj in India}” has attempted to study the reforms in Panchayati Raj in the country since independence. The author has analyzed the major findings of the reports of the different committees, study teams etc, having a bearing on the problem of the democratic decentralization and Panchayati Raj institutions. The author has also indicated the emerging trends and the unfinished business. The study gives a brief but critical view of the various issues and inadequacies in an academic style.\textsuperscript{12}

Ashok Mehta Committee on “\textit{Panchayati Raj Institutions}” was set up to enquire into the working of the Panchayati Raj Institutions and to suggest measures for strengthening them so as to enable a decentralized planning and development to be effective. The Committee suggested that the formulation of structure, functions and the utilization of financial, administrative and human resources on Panchayati Raj Institutions should be determined on the emerging functional necessity of management of rural development. Further, it recommended, a ‘two-tier model of Panchayati Raj instead of three – tier model of Balwant Rai Mehta Committee. The two-tiers were Zilla Parishad at District level and Mandal Panchayati at village level.\textsuperscript{13}

S. Bhatnagar’s, “\textit{Rural Local Government in India}” has indicated that the problem of the sluggish growth of the ‘Gram Sabha’ is a deep-rooted problem. It is suggested that the urgent need of the hour is to strengthen the institution of the ‘Gram Panchayat’. For the success of

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{11} Maheshwari, Shri Ram, \textit{Local Government in India}, the Macmillan Co of India Limited, Delhi, 1971.
\textsuperscript{12} Sudesh Kumar Sharma, \textit{Panchayati Raj in India}, Trimurti Publications, New Delhi, 1976.
\end{footnotesize}
democracy there is a need to decentralize the power down to the grass root level. The local Government may also be constitutionally recognized and protected in the same way as the central and States Governments.14

B.Hooja’s, “Panchayati Raj Versus Decentralization of Administrations” has depicted to review the genesis of the twin concepts of Panchayati Raj and democratic decentralization in the content of their historical perspective and in the light of the development on the eve of independence and afterwards. He has suggested that there is a need for harmonious working relations between the Panchayati Raj Institutions and the District administration.15

N. Pant’s “The Politics of Panchayati Raj Administration” has attempted to delineate the sources and areas of conflict, co-operation and collaboration between officials and non-officials in Bhagelpur district of Bihar and also tried to find out the reasons for the prevailing state of affairs.16

A.Y. Darshankar’s, “Leadership in Panchayati Raj”, analyses the interaction between caste and politics, role of money education and social rank in the working of Panchayati Raj institutions in Marathwada region of Maharastra State. The author suggested that the success of Panchayati Raj largely depends on the leaders and they have to be deeply committed to the ideals of Panchayati Raj, which have brought new charges in various fields. There is a hope that with the emergence of sound, sharp, enlightened and committed leadership these institutions will function for the betterment of the rural community as a whole.17

In developing countries, a large number of development programs are implemented. These development programs are not effectively implemented. Mainly these programs are put into effect by democratically decentralized bodies. How to enable these bodies to function efficiently in carrying out the development programs has been analyzed by Jennie Lilvack, Juraid Ahamed and Richard Bird in their work, “Rethinking Decentralization in Developing Countries”\textsuperscript{18}.

Buckley’s volume on “Broken Silence; Voices of Japanese Feminism” brings together to Japanese/women who explain why Japanese mainstream channels. The women elucidate the variety of feminist practice and theory in Japan and the complex recent history of feminism. They write about the politics of language, the construction of the gendered body through domination institutions, and the interrelationship of Japanese with “Western” feminisms, and they critique Japan’s global role. This text is a significant contribution to Western understanding of the complexity of Japanese femininity and the importance of feminism to Japanese society.\textsuperscript{19}

Davis in his book “Women, Race, and Class” concentrates on the intersection of race and class is the construction of femininity, particularly that of black American women. She writes of the legacy of slavery and the ways in which class and race inscribed the women’s rights campaign. She documents black women’s irrepessible will to be educated and moves to the heart of derogatory stereotypes of black men to explode the myth of the black rapist. His powerful work provides an intellectual foundation for understandings of black American women and their present socio-political needs.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{19} Buckley, Sandra, Broken Silence; voices of Japanese Feminism, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1997.
Berry’s book titled “Post-Communism and the Body Politic” contains articles by East European and US writers who address the situation for women in post communist Europe. Rather than being a strict examination of the sociological or political situation of women since 1989, the articles tend to be more theoretically adventurous, dealing with topics such as feminism and representation, the intersections of nationalism and gender, and some of the specificities of East Europe feminist perspectives. Some of the problems of cross-cultural feminisms are also addressed.21

Einhorn’s book titled “Cinderella Goes to Market: Citizenship, Gender and Women’s Movements in East Central Europe” examines the current situation for women during the transitional period of East Central Europe, specifically in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and former East Germany. She finds the decreasing visibility of women in the public sphere during the move to market capitalism quite perplexing, and looks to the specific combinations of Nationalist, Catholic, and Orthodox Christian, and right-wing libertarian discourses in search of reasons for this phenomenon. The book contains detailed examination of “feminist movement’s based on a specific Western feminist model unnecessarily blinds her to other possible reasons for the rejection of “feminism” by many women in East Central Europe.22

In terms of separate, feminist political theory, Butler and Scott’s volume on “The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection” provide interpretative pieces on the politics of the feminist movement and on their own feminist-inspired models of politics. Hence, it includes pieces ranging from the impact of postmodernism on feminist thought to

details of new democratic models. The ethos underlining all these essays it to approach political thought in a fresh manner.  

Walby’s text titled “Gender Transformations” elucidates and analyses the patterns of convergence and polarization that shape contemporary gender relations in Britain, and the ways in which class, ethnicity, and region inscribe women’s ways of being working from a detailed theorization of gendered power that the terms “patriarchy”, the author takes an uncompromising look at patriarchal relations, and provides compelling examples to substantive her contention that patriarchal relations run counter to a society in which women are equal and active shareholders. Using a sophisticated feminist politics she focuses particularly on British and European and European Union labour markets in order to contextualize and theorize the gender politics greater by their integration.  

Gallop in her book titled “The Daughter’s Seduction: Feminism and Psychoanalysis” begins her writing by questioning the simple coupling of psychoanalysis and feminism to be found in many feminist psychoanalytic writings. Using Mitchell’s rationalistic approach to Freud as her point of departure she explores some of the problems, as well as the potential, for feminist thought in psychoanalysis. She addresses the work of a number of psychoanalysis. She addresses the work of a number of seminal writers including Lacan, Freud, Irigaray, Kristeva, Cixous and Clement. Structured as an ongoing fictional dialogue between various theorists, Gallop’s book questions the power relations between feminism and psychoanalysis and the tendency of feminism to be seduced by master narrators. Through the use of wordplay an metaphors, which attempt to prevent authorial closure, the

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theatricality of her work provides insights into the potentials and limitations of current feminist psychoanalytic theory.25

Silverman in his book titled “The Threshold of the Visible World” examines various psychoanalytic theories in an endeavour to draw a specifically psychoanalytic theory of love from them. Coming from the area of feminist film theory, she extrapolates the Lacanian categories of “the screen” and “the gaze” in order to elaborate the sensational and visual elements of the ego. This bodily ego is examined as both raced and gendered and Silverman works to dispel certain cultural myths surrounding corporeal identifications. Traversing a wide range of theoretical perspectives, Silverman examines the meanings inherent to the valorization of particular bodily idealizations as the level of visualization. Her work is complex, so a prior familiarity with some of the work of Freud and Lacan would be beneficial.26

Di Leonardo’s edited collection of 12 essays titled “Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era” should be an integral text for undergraduate addressing issues of how knowledge is produced, and how gender relations act to enhance or limit academic and popular understandings of reality. This work is situated squarely in feminist anthropology and uses poststructuralist approaches to the construction of meaning.27

Evans’ edited collection of essays titled “Asia’s Cultural Mosaic: an Anthropological Introduction” examines the diverse societies that comprise Asia. The 15 chapters range from a treatise on anthropology and its traditional methodology to understandings of the social construction of language in Asian countries, kinship and family formations, and issues of power and governance including explorations

of class, status, and caste. A classic chapter examines anthropology and the cross-cultural study of women, and the dilemmas of development and the increasing urbanization of many people’s lives. This text places anthropological study in recent theoretical perspectives.²⁸

Mattingly and Falconer Al-Hindi edit a set of essays titled “Should Women Count? The Role of Quantitative Methodology in Feminist Geographic Research” reflects on how numbers can or should be used in feminist research. Coming from a different location within debates over experience, representation, critical reflection, and subjectivity, these feminists assume that feminist geographers can undertake research without necessarily exploiting participants.²⁹

The edited collection titled “Discussion and Debate: Symposium of Feminist Participatory Research” by Moss takes up this issue of exploitation by offering sets of reflections on specific research projects. Each contributor discuss various sets of politics shaping their experiences of conducting academic research and their ways of coming to interim solutions to the dilemmas they encountered in the field. Methodological concerns continue to be central in feminist geographies and remain open for critique, discussion, and debate.³⁰

Rose’s book titled “Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge” would be useful as an upper level undergraduate text if the focus were feminist geography as a field of study. She provides an historical overview of the development of feminism in geography, a feminist critique of the construction of geographical knowledge, and a psychoanalytical conception of

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paradoxical space.\textsuperscript{31} Jones, Nast & Roberts, too, could serve as an upper level text. It would be most useful if the course were oriented toward women in the city or toward the undertaking of feminist research in specific settings. The book is packed with concrete examples of how feminists conduct research and analyze data.\textsuperscript{32}

The article titled “\textit{Europe’s Poor Women? Gender in Research on Poverty}” by Daly sets out to identify the place of female poverty in research to date. The main purpose of her article is to review existing research on poverty for its capacity to reveal the true picture of female poverty in contemporary European society. The key sets of problems that weaken research on women’s poverty are: shortcomings in the definition of poverty; specific measurement difficulties (the appropriate unit or level of measurement and the equivalence scale to be used); under-exploration of life-course changes; under use of structural explanations.\textsuperscript{33}

Ruspini’s article titled “\textit{Women and Poverty Dynamics: The Case of Germany and Britain}” shows that, in the case of women’s poverty, the life course perspective may be a very fruitful starting point. This work focuses on women’s poverty in (West) Germany and Britain using household panel data. The panel approach allows understanding of the events of circumstances causing women and men to fall into and escape from poverty. The author explores poverty dynamics in terms of characteristics and duration of poverty spells; underlines the interaction between critical events and changes in the resource distribution (family, labour, market and welfare) in determining the gender characteristics of poverty trajectories; and verifies the different combination of

\textsuperscript{32}Jones, John Paul III, Heidi J. Nast and Susan M. Roberts (editors), Thresholds in Feminist Geography: Difference, Representation, Methodology, Lanham, Rowman and Littlefield, Maryland, 1997.
\textsuperscript{33}Daly, Mary, Europe’s Poor Women? Gender in Research on Poverty, European Sociological Review, 8/1, 1992, pp.1-12.
beginning/ending events. Results show that women’s greater vulnerability to economic poverty lies in two different elements: on the one hand, women’s poverty spells are longer, and on the other hand women are particularly exposed to economic fluctuations. Moreover, specific risk factors affect women in particular.\footnote{Ruspini, Elisabetta, Women and Poverty Dynamics: The Case of Germany and Britain, Journal of European Social Policy, 8/4, 1998, pp.291-316.}

**To Sum Up**

The review of existing literatures on women empowerment in Panchayati Raj Institutions indicate that much attention has not been paid with regard to studies on Dalit women empowerment in the Panchayati Raj Institutions after the implementation of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act. The present study makes a humble attempt to bridge the gap.