The participation of women in the development process both as active participants and as leaders is essential for the overall development of a nation. Despite manifold efforts and Constitutional provisions for the induction of women and conferring on them a coequal part in the process of development, women in India face many obstacles in their quest for equal participation. Kerala, one of the socially and politically advanced states in India, is no way an exception in this regard. The present study attempts to assess the participation of women at the grassroots in the context of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment and tries to analyse the problems inhibiting them from participating actively at the grassroot level. It is a micro level study based mainly on primary data collected from 408 women-108 women Panchayat members and 300 common women at the village level—in the three selected districts of Kerala. Two interview schedules and Problem Checklist prepared specifically for the purpose were used to collect information from the respondents on different aspects of their participation and the obstacles they encounter there in. The data were analysed by using appropriate statistical techniques including significance test.

The thesis is presented in six chapters: 1-Introduction, 2- Literature Review, 3- Methodology, 4&5- Analysis and Discussion and 6- Summary of findings and suggestions.