Chapter-7

Analysis

and

Interpretation
The case studies of twelve (12) women pradhans reveals that most of them either belonged to scheduled caste or backward caste and most of the women Pradhan won the election from the reserved seats such as scheduled caste women and Backward caste women and there were only two women Pradhans of Sukhrawali and Sarsol gram Panchayat they won the election from the general seat for women. Agriculture and Dairy farming was the main occupation in their families. Most of the women were happy when they become Pradhan of their respective gram-panchayats. Most of them became pradhan for the first time. The case studies of twelve women pradhan have shown interesting results.

These case studies were carried out to find out the sociological parameters of women empowerment through Panchayat Raj. It was found that some women pradhans were empowered by their participation in these decision-making bodies in the sense that it brought about a change in their life and they were able to change the life in their villages to some extent. It was found that other women were not empowered in the sense that it made them aware of right’s and opportunities, enabled to challenge the patriarchal structure enhances their capacity to bring about change. The analysis of these case studies revel’s that education, older-age, prior experience of political participation, freedom for the performance of
house-hold chores and exposure to the world outside family were some of the sociological of the parameters that led to the empowerment of women in Panchayat Raj. This was evident in the cases of gram Pradhan of Kalova, Suhkrawali, Palaci and Amarpur Nehra gram Panchayat in which it was found that all these women Pradhan were educated up to High school or twelve class (12th class). All these women Pradhan had no problem in handling Panchayat paper works and they did not depend on their husbands, father-in-laws and other elder male members of their families to read out for them Panchayat documents and so were able to challenge patriarchal structure. Older age was also an important sociological parameter as it was found that these women Pradhan who’s age were 50 or above were free from House-hold chores because their daughters and daughter-in-laws were there to look after it so they had a lot of time for Panchayat work. Another important sociological parameter was prior experience of political participation such as, they were they Pradhan, block development council member and member of Panchayat samities etc. These women Pradhans who had prior experience of political participation they themselves were very keen and came forward willingly to contest pradhan election and they were very active and went to door-to-door for their campaigning and most of them won the election by a comfortable margin. Another sociological parameter was the
exposure to the world outside family such as involvement in social services like Aganvani worker, working as teacher’s ANM’s etc. These women pradhan did not have any restriction on their movements and were able to talk to others and were more articulate in the meetings of Blocks and chaired gram panchayats and gram sabaha meetings regularly and could meet village secretary and could enquire about the progress of development work from higher officials such BDO (Block Development Officer), CDO (Chief Development Officer) and DPRO (District Panchayat Raj Officer) of the District. All these women Pradhan look after the development work in their respective gram-panchayat such as construction of village roads, panchayat ghar (Panchayat House), construction of Pakka Makan (cemented House) for those people who were living below poverty line (BPL), electricity connection in their villages, Hand pipe, construction of primary school, construction of Health-sub-centres in their villages etc. They also did lots of work’s for women under different rural development schemes such as self-help-groups (SHGs), old age pension scheme, maternity benefit scheme, Divorced Pension Scheme, Indira Mahila Yojna (IMY) etc. All of these women pradhan also went to Thana (Police Station) with the village people for the solution of their personal Problems. It also revealed from these case studies that these women got more respect after being elected
pradhan of their respective gram-panchyats. People of their villages gave them more respect and they also got more respect in the family and had more say in the decision making process such as education and marriages of their children, buying and selling of property and freedom in household experience etc. This showed their ability to challenge the Patriarchal structure. All these pradhan also wanted to contest pradhan election again and some of them wanted to contest election for higher post like Zilla Panchayat Member (highest body of panchayat raj system) or even MLAs.

It was also found that other women pradhans were not empowered in the sense that it did not bring about change in their lifes nor it did it enable them to change village lives for the better. The analysis of these case studies reveled that lack of education, younger-age, lack of experience of political participation, performance of house-hold chores, lack of exposure of the world out-side family were some of the sociological parameter's that prevented empowerment of women through panchyat raj. This was evident in the cases of pradhan of Amarput-Kondla, Bhamati, Bhagvan-pur, Jalalpur, Mahrawal and Nehra gram panchyats. All these women pradhan were illiterate and had a great problem in handling panchayats activities. Even in the periods of more than three year's they did not knew anything about the Panchayat works. All the
Panchayat related work were performed by their husbands, father-in-laws and other elder male members of their families. All the panchayat paper works were done by their husbands, father-in-laws and other elder male member of their families. All the paper’s of panchayats were sent to them in the homes and they just sign or thumb on the dotted line because of inability to read the Panchayat documents. So they were un-able to challenge the Patriarchal structure. Younger age was also a major stumbling blocks for all these women pradhan who were comparatively younger than the other Pradhans. They were having more problems with panchayats work. Their husbands, father-in-laws and other elder male member of their families. Look after the panchayat related activities because these women pradhans were always busy in the kitchen and look after the small children’s. Another sociological parameters which prevented women empowerment through panchayat raj was the lack of prior experience of political participation such as they never became pradhan, block development council members and members of panchayat samities etc. All these women Pradhans who had lack of prior experience of political participation were forced by their husbands, father-in-laws and other elder male members of their families to fight the pradhan elections. Most of their husbands, father-in-laws and other elder male members of their families wanted to contest for pradhan post but they
could not fight because the seats were reserved for women so they wanted their wife's and daughter-in-laws to become Pradhans. So, they reluctantly agreed to contest the pradhan election. They never went out for any election campaigning but they still managed to win the election quite comfortably due to the efforts of their husbands, father-in-laws and other elder male members of their families. Lack of exposure of the world outside families such as non-involvement in any type of social services in the villages was also one of the sociological parameter which prevented women empowerment through Panchayat raj. All these women pradhan hardly went in Block in meetings. They never went to Block other than meetings days with their husbands, father-in-laws and other elder male members of their families. They never participated in Panchayat discussions and just set in the meetings quietly and their husbands and their father-in-laws spoke on their behalf. All these women pradhan never discussed panchayat matters with their village secretaries because they had not met them face to face and did not know their names. All these women Pradhans never chaired Panchayat and gram sabhas meetings because they were never allowed by their husbands, father-in-laws and other elder male member of their families. Non of these women pradhans know about the progress of development work in their respective gram-panchayats because all the development work was look
after by their husbands, father-in-laws and other elder male member’s of their families. All these women pradhan never went to Thana (Police station) when it was needed and on their behalf their husbands, father-in-laws and other elder male member’s of their families discharge the duty. All these women pradhan considered themselves dummy/name-sake pradhan and did not considered as a real pradhan and they did not noted any change in their lifes after being elected as a Pradhan of their gram-panchayats. All of them were busy in the House-hold chores before elected as a Pradhan and still now they were busy with the same. Thus, they were unable to challenge patriarchal structure.

It also emerged from the analysis of the case studies that all sociological parameters must be taken together for understanding the empowerment of women and one or two parameters alone cannot regarded as being important for empowerment. The women pradhan of Mudrak and Kalova gram-panchayat who were illiterate and had no prior experience of political participation but the other sociological parameters led to their empowerment. Lack of education led to dependence on their husbands, father-in-laws and other elder male members of their families to read out panchayat documents because of their in-ability to read panchayat paper’s. Lack of prior experience of political participation was also a sociological parameter which made them dependent on their
husbands, father-in-laws and other elder male members of their families. They were forced by them in pradhan election and they reluctantly agreed to contest. The never went out-side for any election campaigning but still managed to win the election by a comfortable margin by the efforts of their husbands, father-in-laws and other elder male member’s of their families. This shows they were unable to challenge the patriarchal structure. The others sociological parameters such as older age makes them free from house-hold chores because their daughter’s and daughter-in-laws were there to look after it so they could get enough time for panchayat work. Another sociological parameter was the exposure to the world out-side family such as Aganvani worker, working as teacher and ANM’s etc. These women pradhans did not have any restriction on their movements and were able to talk to other’s and were more articulate in the meetings of panchayat and gram-sabhas chaired them regularly and could meet the village secretary and could enquire about the progress of development work from higher officials such as Block Development Officer (BDO), Chief Development Officer (CDO) and District Panchayat Raj Officer (DPRO) etc. These women pradhan look after the development work in their respective gram-panchayats such as construction of village roads, construction of panchayat Ghar (Panchayat House), electricity connection in their villages, Hand-pipe connection,
construction of primary school, construction of Aganvani center, Health sub-centre etc. These women also did lot of works for women under different rural development schemes such as self-help-groups (SHGs), old age pension scheme, maternity benefit scheme, divorced pension scheme, Indira Mahila Yojna (IMY) etc. These women also went to Thana (Police station) with the village people for the solution of their personal problems. These women pradhan did not consider themselves as Dummy/name-sake Pradhan and consider to be a real pradhan. These women pradhan got more respect after being elected pradhan. People of their villages gave them more respect and they also got more respect in the family and had a more say in the decision making process such as education and marriages of their children, buying and selling of property and freedom in the house hold expenditure etc. It was also found that these women pradhan also wanted to contest election even for higher post such as Zilla Panchayat member (highest body of panchayats) and Member of Legislative Assembly (MLAs). These women pradhan did not like their dependence on their husbands, father-in-laws and other elder male members of their families and considered them to be interfering in Panchayat matters. This shows that to some extent they were able to challenge the patriarchal structure even though they were un-educated and had no prior experience of political participation. The sharing of
power and participation in Panchayats had made them aware of rights and opportunities. Thus the others sociological parameter led to the empowerment of these women through panchayat raj. Participation in Panchayats enhances the capacity of these women to bring about qualitative change in their own lifes and to change village lives for the better. This shows that it is not necessary for women to be educated and experienced to bring about change but the sharing of power in decision-making bring about change. This demonstrates the hidden potential of women empowerment through panchayat raj.

All the twelve women pradhan considered education to be important because this was the way to be become independent of their husbands, father-in-laws and other elder male members of their families to read-out Panchayats document for them. All the women pradhan considered political support to be a important because with it they could not fight the pradhan election. All these twelve case studies reveled that they considered training programmes and experience in panchayats to be more important for effective participation. They considered Training programmes to be a substitute for education so that even un-educated women pradhan could take advantage of Training Programmes to become independent of their husbands, father-in-law and other elder male members of their families. They considered experience of Panchayats to
be a substitute for political support because it could enable them to fight Panchayat election even without political support. Thus training programmes and experience of Panchayats could make even those women who were Dummy/name-sake Pradhan as effective participant who could attend Block meetings and could chaired Panchayat and gram sabha meetings regularly and participate in Panchayat discussions. In this way they could also know the progress of development work in their respective gram-panchayats, discussed with their secretaries. This means that women empowerment through panchayat was possible for such women and they could became aware of their rights and opportunities to be able to challenge patriarchal structure and to bring about change.