Chapter-8

Conclusion
In this study of women empowerment through Panchayat Raj, empowerment may be understood as a process by which people developed the ability or capacity to become aware of their rights and opportunities by sharing power and participating in decision-making so as to control resources and circumstances and bring about change. Women’s empowerment refers to the process by which they develop a ability or capacity to become aware of rights and opportunities by sharing power and participation in decision-making so as to challenge patriarchal structure and to bring about change. The 73rd constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 and implemented on 24th April 1993, by which women got 33% reservation in Panchayats at all three levels was an attempt for women’s empowerment. It gave women a share in power and ensure participation in decision-making in Panchayat-raj to make women an instrument of development and social change. It’s marked a watershed in the empowerment of women because it brought women in large numbers in Panchayats. The implementation of 73rd constitutional Amendment Act must be examined to find out the extent to which it has empowered women in the sense the sharing power and participation in decision-making has made them aware of their rights and opportunities and has enables them to challenge the Patriarchal structure and bring about change.
In this study of the implementation of 73rd constitutional Amendment research was carried-out to find out the extent of empowerment of twelve (12) women Pradhan of Lodha Block of Aligarh District. Aligarh district consist of twelve (12) Block's and Lodha Block consist of twelve (12) nayay panchayat in which there were 60 gram-panchayats and 20 were headed by women. The researcher selected one women pradhan from every nayay panchayats. The case study method was used with the help of interview-schedule and participant observation.

The case studies of twelve women Pradhans have shown interesting results. These case studies were carried out to the find sociological parameter's of women's empowerment through Panchayat raj. It was found that some women Pradhans were empowered by their participation in these decision making bodies. The analysis of these 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-out-side family were some of the sociological parameters that led to the empowerment of women through panchayat raj. It was found that all these women pradhan who were educated up to High School (10th Class) 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 panchayats documents and so were able to challenge the patriarchal structure. Age was also an important sociological parameter as it was found that those women pradhan who’s age were fifty (50) or above were free from the house-hold chores because their daughter’s and daughter-in-laws were there to look after it and so they had a lot of time for panchayat works. Another important sociological parameter was prior experience of political participation such as, they were they Pradhan, member of Block Development council (BDC member) and member of panchayat samities. These women pradhan who had prior experience of political participation were themselves very keen and came forward willingly to contest pradhan election and they were very active and went to door-to-door and argued for their canditure and most of them won the pradhan election by a comfortable margin. Another sociological parameter was the exposure to the world out-side family such as involvement in social services like Aganvani worker, working as teacher and A.N.M. etc. These women Pradhan did not have any restriction on their movement and were able to talk to other and were more articulate in the meetings of Block and chaired Panchayat and gram sabhas meetings regularly and could meet the village secretary and could enquire about the progress of development work from the higher officials such as BDO, CDO and other higher
officials the districts. All these women Pradhan look after the development work in their respective gram-panchayats. All these women pradhans also went to Thana (Police station) with the village people for the solution of their personal problems. These women got more respect after being elected as a Pradhan of their respective gram panchayats. People of their villages gave them more respect and they also got more respect in the families and had more say in the decision-making process such as education and marriages of their children, buying and selling of properties and freedom in the house hold expenditure etc. This showed their ability to challenge the patriarchal structure. These women Pradhans also wanted to contest election even for higher post like zilla Panchayat member (highest body of PRIs) and MLA’s (Member of Legislative Assembly).

It was found that other women Pradhan were not empowered. The analysis of these case studies reveled that lack of education, younger-age, lack of prior experience of political participation, performance of household chores and lack of exposure to the world out-side family were some of the sociological parameters that prevented women empowerment through panchayat raj. All these women Pradhan who were illiterate had a great problem in handling panchayat activities. Even in the periods of more than three year’s in office they did not know any thing about the
panchayat work. All the panchayat's paper were sent to them in the homes and they just thumb or sign on the dotted line because of in-ability to read panchayat documents so they were un-able to challenge the patriarchal structure. Younger-age was also a major stumbling block for all these women pradhan who were comparatively younger than the other's pradhans. They were having more problems with the panchayat works. Their husbands, father-in-laws and other elder male member's of their families look after the panchayat related activities because these women pradhan were always busy in the kitchen and look after the small children. Another sociological parameter 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 (BDC members), panchayat samiti member's etc. All these women pradhan who had lack of prior experience of political participation were forced by their husbands, father-in-laws and other elder member of their families, so they reluctantly agreed to contest the pradhan election. They never were 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 member of their families. Lack of exposure of the world-out side family such as involvement in any type social services such as Aganvani worker,
working as teacher in the village, and ANM’s etc. All these women pradhan had restrictions on their movements and hardly went to the block meetings. They never went to block other than meetings days. They never participated in panchayat discussions and just sat in the meetings quietly and their husbands, father-in-laws and other elder male member’s of their families 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 Pradhan never chaired panchayat and gram-sabhas meetings because they never allowed by their husbands, father-in-laws and other elder male member’s of their families. All of these women pradhan knew nothing about the progress of development work in their respective gram-panchayat because all the development work was looked after by their husbands, father-in-laws and other elder male members 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-law and other elder male member of their families discharge the duty. All these women pradhan considered themselves as a Dummy/name-sake pradhan and did not consider as a real pradhan and they did not noted any change in their lifes after being elected as a Pradhan of their respective gram-panchayats. All of them were busy in the house-hold chores before elected pradhan
and still now they were busy with the same. Thus they were un-able to challenge patriarchal structure.

It also emerged from the analysis of these case studies that all sociological parameter’s must be taken to-gather for understanding the empowerment of women through panchayat raj and one or two sociological parameters alone can not regarded as being more important for empowerment. Some women were not empowered due to sociological parameters such as lack of education and lack of prior experience of political participation but they were empowered due to other sociological parameters such as older-age, freedom for the performance of house-hold chores, and exposure to the world out-side family. Lack of education led to the dependence on their husbands, father-in-laws and other elder male member of their families to read-out panchayat documents because of their in-ability to read. 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 member’s of their families. They were forced by them in pradhan election and they reluctantly agreed to contest. They never went out-side for any election campaign but they still managed to win the election by a comfortable margin due to the effort’s of their husbands, father-in-laws and other elder male member of their families. This shows they were un-able to challenge the patriarchal
structure. The other sociological parameter such as older-age makes them free from the house-hold chores because their daughter and daughter-in-laws were there to look after the house-hold chores and they could get enough time for panchayat works. Another sociological parameter was the exposure to the world out-side family such as they were Aganvani worker, working as teachers and ANM’s etc. These women did not have any restriction on their movements and were able to talk to others and were more articulate in the meetings of Panchayat and gram-sabhas chaired them regularly and could met the village secretary and could enquire about the progress of development work from the higher officials such as BDO (Block Development Officer), CDO (Chief Development Officer) and DPRO (District Panchayat Raj Officer) etc. These women pradhan also look after the development work in their respective gram-panchayats. They also went to Thana (Police Station) with the village people’s for the solution of their personal problems. These women pradhan did not considered themselves as a Dummy/name-sake pradhan and consider themselves as a real pradhan. These women pradhan got more respect in their villages after being elected Pradhan and they also got more respect in their families and hand 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 like zilla Panchayat member and MLA’s. These women pradhan did not like their dependence on their husbands, father-in-laws and other elder male member’s 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 member’s 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 revealed 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 member’s 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. This is the empowerment of women through panchayat raj in the real sense.
On the basis of the results of the study it is possible to suggest guideline and policy implication that can take the form of action strategy to empower women.

**Importance of Proper Training**

In order to ensure effective participation of women in panchayat raj it is essential that women should be trained about day-to-day procedure of panchayat raj and various provisions enshrined in the 73rd constitutional Amendment Act. Women must be informed of various development policies and programmes, as well as those pertaining specifically to women and children. The study showed that training programmes could be a substitute for education even uneducated women pradhan could take advantage of training programmes to become empowered.

**Exposure to the World outside Family**

Women Pradhans must be encouraged to come out of their families and get expose to the world as Aganvani worker, teachers and ANM's etc. It is only through this exposure that women can become free of restriction on their movements and enabled them to participate in Block, Panchayats and gram sabhas meetings be articulate in discussions. This
would prepare the ground for their empowerment by ensuring more effective participation in Panchayat raj.

**Need for Experience of Political Participation**

Women organizations such as Mahila Mandal, Mahila Manch and Mahila Welfare societies must mobilize and encouraged them to participate as voters and member of gram-sabhas. This experience of political participation will pave the way for fighting panchayat election and getting more responsible position and lead to their empowerment. The study showed that experience is substitute for political support because it enables them to fight election even without political support.

**Mandatory Participation of Women and Emphasizing on Women and Child Related Schemes**

Making the participation of women representatives in Panchayats mandatory will lead to decision-making by women without interference of males member of the families. Emphasis should be given on development and welfare schemes related to women and child. As this would strengthen the participation of women in decision making. So that they may be free from the house-hold chores. The study showed that dependence on husbands, father-in-laws and other elder male member of their families was a stumbling Block in the empowerment of women.
Mandatory participation of women in Panchayats will remove such dependence. The study showed that the participation in household chores prevents women from Panchayat works. Emphasis on development programmes and welfare schemes related to women and child will encourage women to participate in Panchayats.

This study is broadly concerned with the use of exploratory research design to find out whether the women empowered through panchayat raj or not and to discover the sociological parameters which lead to their empowerment. Exploratory research design was followed because the area was hitherto un-explored. This research enabled us to gain familiarity with the new phenomenon and to give new insight. It also enabled us to suggest the guideline and policy implication for ensuring women empowerment. Further in-depth research needed in this area by drawing case studies from various parts of the country and formulating precise hypothesis and appropriate procedures for their verification.