Chapter- VI

Participatory Role of Women in Developmental Activities

The representative institutions, especially, at the grass root level have been playing a dominant role in the task of development in India, to change the life conditions of rural people by democratic means. In this direction, an initiative was taken by launching the community development programme on October 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 1952, which provided an opportunity to involve rural people in the development process.

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to evaluate the contributions of elected women representatives in PRIs in performing the duties assigned to them under the 73\textsuperscript{rd} Amendment Act. In order to have a comprehensive viewpoint of the respondents, with regard to participation, these were studied from different angles that are, social, economic, political, educational, public work and civil amenities and trade and commerce. Further, each function was studied on the basis of selected parameters. Information related to these functions have been furnished in Table 6.1 to 6.6 and discussed as under.
1. Participatory Role of women Leaders in Social Work

Panchayats must be recognized as self-governing institutions with domain without interference, control and encroachment.¹ Table 6.1 gives the detail of participatory role of women leaders which included Panches and Gram Pradhans, Up Pradhans and members of Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads. Their role has been studied with the help of different indicators such as, elimination of purdah system, contribution towards the eradication of dowry system, involvement of violence, participatory role in elimination against the girl child and participation in the elimination of festivals at the community level.

a.) Elimination of Purdah System

This system was part and parcel of our society. Women were supported to remain in purdah away from the man to avoid any interaction with them. This custom promoted social inequality in the social structure. There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of the women is informed. The empowerment of women by itself cannot place women on equal footing with men. The need of the hour is to change of social attitudes of women. Information regarding this has been furnished in Table 6.1.

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It is evident from the Table 6.1 that the majority of elected women leaders' participation in elimination of the purdah system was low. 73.33 percent respondents and 50.67 percent members from Block Rait and Block Panchrukhi respectively made a little effort to eradicate this social evil from the society, whereas 20.00 percent respondents and 30.67 percent members were of the opinion that they have made some attempt in elimination of the purdah system and remaining only 6.67 percent respondents from Rait Block and 18.66 percent respondents from Panchrukhi block were actively involved in eliminating purdah system from the society.

This analysis shows that a majority of respondents did not involve themselves in eradication of purdah system probably because of their ignorance of ill effects of this custom.

(b) Contribution towards the Eradication of Dowry System

It is ironic that dowry was originally designed to safeguard the women and provision was made in the form of ‘Stree dhan’. ‘Stree’ means women and ‘dhan’ means wealth consisting of money, prosperity or gifts given solely to the women by her parents and relatives at the time of marriage. The abuse of this custom eroded and aborted the original meaningful functions where dowry was a safety not for the women and now it is forcibly made as a price tag for the groom.
An attempt has been made to ascertain the opinion of the elected women representatives about their contribution towards the eradication of the dowry system has been given in Table 6.1 Out of the total sample population in Block Panchrukhi, 32 percent members expressed that their contribution was low where as remaining said that their contribution was either medium or high in eradicating their social menace. In Rait, Block majority of the respondents that is 49.33 percent were in the category of medium range whereas 0.67 percent respondents in Panchrukhi made some contribution towards eradication of dowry system. Remaining respondents were highly involved and worked towards eradication of the dowry system.

This analysis shows that the respondents were somewhat aware and motivated towards eradication of dowry system. The percentage of respondents who were not highly active in this social issue were may be scared of societal pressures and could not muster much courage to revolt against this demonic evil.

c) Involvement in Female Literacy

India has the highest number of illiterates in the world—a mind-boggling estimate of 290 millions of adult illiterates. Literacy is the base of the nations' overall progress and development. We must remember that ignorance leads to greater expectation and lack of empowerment leads to perpetuation of poverty and hunger. India is also known for the
best skilled manpower in the world and also for largest number of illiterates in the world. The bare of illiteracy, especially among the families with strong political determination and will. Women constitute one half of our nation's population and because of orthodox and conservative views females are not given education.

Opinion regarding involvement in female literacy given by the women leaders has been given in the Table 6.1 65.33 percent members of the sample population of Block Rait said that they participated in female literacy in their area at a medium level whereas 20.00 percent members claimed that they actively involved themselves at a high level while 14.67 percent respondents made a little effort to remove this evil of illiteracy among women. Block Panchrukhi data was a little varied as only 9.33 percent respondents involved themselves at a very low level. 52 percent responded that they participated at a medium level and 38.6 percent members made an effort to bring education among females at a high level. The ongoing analysis shows that in both the blocks a majority of them involved in female literacy programmes at medium level and a small percentage participated at a low or high level. One can say that the women P.R.I.s are working in this area but still a lot needs to be done.
d) Participatory Role in the Reduction of Violence

Violence means using force over others to achieve some malafide intentions. Usually we are faced with violence outside our homes but what about the violence that happens within the four walls of homes. Domestic violence is on the increase but seldom anything is done for this cause.

The members of Gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad were asked whether they had any role to play in the reduction of violence. The opinion of members is expressed in Table 6.1. It is revealed from the table that majority of the members, that is, 64 percent respondents participated in the reduction of domestic violence at a medium level whereas 13.33 percent respondents said that they involved themselves, in this regard, at a high level while as much as 22.67 percent members did not have much to do with respect to reduction of domestic violence, in Block Rait.

Block Panchrukhi, on the other hand, had a little different response if one analysis from the given Table 6.1. 6.67 percent respondents expressed that they participated very less whereas 52 percent respondents stated that they helped people on an average and 41.33 percent members opined that involved themselves a lot in the matter of domestic violence reduction. It can be concluded from the above analysis that a majority of women members were active in the reduction of domestic violence.
This analysis shows that most of the women respondents were concerned about the domestic violence in their area and wanted to create a calm and serene atmosphere to develop a peaceful environment for children and family. Progress is not only in economic terms, it also has to be productive in homes to have social progress.

e) Participatory Role in Elimination of the Girl Child

In India, we have inherited the cultural legacy of having a preference for sons among all communities, religious groups and citizens of varied socio-economic backgrounds. Patriarchal attitudes manifest in women and girls having subordinate position in the family, discrimination in property rights and low paid or unpaid jobs. Social discrimination against women results in systematic neglect of women’s health, from womb to tomb. The root cause for elimination of female foetus is to be traced in the evil of forced marriages, dowry, illiteracy among the females, the lives of females cannot improve.

In this indicator, the perceptions of the respondents regarding their role in elimination of the girl’s child has been discussed in the Table 6.1. Out of the total sample population of Block Rait, 29.33 percent respondents expressed that their participation in this regard was very low whereas 56 percent members said that they involved themselves at a medium level while 14.67 percent respondents expressed that their
role in this regard was very high. Block Panchrukhi analysis is also not very different. 36 percent members out of the total sample population opined that they didn't do much about this grave problem whereas 40 percent respondents expressed that they helped at a medium or an average level while 24 percent members stated that they participated highly in stopping the elimination of the girl child.

One can say that from the ongoing analysis that even though one section of the sample population expressed that they didn't do anything actively about it but majority of the women Panchayat members were aware of this serious evil of our society. One can hope that some day this dark phase in the lives of women might be reduced if not over.

f) Participation of Women Leaders of PRIs in the Celebration of Festivals at Community level

Festivals are a part of our Indian culture but in the mad race of today's life, festivals are losing their intrinsic meaning. Commercialization has pervaded into our lives. In villages, people still celebrate festivals at a community level. In Block Rait, out of the sample population, 33.33 percent respondents stated that they participated in the celebration of festivals at community levels very less whereas 53.34 percent respondents said that they participated to a medium extent and only 13.33 percent respondents expressed that they took part in the festivals. Block Panchrukhi had a slightly varied response.
Only 9 percent respondents said that they associated with the celebration of festivals at a very low level whereas 65.33 percent members said that they engaged themselves in the celebration of festivals at a community level and finally 22.67 percent respondents shared in the celebration. Conclusively, it appears from the above sample’s data that people still celebrated festivals in villages. The women PRI leaders make an effort to do so.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SN</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Block Rait</th>
<th>Block Panchrukhi</th>
<th>%age</th>
<th>%age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>L</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Elimination of Purdah System</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>55 (73.33)</td>
<td>15 (20.00)</td>
<td>5 (6.67)</td>
<td>100.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Contribution towards the eradication of dowry system</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>33 (44.00)</td>
<td>37 (49.33)</td>
<td>5 (6.67)</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Involvement in female literacy</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>11 (14.67)</td>
<td>49 (65.33)</td>
<td>15 (20.00)</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Participatory role in the reduction of violence</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>17 (22.67)</td>
<td>48 (64.00)</td>
<td>10 (13.33)</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Participatory role in avoiding the elimination of the girl child</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>22 (29.33)</td>
<td>42 (56.00)</td>
<td>11 (14.67)</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Participation in the celebration of festivals at community level</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>25 (33.33)</td>
<td>40 (53.34)</td>
<td>10 (13.33)</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Opinion Regarding Economic Activities

Economic activities are an integral part of any society. To survive in this world, one needs to develop one's financial potential and acumen to the maximum. In India, now, the times are changing and women are also held to be an important part of the workforce. In rural areas, usually, women are subjugated and suppressed so that men can always have an upper hand. An attempt was made to evaluate the contributions made by women Panchayat leaders in the economic field with regard to their level of participatory role. Table 6.2 gives the detail of the participatory role of women leaders in the economic field.

(a) Role in Assisting Others in Seeking Employment

Usually in our Indian society, the bread winner of a family is a man but in the fast changing face of our society, women also have to contribute towards the family income. Educated women in urban areas find it relatively easy to gain employment but in villages, without any awareness for jobs, it is difficult for women to seek for work on their own. From the Table 6.2, it was found that in Block Rait, women PRI leaders involved themselves in helping women to gain employment, 56 percent respondents expressed that they participated in assisting others in seeking employment at a medium level whereas 20 percent respondents stated that their role in the same task was a very significant one.
In Block Panchrukhi, 41.33 percent women members of the PRIs said that they assisted others to get jobs at a very low level, 46.67 percent respondents expressed that they helped in this noble cause at a medium level while only 12 percent respondents expressed the view that they helped others to gain employment at a very high level. From the above data analysis, it can be said that women are becoming aware of economic elevation though at a slow rate.

(b) Knowledge about the Preparation of Budget

Women Panchayat members were asked if they had any awareness of how a budget was prepared. This aspect of budget preparation is quite important for Panchayat members to be active in activities of finance. Table 6.2 reveals that in Block Rait 6.67 percent respondents stated that their knowledge about budget preparation was of a low level whereas 49.33 percent respondents expressed their opinion that they participated at an average level and 44 percent women leaders said that they were aware of the budget preparation at a high level. Block Panchrukhi gave quite a different picture. 56 percent members said that they knew very little about how a budget was prepared while 36 percent members said that they were aware of budget preparation at a medium level and only 8 percent respondents admitted of their awareness of budget preparation.
The above analysis of the responses contained in Table 6.2 shows that Block Rait was more advanced in their knowledge of budget preparation. A disparity was found between both the blocks – Panchrukhi and Rait – which must be avoided to remove unbalanced growth.

(c) Involvement in Preparing Panchayat Budget

Preparation of the Panchayat Budget is one of the major tasks of Panchayat members. The sample population was asked about their involvement in preparing Panchayat budget. According to Table 6.2, 26.67 percent members expressed that they didn’t involve themselves much in this activity. 46.67 percent members and 26.66 percent members said that they participated in budget preparation at a medium and high level respectively. In Block Panchrukhi, 46.67 percent respondents said that they didn’t participate much in budget preparation. 38.66 percent respondents opined that they involved themselves on an average and 14.67 percent members responded they very active in budget preparation.

Analysis of Table 6.2 shows that the women political leaders were not highly active in preparing the budget of the Panchayat.
(d) Checking Misappropriation of Panchayat Budget

To check misappropriation of Panchayat Budget, one has to be obviously aware of the procedure of the budget preparation. In Block Rait, 10.67 percent women members of the PR responded that they participated at a very low level in this activity, whereas 48 percent members expressed that they checked misappropriation of Panchayat budget at a medium level while 41.33 percent members stated that they checked misappropriations at a high level.

In Block Panchrukhi, only 4 percent respondents expressed that didn't check much about budget misappropriation whereas there was a marked difference in the responses in the medium category. 42.67 percent members responded positively at a medium level and as many 53.33 percent members said that they checked misappropriations of Panchayat budget at a high level.

The above analysis shows that almost half of the sample population was active in checking misappropriation of budget and the other half was highly active. It shows that they were aware of happenings around them and are against corruption.
(e) Role in Discussion of Expenditure of School, Anganwadis, etc.

Schools, anganwadis, etc. are the pillars that strengthen the building of the society. The sample population was asked about their contribution in the discussion of expenditure of school, anganwadis, etc. According to Table 6.2, in Block Rait, 9.34 percent respondents said that they didn't involve themselves much in this area, 57.33 percent members remarked that they discussed about the expenditure of developmental activities at a medium level whereas 33.33 percent respondents expressed that they were highly involved in such discussion.

Block Panchrukhi had a slightly different picture. 16 percent respondents said that they didn't bother much about such discussion whereas on the other hand, a very high percentage of 57.33 percent members said that they played a definite role in the expenditure of schools, etc. 33.33 percent respondents said that they engaged in discussions of such expenditure. In Block Panchrukhi, 16 percent respondents stated that they didn't associate themselves much in discussions about expenditure, 69.33 percent members answered medium and only 14.67 percent respondents replied that they discussed about expenditure of school, anganwadis, etc. at a high level.
The above analysis shows that Block Rait women members of PRI were more alert and conscious about being active in discussions about schools and anganwadis, etc. than Block Panchrukhi. The government must motivate the political leaders to take an interest in such discussions.

(f) Role in Helping Women in Getting the Right of Parental Property

In today's scenario, we have been given in our Constitution the fundamental right of equality. With respect to this right, women have an equal right to inherit parental property. An attempt was made to find out if the elected representatives at the grass root level, of PRIs, participated at all in helping women to get their parental property.

According to Table 6.2, in Block Rait, 50.67 percent respondents said that they helped in this regard to a very minimal extent, 16 percent members expressed that they helped other women in his issue to a medium level whereas 33.33 percent respondents admitted of helping women in getting parental property. In Block Panchrukhi out of the total sample population, 36 percent members said that they didn't assist women in this area of reference actively, 48 percent representatives, a very large sample population responded that they participated in this regard to a medium level whereas only 16 percent respondents expressed that their role in helping women in getting the said right was a high one.
We all know that India has been an orthodox society, through out the ages and women has never been given an equal status, what to talk about parental property. There has, though, come about a hope of improvement of the situation with women elected representatives. So, it can be said conclusively, on the basis of Table 6.2, that the role of women elected representatives, at all the three levels of PRIs, is on the whole on a progressive level. Women seem to be getting more aware of these economic activities as it is the foundation of developmental activities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S N</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Block Rait</th>
<th>Block Panchrukhi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>L (24.00)</td>
<td>M (56.00)</td>
<td>H (20.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Role in assisting others in seeking employment</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Knowledge about the preparation of budget</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>5 (6.67)</td>
<td>37 (39.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Involvement in preparing Panchayat budget</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>20 (28.67)</td>
<td>35 (46.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Checking misappropriation of panchayat budget</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>8 (10.67)</td>
<td>36 (48.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Role in discussion of expenditure of school anganwadis etc.</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>7 (9.34)</td>
<td>43 (57.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Role in helping women in getting the right of parental property</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>38 (50.67)</td>
<td>12 (16.00)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Viewpoint of Respondents vis-à-vis Political Parties

Politics is about participation in public sphere but for women's movement both the personal and the public domain are equally political as fluid boundaries separate the public and the private domain\(^2\). The rich experience of grass roots organizations of women demonstrates that they do provide a support base to women from marginalized communities as they gain a new identity.\(^3\)

Political consciousness and political equality are two concepts which are gaining a lot of attention these days. Political parties have an enormous role to play in the social awakening of India. Once Gandhiji told the renowned author Mr. Mulk Raj Anand that we can't build India unless we build villages. Gandhiji wanted to make the villages independent republics, independent in governance and for routine governance, government by the people of villages and self sufficient for financial needs. Developmental affairs in the rural areas include activities like road building, health center school, opening of cooperatives, etc. Usually, it is left to the government to work on its own. There is very less effort from the side of women. Table 6.3 indicates about awareness of respondents in political parties.

\(^2\) Ibid, PP. 64-65.
\(^3\) Ibid, P. 65.
(a) Contribution of Women Representatives in Encouraging Rural Women to Participate in Developmental Activities

Out of the total sample population, in Block Rait, 32 percent respondents expressed that their contribution in this area was low, 41.33 percent respondents said that it was medium and 26.67 percent members stated that it was high. In Block Panchrukhi, 33.33 percent members expressed that they didn't engage themselves much in this area, 52 percent respondents stated that they associated at a medium level, in developmental activities while only 14.67 percent respondents said that they involved themselves in such activities at a high level. It may be said that women representatives were involving themselves in developmental activities though a small percentage of the total sample population. There is a long way to reach the goal though a beginning has been made.

(b) Involvement in Making People Aware of their Voting Rights

The initial apprehension and doubts over the readiness of women folk to come into power-centres and to take up responsibilities of administering development on their own, have been dispelled by their participation in the electoral process of the local body institutions.  

In India, our constitution makers, gave us all voting rights, under the Adult Franchise that we all have the right to vote at the age of 18
years in respective of caste, colour, creed or religion. In the survey, an attempt was made to evaluate the involvement in making people aware of their voting rights. According to Table 6.3, in Block Rait, 8 percent respondents expressed that they didn't participate much in this issue of making people aware of their voting rights, 30.67 percent respondents said that they engaged themselves in this activity at a medium level while 61.33 percent respondents admitted of helping in this sphere at a very high level. In Block Panchrukhi, 20 percent women representatives stated that they participated in this activity to a very low level whereas 61.33 percent respondents said that they associated themselves at a medium level while only 18.67 percent members expressed that they helped people in this field at a high level.

The given analysis indicates that Block Rait was politically more aware than Block Panchrukhi. A majority of Block Rait women members of PRIs were highly active in making people aware of their voting rights whereas in Block Panchrukhi a very low percentage of respondents were alert about it may be because they were themselves not very active politically and were placed there by men, only to gain power. This disparity between the two blocks of Panchrukhi and Rait could be due to various reasons:

1. **Tradition** Traditionally, we have a patriarchal family system in which father has been the head of a family and mother's position has been

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subordinate to him. Further, there is a strong feeling that God had created women for kitchen.

2. Family Responsibilities Family responsibilities have been a handicap for women to actively participate in politics.\(^5\)

3. Political Parities After independence political parties have also failed to educate and mobilize women adequately. They have also aided to provide adequate number of seats for women.\(^6\)

(c) Involvement in Exposing Corrupt Officials

Corruption in any form is treated as an incurable disease, a cause of many social and economic evils of society and it damages the moral and ethical of the civilization. Dishonest and corrupt politicians must not be voted to come into power whether he or she belongs to our caste, creed or religion. There must be some penalty and fine on the corrupt officials to have deterrent effects. An attempt was made to find out if the women Panchayat leaders contributed at all in exposing corrupt officials. Out of the sample population, in Block Rait, 66.67 percent respondents stated that they associated themselves in such activity to a very low level whereas 28 percent members expressed that they engaged themselves at a medium level while only 5.33 percent respondents admitted that they involved themselves in exposing corrupt officials.

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In Block Panchrukhi, 60 percent respondents expressed that they didn’t involve themselves in this activity whereas 32 percent members stated that they involved themselves to a medium extent while only 8 percent members said that they associated themselves at a very high level. From the above analysis, it can be said that a majority of the sample population did not participate in exposure of corrupt officials may be from fear. A very low percentage admitted of associating themselves in this activity.

(d) Contribution in Making the Panchayat System Transparent

Transparency in administrative system and government is a vital factor these days. In Indian context, the issues between politicians, bureaucrats, criminals and police is a known fact. Corruption has rooted in all works of life. Every wing of the administrative is rotten with corrupt practices. The right to know or need of transparency has become too important. Accountability means the responsibility of the administration to the legislature for public expenditure. Accountability, therefore, means not only the submission of accounts of completed expenditure for inspection by the Parliament but also the Parliament’s right to criticize public expenditure. So, transparency and accountability are inter-linked as transparency means the citizens’ right to know and accountability on the other hand means responsibility of the administration. So, these two

concepts lead to reduction of corruption. According to Table 6.3, it became evident that Block Rait, only 5.33 percent members said that they played a minimal role in making Panchayat system transparent whereas 41.33 percent respondents expressed that they engaged themselves in making Panchayat system transparent at a medium level while 53.34 percent respondents admitted that they associated themselves in this activity at a high level.

In Block Panchrukhi, 46.67 percent respondents expressed their role as being less in making Panchayat system transparent whereas 44 percent respondents said that they involved themselves at a medium level and only 9.33 percent members stated that they contributed in transparency of Panchayat system at a high level. This analysis shows that Block Rait’s elected women representatives

(e) Community Participation in Awareness of Politics

Although the Constitution provides for elections before the expiry of 5 years of the first meeting of the elected local bodies, there have been serious delays in many states in the conduct of timely elections. The Supreme Court has laid down the exceptional circumstances in which a slight delay may be condoned as unavoidable but the practice of delaying elections on the other grounds has become regrettably, widespread. This is as true of elections as of bye-elections.
The Constitution stipulates in Articles 243E (4) and 243 U(4), respectively, that if a Panchayat/municipality is dissolved for any reason, elections must be held within six months to reconstitute that particular Panchayat/municipality. This provision is being widely misused to dissolve all Panchayats/municipalities and then avail of the six-month provision to not hold election at all.

States must commit themselves to holding elections within the stipulated time-period subject only to the exceptional conditions set out in the Supreme Court order.

Complaints of electoral malpractice are widespread. State Election Commission, in consultation with the Central Election Commission, may consider ways and means of riding local bodies' elections of electoral malpractice.  

In this context the respondents were asked their level of awareness at a three merit scale – high, medium, low. The information furnished in Table 6.3 shows that in Block Rait, out of the total sample population only 5.33 percent respondents admitted that they didn’t engage themselves in making people especially women aware in policies, 41.33 percent respondents said that they associated at a medium level and 53.34 percent women Panchayat members stated that

8. Sanjeev K. Mahajan (Jan-Dec, 04). Public Accountability of State Level Public Undertakings in India: A Case Study in Dynamics of Public Administration, Department of Public Administration, University of Lucknow, P. 22.
they involved themselves at a high level. In Block Panchrukhi, 46.67 percent respondents said that they participated in this activity at a very low level, 44 percent respondents engaged at a medium level and only 9.33 percent members associated at a high level.

From the ongoing analysis of Table 6.3, it can be said that in Block Rait, half of the sample population participated at a high level and half at a medium level whereas in Block Panchrukhi, a very low percentage participated at a high level and half of the rest participated at a low level and the other half at a medium level.

(f) Role in Encouraging Voters to use Voters Rights with Care

Linkages between the State and Local government realms are also produced by the system of party politics. Local democracy does not work in a vacuum but is closely connected to the wider state political framework. Parties have not been a dominant feature of local government and elections have never been organized on party lines. Although elections for the post of the President and the ward members are not contested on party lines, they flaunt their party connections and the members of the same party canvass together as a single group.

10. Ibid., P. 270.
So it is very essential that voters are made aware of their rights so that they may use their rights judiciously.

Women Panchayat leaders need to encourage other women to be aware of their voting rights with care. In Block Rait, according to Table 5 only 5.33 percent members admitted that they didn't do much in this regard, 10.67 percent respondents said that they participated at a medium level and a majority of 84 percent members stated that they involved themselves at a high level. In Block Panchrukhi, according to Table 6.3, out of the total sample population, 34.66 percent respondents said that they encouraged other voters to use voter rights with care whereas 46.67 percent women PRI members admitted that they involved themselves in this activity at a medium level and 18.67 percent respondents said that they participated at a high level.

From the above analysis, it is clear that in Block Rait, a majority of the respondents involved themselves highly whereas in Block Panchrukhi the percentage was much lower. May be the respondents in this block lacked awareness which the state officials must take care of.
Table 6.3

View point of Respondents vis–a–vis Political Parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SN</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Block Rait</th>
<th>%age</th>
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<td>L</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>%age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Contribution in encouraging rural women to participate in developmental activities</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>20</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Involvement in making people aware of their voting rights</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Involvement in exposing corrupt officials</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Contribution in making the Panchayat system transparent</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Community participation in awareness of politics</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Role in encouraging voters to use voters rights with care</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Perception of Respondents vis-à-vis Educational Activities

Education is a basic amenity and a necessity of our lives. India is wrought with dogmas and superstitions because of lack of education. Now, times are changing and awareness is being brought in the rural and weaker sections of society with the help of women Panchayat members. Education makes a man a source of dissemination of education among the rural masses. An attempt was made to study the perception of respondents regarding educational activities. Table 6 furnishes our information vis-a-vis six indicators. They are:

(a) Participation in Various Literacy Programmes

Table 6.4 tells us about how much the women Panchayat members contribute towards literacy programmes. Out of the total sample population in Block Rait, 21.33 percent respondents said that they contributed very less, 46.67 percent members associated themselves with literacy programmes at a medium level whereas 32 percent respondents admitted of helping at a high level. In Block Panchrukhi, 10.67 percent respondents admitted that they didn't contribute much in this field whereas 56 percent respondents contributed at a medium level and 33.33 percent respondents engaged themselves in this activity.
This analysis shows that most of the respondents in both the block were active either at a medium or a high level regarding their participation in various literacy programmes. This means that women leaders take a keen interest in social upliftment.

(b) Role of Women PRI Leaders in providing Education to Children of Weaker Sections

Children are the future of our society. In urban areas, children get education without much of a problem but in rural areas, it is very difficult to give education to children especially of weaker sections. In Table 6.4 out of the total sample population, in Block Rait, 22.67 percent respondents admitted that they didn’t participate in this area much, 46.67 percent women Panchayat members stated that they contributed in children’s education of the weaker section at a medium level whereas 30.66 percent respondents stated that they involved themselves highly in this parameter. In Block Panchrukhi, 28 percent respondents helped at a low level, 54.67 percent members admitted of contributing at a medium level while only 17.33 percent members engaged themselves at a high level.

The above analysis makes it evident that the majority of women PRI leaders were active in providing education to the children of the weaker section either at a medium or a high level. This means that women leaders are responsible towards the weaker section of the society.
Preparatory schools and primary schools are important stepping stones for children to get further education. It was found from the Table 6.4 of the survey that in Block Rait, 33.33 percent respondents said that they participated in encouraging parents and children for preschool and primary school, at a very low level whereas 42.67 percent members involved themselves at a medium level while 18 women Panchayat members at a high level. On the other hand, in Block Panchrukhi, 42.67 percent respondents said that they encouraged parents to send their children to pre-school play ways or also at primary level at a low level while 41.33 percent women Panchayat members said that they participated in this activity at a medium level whereas only 16 percent respondents expressed that they participated at high level.

The above analysis shows that majority of respondents in both the blocks – Panchrukhi and Rait–were associated in encouraging pre-school and primary school education at a low or a medium level and only a small percentage were highly active. In fact, it should be the other way round. Primary school education has become compulsory and free by the government but it has to be ensured that students go to school also. For this, the parents need to be motivated.
(d) Involvement in Organizing Sports or Cultural Shows

Sports and cultural shows are a vital part of personality development of children. Table 6.4 furnishes information regarding the contribution of women Panchayat leaders in organizing sports or cultural shows. In Block Rait, 37.33 percent respondents said that they helped very less, 42.67 percent respondents admitted of their contribution at a medium level whereas 20 percent respondents said that they participated in this activity at a high level. In Block Panchrukhi, 44 percent women Panchayat members responded that they helped very less, 42.67 percent respondents said that they contributed at an average level while 13.33 percent respondents engaged at a high level.

This analysis of the data available in Table 6.4 shows that most of the respondents in both the blocks—Panchrukhi and Rait—involved themselves in organizing sports on cultural shows at a low or a medium level. Only a small percentage involved themselves at a high level. This can be interpreted in this way that the majority of the respondents didn’t feel that sports and cultural shows were important or were too busy in their own work to spare time for such activities which are an essential part of our lives for all round personality development.
(e) Participation in Enrolment Drive of Children in School

According to Table 6.4 in Block Rait, 28 percent members admitted of contributing in this field at a very low level whereas 37.33 percent respondents at a medium level and 34.67 percent members at a high level. In Block Panchrukhi, 30.67 percent respondents said that they helped very less in this area, 49.33 percent members at a medium level and 20 percent at a high level.

This analysis of Table 6.4 shows that a very low percentage of the sample population was involved in enrolment drive of children in school. If our younger lot doesn’t go to school, we will not have a sound base and a very weak future. A literate and educated India will be a strong economy too in the times to come.
Table 6.4
Perception of Respondents vis–a–vis Educational Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S N</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Block Rait</th>
<th>Block Panchrukhi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>L</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Participation in various literacy programmes</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>35(46.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Role in education to children of weaker sections</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>35(46.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Participation in preschool and primary school children</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>32(42.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Involvement in organizing sports or cultural schools</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32(42.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Participation in enrolment drive of children in school</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28(37.33)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Opinions of Respondents regarding Public Work and Civil Amenities Activities

Activities like construction of roads and drains, installing smokeless chulhas, providing drinking water, construction of community Bhawan, providing sanitation at public places, construction of houses, etc. are very important for development of our rural areas. Table 6.5 gives us data and information regarding the level of contribution made by women Panchayat members.

(a) Participation in the Construction of Road and Drainage Facilities

Roads and drains are constructed to develop an area. Table 6.5 furnishes information about the respondents' viewpoint. In Block Rait, 10.67 percent members said that their involvement in this area was very low whereas 45.33 percent respondents stated medium level and 44 percent respondents expressed a high level participation. In Block Panchrukhi, only 8 percent respondents admitted of not doing much in this field whereas a majority of 53.33 percent respondents stated a medium level participation while 38.67 percent respondents admitted of high level contribution.

This ongoing data analysis shows that a majority of respondents were involved in construction of roads and drainage in both blocks which is a very encouraging picture as roads as well as drainage form an
integral part of development at the grass root level which was the basic purpose of PRI formation.

(b) Contribution in Installing Smokeless Chulhas

According to Table 6.5, in Block Rait, 48 percent respondents' contribution was very low with respect to installation of smokeless chulhas whereas 34.67 percent respondents was medium while 17.33 percent respondents was high. In Block Panchrukhi, 29.33 percent members contributed at a low level, 49.33 percent respondents at a medium level and only 21.34 percent members at a high level.

The ongoing analysis of the data given in Table 6.5 shows that the elected women representatives of PRIs involved themselves in the installation of smokeless chulhas at either low level or at a medium level.

In fact, smokeless chulhas are very useful as they avoid pollution and are environment friendly but sadly, our respondents did not participate in this activity highly.
(c) Role in Obtaining Drinking Water for Common People

Clean drinking water is lifeline for healthy life. Table 6.5 gives us a picture about the levels at which the elected women representatives contributed in obtaining drinking water for common people. In Block Rait, out of the total sample population, only 8 percent respondents said that they helped at a very low level whereas 57.33 percent respondents expressed that they participated at a medium level while 34.67 percent respondents associated themselves at a high level. In Block Panchrukhi, 24 percent respondents stated that they involved themselves at a low level whereas 57.33 percent respondents admitted of engaging themselves in this activity at medium level while 18.67 percent respondents at a high level.

This data analysis given in Table 6.5 once again shows that our women elected representatives do not have an important role in obtaining and providing drinking water for common people. Majority of the respondents of the sample population fell in the medium level category whereas it should have been at a high level as clear drinking water is very important for a healthy population. Dirty drinking water leads to diseases and unhealthy life. This kind of environment further is conducive to unproductive manpower. So, to achieve an optimum utilization of manpower, women political leaders must be proactive in this area.
(d) Involvement in Construction of Community Bhawan

In villages, a community Bhawan helps in hosting various religious and social functions. Table 6.5 shows that the respondents involved themselves in this activity at various levels. In Block Rait, out of the total sample population, only 9.33 percent respondents admitted of not doing much in this activity. A majority of 58.67 percent respondents said medium level while 32 percent members expressed a high level. In Block Panchrukhi, only 12 percent respondents stated that they participated in this activity at a low level, 44 percent respondents at a medium level whereas 44 percent respondents at a high level.

The above data analysis of Table 6.5 shows that a majority of respondents were quite active at a high level in the construction of a community Bhawan. This means that even though the sample population was not very active in areas like education, provision of drinking water and smokeless chulahas, etc., they liked religious and social activities which is why the keen interest in the construction of a community Bhawan.

(e) Contribution in Providing Sanitation at Public Places

According to the Table 6.5, 13.33 percent respondents said that they involved themselves in providing sanitation at public places at a very low level whereas 49.33 percent respondents while 37.34 percent
members said that hey associated themselves with the activity at a high level. In Block Panchrukhi, out of the total sample population 14.67 percent members admitted of not involving themselves much in this activity, 64 percent respondents stated of medium level participation while 21.33 percent respondents said high level.

This analysis of Table 6.5 shows that the majority of the respondents fell in the medium level which means that they are quite conscious and aware of the problem of sanitation at public places and want a clean and healthy environment to promote health as opposed to their lack of concern with the provision of clean drinking water. This could be due to their lack of knowledge and awareness about the usefulness of clean drinking water which the administrators must provide.

On the other hand, the majority of the sample population was proactive in the provision of sanitation at public places.

(f) Involvement in Construction of Houses

Table 6.5 shows to what level the women elected representatives of PRIs contribute in construction of houses for downtrodden people. In Block Rait, 50.67 percent respondents confessed of low participation whereas 17.33 percent members admitted of medium level participation while 32 percent members expressed that their involvement was of a
high level. In Block Panchrukhi, 16 percent members admitted of low participation, 52 percent members said that they engaged themselves at a medium level while 32 percent members stated that they associated themselves at a high level.

The above analysis of Table 6.5 shows that both the blocks – Panchrukhi and Rait–had a different response. Block Panchrukhi women political leaders were associated with construction of houses for the poor at a medium level whereas a majority of Block Rait respondents confessed of low participation. The officials must motivate Block Rait political leaders to come forward and develop their area by making them aware of various development housing schemes.
Table 6.5
Opinions of Respondents in Public Work and Civil Amenities Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Block Rait</th>
<th>Block Panchrukhi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>L</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Participation in the construction of road and drainage facilities</td>
<td>8 (10.67)</td>
<td>34 (45.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Contribution in installing smokeless chulhas</td>
<td>36 (48.00)</td>
<td>26 (34.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Role in obtaining drinking water for common people</td>
<td>6 (8.00)</td>
<td>43 (57.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Involvement in construction of community Bhawan</td>
<td>7 (9.33)</td>
<td>44 (58.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Contribution in providing sanitation of public places</td>
<td>10 (13.33)</td>
<td>37 (49.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Involvement in construction of houses</td>
<td>38 (60.67)</td>
<td>13 (17.33)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Perception of Respondents as Regards to Trade and Commerce

Trade and commerce is one of the most important economic activities for any area's development. It was attempted to gauge how and to what level the women Panchayat members contributed to raise the level of trade and commerce of their area.

The success of development programmes also depends on the will of the political and administrative elite to decentralize real power at the grass root level. The choice in the matter is thus very sharp in view of the disintegration of the fabric of the Indian society. Either decentralize or perish. Without decentralization there is neither going to be democracy nor economic development. If both are denied, it is obvious that the logic of the rest of the system will push it towards authoritarianism on the one hand and acute exploitation and inadequacies on the other.\(^{11}\)

(a) Role in Organization of Cooperative Marketing of Agricultural and Other Products

Rural areas have the capability to produce crops and even manufacture products though at a small scale but don't have the acumen of marketing it. In Block Rait, out of the total sample population,

\(^{11}\) S.L. Goel and Shalini Rajneesh (2003), *op. cit.*, P. 184.
33.34 percent respondents stated that they helped in this area at a low level, 60 percent members responded medium level and only 6.66 percent members admitted of high level participation. In Block Panchrukhi, 68 percent respondents admitted of low participation. 22.63 percent respondents expressed medium participation and only 9.33 percent members said that they contributed high level participation.

The ongoing analysis of Table 6.6, it becomes quite evident that the majority of the respondents of the sample population belonged either to low or medium category. This means that the women leaders were not very active in providing the facility of Cooperative Marketing of Agricultural and other Products to the farmers.

The officials must see to it that the farmers get the knowledge of cooperative marketing which is quite beneficial to all concerned as it will help them to send their products and crops to the markets at reasonably good prices.

(b) Association with Providing Cheap Credit Facilities to People

Role of Credit Agencies—Development of rural sector involves integrated efforts of credit and non-credit institutions. Credit institutions have been increasing their involvement in the developmental process, year after year. In order to highlight the role of various credit agencies
and to ensure a proper direction to the credit, Reserve Bank of India had introduced the system of Lead Bank Scheme, which devolves the responsibility of planning and monitoring of credit to the Lead Bank of the district.\textsuperscript{12}

Thus, PRIs could effectively augment their resources through appropriate utilization of bank finance for poverty alleviation programmes as well as area/infrastructure development.

In today's world of plastic money, credit facility is a way of life in urban areas but it has not permeated down to the rural areas. In this survey, an attempt has been made to see to what level cheap credit facilities to people are being given to rural people by elected women Panchayat members. According to Table 6.6, in Block Rait, out of the total sample population, 46.67 percent respondents confessed of low participation whereas 46.67 percent respondents admitted of medium level contribution while only 6.66 percent members said that they engaged in this activity at a high level.

In Block Panchrukhi, 38.67 percent members helped at a low level, 53.33 percent respondents contributed at a medium level and only 8 percent respondents admitted of a high level contribution. From the ongoing analysis it can be concluded that a very low level of women members of PRIs contributed in the field of providing credit facilities to people in rural areas.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., P. 200.
(c) Contribution in Checking Malpractices in Trade and Commerce Activities

It was found from the Table 6.6 in Block Rait that 60 percent members contributed at a low level, 30.67 percent respondents involved themselves at a medium level and only 9.33 percent members engaged at a high level. In Block Panchrukhi, 34.67 percent members involved themselves at a low level whereas 30.67 percent respondents associated themselves in this activity at a medium level while only 9.33 percent members helped in checking malpractices. According to this analysis, it appears that a very low percentage contributes in checking malpractices in trade and commerce. This could be due to lack of knowledge and awareness about trade and commerce activities. The government should keep a supervisory control over the officials so that they provide such knowledge to the women political leaders.

(d) Role in Maintenance of Cooperative Godowns

Cooperative societies are a landmark in the development of our rural society. Godowns are its practical aspect which helps in their functioning. Table 6.6 furnishes the data of the level of the role of women PRI members in the maintenance of godowns. In Block Rait, out of the total sample population, 68 percent members admitted of a low role, 18.67 percent members confessed of a medium role whereas only 13.33 percent members said that they contributed at a high level. In Block Panchrukhi, 66.67 percent members stated that they contributed at a low level, 22.67 percent members admitted of a medium level and
only 10.66 percent members confessed of a high level contribution in this field.

According to the ongoing analysis, it becomes clear that the majority of the sample population did not have a key role in maintenance of cooperative godowns. This could be because of no godowns or unawareness and lack of interest in such activities. To speed up the movement of PRIs, officials and functionaries must promote the concept of cooperative godowns so that they can have benefit of storage of their crops or products. This way, the crop can be kept safe from adverse weather conditions and from any thefts also.

(e) Contribution in Organization of Cooperative Consumer Societies

In planned development, cooperation is an instrument which, while retaining some of the advantage of decentralization and local initiative, will serve willingly the purpose of the five year plans. The main objectives of the cooperative societies is to raise funds by deposit from members and loans from government and distribute the money thus obtained as loans to members.\(^\text{13}\) It was found from the respondents that in Block Rait, 66.67 percent members said that their contribution in this respect was of a low level whereas 26.66 percent members confessed

of a medium level participation and only 6.66 percent respondents stated that they helped in this area.

Block Panchrukhi didn't give a very different picture. 69.33 percent members admitted that they contributed at low level, 13.33 percent respondents expressed medium level participation while only 17.34 percent respondents said that helped at a high level.

This ongoing analysis of data shows that most of the respondents of the sample population were contributing either at a low or medium level. The women PRI leaders were not active in cooperative consumer societies organization. This could be due to lack of knowledge about consumer cooperative societies, in which the role of officials concerned also is to be criticized.

(f) Participation in Procurement of Remunerative Prices

To get a reasonable price for the produce of rural people, women Panchayat members need to help in this field so that the role of the middle man is eliminated. According to Table 6.6, in Block Rait, as many as 68 percent members admitted of low participation whereas 25.34 percent members confessed of medium participation while only 6.66 percent respondents said that they involved themselves of a high level participation. In Block Panchrukhi, 64 percent respondents answered that their role in this activity was low whereas 24 percent members admitted of a medium level participation while only 12 percent respondents confessed of a high level participation.
The above analysis shows that a very low percentage associated themselves at a high level in procurement of remunerative prices. Majority of the respondents confessed of a low level participation. As a whole, this means that the respondents' participation in trade and commerce was low. This area needs special attention so that these two blocks can become economically strong.

Summary

Participatory role of women leaders of PRIs was studied on the basis of the data collected from the respondents. The survey was conducted on 6 basic parameters to understand the contribution of the women leaders. They were:
1. Social Work

It entailed elimination of purdah system, eradication of dowry system, female literacy, reduction of domestic violence, eradication of elimination of the girl child and celebration of festivals at a community level. From the analysis of Table 6.1, it can be concluded that a majority of women leaders contributed in limitation of purdah system only at a minimal level and only a few were highly aware of their social responsibilities. Again it was found that only a small percentage actively contributed in the eradication of dowry system whereas a majority of them helped in female literacy programmes at a medium level while a lesser percentage were activity involved.

As far as their role in reduction of violence is concerned, most of them contributed again at a medium level while a small percentage were highly involved in the avoidance of elimination of the girl child whereas the majority of them involved themselves at a medium level. Finally, one can say that the participation of a majority of women members in the social work was of a medium level.

2. Economic Activities

The foregoing analysis reveals that on an aggregate level, the majority of the respondents expressed a medium level participation in economic activities. This parameter was evaluated at six diversified fields:
Firstly: The role of elected women representatives at PRI level was assessed in assisting others in seeking employment and it was found that the majority of the respondents helped at a medium level while a small percentage helped at a high level.

Secondly, their knowledge about the preparation of budget was evaluated which was a little different from the earlier indicator. Both the Blocks, Rait and Panchrukhi, gave a different analysis. In Block Rait, a high percentage of respondents were highly aware of budget preparation whereas a small percentage were aware only at a low level.

Thirdly, their involvement in the preparation of budget was studied which gave the result that a majority participated at a medium level. The fourth indicator was their contribution regarding checking misappropriation of Panchayat budget. Majority of the respondents admitted of a high level contribution. The fifth indicator involved the discussion of expenditure of school, anganwadis, etc. in which a majority of respondents said that they discussed budget of Panchayats at a medium level.

The sixth indicator was the role of women Panchayat members in getting the right of parental property. The block wise analysis was quite different. In Block Rait the maximum respondents were not very active in this regard whereas in Block Panchrukhi the majority helped at an average level. So, it can be safely said that the respondents were involved in economic activities at a medium level.
3. Political Activities

From the analysis of Table 6.3, it can be observed that a majority of respondents were quite active in making people aware of their political rights. Political equality is an essential element in a democracy. **Firstly**, it was found that women Panchayat members' contribution in encouraging rural women to participate in developmental activities was mostly at a medium level and a low percentage were involved highly. **Secondly**, again a majority were involved in making people aware of their voting rights at a medium level in Block Panchrukhi whereas in Block Rait, the majority participated at a high level. **Thirdly**, a majority responded that they associated themselves in exposing corrupt official at a low level.

**Fourthly**, a majority of the respondents didn't contribute much in making the Panchayat system transparent. **Fifthly**, community participation in awareness of politics was difficult as Block Rait showed a high level participation whereas Block Panchrukhi was absolutely apposite with a low participation. **Sixthly**, it one sees block wise, the response was quite varied with reference to encouraging voters to use voter's rights with care. In Block Rait, the respondents said that they participated highly whereas in Block Panchrukhi, it was found to the contrary that a low percentage contributed highly in this activity.
4. Educational Activities

The contribution of women Panchayat members was assessed, from the Table 6.4, in educational activities. Firstly, as far as participation in various literacy programmes is concerned a majority of respondents participated at a medium level and a major portion of them were highly active. Secondly, their role regarding education to children of weaker sections was again gauged at an average level. While the third indicator of their participation in providing education to preschool and primary school children showed that the respondents helped at a medium level and a lower percentage at a higher level. Fourthly, the involvement of respondents in organizing sports or cultural shows was found to be again of a medium range. The fifth, the last indicator, dealt with the enrolment drive of children in school. The respondents conformed to the trend of a medium level response.

5. Public Work and Civil Amenities Activities

Firstly, the participation of women Panchayat members regarding construction of road and drainage facilities was found to be of a high level in both the blocks. Secondly, their contribution in installing smokeless chulhas was gauged at a low level. Thirdly, their role in obtaining drinking water for common people was analyzed as medium whereas fourthly their involvement in construction of a Community
Bhawan was also found to be of an average level. The Fifth indicator, concerning provision of sanitation of public places, according to the analysis, showed that a majority of respondents contributed at a medium level. Lastly, the Sixth indicator dealt with the involvement in construction of houses, in which most respondents expressed a medium level range and a lower percentage participated at a high level in Block Panchrukhi whereas a majority of respondents in Block Rait said that they helped at a low level.

6. Trade and Commerce

After going through the statistical analysis of the Table 6.6, it came to light that in both the blocks and all the six indicators involving:

➢ Organization of Cooperative marketing of agricultural and other products.

➢ Providing cheap credit facilities to people.

➢ Checking malpractices

➢ Maintenance of cooperative godowns

➢ Organization of cooperative consumer societies and

➢ Procurement of remunerative prices.

The majority of respondents showed that they contributed a low level and a very small percentage participated at a medium or a high level.