CHAPTER - 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This Chapter discusses the research methodology used to conduct the study on woman empowerment through Panchayati Raj Institutions. The chapter gives a brief overview of objectives, nature and scope, key variables and how each was measured, locale of the study, universe of the study, sample plan of the study, tools of data collection, and the procedure for analysis. Limitations of data collection method and how the limitations were addressed are also explained.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Women empowerment has been an ongoing debate in India and elsewhere. Indian women occupying a subordinate position to men, need to be empowered to overcome social, political and economic discrimination. There were several attempts to improve the position of women after India got independence. The 73rd Amendment Act is a major step towards political empowerment of women through Panchayati Raj Institutions. This has resulted in the entry of large number of women into decision making bodies in the rural areas, who were otherwise home makers. On the other hand, participation of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions had lead to lot of debate on the functioning of women members in these institutions. Contradictory reports about the story of women member’s participation, some triumphant, other tragic has enhanced the curiosity of researchers.

Present study intends to focus upon various aspects of women’s functioning in the three tiers of Panchayati Raj Institutions and its impact on overall development of women. Investigation into these institutions throws light on the actual role played by the women especially at the third strata of governance in solving local problems. The study makes an attempt examine to what extent affirmative action has helped women to get politically empowered. It attempts to explore the extent to which the Act has succeeded in pursuing the agenda of equal rights for women and concern for recognition of women as equal partner in local administration. It examines the various dimensions of empowerment of women through gram panchayats on the basis of empirical investigations in the state of Haryana in India.
The study covers very significant areas of woman heads’ life specially the dimensions of change in their social and economic life.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Women's political participation has been considered a major measure of women's empowerment. Globally, through histories of the world we have records of very few regents, sovereigns, and active agents in nobility who were women. Gender equality and gender equity are emerging as major challenges in the recent times. As Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen has pointed out, “Democracy is not the goal of development; it is the primary means of development.” Women’s participation in political processes is important for strengthening democracy and for their struggle against marginalization, trivialization and oppression. Coming up of women as a strong group would change the prevailing political practices, the nature and content of debate in the legislature and women’s issues can be taken care of from the feminists’ perspective both in policy formulation and implementation. Women are considered extremely pivotal in the process of change in the rural areas. Women’s participation in Panchayats has provided them opportunities in the decision making process. It has proved to be the most effective instrument in bringing about change in their way of life in terms of economic well being and adoption of new technology. Their entry into Panchayati Raj Institutions, both as members as well as heads of Panchayats, has pushed them into the policy making and implementation process in a big way. A few states have already introduced 50 percent reservation to women in local governments. Women are also coming forward in the local politics and their participation in the decision making and governance of development programmes and schemes is gradually increasing, however, they face problems and challenges in performance of their responsibilities and roles. Their problems are manifold which include proxy attendance in meetings, role conflicts as they face grievances of family, society and governments, social barriers, male dominance in decision making, lack of knowledge, information and educational backwardness, etc. Thus, it is imperative to study the opportunities and challenges of elected women heads of PRIs in Haryana.
AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the study is to understand the extent of empowerment achieved by women heads of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Haryana. The study aims at a descriptive study of the status of the woman heads of PRIs in Haryana. The basic objectives of the study are-

- To study the political participation of Women in India in general and Haryana in particular,
- To examine the socio-economic conditions of the women heads of PRIs in Haryana,
- To verify the roles and responsibilities of women heads in PRIs in Haryana,
- To examine the problems and challenges faced by the women heads in Panchayati Raj Institutions in Haryana,
- To draw policy implications for improving the functioning of the PRIs in India and Haryana in particular and also for Social Work Intervention for empowerment of women.

HYPOTHESES

The status of the women in Haryana is not uniform among all the different communities. Factors like patriarchal family, marriage and divorce, degree of acculturation and urbanization, level of education and so on many have contributed to this variations. The status of women in this region varies along with the differences in the level of socio-economic development.

The study was conducted keeping in view of the following hypotheses:

- Women participation in political institutions especially PRIs have increased since enactment of 73rd Constitutional Amendment.
- Women are facing problems in performance of their roles and responsibilities in the male dominated society and political set up.
- There has been positive change in the political landscape due to reservation of women in local governments.
- Most of Sarpanches, Chairpersons Block Samities and Chairpersons Zila Parishad are less educated with very poor understanding and knowledge of
the gram panchayat manuals, their rights and responsibilities, poverty alleviation and employment generating schemes which are currently operational in the rural areas

- Political participation of women in the local rural bodies has hardly made any noticeable dent in terms of raising their social and economic status, improving the literacy ratio, providing health, maternity and sanitation benefits to women and ameliorating violence, oppression, menace of dowry, rape, discrimination etc.

OPERATIONAL DEFINATIONS

- **Empowerment:** Empowerment refers to improvement of living conditions and facilitation of socio-economic development of an individual. It is about one’s overall developments that increase his/her ability to realize his/her own preference in life.

- **PRIs:** PRIs refer to local government constituted as per 73rd Constitution Amendment Act in 1992. These institutions are Village Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad of Haryana State.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Present study is mainly empirical and descriptive in nature and based on primary data. The study critically analysed the socio-economic and political conditions of woman heads of PRIs of Haryana. The study also focused upon the roles and responsibilities of women heads. The researcher also examined the problems and challenges faced by the women heads in Panchayati Raj Institutions in Haryana. The researcher has also made an attempt to understand the level of empowerment on the basis of autonomy in the family, mobility within and outside the community and decision making powers among the women heads. The study also draws policy implications for improving the functioning of the PRIs in India and Haryana in particular and also for Social Work Intervention for empowerment of women.

UNIVERSE OF THE STUDY

The universe of the present study is the elected women heads of the all the
three tires i.e. Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samitis & Zila Parishad in the State of Haryana. The universe has been selected for the reason the researcher is well conversant of the conditions of women in the area. The researcher has relatively easy access and mature understanding with regards to language, socio-economic, and management and non-domestic aspects of the region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women Heads</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Divisions</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Districts</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blocks</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Villages</td>
<td>6754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zila Parishads</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panchayat Samitis</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gram Panchayats</td>
<td>6083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2355</td>
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</table>

**LOCALE OF THE STUDY**

Since the inception of Haryana State on 1st November 1966. The Punjab Gram Panchayat act 1952 was made applicable to the PRIs in Haryana also. Pursuant to the 73rd Constitutional amendment in 1992, the Haryana Panchayati Raj Act, 1994 was framed which came into force w.e.f. April 22, 1994. Thereafter Haryana Panchayati Raj Election Rules, 1994 were formulated on 24th August, 1994 followed by Haryana Panchayati Rules, 1995, notified on 16th February1995. Subsequently the Haryana Panchayati Raj Finance Budget/ Accounts/ Audit/ Taxation and works rules 1996 were also notified on 14th August, 1996. Under the Haryana Panchayati Raj Act 1994, the Panchayati Raj Institutions have been entrusted with duties & functions related to all the 29 subjects listed in Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution.

Haryana, the state in India, is known as the cradle of ancient Indian civilization. Women in Haryana constitute 46.73% of total population, the sex ratio of 877 females for every 1,000 males has registered a gain of 16 points, and the female literacy rate is 66.77 % with a net gain of 11.04%. The state has 21 districts,
74 tehsils, 6,841 villages and 6083 panchayats. As many as 385 women representatives have been elected to urban local bodies in the state, including 229 municipal committees, 142 municipal councils and 14 in municipal corporations. Similarly, 21,739 women panches, 2022 women sarpanches, 956 women members of panchayat Samitis and 132 women members of Zila Parishads are elected members of the PRIs.

**SAMPLING**

In the present study Census method and Probability Sampling Method is used to select the respondents.

The field survey has been conducted in the state of Haryana. Four districts each from the four divisions of Haryana viz., Gurgaon, Hisar, Jhajjar and Kurukshetra were selected for the study of village panchayats by using lottery method of Simple Random Sampling technique.

As per the constitutional provision 33 percent seats are reserved for women. Therefore, out of the total heads of Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad, 33 percent women heads are taken as sample. 7 women Presidents of Zila Parishads, 40 women Chairpersons of Panchayat Samitis were chosen randomly by using lottery method. All 375 women Sarpanches of Village Panchayats from Haryana state were contacted for data collection by using census method. Thus the number of the respondents for the present study is 422.

**Sample Size**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Women Heads</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chairperson, Zila Parishads</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairperson, Panchayat Samitis</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarpanch, Gram Panchayats</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurushetra</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hisar</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurgaon</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jhajjar</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>375</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Sample Size</strong></td>
<td><strong>422</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The field survey was conducted with the help of structured interview schedules.

**PRE-TESTING OF INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

The researcher pre-tested the interview schedule on 43 respondents, out of which 40 interview schedules were pretested on women Sarpanches, two interview schedule were pretested on heads of Panchayat Samiti and on e on Head of Zila Parishad. After pre-tested the interview schedule the researcher made some modification in this schedule. The researcher made some changes on the structure of the questionnaire like modification in open ended questions to close ended questions specifically related to the roles and responsibilities of the women heads.

**SOURCES OF DATA**

The study has conducted on the basis of two sources of data. The first one is primary data collection and the second one is Secondary data collection. The details of primary and secondary sources of data collection are given below.

(A) **Primary Sources:**

The primary source of data was the 422 unitse women heads of the all the three tires i.e. Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samitis & Zila Parishad in the State of Haryana. The primary data were collected through face to face interview with the respondents and also by observation.

(B) **Secondary Sources:**

The researcher has collected relevant information from reliable sources from government departments i.e. Department of Panchayati Raj, Government of India.

**TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION**

In order to fulfill the objectives of the study the researcher used both the quantitative and qualitative methods during data collection. The following tools were used for data collection.

(i) **Interview Schedule:**

A well structured interview schedule was prepared for data collection. The interview schedule was divided into three parts. The first part includes the socio,
cultural and economic profile of respondents and their political participation, second part of the schedule includes women’s role and responsibilities in PRIs and the last part includes their perception pertaining to decentralized governance and role conflicts, etc. Both closed ended and open ended questions were given in the interview schedule. The open ended questions gave the respondents the freedom to record their own experiences as Heads of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

(ii) Observation:

Apart from interview schedule observation method is also applied to supplement the information supplied by the respondents during the filling up of schedules. Observation method was used to collect the necessary information regarding their socio-cultural and political practices. The researcher has made a number of visits to the Heads of all the tier of PRIs and gathered information.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

The filled interview schedules were thoroughly checked, edited, and processed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) for the purpose of analysis. Univariate and bivariate tables were prepared to find out the relationship between the variables. Inferences, results, and conclusions were drawn from the analysis of data. Diagrammatical presentations were also made where required. The findings of the study are presented in seven chapters. The policy recommendations also made on the basis of analysis of research findings and critical appreciation of pertinent literature.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.

The present study has its own limitations. All the limitations are as follows:

- The study is only confined to the women Heads of the three tiers of the PRIs only.
- The findings of the study are based on the responses received from the respondents.
- The area of the study is limited to the State of Haryana.
- The result of the study is based on the primary field work basis.
Apart from the limitations of the study the researcher has faced many difficulties during the data collection at the field survey. Some respondents were not ready to respond as the work was taken care by their husbands. The interference of husbands during the interview was also a great hurdle. Researcher was not able to meet some of the respondents as they were out of station. The researcher made many efforts to overcome the above hurdles. He visited many times to some of the respondents sometimes along with Anganwadi Workers to get the accurate responses from the respondents.