CHAPTER - VII

EMPOWERMENT LEVEL OF WOMEN GP MEMBERS
An attempt in this chapter has been made to find out the level of empowerment of women GP representatives. In fact, one of the intentions of providing reservation for women in grass-root politics is to empower the women. Once the women are empowered, they in turn help their counterparts in empowerment. However, to what extent does the 73rd Amendment help the women representatives to become empowered? As we discussed earlier, women members had to face a lot of constraints and discouragement from the male members. People even today do not accept political rule by women. Androcentric values discourage women from active political participation. In this context it is important to know whether women respondents of the present study have been empowered or not. In this regard data were collected on the basis of parameters such as changes at household level, personal level, community level, economic level and psychological level.
HOUSEHOLD LEVEL CHANGE

To assess the household level changes of the respondents some questions were framed. That is their routine work related to the household chores and related to external household chores such as cooking and serving, washing and cleaning, water fetching, fuel gathering, cattle tending, house maintenance and repairing, child care, leisure and recreation and other work participation. Through this, answers were scored as positive and negative and the total score was altered into percentages.

Fig 7.1

Respondents' Household Level Changes

![Bar Chart]

Figure 7.1 shows that there is hardly any change at the household level. Because even after becoming elected deputies 86.08 per cent...
women representatives stated that they have not become free from household related chores. There were no changes in their subordinate role. For them, GP work is an additional activity. So it has become more difficult to balance the work. Thus, it is clear that even after becoming GP leaders, they have not improved their status at the household level.

**PERSONAL LEVEL CHANGE**

To find out the personal level change, some questions were asked relating to decision-making at the household level, such as family budget, children's education, children's marriage, size of family etc.

**Fig 7.2**

Respondents Change at Personal Level

![Bar chart showing change at personal level](image-url)
Figure 7.2 shows that even after becoming GP leaders, 80.87 per cent of the elected representatives did not feel personally empowered. Because their family members do not respect their decisions regarding children’s education, children’s marriage etc., Only 19.13 per cent respondents have said that as a result of being a leader they got personal empowerment. Now their family members accept their decisions regarding children's education, children's marriage etc. They started showing interest in visiting certain places alone and contacting officers. Accordingly, their status is also improving. Thus, it is evident that even after becoming GP leaders a large proportion of respondents were not empowered at the personal level.

LEVEL OF ECONOMIC CHANGE

To measure the level of economic change, women respondents’ control over finance and management, control over economic resources such as land and property, control over savings and earnings etc., were considered.

Fig 7.3 shows that 74.78 per cent respondents did not achieve any role change or empowerment although they are in the position of leaders. Respondents revealed that they do not have any control over finance
and management, control over economic resources such as land and property and they are not in the position of earning and saving money on their own. Accordingly, their economic status is also very low. But about one-fourth (25.22 per cent) respondents achieved a moderate level of economic change. A small proportion of respondents had also left working as wage labourers and has established their own shops. Although the changes in occupation of women respondents were found to be significant, unfortunately a large proportion of respondents lacked control over economic resources.

Fig 7.3

Respondents Level of Economic Change

![Bar Chart]

- No change: 74.78
- Change occurred: 25.22

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LEVEL OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CHANGE

At the level of psychological change, respondents' changes in self-confidence, security, etc. were considered. 41.74 per cent women respondents experienced improvement in their self-confidence, security and etc. It is heartening to note that at least at the psychological level about 40 per cent of the sample respondents showed improvement. These respondents expressed their improved confidence in facing the public, which otherwise was missing previously.

Fig 7.4

Respondents Level of Psychological Change

![Bar chart showing 58.26% no change and 41.74% change occurred]
COMMUNITY LEVEL CHANGE

For community level change, respondents' improvements in participation of various activities such as marriage and social ceremonies, cultural programmes, agitations and other related functions were considered.

Figure 7.5 show that 32.17 per cent respondents had experienced improvements in their participation in different activities of the concerned villages. Remaining (67.83 per cent) respondents revealed that they had not availed themselves of any chance to improve their participation in different activities of the villages. Thus, study reveals that hardly any change occurred or respondents were empowered at the level of community.

Fig 7.5

Respondents' Community Level Change

![Bar Chart](image-url)
From the foregoing analysis we can conclude that most of the sample respondents did not feel any role changes after they became the deputies of people. Only a small proportion of respondents felt some changes. It is because of the chances that they gained from participating in different meetings, initiating the meeting and handling some development programmes and activities.

RESPONDENTS VIEWS ON EMPOWERING THE STATUS OF WOMEN

An attempt has been made to find out the views and suggestions of the sample respondents about what kind of alternative initiatives would be more helpful in future to bring about improvements in their status and strengthening empowerment of women.

Taking into account the views and suggestions of the sample respondents, the study reveals that significantly a high proportion of them have suggested that, there should be necessary steps towards for bringing equal awareness among women representatives of GPs about their duties, rights and functions by giving adequate training. Many of the sample respondents opined that, unless the attitude and ill feelings of men against women is changed, changes in socio-economic status and empowerment of women will not be possible. While 66.95 per cent of the sample
Table 7.1
Respondents Views on Requirements for Improving Socio-Economic Status and Empowerment of Women GP Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Type of changes</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Training about their rights, duties and functions</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>86.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bringing changes in the attitude and feelings of men against women</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>72.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Abolition of social, cultural and traditional barriers</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>61.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Compulsory participation of women in the meetings</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>66.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Frequent holding of meetings in the Panchayats</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>56.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Allotting more schemes and funds to women headed PRIs</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>47.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Frequently organizing social functions</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>51.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Initiating more welfare schemes for women representatives</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>58.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Reducing family’s work load</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>54.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td>142</td>
<td>61.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
respondents suggested that there should be made compulsory participation of women in the meetings, followed by 61.30 per cent have stated that unless social, cultural and traditional barriers are broken, empowering women is not be possible. 47.82 per cent respondents have opined that, government should give priority to allot more schemes and funds to women headed PRIs. More than half of the sample respondents had recommended to hold the meetings of panchayats frequently. Efforts also should be made to reduce families work load, and to initiate more welfare schemes for women representatives.