

CONCLUSION, MAIN FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

In the Indian history when the names of some of the most powerful and influential females appeared there should be no doubt and confusion that females in ancient India were generally more empowered as compared to the present India. It is to be noted that females in India since long past are not given equal opportunity and are discriminated socially and economically. When the analysis of ancient period is done in the context of status of females in India in the past, an important factor i.e., traditional and cultural factors were responsible played a significant role in discrimination based on gender in India.

It is unfortunate to note that the ordinary females were not able to come out and make their position in society, as the life of these females were confined to walls of their house. As these females were overburdened with the duties of their household. Further, the life of these ordinary women were controlled by the male members of their family. During the pre-vedic era women have anonymous status. On the basis of historical evidences it could be observed that the natural forces and the divine references that were worshipped by the individuals were feminine in nature. This is the reason due to which the nature is often mentioned as 'Mother Nature'. It is also evident from the historical sources that people living in the Indus Valley Civilization worshipped Mother Goddess. At the time period of Vedic era the life and position of the females was much better as compared to later ages as there are ample of evidences which shows that these female receive good amount of respect in their society and with this they too have various opportunities.

During Vedic period a women as a mother was seen as one who play a vital role in creating an individual, protecting her children. During ancient period females and wives who have right to participate in the religious ceremonies along with their husbands as they get opportunity to offer sacrifices in the religious ceremonies along with their husbands. Later, there was a change observed in the society as society gradually developed in the patriarchal society from matriarchal. Number of limitations were implemented on females regarding their socio-political and religious freedom by vedic texts that includes Brahmanas and Upnishadas and it was also supposed that females should follow the rules that have been prescribed for them religiously. The base of the hindu culture and tradition that governed the way of living of women's in India at that time was laid by upnishads and was followed till the middle era. Further, it was also seen that the upnishads played a vital role in forming a stereotype roles for females in India which continued for long time.

An important contrasting image has been presented of women in various important ancient writings such as vedas and writings of manu in which he mentions that womens should be given protection and honour at each and every stage of her life and he further mentions that the males of the family of a women whether father, husband or son should keep an eye on their female family members and must control them.

For the time period of over 500 years (i.e., from A.D. 1200 to A.D. 1700) Mughal era in Indian History was found to be flourishing. Certainly, a whole new religion appeared on the Indian soil. There were certain elements that emerged during the medival peiod that helped in empowering the status of women. As number of prominent powerful muslim females emerged during the medival era who made important contribution in political area such as Nur

Jahan and Jahanara participated actively in political affairs. But it must not be neglected that these prominent figures belonged to royal families and on the whole the condition of ordinary female was not better as they were always discriminated. As various evil practices such as Purdah system, Sati, Devdasi system were also practiced. But with the emergence of British era and modern Indian period (1700-1947 A.D.), when the upheaval of intellectual was started in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the demand for establishing a society that was independent and egalitarian in nature that should emphasize the equality between both the sexes.

The process of Modernization in India could be observed taking place with the coming of Britishers and establishment of colonial rule in India. But at the time of British era, women's position was at its worst condition. Number of evil practices viz., sati, pardah child marriage was followed. Indian population slowly started getting impressed with the British way of living. It was during this time period some intellectuals such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy argued and said that evil practices like Sati system don't have any religious sanctions and opposed this practice. Later, number of other steps were taken to uplift the position of females.

After independence of India number of important steps were still required to be taken in order to improve the social and economic condition of Indian women.

In this continuation with the formulation of Indian constitution after India's independence an important change appeared in the position of females in India when the 73rd Constitutional Amendment through which local self-government appeared in the rural areas of India. For females, this amendment provided an important opportunity for showing their capability at

various important issues viz decision-making process by becoming chairperson and members in panchayats and fulfilling the duties that have been assigned to them.

The changes taking place in the rural parts of India was supported from the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1993. The key objective of this amendment was to form such system that is accountable and transparent and which is participatory in nature. The 73rd constitutional amendment lead to the decentralization of democratic, governing and monetary system from the government at local level.

Number of steps had been taken by the constitution to uplift the females with the help of number of legal provision by starting and implementing number of welfare schemes and policies because of the reason that females living in the countryside areas of our country could attain empowerment.

With the initiation of implementation of reservation policies by the authority the interest of females have been effected in positive way and the empowerment of females in the panchayats has also seems to be effected by the general way of thinking of those candidates who have been elected as a members in village panchayats undertake various issues and what are the different types of steps do these elected female representatives towards these undertakings, in what manner do these elected representatives associate themselves with certain social and monetary reforms that are taking place around them. One important point that is responsible is the level of their awareness regarding the rights, duties and responsibilities that have been assigned to them and that they have to perform. As the main motive behind the reservation policy for females in PRIs (Panchayati Raj Institutions) was to bring the change and improvement in the representation of females in

democracy and through this to improve their socio-economic condition by improving their position in society. When the improvement in their socio-economic condition of these female will take place then it is quite possible that the attitude of the family members particularly the male members of their family towards these females will change. Further, by bringing the change in socio-economic condition it is quite possible that these females could also become able to participate actively in the decision making process of those development schemes that are being initiated by their village panchayats.

To make any study scientific and in control, some objectives and hypothesis related to study are required:

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

Women leadership seems to be an important concept if we see it in context of social development of Indian women in contemporary Indian society. Rights which have been provided to women by Panchayati Raj Institution reflects how much they are helpful in empowering the condition of women both in socio-economic and political manner and in what ways these rights which have been provided to them by panchayati raj institution is being used by these women. These social limitations and economic dependency creates problems in the path of their participation in panchayats. While proceeding further those factors are required to be analysed which could become helpful in rural development, in order to get actual picture and ground reality of system which is functioning to provide common facilities required by common people and could fulfil their expectation, to know the views of women belonging to rural areas which they hold for panchayati raj institution, to study and analyse the role played by elected female members as representatives and what type of role they play after being elected as

member of Kashi Vidyapeeth Block of Varanasi district. As in any study which is being conducted objectives have their important role to play under subject matter. Objectives of present study are as follows:

1. To analyse the form of female leadership in present system of panchayati raj.
2. To assess the presence of reservation policy and its implementation pattern.
3. To know the socio-economic status and situation of Pradhan and Member's participation in the activities and the meetings of village panchayats and block panchayats.
4. Pattern of initiation and implementation of development programmes and schemes.
5. Analysing the perception of women members and Pradhans regarding the changes they experienced in their socio-economic and political status, in their home as well as in society.
6. In panchayati raj system is there co-operation and co-ordination found to be remained maintained among the female pradhan and members.
7. To know about the upgradation in the status and improvement of women due to introduction of reservation for female in panchayat and their participation in it.

HYPOTHESIS

In order to conduct the present study in scientific manner, some hypothesis have been formed. They are as follows:-

1. In Panchayat normally upper caste hold dominant position.
2. Participation in Panchayati raj system, there is improvement in the status of women.

3. Male members of the family interfere in the administration of elected female members.
4. In Panchayati raj system and rural development elected female members play positive role.
5. In Panchayati raj system is there co-operation and co-ordination found to be remained maintained among the female pradhans and members.

MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

In the light of chapter three when we look at the socio-economic background of the respondents, it could be well observed that majority of the respondents are of young age between the age group of 28-37 years who are actively involved or are taking part in panchayati raj institutions with **37.50%**. It could also be clearly observed that majority of the females among respondents are married and they constitute 95% of the total respondents. While the percentage of unmarried and widow respondents are very low as compared to married ones. And most of the respondents (both pradhans and members) are housewives 45.84% and do not have any occupation so that they can earn independently. Thus, they are economically and financially dependent on their family. Majority of the respondents were found belonging to the upper caste hindu women living in joint families. Most of the women respondents although were literate but were not highly educated, very small percentage of the respondents were found who have completed their higher education. Another important part of their social background was that majority of the respondents living in joint families having large number of family members in their family. As respondents were from rural background majority of them reside in the house which was both Kuccha/Pucca in nature and majority of them have basic facilities like toilet in their house.

While looking over the socio-economic status of the respondent's family it was found that educationally in the society the females of their family although have not attended higher education but quite good percentage of females of the respondent's family members were educated and thus have good or quite satisfactory (medium) level of educational status in their villages. It was also found that the monthly income of the majority of the respondents was less than ₹5,000.00 and quite good percentage of the respondents i.e., 41.67% of the respondents families were having less than 1 acres of land.

This clearly shows that their financial condition was not so good as a result when they suffered from financial crisis 37.5% of the respondents took loans among which majority of them went to NGO's 44.45% to draw the loans and that at second place to government banks 44.44% in order to get loan. Only few of them 11.11% replied that they went to money lenders to get loan.

Further, they were found socially active and well aware as majority i.e., 75% of the respondents which include both female pradhans and female members of the panchayats were aware about the presence of women reservation in village panchayats and only small percentage i.e., 25% of them were not aware about it. As these respondents were politically active and aware about their participation and representation in panchayat, 89.17% of the respondents (both female pradhans and female members) replied that women's awareness and participation towards politics has increased and majority of the respondents which constitute 48.59% think that all factors which include effect of communication medium, increase in educational level of women, awareness regarding rights are responsible for the increase in political participation of women. This clearly shows that women are now well aware, getting empowered since the panchayati raj institution has come in force.

In chapter four not only just by introducing reservation for women in Panchayati Raj System could be helpful in associating the women of rural areas with Panchayati Raj Institution could empower them.

There are various other factors which are responsible and play key role in improving socio-economic condition of women. Important steps those are actually responsible directly or indirectly to improve the socio-economic and political status of women in society in order to empower them are the nature and extent of female's actual participation in various activities of village panchayat which include decision making process over certain policies and participation of female's in it, other than this extent of their (women's) involvement in panchayat meetings which are organised from time to time and the kind of role they play in it and the importance of the role which they are playing.

When various development programmes and welfare schemes are being implemented by the village panchayat from time to time then at that time to what extent do these female who are members and pradhans get opportunity to involve and participate in it. In the present study attempt was made to know the nature of involvement of women participants which include both female pradhans and female members in the decision making process in village panchayats and their participation level in various activities of block and village panchayats.

It is found that the block panchayat meeting when called for various purposes then (as replied by female pradhans and members) they sometimes participate in these meetings although there is no specific reason behind organising these meeting. Respondents (female pradhans and female PRI members) also described and replied the condition of female pradhan's participation in these meetings, 51.67% of the respondents replied that female pradhans regularly participate in meetings.

Further, they also told that the reason why they don't get chance to present their views in the meetings of panchayats because Chairperson do not provide opportunity to them to do so. The reason behind this problem of not getting opportunity to present their views in the meetings is because of low educational level of the respondents as 3.44% of the respondents (female members) are either illiterate or just literate 8.16%. So, they get suppressed easily by other male members of village panchayats. Only small percentage of the respondents are found who have either completed their intermediate, graduation or post-graduation level of education.

Further, it was also revealed by the response provided by the respondents that they get excellent level 12.50% of co-operation from the male block pramukhs. This reveals that although the reservation policy for female have been implemented in panchayati raj institutions but still male pramukhs dominate panchayats as majority of the respondents (female pradhans and female members) were not well educated.

While enquiring to the female members about what type of co-operation do they find from the block pramukhs over allocation of funds, respondents in quite good percentage of 43.38% replied that they are unsatisfied from the block pramukhs. Further, when asked about the attitude and level or extent of co-operation they get from the block officials when they go to them with some problem, majority 56.67% of the respondents are found satisfied with the behaviour/attitude of block officials towards them.

Over the question that what is the attitude of block pramukhs on the matter of solving problems of the respondents in the meetings do they get their problems solved when they reach to discuss it with male block pramukhs majority 54.22% of the respondents (female members) replied that they were satisfied with it. This clearly shows or indicate that with the introduction of

reservation for females in the PRI's (panchayati raj institutions) the voices or the problems of females especially female members earlier was not heard but now the proper action is taken in order to solve their problems by the male block pramukhs also. Thus, to some extent change is gradually taking place.

In this continuation in order to know what is the extent of co-ordination prevailing among the women pradhans in panchayats. Over various issues few questions were asked from the respondents, the responses provided by the respondents (female pradhans) of Kashi Vidyapeeth Block reveals that over the matters related to the problems they face or experience in programme implementation about which majority 67.57% of the respondents (female pradhans) replied that they do not experience any problem while implementing the programmes. This seems to be possible only when they i.e., female pradhans have good co-ordination among them.

In a large percentage 64.87% respondents (female pradhans) replied that they do consult each other outside the block panchayat's meeting. Thus, this seems to be the important reason for the presence of good level of co-ordination among the women pradhans. In this continuation it was also revealed that women pradhans in quite good majority or percentage over the matters of policy making issues consult each other then the meetings of block panchayats, then they 'Always' find the presence of co-operation over the matters of policy making. Thus, this shows that these women pradhans do have good level of communication & understanding, they do work seriously over various important issues of policy making. The same seriousness and commitment was found over the other matters such as monitoring the progress made in the development schemes which have been either launched or are in the progress, in this case the reply provided by the respondents

shows that 54.05% of the female pradhans replied that they 'always' find the presence of co-operation on monitoring the progress of development schemes that have been launched. Thus, this indicates that female pradhans do have good level of co-operation among themselves.

While analysing the extent of co-operation among women pradhans over the level of communication they have for new development schemes arrival and whether they get adequate level of information about it, to which 62.16% of the respondents replied to the option 'No'. Thus, it could be said that these female pradhans do not have good level of co-operation among themselves and communication so they don't get information about the arrival of new development schemes. As the presence of good level of communication is very important in order to implement various policies and to provide welfare schemes benefits to the local people living in various villages that come under the panchayati raj institutions. Further it was also revealed that the block officials take long time in allotting schemes as 72.97% of the respondents (female pradhans) told that longer time is taken by block officials to allot various schemes. Thus, it could be said that although good level of co-operation among the participants of panchayat is present but the development of the villages cannot take place until the programmes are timely implemented.

It was found that village panchayats organise the meetings regularly in panchayats as respondents in large percentage 62.50% replied to the option 'yes' when asked to them about the meetings frequency in panchayats. It could also be observed that these meetings were organised mostly for agricultural problems. It was also revealed that when meetings were organised to make discussion over various welfare issues of village such as

discussions were made over the programmes like Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana, Maintenance of Panchayat Bhawan etc, it was found that there was presence of co-ordination between the pradhans of panchayats and members of panchayats over this issue. This clearly indicates that panchayats do organise meetings regularly to look after the welfare of rural people. Although it was also found that the meetings in the village panchayats were organised quite frequently. But, it was also found that women in village panchayats face the problem of groupism. The most common cause behind the problem of groupism seems to be present due to presence of caste system in rural society. Thus, groupism was based on caste i.e., caste groupism was found mostly prevailing in the village panchayats. They (Female Members & Female Pradhans) were also found feeling difficulty in the regular functioning of gram panchayat.

In the analysis of chapter five It was found that majority of village panchayats were actively involved in initiating and implementing various development programmes like Integrated Rural Development Programme 100%, programmes for housing (Pradhan Mantri Grameen Awas Yojana) **100%** was initiated by the government, Panchayat Bhawan (building) 100%, Primary School Building 100%, Toilets (under Swacchha Bharat Mission/Abhiyan) 100%, Bio-Gas Plant 98.33% Primary Health Centre 100%. This clearly indicates that panchayat with female representatives are working sincerely in order to bring the basic facilities required which are basic needs in order to run daily life of people smoothly. Although, some programmes initiated by government like Solar Power Plant was not found initiate or working on ground level. But the basic facilities like health services was found to be present in the reach of local villagers as there was at least one primary health centre in each village was present.

When enquired it was also found that respondents (female pradhans) were quite satisfied with the financial situation or aid that is being provided to the various development programmes that were initiated in various village panchayats. As female pradhans also replied that they basically visit Zilla Mukhyalaya (office) in order to collect the information about various development schemes where they face problems in the implementation of schemes for their village panchayats. But instead of facing these problems they successfully get schemes implemented in their panchayats. From the response of the respondents it was also revealed that they (female pradhans) 'Always' (70%) get correct and timely information regarding various development programmes from various departments that have been proposed by these departments to distribute in various village panchayats.

Examining about the nature of participation of female members in implementation of various welfare programmes it was revealed on the basis of response provided by the respondents (female members) that they are sometimes 50.60% invited in the initial stage of welfare programmes. They (female members) also replied that they were never 50.60% invited by the pradhans for the supervision of schemes which were going on. This indicates towards the presence of dominant role of pradhans (females) or lack of co-ordination prevailing between female members and female pradhans over implementation of development schemes. Or it could also be said that co-ordination between members and pradhans generally depend upon their mutual understanding or what type of general day to day relations they have.

It was also found that 45.95% of the female pradhans never actively participated in the process of identification of beneficiaries for development programmes, it indicates towards the presence of male dominance (either these male members are of panchayats or their family members). Later, it was

revealed female pradhans of the panchayats were assisted by their male family member 59.45% while schemes were implemented or various schemes were completed.

Responses provided by the female pradhans also indicate towards the presence of dominance of male members either of their family or panchayats. It was found that the reason for lacking in participation by them in monitoring of development programmes while they are being implemented was because of the reason that female pradhans were busy in their household works 48.65%. This shows that although women are coming out to participate in grassroot level politics i.e., in panchayati raj institutions as representatives but being a patriarchal society females are still bound by household chores.

Female pradhans were found actively supervising various development programmes with the main aim of looking after each and every step of programmes from implementation of programme in different stage 81.08%, they remain there actively participating in programmes at each and every stage 94.59%, distribution of wages 81.08%, participate in the initiation of programmes only 67.57%, as maximum percentage 94.59% of the respondents replied that they stay for whole duration. This indicates towards the dedication of female pradhans towards their duty in Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Examining the various problems which were faced by Women Pradhans from the various representatives of PRI's (panchayati raj institutions) it was found that mostly male PRI members do not provide their co-operation so that the schemes could be completed and further these PRI male members create problems in the selection of beneficiaries and sites. From the female pradhan's response it is clear that female members do not create much problems in meetings when various programmes are required to be

implemented. From the response provided by female pradhans it is also quite clear that Gram Sabha members also do not create much problems over various issues like when co-operation is needed for completion of schemes, selection of beneficiaries and sites, and do participate in meetings in good numbers when compared to the other male members of Panchayati Raj Institution. Thus, it indicates towards the presence of male dominance in Panchayati Raj Institutions although seats have been reserved for female candidates (both for pradhans and members) by the constitution.

Examining, the nature of participation by women pradhans in various cultural functions and local level activities, it could be concluded on the basis of replies that have been provided by the respondents (pradhans) that 32.43% of the respondents (female pradhans) always participate in various disputes in order to solve them, female pradhans in notable percentage 54.05% always participate in cultural programmes that are being organised at local level and respondents (female pradhans) 32.43% were found participating in festivals. This indicates that although these females have become the pradhans of their village panchayats but due to living in conservative rural society they are unable to participate in various cultural programmes, festivals and disputes in order to solve them.

In the light of chapter six It was found that families of both female pradhans and members of Panchayati Raj Institutions provide them significant amount of freedom and opportunities so that they (female pradhans) can participate in various local level disputes, religious festivals, cultural activities/programmes of village.

62.17% of the respondents (female pradhans) replied that they find improvement in their status while participating in the marriage and social ceremony and 62.17% of the respondents (female pradhans) replied that they find improvement in their status while participating in village functions.

This indicates that even though women in PRI's have reached to the position of pradhans but to some extent they are still found to be bounded by the general rules of rural society and they have to follow them.

While analysing the changes that have taken place in the reputation of females since they have become the pradhans of their village panchayats over various family matters or household affairs.

It could be concluded on the basis of response provided by the respondents that although in some matters like child care and activities related to household and activities related to agriculture 59.46% and decision in financial matters of family 51.35% experience positive change while in other activities viz. participation and contribution in family business 72.98%, decision in other matters of family 70.27%, freedom to visit outside 78.37%, and to male contribution in festivals 78.37%, participation in feast 72.98%, visiting market places and to cinema 78.37% do not experience positive change in their status as till the present date they are not permitted to move freely although they have been elected as the pradhans of their village panchayats. This shows that rural society is still a traditional society due to which not much change has occurred in the social status of women.

It was also found that females face many restrictions due to household chores .As majority of women (female members) 66.27% replied that they have been restricted to visit block alone, restricted to visit market alone 66.27%, restricted from visiting town/city alone 66.27%, restricted from participating/attending dispute matters 65.06%, restricted from attending meals/festivals/ 60.24% attending marriages/social functions 68.67% or joining political movements 68.67%. It was also found that few female members of the village panchayats were restricted from attending these mentioned occasions or visiting places like block or market alone. This clearly

indicates that although change is taking place in rural areas but at slow pace. And it will take time to change the overall situation/social conditions of rural areas in India.

They (female pradhans and female members) provided responses which also indicates that the major cause behind these various restrictions that were being imposed on them was mainly due to presence of illiteracy and conservative attitude of parents 86.49% (pradhans) 97.59% (members), various social restrictions 83.78% (pradhans) & 92.77% (members), overburden of household works 67.57% (Pradhans) & 63.86% (Members). They (female pradhans) of PRIs were not found replying that lack of freedom to visit block alone 83.78% (pradhan) or lack of accessibility 54.05% (pradhans). The main cause responsible for this is that there is presence of various social restrictions, illiteracy and conservative attitude of parents due to which their families are imposing restrictions on them to participate in various activities. Whereas female members have denied to such restrictions are being imposed on them when asked.

It was revealed on the basis of the responses provided by the female pradhans that they have experienced the change in their status in village panchayats 54.05%, nayaya panchayat 54.05%, block level 56.76%, among the groups of women 51.35%, in political activities 54.05%. Although they (female pradhans) have observed the change in their status since they have become the pradhans of their village panchayats but within their family 62.16% and in their family matters 51.35% they have were found still lacking behind as majority of the respondents do not find the presence of change in their status after they have become the pradhans of their village panchayats. But these respondents (female pradhans) do find change in their status in political activities 54.05% while majority of the respondents (female pradhans) 91.09% replied that they do not observe any change.

Further, according to them (female pradhans) the main reason responsible due to which they face hindrances in the way of their empowerment and increasing participation in various activities was due to the reason that they (females) was because they lack behind in education 100.00%, do not get motivated by their family 94.60%, they lack behind in knowledge about their rights 91.90%, this might be due to the reason because they lack behind in education. They lack in leadership quality 97.03% as they are educationally deprived thus, were not found confident enough, were also suppressed by dominant males and rich people 89.18%. All of the above here the basic reason which was found responsible for the lack of participation by female members seem to be their weak educational background 51.35%.

Now, it was also found that there is need for educated women in PRIs as but there was lack of initiatives taken in order to identify such women who could introduce women's to various development programmes which were started for women's development 56.76%. They were also found lacking in getting proper guidance and training from administrative agencies 51.35%. All these factors have resulted in creating hindrances in the way of women's empowerment. But due to introduction of reservation for women's in PRIs it was also found that changes are taking place in socio-economic conditions of women, and is helping those women living in the rural areas so that they get empowered and developed.

On the other side various evil practices which are deep rooted in the Indian rural society since long time like caste system, gender biasness etc., have resulted in slowing down the process of overall development of women in rural areas. Thus, it could be said that there is long way ahead to be travelled by these women living in rural areas in order to reach the goal of women's empowerment through their participation in the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

In the light of all the analysis, maximum number of variables, indicators and testing of hypothesis shows that participation and representation of women in the panchayati raj institution are increasing day by day.

SUGGESTIONS

In the light of analysis of data following suggestions are given :

- (a) Female representatives should get proper training regarding their work and duties so that they become aware about their constitutional duties and they could become confident enough to take decisions on their own.
- (b) Educational level/qualification of female representatives indicates towards the point that it (education) plays a vital role while they are participating in various block level activities either its decision making process, participation in various steps when the programmes are being implemented etc. Thus, some criteria regarding the educational qualification of the respondents must be decided or fixed for those women who want to take part in the elections of village panchayats as a contestant.
- (c) It should be assured that representatives should regularly participate in the various meetings of gram panchayats.
- (d) A Nodal agency should be formed at panchayat level (which can keep an eye) or which regularly monitor the works or steps taken regarding rural development. A regular monitoring of the various development programmes at the Panchayats are required.
- (e) It is necessary that female representatives must be made financially independent so that they can work freely for panchayats.

On Panchayati level such environment should be created where women can keep their views and in order to know the progress made in various implemented programmes they could collect information from general public living in rural areas.

