

CONCLUSION, SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Development in itself is highly complex phenomenon and the complexity gets further compounded as one move into the tribal context. In Himachal Pradesh, Kinnaura tribe has its own specification, socio-cultural ethos and a different political outlook due to its unique socio-religious background. The impact of 73rd amendment has different dimensions on rural and specifically tribal womenfolk of Himachal Pradesh. The concept of reservation and election of tribal females on such a large scale has been welcomed by tribal females. Their social set-up is more liberal (not conservative like rural) which allows them to touch new heights, though due to poor geography they do not have better access to new information and new developments which are taking place at state level. Still their elections as Ward Members to Zila Parishad have opened new windows to a new world for them. Slowly, they are becoming responsible and filled with zeal to work for development at grass-root level. They are fighting at their own level against the hurdles which they are facing due to non-co-operation of family, officers, or their elected male counterparts. Leaving aside a few exceptions most of the elected female respondents of district of Kinnaur accept that reservation policy has enabled them to stand and to be a part of development processes. The importance of leadership is felt in every walk of social and political sphere and need no exploration. With the introduction of Panchayati Raj Institutions, there has been a vital change felt in the attitudes and behaviour of rural leadership which has given rise to different patterns of

rural leadership in these institutions. In fact, leadership has a pivotal role in the working of Panchayati Raj Institutions. It is through these leaders that wishes and aspirations of rural people are met with. So often they are called 'eyes' and 'ears' of rural masses. The effective quality of leadership available at grass-root level plays a significant role in promoting political development and democratic growth.

In Panchayati Raj Institutions it is natural that the elected members are taken as holders of leadership. In fact the person who is an elected member of Zila Parishad, Block Samiti or Panchayat, makes him/her an institutional leader. To understand the status of women in society, an examination of their political status is necessary. Though the political status is inter-linked with the socio-economic status, it has the capacity to influence the transformation of the socio-economic system. It has now been accepted that women's right to vote and to occupy position is fundamental to women's status. 73rd amendment has made it possible for woman to dream about a different world especially for tribal woman. It is a world of empowerment. Through reservation a new pattern of tribal woman leadership is emerging. The present study presents a micro level observation of emerging women leadership in a tribal district of a hill state called Himachal Pradesh.

The present research work is organized into six chapters analyzing the concept of empowerment for tribal women of district of Kinnaur. Empowerment concept is talking about power and about changing the balance of power towards equality. As far as the concept of tribal women's

empowerment is concerned it is about gaining autonomy within a distinct cultural group and to be a part of development process politically at grass-root level. Comprehensively women's empowerment is a certain level of 'critical consciousness' which is being defined days' political scientists in new light of political rights. Empowerment through 73rd amendment is an attempt to create political awareness with a feeling of gender equality and social justice. It aims at changing the balance of power between two sexes so as to create a more equitable status for women in society.

The concept of women empowerment at global and national level tends to prove that slowly it is gaining grounds. Indian democracy and its concept of decentralization is making good contribution in empowering women but 73rd and 74th amendments have provided a major boost to empowerment issue at grass root level. A comprehensive literary study has been done through books, journals and articles to check the growth of this concept from ancient times. Focus of the study was to examine the impact of 73rd and 74th amendment on tribal women. Through sampling, questionnaire and field study this work has been done by manual preparation of tables. Field work done in this research work is its soul. A few books and articles have been consulted to draw inferences for the present research work.

Second chapter provides detailed information about the theoretical framework on issue of empowerment both, at world level and national level. The data shows how the efforts at world level are being made to cope-up with the magic figure of 33%. In Indian Parliament, the elected female

representation is just 10% and that too has been made possible during these elections only. This chapter further discusses about the various dimensions related with the issue of female empowerment. In the sense of social empowerment, it means a more equitable social status for women in society; in economic empowerment it carries its terms with better quality of material life through sustainable livelihoods owned and managed by women. In the sense of political empowerment, it explores a political system favouring the participation in decision making process and in governance at grass root level and so on. Formulation of government policies for female follows the rules of inclusion and exclusion which has thoroughly been discussed in second chapter. Secondly, empowerment of female has remained almost thrust of all feminist theories world-wide. Though after independence, in Indian constitution various provisions were made to save female's rights but 73rd amendment has proved the greatest leap taken in this direction. It has not only changed the political outlook of female but has forced traditional Indian society to accept its female section as equal partner in the process of sharing power in the democratic institution. Through reservation only tribal women of India who were treated as separate ethnic identity in its own female wing are enabled now to come in terms with mainstream women. This includes tribal females of Himachal Pradesh also.

Third chapter is divided into two segments. First section deals with constitutional developments which took place in Himachal Pradesh regarding decentralization, Panchayati Raj and reservation. Second section

speaks about district of Kinnaur and changes taking place under and after Amendment Act. The provisions of Panchayati Raj Act of 1959 were implemented in Himachal Pradesh in 1962. After 1962 Act of Panchayati Raj, attempts through Panchayati Raj Acts 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000 and 2006 were made to establish three tier structures in Panchayati Raj Institution with changed provisions. Amendment Act of 1994 only, 33% reservation came in Himachal. It also provided decentralization of powers and more powers to Panchayats so that the aim of 'transfer of power to the people' could be achieved in real sense of the term. Himachal Pradesh Amendment Acts of the year 1994, 1996 and 1998 provided the various provisions regarding functioning of Gram-Panchayat, Panchayat-Samiti and Zila-Parishad, formation of various Samitis which will be working for the smooth functioning of these grass-root level agencies etc. Himachal Pradesh PRI Act 2000 provided provisions for four general meetings in each year. These Acts not only enabled rural females to become a part of PRIs but also paved a new way of life to tribal females living in far-flung geographically poor terrain of this hill state.

Kinnaur is amongst the three pockets of tribal belts of Himachal Pradesh besides Lahaul-Spiti and Pangi-Bharmaur of Chamba. Kinnaur came into existence in 1960, this district is divided presently into three blocks; Pooh, Kalpa and Nichar. The history of Kinnaur runs parallel with state history from pre-Vedic age till statehood achievements of Himachal Pradesh. Its inclusion in the list of scheduled tribe areas in the Constitution

of India provided it a different status. With the passage of time administrative structure of Kinnaur changed from ruling kings to village autonomous institutions. With the apples and dry fruits, the economy of Kinnaur is now growing leaps and bounds. Horticulture and agricultural developments are taking place which has converted this once a desert area into green belt area. Socially, people are moving outside and getting in contact with non-tribes. Because of modern social values tribal groups are changing. Polygamy and polyandry which is a distinct feature of Kinnaura tribe is coming to extinction. Diet (also going under change) and food menu are changing. Even marriage rituals are getting affected. Birth and death rituals are taking new shape. Revolutionary changes have been noticed in the position of tribal female of Kinnaur after 73rd Amendment Act. Now 33% reservation which has come like an opportunity to females is changing social set-up also. Kinnaur is not an exception to it. The notion of 'fields and family for female of Kinnaur is changing. After their elections in PRIs, it has become almost a compulsion for males to share the responsibility of fields and family. The feeling of empowerment and self-respect has enabled the tribal female to move ahead despite hurdles. Politically, male section Kinnaur is learning to share political responsibilities with females. Caste restrictions are losing its base slowly. So, tribe of Kinnaur also seems to be getting in tune with mainstream after 73rd Amendment Act. At least at grass-root level politics, a state-wide and a nation-wide uniformity has been created by this Act. This Act has tendency to bring rural, urban and tribal

female masses on a common platform theoretically and practically, both ways.

Besides theoretical dimension, next comes the field work has been conducted on 65 Panchayats of all three blocks of Kinnaur covering total 230 elected female respondents working on various posts in three-tier structure from both, reserved and open seats. Information provided by them is a valuable source of information not only about the baseline question of impact of 73rd Amendment on tribal women of Kinnaur, but also about social, economic, cultural and political development and changes taking place in Kinnaur. Side by side it tells about the changing outlook of the people on various issues. The study reveals that elected female members of the years 2000-05 belong to 'middle-age group' (table no. 4.1A of part A). Their average education rate is matriculation level (table no. 4.4A of part A). The study forfeits the notion of dominance of aged people in overall PRIs nationwide in first instance as most of the elected females are of middle age. These findings are not matching to most of the latest researches which reveals that young and middle age cadres are less preferred in election to old age at grass-root level. Though, education rate is lower than general average rate of higher secondary existing at national level. It shows that people of Kinnaur are not ready to see middle and young cadre instead of traditional aged group as their representatives but also matriculation level can be considered 'good'. Knowledge of the socio-economy background of elected women member's is important in shaping the nature and level of participation of these members

in political institutions. The occupational pattern of elected representatives and their family members suggests variety of occupations with agriculture and horticulture as their main stay (table no. 4.7A of part A). Average annual income is between 1.50 lakh to 2 lakh (table no. 4.6A of part A). This income is excluding land-holdings income, domestic income from small-scale industry and cattle etc. It only includes income either from crops or salary of employees. Though few elected female representatives are from economically very influential families but due to this 'exclusion factor' most of them come under middle or lower class income-group. A very interesting observation was made in house building system of these elected female members during field study. It shows that houses of dominant group of scheduled tribe i.e., *Khoshiya* (high caste) are well furnished while houses of scheduled tribe i.e., *Chamang* and *Domang* (low caste) are either single story or *Kachha* houses. Table no. 4.8A of part A shows the caste-wise distribution of elected female respondents revealing *Khoshiya* caste as dominating group. Another indirect conclusion can also be drawn from the study of above tables is that power game is mostly concentrated in the hands of *Khoshiya*. Secondly, caste plays an important role in shaping political scenario of the whole district. Large number of land holdings are maintained by *Khoshiyas*, so economically, socially and politically they remain dominant.

Speaking on marital status most of the elected female respondents are having (table no. 4.3A of Part A) monogamous status because polyandrous status was not openly revealed by them. The analysis of family structure

suggests that majority of them came from joint family system enjoying good status at family level. Being representatives of common masses they get more respect from members of their family (table no. 4.14A of Part B). At Panchayat level they feel themselves at much better footing than common females of their Panchayat (table no. 4.20 A of Part A). Slowly they understand the importance of their elections for being a female. They are able to understand female's problems in much better way and raise them at proper platform. Common females of village come to them to get the solutions of their problems. More SHGs and NGOs are making now. Despite these signs of good progress, this fact cannot be denied that their male family members influence their decision by interfering in their work. It was observed that even a few females support their male counterpart's interference on the ground that exposure of their husband or father is more, so they do not mind seeking their 'advice.' They do not take it as interference but as a support in taking right decision (table no. 4.11A of Part B).

The political arena which remained male dominated for centuries, entry of female into it was made possible by this Act only. The power and importance of posts of Chairman, Pradhan, Up-Pradhan etc. was felt directly for the first time by females under this Act only. This Act has enabled a new tribal leadership to emerge on the scene. The most significant part of it is that tribal females are becoming part of this new leadership. Slowly their quality of participation has improved (Table no. 4.7A of Part A of Part B). Tribal females (elected) seem to be divided on the issue whether reservation

should be 33% only or it should be increased up to 50%. One section opines that the process of empowerment at 33% even has not achieved its goal yet, so 50% increase will be like a haphazard growth of unskilled, uninterested female masses in politics. But second group feels that more reservation will enable more females to enter into politics and be a part of development process (table no. 4.11A of Part A). Starting of political career from grass root level has enabled females to be a part of development process. Some elected tribal females feel that PRIs being the baseline of rural politics and important to provide future leadership at state level of politics so it acts as a basic platform to start (table no. 4.9A of Part A). So most of the elected females do not want that their election in Panchayats to be on party basis (table no. 4.10A of Part A). They want to be grass-root level leaders.

It was only after their elections that tribal females came to know about their political responsibilities. They came to know about development plans being run by the government, non-government organizations and self-help groups through meetings. They attend regular meetings, so the cases of proxy attendance in district Kinnaur are very few. From the very beginning most of the elected females come to the meetings and welcome this change of compulsory attendance. It is a new world for them where there is a challenge before them to prove their existence to establish themselves in male dominated world so they work enthusiastically. In meetings, they seek budget for the projects already running, get sanctioned money for new plans and even submit contingency (table no. 4.8 B of Part B). Majority of them feel

that due to their elections only now they have become 'something from nothing'. Due to attendance in meetings, getting people work done and taking part in various development activities, they feel that their decision – making capacity has increased (table no. 4.21A of Part A). Their work and efficiency is recognised by those who elected them firstly from reserved seats and next time from open seats even.

In democracy, voters play a vital role in electing representatives at various levels. Their considerations vary with region, religion, sex, marital status, economy, educational qualification and so on. A tribal voter is different from urban and rural voters. Even outlook of a male tribal voter is different from a female tribal voter (Vth Chapter). For the present study, total 197 voter's sample was taken from 65 Panchayats of three blocks of Kinnaur, which included 99 males and 98 females. Religion has a great influence upon voters while selecting and electing their representatives. Mostly elected members get introduced in religious gatherings. In upper region (Pooh) Buddhist voters are more in number and in lower region (Kalpa, Nichar) influence of tribal Hindu religion is there (referred to table no. 5.2). In religious gatherings, during elections, female voters are tried to be interacted with because in religious gatherings their presence is compulsory due to tribal custom. Caste plays an important role in PRIs elections as voter generally prefers to cast his/her vote in favour of candidate of his/her caste (referred to table no. 5.5). But when it come to overall preference to elect any female tribal candidate, her personality and potential

carries weight (referred to table no. 5.6). Once a seat has been reserved for female, sex consideration automatically becomes meaningless. In tribe of Kinnaur decision of elder male member dominates and this applies to casting of vote in favour of a particular candidate also (referred to table no. 5.7). Having affiliation to political party forms a sound base in PRIs elections though indirectly (referred to table no. 5.8).

Once the elections are over and candidate has been elected, performance matters a lot. Voter of Kinnaur seems to be satisfied with the performance of female representatives who are coming on various seats due to reservation (referred to table no. 5.11). It shows not only the liberal and welcoming attitude of tribal voter for new change but also impact of sincerity, hard-work and honesty of emerging female leadership. Voter considers reservation policy as a step taken in right direction for empowering females (referred to table no. 5.9). Once this number is on increase, it will certainly affect the functioning of PRIs. Due to work efficiency of elected females, PRIs are also working well. Its direction is changing from political side to development side (referred to table no. 5.10). All this has forced people to accept females as their 'next generation political leaders'. (referred to table no. 5.12). Elected females are fighting tough to overcome hurdles which tend to restrain them from moving ahead. Foremost of the hurdles are lack of education and lack of economic independence. (referred to table no. 5.13). Non-co-operation of bureaucrats, family members and male members are also adding trouble to it. But still this fact cannot be denied that females are being accepted as new leaders for future. They are trying their level best

to prove their worth and tribal voter of Kinnaur has candidly welcomed this change. Voters feel that process of women empowerment is passing through transitional phase in PRIs so there is still not a complete platform ready for females to work on state level politics which is much bigger than district level platform. But reservation has certainly added wheels to the process of empowerment.

The base of whole field work was to find out the impact of 73rd Amendment on empowerment of tribal women of Kinnaur. Concluding it can be said that on the one side, elected female members definitely feel that it is because of this amendment (reservation policy) only that they are able to become a part of decision-making bodies at grass root level. On the other hand 73rd amendment has opened a new vista in life of tribal female of Kinnaur. Even state-wide data of PRIs election of the year 2005 shows two major trends: first, a large number of females (9,273) are being elected women under reservation policy. Secondly and more encouraging fact is that females who are coming from open seats (referred to table no. 3.9) are also increasing in their number every time (9,43 women). One last thing is noticeable that number of female Up-Pradhans who are coming from open seats is maximum those who are being elected from open seats. Seat of Up-Pradhan who is coming from open seats is maximum those who are being elected from open seats. Seat of Up-Pradhan is very important in PRIs (coming next to Pradhan) so this increasing number carries much weightage. It's a clear-cut sign of empowerment. Tribal female voters also admit that female has been empowered. Voters admire that honesty, sincerity and hard

work and females yearning to learn so many things have remained unquestioned which has ultimately enabled them to be a successful leader. All are unanimous on this issue that tribal female needs economic and educational empowerment is equally needed to along with political empowerment. Even if they are provided with some non-formal education, they may gradually overcome their hesitation to deal with male members and bureaucrats. Few suggestions in this regard are being made:

- Though influence of relatives and friends for contesting elections have made woman to cross the traditional barriers, which itself is a sign of development but it seems that in tribal set-up of Kinnaur it may take some more time for men to accept women as their equal at PRIs level. At the same time women themselves should come forward to join politics at grass-root level and should also enjoy their right to be a part of decision making processes and share power in democratic institution.
- Use of adult education programmers can be made to create social and political awareness among old womenfolk who are being elected.
- Mahila Mandals can motivate women to contest election. To get a sense of economic independence and self-confidence, participation in Mahila Mandals and SHGs should be ensured.
- Reservation for women should be extended to the Parliament and state legislatures for linear development of the issue of empowerment. It will help them in gaining self-confidence and will promote/motivate them to work on bigger stage of politics.

- Systematic training, regular workshops, orientation programmes and various public welfare programmes etc. should be made compulsory for first timers so that they may acquire necessary skill, knowledge and aptitude to deal with complexity of functions.
- Party politics at grass-root level should be avoided as it is creating factionalism in peaceful society of Kinnaur. Development works are getting affected.
- The use of media (both print and electronic) must be made to broadcast and public special programmes for women, creating awareness on various issues.
- Central and state sponsored schemes should be provided sufficient flexibility to consider varying tribal requirements. Execution of minor schemes should be provided sufficient flexibility to consider varying tribal requirements. Execution of minor schemes should remain with Panchayati Raj Institutions only.

73rd Amendment of the Indian Constitution is not an end in itself. It is the beginning of grass root democracy and requires constant improvements and work efficiency. As PRIs are playing crucial role in development process, therefore it would be necessary to strengthen them. The direct involvement of female in decision-making bodies is a milestone in development process. 73rd amendment has certainly created a silent revolution among women folk of tribal society of Kinnaur.