



Chapter- 6

Conclusion

CHAPTER -VI

CONCLUSION

It has now become clear that, for sustainable economic and social development to take place in any country, it is necessary that people participate in the political process. The process of participation is complex, and it is by no means clear that it is comprehensively inclusive. By this, we mean that it is not possible to assume that all sections of the population take part effectively in political and democratic processes of society. There are many reasons why people may not participate from apathy to a sense of helplessness. In particular, unless specific conditions are met, women face multiple hurdles and find it difficult or participate in the political process that has hitherto been a male bastion. The reason for this is gender specific. Women are less mobile than men. They have domestic responsibilities, which puts limits on the time they can spend in such processes. These are historical prejudices. Consistent efforts will have to be made over a period of time to engender the political process and institutions, and issues that are critical to this process. Recognizing this limitation where gender is concerned, India has passed laws that make it mandatory for local government to include women. These laws do not apply to state and national level legislatures. One third of the seats in local bodies are 'reserved' for women. This means the contests can only be between women in these constituencies.

The study has aimed at examining the nature and extent of participation of women representatives in the panchayat process after statutory reservation of one-third seats has been ordained for them in the district Jhajjar of Haryana State. The factor affecting of women participation in Panchayat Raj, have been took into. Social status of women in general and policy of reservation for women in the Panchayat process have been reviewed. The social, economic and political background of women respondents, how women have joined in panchayats and different dimensions of their participation in panchayat decision making process have been presented we have also examined the caste barrier in participation of panchayat has also been

analyzed in the light of the survey data. Besides, that profile and participation of women respondents, and their assessment about women's social position and their panchayat role performance have also been looked at.

In this last chapter we intend to summarize the foremost findings of the study. As borne out by the study, few pertinent points seem also significant and expedient for proper understanding and evaluation of rural development and caste and gender developmental roles of women member.

Women are an important part of the society. Being almost 50 per cent of the total population of the world, they have contributed a lot in the social, and economical development of the society. However, they have received too less against the contribution made in all sectors of society specifically in the political area where they are just negligible. This fact about the women is prevalent in all societies specially developing societies, and India is not different to that.

The present study was conducted in the Jhajjar district of the Haryana state. To study the participation of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions we have taken women representative in PRIs as our unit of study. For the present study random sampling method was employed. In the present study four women headed panchayats are randomly selected from each block. Thus, twenty women headed panchayat are selected in the present study. All the former elected members of panchayat samities and Zilla Parishads are also interviewed. All the women who had been elected members of panchayati since a period of 1999, 2004, 2009 are interviewed. All the women member of Zilla Parishad and Block Samiti are also interviewed. So total 398 woman representatives have been selected as a sample. The socio-economic and political background of the elected women representative of the Panchayati Raj Institutions is examined to find the relationship between socio-economic background and their role performance. The study indicates that there are about 34 per cent such women representative belonging to middle age group (36-45) who have much interest in the politics, and 24.87 per cent women respondents belonging to (46-55) age group, 23.87% women leaders belonging to 21-35 age group and only 18 per cent women leaders belonging in the age group of above 55 age. The old age leadership is gradually yielding place to the leaders of younger and middle age. The data clearly

indicate that there is a break in the traditional concept of rural leadership based on the age factor, younger and middle aged leadership is coming forward to share the represent responsibilities of rural community.

It has been revealed by the study that 73.62 percent women represent actives belongings to higher caste (upper caste) and 20.35 per cent women leaders belonging to lower caste while 06.03 per cent are from backward caste. The data shows dominance of upper castes in the villages because of their better economic position and social status. There is a significant representation of weaker sections, in the Panchayati Raj Institutions. It has now become possible due to the obligatory provision of reservation for these castes in PRIs. The trend in the data reveals that scheduled caste has been represented as per their percentage in the population in the state, while backward caste have captured significant seats because of their significant proportion in the population of rural areas. They have been elected on the general seats because they are scattered all over the villages. Thus, the reservation policy has opened the gates of political power for the weaker sections of society and the dominance of upper castes is withering away. However, it is an undisputed fact that the elections of PRIs are being held on caste lines and every caste tries its best to capture power positions by fielding its own candidates. Thus, the caste consideration is still there in the election and it is instrumental in the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

The study revealed that about 14 percent women of the total women respondents are illiterate, while majority of them 86.68 per cent are literate in the PR Institutions. The data indicates that most of the elected women leaders i.e. Sarpanches, Zilla Parishad members and Panchayat Samiti members are educated up to metric level. The latest trend is that the educational qualifications of the elected women leaders is increasing at the higher level, which may be attributed to the educational development and election of younger educated women in PRIs. It is also observed during the survey that women leader of upper castes have higher educational qualifications than those from the lower castes. Mostly women representative are married. It indicates that the married women who are supposed to be more responsible, mature and dutiful are being preferred as leaders.

The most of PR women leaders are from the agricultural and associated occupations. It is due to their suitability, social status, economic position, land holding and sufficient time for the political activities in the villages. Sharecropping and shopkeeping are in negligible number because they can neither spare sufficient time for political activities nor can they stay whole time in the village. The educated unemployed youth can get the opportunity to become rural leaders as they have no other function to perform regularly and they can spare sufficient time for the public activities. Thus, the better economic position and higher social status of families of leaders provide better opportunity to elect the leaders. The traditional pattern of the rural leadership is changing and now small and medium sized nuclear families are making inroads in rural power structure of the society. The study revealed that 50 per cent women respondents have small size families, only 20.35 per cent women respondents have large size families. Hence, it is concluded that small and middle size families are dominating the village power structure and replacing the dominance of large sized families. The study also reveals that majority of women leaders have 3-4 children. In other words, the adoption of small family norms on universal basis is not practiced yet. In the rural areas, 55.78 per cent woman respondents of PR institutions have agriculture as a major source of income, followed by the agricultural labour 26.63 per cent. It is found that agriculture is the primary source of income in the rural area. Yearly income range from Rs. 40001 to 80,000. Only 6.03 per cent women representatives household income is more than one lakh.

The study shows that those women leaders who are elected as Sarpanch, Panchayat Samiti members and Zilla Parishad members, have large land holding in comparison to the. It is already mentioned that land is a symbol of social and political status and this makes it difficult for a landless women to act independently as a head in PRIs. Though, the law has empowered them politically but actually their power generally exercised by landlords of the village.

The Gram Panchayat level leaders have to perform their duties in the villages and hence, they are living in the rural areas. However, the women leader of Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad levels have to contact and maintain relations with the official and politicians. Thus, they can perform their role effectively, even if they

reside in the urban areas. 2.55 per cent women respondent of Panchayat Samiti and 11.11 per cent respondent of Zilla Parishad reside in the urban areas. 67.58 per cent women leaders are possessing only one house and only 11.6 per cent women respondent had possessing more than two houses. The data shows that majority of women respondent do not have any property in urban areas. The study also shows that only 10 per cent elected women are affiliated with political parties. It is observed 90 per cent elected women respondents in PRI do not have direct affiliation with any political party.

The study shows that 88.94 per cent women respondent have awareness in terms of casting their vote in general election, while 11.06 per cent women respondent don't use their right to vote. During the study it is found that they are not interested in politics but while working in Panchayat Raj Institution they have started realizing the importance of casting their vote. The study also shows that 16.58 per cent women respondent are associate with other political organization like Mahila Samiti, Mahila Mandal, which are common platforms to discuss their problem, Most of the women member of panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad are linked with other political organization. It is also found that, only 19.10 per cent women respondent have earlier experiences of working in Panchayati Raj Institutions, while 80.90 per cent have first exposure of working in Panchayati Raj Institution. The data suggest that 49 per cent women respondent were supported by community during elections and 31.16 per cent women respondent are supported by spouse. It is observed that most of representatives are supported by their community and spouse.

The present study indicates that reservation of seats for women in PR institutions has encouraged them for active involvement in political process of the country. It has provided opportunity for them to participate in decision-making and implementation processes in rural society. Prior to the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, a few women representatives are elected to the Panchayats in Haryana. Nevertheless, the Act has changed the concept of male dominance over rural local bodies after passing of the Haryana Panchayati Raj Act a number of women have come forward to contest elections and in some of Panchayats, they have contested and won general seats also. Their number in Panchayats, presence in meetings and

involvement in the decision-making process proved the way for their entry into the political scene at state and national levels. As a result of this, the women's organizations and political parties have started demanding reservation of one-third for women in state assemblies and parliament. The data shows that about 60 per cent women representatives motivated for election due to 1/3 reservation in PRIs. It indicated that majority of women respondents never participated in any types of political activity. Only 40% women respondents take part in political activities like campaigning, canvassing and rallies. Most of women respondents admitted that they are helped by govt. officials, while they fill the nomination to contest the election. Secondly, they are also motivated and informed about other various activity regarding the PRIs. The study also confirms that there is not much expenditure on election at Gram Panchayat level but amount of expenditure was much higher in Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad. Most of the women respondents are not aware about election expenditure. The findings of the study indicate that 59.30 per cent respondents campaign door to door for canvassing. Further at the panchayat samiti and zilla parishad level, situation is different where contestants adopted the different type of strategy of door to door visit and passive meeting for canvassing and campaigning. In the past, dissatisfaction among the women leader is due to problem faced by them during campaigning and filling of nomination papers but now, 94 percent women respondents are satisfied by fairness and safety during election. The involvement of women representatives at village level is negligible in attending the meeting. Only 41.46 per cent women representative devoted time in PRI function as and when it required according to issues brought or related to PRIs. The finding of the study depicts that major proportion i.e. about 86 per cent elected women representative have knowledge about new Panchayati Raj Act. It is observed that most of women representative of PRIs are not attending the meeting regularly because women have to look after their home and they have also domestic burden.

India's villages are bound by traditions. The position of women in rural society is governed by various kinds of laid down custom and orientations to the male domination. Village society is experiencing the process of social change from the pattern of exploitation to political participation as the result of the new Panchayat Raj

Act. The ascribed status of the women is changing into achieved status. It is found during the field, that most of dispute and grievances are resolve or settled by the male members in the rural society till today. Approximately 50 per cent women representative reported that their membership is supported by village and new Panchayati Raj Act has created space for their leadership. It is also observed that women representative are attending the panchayat meetings but they hardly discussed the village or community problems etc., due to literacy, male domination and other social restrictions. On the other side, it is found that educated women are asserting for the rights because Panchayati Raj Act provides weapon to the powerless section of the society. It is expected that reservation provides under the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act would help to serve the interests of under privileged sections of the society and resist the elites in PR institutions.

The level of expression of views in meetings and involvement in decision-making process of scheduled caste and backward caste is not up to the mark. Most of schedule caste women chairpersons are represented through proxy by dominating factions in these institutions. The reservation has provided them number, but not power to influence the system. However, Scheduled caste women representative raise the issue for their interest and also present their demands and local problems before government officials. It is also important to mention that level of awareness and participation in decision-making process of these sections varies from district to block and village levels.

Most of elected women representatives of Panchayati Raj wish to subordinate the officials so that these institutions can be made more efficient and accountable to the people. However, it is not easy to do so as most of the elected women leaders particularly at GP level, are illiterate and not highly educated. It is observed that most of women representative contact with other women colleagues only during meeting. The involvement of women representatives at panchayat samiti and zila parishad level is satisfactory because they are more educated and politically aware. The elected representative of Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad members met Block Development Officer & Block Development and Panchayat Officer for the purpose of guidance and other official purpose. It may conclude that BDO & BDPO is one of the

chief official with whom all PRIs representatives have to contact with him. Most of PRIs women representatives contacted with district Administration when they feel needs to resolve their problem. It is also observed that most of women Panch rarely contact with administration to solve their problems. Mostly women Sarpanches, Panchayat Samiti members and Zilla Parishad members meet with Deputy commissioner as and when required.

It is observed that most of women elected representatives at the village level and block level and Zilla level have contact with women and child development department as and when required. In delineation of development role of Panchayat members one has to grasp the financial and operational process of Panchayats. Most of women Sarpanch, block Samiti members and Zilla Parishad women members are aware about fund allotted source of PRIs and most of women Panches have no idea about source of fund of PRIs. Women have to observed *Purdha* during PRIs meetings also. Feeling of shy has and hesitation is there, but now some are getting change. Now, women representative are attending the meeting without *Purdha*. Most of women respondent admitted that male members support and help the female while remaining in the meeting. Most of elected women representatives don't think the PRIs work as burdensome. It is observed that lack of people's participation and bureaucratic apathy are major factor of declining role performance of PRIs women leaders. 32.16 per cent women feel empowered after elected in PRIs. It is also observed that majority of elected women feel change in their social life. Majority of women representatives i.e. 38.94 per cent take a decision independently. The data also indicates that women representatives are more active as Sarpanch, Panchayat Samiti members and Zilla Parishad member as compare to Panch.

It is expected that new Haryana Panchayati Raj Act, 1994 will definitely improve the status of women in rural Haryana. The data suggests that 44 per cent women respondents believed that new PRI Act would improve the quality of life or rural masses about 28 per cent women leaders believed that it has improved decision making power. About 83 per cent respondents admitted that women must attend the meeting regularly. Majority of Women i.e. 85 per cent are in favour of proper training programme regarding Panchayat Raj institutions. They admitted that, through these

training they will come to know about role and responsibility and also acquire skill to fulfill the respective roles. The present study shows that Purdah system male dominated society, illiteracy, ignorance, lack of communication skills etc. are the major barrier in their social life. They are also ignorant about the complexity of the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions for which they are elected. Majority of PRIs leaders favoured that training must be organized at village and block levels. Women Panchs and Sarpanchs admitted that govt. agencies must organize training programme at their respective areas. They lack confidence do not have companion, illiteracy and lack of exposure to PRI functioning. Women leaders not only lack is confident but also require the company of their spouse/family members/relative and Mahila Mandal Members while attending the training programmes. We may conclude from the above analysis that spouse of women leaders participate directly in PRIs functioning. It is observed that about 57 per cent women leaders are fully satisfied and 44 per cent women leader are partially satisfied with training programme.

The role performance of women suggests that some women do possess conflict resolving psyche and conduct meeting independently and assertively. But it is also well documented that most of the women are deejure where husbands and PR officials practically conduct PR meetings and everything. Women in the present study have comparatively higher economic and political background, they are dominated by families in the sense that majority of them have family members in PRIs.

Before one third statutory reservation women had very marginal or token representation in PRIs throughout Indian states. Legal compulsion representation to women. Women respondents admitted that lack of reservation provide wider is the cause of their absence in earlier elections. Statutory provisions have put forth the political opening for roughly three fourth of women respondents who are most likely to embrace and pursue the political career. In other words, without reservation they could not endeavour political career. Thus, statutory reservation has become the gate way for women to participation in Panchayat process.

Inspite of these drawbacks, the PRIs in Haryana are functioning effectively. Due representation has been given to the SCs, and women in the PRIs. However, the role of women representatives have not been found effective because of proxy.

Thus it is evident that women Members are participating in panchayati raj institutions but not regularly attending in the activities of panchayati raj institutions as stipulated in the constitution as expected out of them as responsible Members. Their enhanced status in the society by virtue of their membership also encourages them to take their work seriously. Gradually it is expected that more and more women are likely to contest for PRIs and would make their presence felt in representative system.

In panchayati raj institutions a seat which is reserved for a woman candidate becomes unreserved in the next election. So there is no certainty that the Members will get re-elected. Here the party plays an important role. It is unfortunate that political parties always do not want to fill women candidates for these unreserved seats. Adding to this problem is that women do not want to contest as independent candidates, as that they feel lessen their chance to be re-elected. This clearly indicates that political parties who are supposed to play a very important role in fulfilling the goal of 73rd Amendment Act, have accepted 33% reservation for women as a compulsion not as an avenue for social change.

To conclude, until and unless structural change occurs at all levels of social-economic, political, mental and attitudinal set up of our society, the goal of women's empowerment through political representation will remain unfulfilled.