



## Panchayati Raj and SC/ST Women of Madhya Pradesh

**Dr. Manoj Kumar Gupta**

Research Officer, Dr. Ambedkar Chair

### Abstract

The decade of 90s can be called the decade of political reconstruction of rural India. Significantly, the 73rd Constitutional Amendment made the holistic democratic decentralization of the Indian democratic system. The Panchayat elections held after 1992 not only changed the political idioms in principle, but also instilled confidence in expanding the responsibilities of governance to a larger population. Through reservation in Panchayat politics, every section was given the right to perform representative roles. With the implementation of the Panchayati Raj system, the one-third reservation given to women has not only increased their numerical share, but it is possible to say that their political empowerment has also taken place by quoting various research reports. The positive results of its success are that many states have made legal provisions to secure up to 50 percent seats for women in panchayat institutions, Madhya Pradesh being one of them. More than two decades have passed since the Panchayati Raj system was implemented. During this, what was possible in rural political consciousness and practice and on what aspects more is likely to happen. After all, in what form have the representative roles of women come to the fore through panchayat politics and also what has been possible to achieve and what have been its limitations in the face of entrenched roles of caste, class and gender in the rural political structure. Keeping the selected districts of Madhya Pradesh in the center, through this research paper, what are the representative roles of scheduled caste, scheduled tribe women, practical acceptability of women leadership and the meaning of women leadership in rural social life? This is studied here.

**Key Words:** Panchayati Raj, Schedule Caste/Schedule Tribes, Gender, Governance, Political Participation.

### Introduction

More than 25 years have elapsed since the Panchayati Raj system got constitutional recognition as the primary unit of the parliamentary system of the republic of India. With the introduction of political, social and economic activities of rural India through Panchayats within the democratic ambit, the expansion of the practice of decentralization, system was made possible through the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. Today we have certainly been able to move forward in that direction. Through the Panchayati Raj system, political participation and leadership roles have increased for a large number of sections of the society who were earlier virtually excluded from decision-making roles. After the constitutionalization of the Panchayati Raj system, regular elections, everyone's participation and budget provision related to definite development, not only political interest of the people, access to decision-making roles including participation, but also direct access to many welfare schemes introduced from the state and central governments has also

been far away extended to the villages. Providing democratic strength to grassroots politics, the Panchayati Raj system has been making villages an essential unit of the state system, more than making villages an important part of the implementation of developmental schemes. When this is being said, it does not only mean the theoretical and objective facts like political empowerment of rural India, direct access to all schemes, numerical representation and participation of others including women, but also its practical conditions including ground achievements.

With the implementation of the three-tier Panchayati Raj system, many states have increased it to 50 percent in panchayat bodies, expanding the one-third share that women got. According to a figure of the Ministry of Panchayat Raj, about 13.75 (2018) lakh women are in a representative role in the Panchayat bodies. After the 73rd constitutional amendment, the role of leading state of Madhya Pradesh in conducting panchayat elections is more visible in the sense that today 50 percent representation for women in the three-tier panchayati raj system has been legally ensured here. Looking at the ground conditions, it seems necessary to study the fine print between representation and participation. Looking at the ground conditions, it seems necessary to study the fine print between representation and participation. It is obvious that the process of decentralization ensures process representation, but does representation reflect participation in the same way? With the concept of VISHWAGAON and globalization, there are many aspects of strengthening the local bodies in many countries of the world including India and developing them as a strong link this. However, various aspects related to women's political participation and leadership are being studied here through Panchayats.

### **Research objective**

Scheduled caste of Madhya Pradesh through Panchayati Raj system, Analytical study of the political status of women Panch-Sarpanchs of the tribe and the role of women leadership in the development of rural India including gram panchayats, future possibilities and challenges.

### **Research methodology**

Keeping in mind the purpose of this research paper, the process of collecting facts of subjective nature has been adopted to conduct a socio-scientific and rational study of the grassroots aspects of the leadership role of women in the three-tier Panchayati Raj system. Secondary sources have also been used to complete this research paper along with data collection following the focus group discussion. Feminist stand point has been adopted to understand and analyze various aspects of leadership role of women in panchayat politics.

### **Research area determination and method of data collection**

Along with studying the leadership roles of women in the Panchayati Raj system and the conditions of governance administration, this study focused on the political empowerment of women representatives after coming into Panchayat politics and their vision for the development of villages in Agar, Vidisha and Dhar districts of Madhya Pradesh. Has been done Following the purposive sampling, the women representatives who attended the three-day panchayat training have been included.

After participant observation and training, to know the entry of women in the rural political world, their representational roles in the rural political world with women Panch-Sarpanches of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes present in the three-level Panchayati Raj training program organized in different districts of Madhya Pradesh which is organized by BRAUSS. Unstructured group discussions were conducted with the selected women representatives.

### Study area introduction

Three districts of Madhya Pradesh Agar-Malwa, Dhar and Vidisha have been taken as study area, which are the districts of Ujjain, Indore and Bhopal divisions respectively. In this, from the geographical-cultural point of view, a large area of Madhya Pradesh has been included in this study. The common colloquial language of the selected area is Malvi and its adjacent dialects including Hindi.

Analysis and interpretation of qualitative data obtained from group discussion

### Discussion Group-I (Agar-Malwa)

**Format:** Group Discussion

**Sample size** - 15

**Date of fact compilation** - January 18, 2020

**Time Limit**- 40 Minutes

**Location** - District Panchayat Headquarters

**Types of Data** – Conversation, Gesture, Written Instrument

Introduction of the participants in the Group Discussion- Only female participants are included in the Group Discussion. All of them were in the age group of 25 to 65 years along with working as an elected representative of the Gram Panchayat unit. Along with the people's representatives, all are also associated with agriculture and agricultural labour. Women representatives of Agar, Barod, Susner, Nalkheda districts are included in this.

S.N.	Name	Post
1.	Kamla Bai Shankar	Panch
2.	Shamu Bai	Panch
3.	Sampat Bai	Sarpanch
4.	Shanti Bai	Panch
5.	Angeki Bai	Sarpanch
6.	Sugna Bai	Sarpanch
7.	Kalavati	Panch
8.	Leela Bai	Panch
9.	Moon phase	Panch
10.	Ladkunwar	Panch
11.	Kaneri Bai	Panch
12.	Rajshri	Sarpanch
13.	Saroj	Panch
14.	Kanchan Bai	Sarpanch
15.	Geeta Bai	Sarpanch

## Discussion Group-II (Vidisha)

Format: Group Discussion

Sample size - 15

Date of fact compilation - 23 January 2020

Time Limit- 40 Minutes

Location-Vidisha District Headquarters

Types of Data Collected – Conversation, Gesture, Written Instrument

Introduction of the participants in the Group Discussion- Only female participants are included in the Group Discussion. All of them were in the age group of 25 to 65 years along with working as an elected representative of the Gram Panchayat unit. Along with the people's representatives, all are also associated with agriculture and agricultural labour. Women representatives of Vidisha, Gyarpur, Basoda, Nateran district panchayats are included in this.

S.N.	Name	Post
1.	Gulab Bai	Panch
2.	Sunita Devi	Sarpanch
3.	Krishna Bai	Sarpanch
4.	mohar bai	Panch
5.	Hemlata	Panch
6.	Lalta Bai	Panch
7.	Komal Bai	Sarpanch
8.	Laxmi Bai	Panch
9.	Parvati	Sarpanch
10.	Tara Bai	Sarpanch
11.	Yashodabai	Panch
12.	Kamlesh bai	Sarpanch
13.	Sushila Bai	Sarpanch
14.	Sunder bai	Panch
15.	Kala Bai	Panch

## Discussion Group-III (Dhar)

Format: Group Discussion

Sample size - 15

Date of fact compilation - February 07, 2020

Time Limit- 40 Minutes

Location- Dhar District Headquarters

Types of Data Collected – Conversation, Gesture, Written Instrument

Introduction of the participants in the Group Discussion- Only female participants are included in the Group Discussion. All of them were in the age group of 25 to 65 years along with working as an elected representative of the Gram Panchayat unit. Along with the people's representatives, all are also associated with agriculture and agricultural labour. Women representatives of Dhar, Nalchha, Tirla, Umarvan, Gandhwani district panchayats are included in this.

S.N.	Name	Post
1.	Ayodhya Bai	Panch
2.	Sumitra	Sarpanch
3.	Maya Bai	Sarpanch
4.	Jatan Bai	Panch
5.	Gangabai Damor	Sarpanch
6.	Teju Bai	Panch
7.	Reva Bai	Sarpanch
8.	Archana	Sarpanch
9.	Lalitha	Panch
10.	Gayatri	Sarpanch
11.	Tota Bai	Panch
12.	Jhangu Bai	Sarpanch
13.	Rekha Bai	Sarpanch
14.	Shantabai	Panch
15.	Ghuma Bai	Panch

### **Group discussion held at Agar-Malwa, Vidisha and Dhar discussed and analyzed with different individuals-**

Analysis of the facts obtained from the question based on rural political affiliation and participation of women and their interest behind coming into Panchayati politics regarding the Panchayati Raj system.

Talking about the Panchayati Raj system, most of the women told that first of all the Panchayati system is working in our villages. All kinds of decisions and small issues or matters related to the villages were resolved at the Sarpanch itself. Most of the participants agreed that the manner in which Panchayat elections are being held for the last few years and the interest of people has increased in it was not the same before. Panchayati Raj system was constitutionalized in India after the 73rd constitutional amendment, although its theoretical side is not fully known, but all the women representatives definitely know that now women's seats are reserved in many panchayats, because of which he has also got a chance to get elected in PRIs. Rather, the women of all the three selected groups also told that when they are reserved, their family members get them to fill out the form, while they do not know much about it. But what emerged as a basic



understanding of women's political representation through Panchayati Raj system is that all these women who have completed more than 4 years of their tenure, a new kind of political interest in them. Has awakened. Which she seemed to accept. Regarding the presence of women in the rural political environment, most of the participants said that there is an equal share in the movement and work of women from home to farm-barn, but there is no role of women in village politics or any major decision. Yes, it is definitely that after getting elected in the panchayat, the role of women sarpanch has definitely changed. Two major things came out regarding the role of women in rural politics, in which the first and most effective factor is the male dominated structure of the society and second is the education and awareness of women. According to these female representatives of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, there is no difference between men and women in the social structure in many cases, and the main reason for this is joint work for livelihood, but women's work participation is more in many cases. Despite this, they have to stay behind in decision-making roles. Answering the questions of political interest and curiosity becomes more important as all the women involved have spent more than four years of their tenure. According to her, there were many such experiences in these four years when she got that respect or status as Panch-Sarpanch, which is probably difficult to get, especially for a common woman. Got to learn a lot too. Most of them say that due to lack of awareness and they never got the opportunity to get involved in such works, nor to see them closely, but while doing the work, what role can we play for the village, it is being understood to a great extent. Is. Representatives who are relatively more aware of the level of conversation and understanding said that generally men get to know many things despite not being Panch-Sarpanch because they stay with the people of Panchayat. This opportunity remains equal to none for women.

**Analysis** of the facts obtained from the question based on the changes in personal, family and social life as an elected representative of Gram Panchayat.

Participating women from different groups agreed in one opinion on this question that definitely in their personal, family and social life they have felt the identity of a citizen above that of a woman. Especially the members working on the post of Sarpanch clearly spoke on this and others registered silent consent. Change is visible in the situation from the first day of being elected as Panchayat representative till today. If we talk about common of all the three groups, about 40-50 percent women believed that they are panchayat representatives but due to lack of information, illiteracy and more recognition of men in the social structure, they find it difficult to do different types of development work but the behavior of the officials with them is not very positive. The changes in social and political life can also be understood from the fact that she says that because of coming to the panchayat, she also learned a lot about organizing, conducting and participating in the proceedings of the gram sabha, including the outside world and government offices. Got an opportunity too.

While doing gram panchayat related work, being a woman, do you face some different types of problems.

Talking about this question, the participants did not directly explain the challenge being women, but the facts that came out from their discussion made many things clear. Generally, the role of women is negligible or kept in office work, both are the things. In the functioning of the Gram Panchayat, the cooperation done by the family or a close friend gradually emerges as domination, which even these women do not like. Some oppose it and some cannot. This is evident from their answers. However, some women said that sometimes other people try to get the male representatives to work under their influence. But it seems common to us. It is clear here that all these women are talking about the fabric of male dominance somewhere. Another challenge the representatives see is the lack of training programs regarding the functioning of the Panchayat, their rights, duties etc. The matter of gender discrimination is also visible in the discussion of the government personnel associated with the Gram Panchayat. The women involved in the group expressed their views in different forms and there was almost a consensus on the fact that the gram panchayats where the women representatives are educated and relatively more aware, instead of most women representatives, should be left with them. These officers are closely related to their husbands or close alleged male patrons. All the included representatives, who have completed nearly four years, not only looked positive about their political role despite some such challenges, but they said that gradually we are discharging our responsibilities by understanding the various activities of the Panchayat, in which many People's co-operation is also received. It is definitely said that if training is conducted on time to time after the elections, then the people representing the Gram Panchayats can work in a better way.

The issues of the candidates in Gram Panchayat elections? On what basis do the people of the village choose the representatives.

In response to this question, the members said that usually there are different groups in the village and almost all of them field their own people during elections. This opportunity for women comes only when there is a women's seat, some said that it is very rare that a woman contests an election on an unreserved seat and wins, but some of our sisters have won from such villages as well. If seen in this way, people expect from the candidates in Panchayat elections that they should be more effective in providing housing, drinking water, lights and roads as well as government schemes to the villagers in a proper manner. Most of them also said that in panchayat elections, the work of secretly feeding people with alcoholic drinks etc. is done by some candidates in order to vote in their favor, but the important thing is that in these mostly male class only get involved. Some actively participating women believed that where women seats are reserved, these things are almost non-existent. Yes, it is definitely that in many women reserved seats, there is interference of men close to them, even though such activities are less frequent there. On which all the opinions remained similar.

### **Conclusion**

Currently, Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) are seen as an integrated solution to rural development. Especially women empowerment is an important aspect. Women in Panchayats In the last few years, there has been an increase in women's participation, especially from the weaker

sections, due to the positive outlook on Panchayats at the national level. Along with this, some challenging facts have also come to the fore, especially the influence of husbands and male officers in decision making. Study based on the related field and analysis of this study based on primary sources clearly shows that the influence of women leadership in Panchayati Raj system has increased year by year. Political participation through Panchayats, increasing confidence in the democratic process among Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women will definitely prove to be effective in their socio-economic status, leadership role, educational level and political awareness and achievement.

#### Reference-

- Chaudhary, Prem. (2014). *Political Economy of Production and Reproduction*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Dutta, Subhabrata. (2009). *Democratic Decentralization and Grassroot Leadership in India*. New Delhi: Mittal Publication.
- Goyal, Omita (Ed.). (2015). *Intrrogating Women's Leadership & Empowerment*. New Delhi: Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd.
- Mathew, George & Baviskar, B.S.(Ed.). (2009). *Inclusion and Exclusion in Local Governance Field Studies from Rural India*. New Delhi: Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd.
- Mathew, Gorge. (Ed.). (2013). *Status of Panchayati Raj in the State and Union Territories of India*. New Delhi.
- Singla, Pamela. (2007). *Womens Participation in Panchayati Raj Nature and Effectiveness*. Jaipur: Rawat Publication.
- A. Ruth J. & K.Anirudh & Disa S. edited by Samantha Forusz *Inclusion And Local Elected Governments: The Panchayat Raj System In India* (Access: <https://web.worldbank.org/archive/website01061/WEB/IMAGES/INCLUSIO.PDF> on 21/03/2023)