

Vol II Issue VIII Feb 2013

Impact Factor : 0.1870

ISSN No :2231-5063

Monthly Multidisciplinary
Research Journal

Golden Research

Thoughts

Chief Editor
Dr.Tukaram Narayan Shinde

Publisher
Mrs.Laxmi Ashok Yakkaldevi

Associate Editor
Dr.Rajani Dalvi

Honorary
Mr.Ashok Yakkaldevi

IMPACT FACTOR : 0.2105

Welcome to ISRJ

RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

ISSN No.2230-7850

Indian Streams Research Journal is a multidisciplinary research journal, published monthly in English, Hindi & Marathi Language. All research papers submitted to the journal will be double - blind peer reviewed referred by members of the editorial Board readers will include investigator in universities, research institutes government and industry with research interest in the general subjects.

International Advisory Board

Flávio de São Pedro Filho Federal University of Rondonia, Brazil	Mohammad Hailat Dept. of Mathematical Sciences, University of South Carolina Aiken, Aiken SC 29801	Hasan Baktir English Language and Literature Department, Kayseri
Kamani Perera Regional Centre For Strategic Studies, Sri Lanka	Abdullah Sabbagh Engineering Studies, Sydney	Ghayoor Abbas Chotana Department of Chemistry, Lahore University of Management Sciences [PK]
Janaki Sinnasamy Librarian, University of Malaya [Malaysia]	Catalina Neculai University of Coventry, UK	Anna Maria Constantinovici AL. I. Cuza University, Romania
Romona Mihaila Spiru Haret University, Romania	Ecaterina Patrascu Spiru Haret University, Bucharest	Horia Patrascu Spiru Haret University, Bucharest, Romania
Delia Serbescu Spiru Haret University, Bucharest, Romania	Loredana Bosca Spiru Haret University, Romania	Ilie Pintea, Spiru Haret University, Romania
Anurag Misra DBS College, Kanpur	Fabricio Moraes de Almeida Federal University of Rondonia, Brazil	Xiaohua Yang PhD, USA
Titus Pop	George - Calin SERITAN Postdoctoral Researcher	Nawab Ali Khan College of Business Administration

Editorial Board

Pratap Vyamktrao Naikwade ASP College Devrukh,Ratnagiri,MS India	Iresh Swami Ex - VC. Solapur University, Solapur	Rajendra Shendge Director, B.C.U.D. Solapur University, Solapur
R. R. Patil Head Geology Department Solapur University, Solapur	N.S. Dhaygude Ex. Prin. Dayanand College, Solapur	R. R. Yaliker Director Managment Institute, Solapur
Rama Bhosale Prin. and Jt. Director Higher Education, Panvel	Narendra Kadu Jt. Director Higher Education, Pune	Umesh Rajderkar Head Humanities & Social Science YCMOU, Nashik
Salve R. N. Department of Sociology, Shivaji University, Kolhapur	K. M. Bhandarkar Praful Patel College of Education, Gondia	S. R. Pandya Head Education Dept. Mumbai University, Mumbai
Govind P. Shinde Bharati Vidyapeeth School of Distance Education Center, Navi Mumbai	Sonal Singh Vikram University, Ujjain	Alka Darshan Shrivastava Shaskiya Snatkottar Mahavidyalaya, Dhar
Chakane Sanjay Dnyaneshwar Arts, Science & Commerce College, Indapur, Pune	G. P. Patankar S. D. M. Degree College, Honavar, Karnataka	Rahul Shriram Sudke Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, Indore
Awadhesh Kumar Shirotriya Secretary, Play India Play (Trust),Meerut	Maj. S. Bakhtiar Choudhary Director,Hyderabad AP India.	S.KANNAN Ph.D , Annamalai University,TN
	S.Parvathi Devi Ph.D.-University of Allahabad	Satish Kumar Kalhotra
	Sonal Singh	

**Address:-Ashok Yakkaldevi 258/34, Raviwar Peth, Solapur - 413 005 Maharashtra, India
Cell : 9595 359 435, Ph No: 02172372010 Email: ayisrj@yahoo.in Website: www.isrj.net**



GRAM PANCHAYATS AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

R.B.KOKATANUR

Asst Professor Dept of History . SSS Govt First Grade College, Mudalagi.

Abstract:

In order to give a better deal to women, especially OBCs, SCs & STs in democratic processes, the govt. of India enacted the 73rd Amendment Act in 1993. Consequently, the Panchayats in States with political power were revitalized and re-equipped to play a vital role as agents of social and economic transformation with a special focus on SCs and STs and women. The underlying assumption is that a change in the access to political power will not only transform the lives of the power-holders, but also enable them to transform the socio economic conditions of the villages in which they live. Political power is considered as 'resource'. It is argued that once lower classes are given power they can play a significant role in bringing about modern changes regardless of their low socio-economic status. There are others who argue that even though lower class people are given a greater access to political power, they are not likely bring about any changes due to their low class status. It is also held that the policy of reservation will be utilized more by the economically well-off than by the poor.

KEYWORDS

Gram Panchayats, Women Empowerment, Society, Literature.

INTRODUCTION

It is almost 18 years since the New Panchayat Raj came into being. It is time to examine and evaluate the part played by Gram Panchayats in introducing changes in the socio-economic conditions of the rural society.

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment: A New Chapter for Women's Empowerment:

Political reservation for weaker sections has been an important tool of ushering in equal opportunities for development since the advent of British rule in India. Political reservation for the SCs and STs and OBCs has ensured vast social, economic and political opportunities for mobility.

The 73rd Amendment of the Constitution of India in 1992 introduced a new political initiative to empower women. The Constitution Amendment Act 1992, Article 243 D() reads; Not less than one third of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat shall be reserved for women (SCs and STs) and such seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a panchayat.

The Assumption underlying the 73rd Amendment is that provision for reservation for seats in Panchayats will bring about a change in terms of empowerment among men and women members in

particular and rural women in general. However, this hypothesis needs to be examined.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

A number of studies have been conducted on the impact of Gram Panchayat Raj since the enactment of the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution of India. However, there are significant differences in the findings of the studies.

Earlier studies (prior to the enactment of the 73rd Amendment Act) conducted on women's role in Gram Panchayats have given a gloomy picture. In case of Andhra Pradesh the study conducted by Manikyamba (1989) presented a gloomy picture on the participation of women in PRIs. The study revealed that women were shy and could not articulate their official jobs as freely as they could. Hazel D' Limas (1993) study of women in local government showed that the women of the upper castes, wives of big land owners and politically influential families tended to dominate the positions reserved for women in Zilla Panchayats and Panchayats Samithis in Maharashtra. Women's ability to participate actively was influenced by their own educational level and the educational status of the family.

Sudha Pai (2000) conducted a study on "Pradhanis in the New Panchayats: A study from Meerut District". The data were drawn from three villages in Meerut district U.P. The author points out that the impact of reservation on women's participation has been differential. In states where the social status of women has traditionally been better and levels of literacy status in society, participation in the workforce, and even, in local politics higher women have been able to take advantage of the new measure. In other parts of the country where women's position in the society and participation in public affairs has traditionally been low, the reservation measure has not caused much change. This is particularly true of the states in the Northern plains, such as UP as is evident from the role played by the elected Pradhanis in the three selected villages of Meerut district, given below. The study shows that reservation alone cannot change the status of women in the family and society and thereof ensure their participation in local bodies. The Pradhanis in the sample villages were mere name sake representatives of the male members of their household. Studies by Rashmi Arun (1996) and Jeyapal and K. Dravidamani (1997) show similar results.

A significant study was done by Anil Sutar (2007). The study revealed that the women leaders who hailed from the lower stratum of the society were more democratic and people centered, whereas those from the upper castes were more conservative and family centered. The findings of the study are important. But they need further testing.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The Chief Objective of the study is to analyse the attitudes of the Gram Panchayat towards women's empowerment. The specific objectives are:

1. To study the socio-economic background of the respondents.
2. To study their attitude towards women's empowerment, and,
3. To study their strategies which directly or indirectly promote women's empowerment.

HYPOTHESIS:

The Chief hypothesis of the study was that although the govt; has provided a greater degree of access to political power to the backward, SCs & STs, especially women, through reservation, it is their socio-economic background that influences their attitude towards rural development in general and women's empowerment in particular. Government's policy of reservation in the absence of any integrated policy of development may create more problems than it solves.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT:

The concept of empowerment of women is of recent origin. The word "empowerment" has been given currency by UN agencies during recent years. The term 'empower' is relative to weakness, disabilities, disadvantages and deprivations based on sex, age, population (minority) region (backward). 'Empowerment' means make one powerful or equip one with the power to face the challenges of life to, overcome the disabilities, handicaps and inequalities. Empower means making unequal people equal. Empowerment in the context of rural women means providing literacy and primary education, employment opportunities, health facilities (PHCs, Anganwadis) water, electricity and latrines.

UNIVERSE AND METHODOLOGY:

The study was conducted in Belgaum district, Karnataka. In all there were 2058 Panchayat members out of 8350 members there, a sample size of 200 men and 120 women was randomly selected. Data were collected through personal contact.

1. Socio-economical Background:

The socio-economic background of the respondents in terms of age, education, employment, income and marital status has a deep impact on the development of personality. The underlying assumption is that one's socioeconomic background influences one's behavior.

Age:

Age is a demographic factor. But it has deep social and psychological effects on one's personality. Age indicates one's stages of personality. Very young people (16-19 years) are socially, psychologically and physically less matured. Their interaction pattern and decision making power is less certain. Young people in the age group of 20-24 years are likely to be relatively more matured. By this time they would have developed more thinking power, courage and confidence. Adults in the age group of 25-30 years, are more matured in their behavior and thinking.

Data presented in the Table – 1 show that in general 62 percent of the respondents were young, while 21 and 17 percents were very young and adults, respectively.

Table – 1
Respondent's Age by Sex

Age	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No	%	No	%
1. Very Young	50	25	20	17	70	21
2. Young	120	60	80	67	200	62
3. Adults	30	15	20	17	50	17
Total	200	100	120	100	320	100

The fact that a majority of the respondents were young shows they are more matured. Data further show that there were more young women (67%) than men (60%).

2. Marital Status:

Marital Status has a significant influence on one's personality development. Marriage provides status, power, position, authority and privilege for both men and women. Marriage brings closer men and women on the one hand and women and women on the other. Thus marriage enhances one's personality.

Data presented in Table – 2 show that 80 percent (80%) of the respondents were married. Majority of both women (83%) and men (80%) were married.

Table – 2
Respondent's Marital Status

Marital Status	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No	%	No	%
1. Married	160	80	100	83	260	80
2. Unmarried	40	20	20	17	60	20
Total	200	100	120	100	320	100

Caste:

Caste is the basic socio-economic and ritual component of social stratification in India. Although there are significant changes in the social stratification of India because of the reservations for the SCs and STs and women, modernization, liberalization and privatization; caste continues to socialize one's personality.

Table – 3
Respondent's Caste

Caste	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No	%	No	%
1. Forward Caste	20	10	10	08	30	10
2. Backward Caste	60	30	40	34	100	32
3. SCs & STs	120	60	70	58	190	58
Total	200	100	120	100	320	100

Data presented in Table -3 show that 58 percent of the respondent's were SCs & STs, while 32 percent were from the backward castes. But only 10 percent were from the forward castes. Data further show that men and women did not differ much in their caste composition. It is assumed that since a majority of the respondents were from the lower and middle castes, the Gram Panchayats are not likely to play any significant role in women's empowerment.

EDUCATION:

An education term of formal degrees provides knowledge and develops one's abilities, capacities and potentialities. Schooling for example, brings students in contact with written/published material viz books, magazines etc with children and teachers from diverse, cultures. Thus, it develops reading, writing and simple mathematics. It also develops rational thinking, courage and self-confidence. In short, education and social change go together.

Table – 4
Respondent's Education

Education	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No	%	No	%
1. Illiterate	60	30	80	67	140	44
2. Primary	120	60	40	33	160	50
3. 7 th Std	20	10	--	--	20	06
Total	200	100	120	100	320	100

It could be seen from Table -4 that 50 percent of the respondents had primary education, whereas 44 percent were illiterate, only 6 percent had education up to 7th Standard.

Men were more educated than women. For example, 30 percent of men as against 67 percent of women were illiterate. Similarly, 60 percent of men as against 33 percent of women had primary education. Ten percent (10%) of men had education up to the 7th standard. It could be said that more men than women are likely to play significant role in deciding the policies and programmes of Gram Panchayats.

Occupation :

Occupation is another factor that indicates one's status. For example, those who are engaged in business and trade are likely to be change oriented. On the other hand, those engaged in agriculture are likely to be conservative. Similarly, those who are engaged in labour are likely to be very conservative and rigid.

It could be seen from Table – 5 that 44 percent of the respondents were on the sector of agriculture. Similarly 36 percent

Table – 5
Respondent's Occupation

Occupation	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No	%	No	%
1. Business	43	22	21	17	64	20
2. Agriculturer	120	60	20	17	140	44
3. Labour	37	18	79	66	116	36
Total	200	100	120	100	320	100

Of them were labourers. Only 20 percent of the respondents were engaged in business- self employment. Data further show that a majority of the men were in agriculture, while only 17 percent of the women were engaged in agriculture. It could be further observed that 66 percent of women, as against 10 percent of men were working as labourers.

In general a small percent of the respondents are likely to play any meaningful role in bringing about a change. It could be further observed that more men were working in agriculture and likely to decide the policies and programmes.

Income :

Income status is one of the components of social status, which in turn, decides one's standard of living. Income is power; one can buy and purchase goods and services. Higher income means higher scope for standard of living.

Table – 6
Respondent's Income

Income	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No	%	No	%
1. High	40	20	--	--	40	13
2. Medium	120	60	120	60	160	50
3. Low	40	20	40	20	120	37
Total	200	100	120	100	320	100

Data presented in Table – 6 shows that 50 percent of the respondents belonged to middle income group like wise, 37 percent of them belonged to low income group. In short, there were more respondents from middle and low income groups.

II. Attitude towards women empowerment :

This section deals with the attitudes of the respondents towards women's empowerment. The respondent's attitudes are analysed with reference to five women empowerment components viz 1) age at marriage 2) girls consent for marriage 3) education 4) employment and 5) freedom to move freely.

Attitude towards Age at Marriage:

Age at marriage is an important indicator of women's empowerment. Early marriage (below 16 years) of girls blocks their personality development. Early marriage means early pregnancies, which in turn, would lead to early birth of children. It is important to know how do the respondents react to the age at marriage.

Table – 7
Respondent's Attitude towards age at marriage

Income	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No	%	No	%
1. High	20	10	--	--	19	06
2. Medium	80	40	66	33	122	38
3. Low	100	50	54	67	179	56
Total	200	100	120	100	320	100

It could be seen from Table 7 that 56 percent of the respondents believed a low age at marriage for girls (16-19 years). Interestingly, 38 percent expected girls to be married between 20-24 years. It means the Gram Panchayat members are conservative. A comparative analysis of men and women shows that 67 percent of the women as against 50 percent of men expected girls to be married off below 16 years. Similarly, 40 percent of men as against 33 percent of women expected girls to be married off between 20-24 years. Interestingly, 10 percent of the men wanted girls to get married between 25-29 years.

The main finding is that in general a majority of the respondents are in favour of low age at marriage for girls, while more women (67%) than men (50%) are in favour of low age at marriage for girls. It could also be observed that more men (40%) than women (33%) were in favour of middle (20-24 years) age at marriage for girls.

2. Right to Consent for Marriage:

The Constitution of India has provided rights to women to decide their marriage. In traditional society women, even men, had no right to decide their marriage. Parents and kin members played a very important role in selecting and fixing marriages of their wards.

With the onset of modernization (19th Century) there is a wave for individual liberty and freedom. However, the required change in rural areas and at lower classes is not very conspicuous. It is important to know the attitudes of the respondents towards the right to consent for marriage.

Table – 8
Right to consent for marriage

Income	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No	%	No	%
1. High	22	10	--	--	22	07
2. Medium	100	50	60	50	160	50
3. Low	80	40	60	50	110	43
Total	200	100	120	100	320	100

Data presented in Table – 8 reveal that 50 percent of the respondents have said that girls should be given sufficient (50%) freedom to decide their marriage, although 43 percent of them were not in favour of giving any right to decide their marriage. Interestingly, 7 percent of them were in favour of cent percent of freedom to girls to decide their marriage.

Data further show that 50 percent of men and 50 percent of women were in favor of granting sufficient (50%) right to girls to decide their marriage. But more women (50%) than men (40%) were not in favour of giving any right to girls to decide their marriage. On the whole, the respondents were a little liberal towards granting freedom to girls to decide their marriage. It may be concluded from the above analysis that Gram Panchayat members are relatively conservative in their attitude towards women's empowerment although there are symptoms of change.

1. Right to decide education:

Education is an important indicator of women's empowerment. It enables women to acquire degrees, which in turn, qualify them for white collar jobs. Literacy helps them to manage their household needs. Educated women are relatively more liberal, dynamic and progressive. Therefore, it is important to know the attitudes of the respondents towards women's education.

Table – 9
Respondent's Attitude towards Girl Education

Girls Education	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No	%	No	%
1. High	10	05	10	08	19	06
2. Medium	120	60	70	58	192	60
3. Never	70	35	40	34	109	34
Total	200	100	120	100	320	100

Respondents attitudes towards girl's education, as shown in Table -9 reveals that a majority (60%) of the respondents have favored medium education for girls i.e. up to 10th. Interestingly, 34 percent of them have opined that girls be given minimum education (7th). Only 6 percent expected that girls should be given higher education.

Data further show that a majority of the men (60%) and women (58%) have favored high school education. The above analysis shows that a majority of the respondents both men and women have favored high school education for girls.

Employment for Girls :

Employment and women's empowerment are interrelated. Employed women are more empowered than non-employed. Employment gives economic power to the incumbents. It provides power to purchase and spend. Employment provides power and authority. It also enhances one's self concept.

Table – 10
Employment for Girls

Employment	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No	%	No	%
1. Employment	20	10	10	08	19	06
2. Self employment	120	60	70	58	192	60
3. No employment	60	30	40	34	109	34
Total	200	100	120	100	320	100

Respondents attitudes towards girl's employment (see Table – 10) show that a majority (60%) of the respondents wanted that girls be given self-employment. A probe revealed that employment should not affect their family. It was also observed that 34 percent of them were against girls employment as it affected their family life.

A majority of the men (60%) and women (58%) expected girls to take up self-employment. A small proportion of them both men (30%) and women (34%) did not want employment for women as it led to family disorganization. In short, a majority of the respondents of the respondents were, in favour of women's employment in unorganized sector.

Free Movement of Women:

Right to free movement of women constitutes a significant component of women's empowerment. The degree of freedom given to women to go out of home and do shopping, attend functions, are important factors that determine women's empowerment. Therefore, it is important to study respondents attitudes towards.

Table – 11
Right to Free Movement

Right to Free movement	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No	%	No	%
1. Great extent	20	10	--	–	20	06
2. Some extent	80	40	40	33	120	38
3. Never	100	50	80	67	180	56
Total	200	100	120	100	320	100

Data presented in Table – 11 show that a majority (56%) of the respondents did not want any freedom for women to go alone to make purchasing and attend social functions. It was contended that women going out alone was risky and dangerous. However, 38 percent expected freedom for women to some extent. They felt that women should be allowed to go out along with other women or under the supervision of men.

Data further show that a majority of the women (67%) and men (50%) were not in favour of giving any freedom to go out freely to attend social and domestic functions. Interestingly, more women (67%) than men (50%) were conservative with regard to freedom for women. It could be further observed that 40 per cent of men as against 33 percent of women were prepared to grant freedom to some extent. It was argued that women should be given freedom to go out of house alone only under the protection of their Kith and kin. It was pointed out that limited freedom was in the interest of women.

In short, Gram Panchayat members were not in favour of granting freedom to women although a limited proportion of them was prepared to grant certain degree of freedom.

III. Community Measures to Provide Basic Facilities to Empowerment Rural women:

Unlike traditional Panchayats, Gram Panchayats in modern India are vested with the responsibilities of transforming the rural society. Rural development in general and women is empowerment in particular depend on the strategies or programmes launched by the Gram Panchayat (Khan 2004; Mavalkar & Patel 1998) Women's empowerment should be conceived not only an individual matter but also a collective or group phenomena.

For example it is important to know whether the Gram Panchayats have been able to provide basic facilities such as water and latrines, health care services (PHCs, Anganwadis) and employment opportunities to women in rural areas.

Among social welfare services to the community environmental sanitation and personal and community hygiene play a significant role in promoting and preserving the Physical, mental and social well being of the people. In the following pages an attempt is made to analyse the efforts of the Gram Panchayats in providing 1) Water and latrines 2) Health services and 3) Employment opportunities.

1. Water and Latrines:

Provision for water and latrines are directly and indirectly related to health of people. They are especially related to women's empowerment.

Water:

Water in general and drinking water in particulars are one of basic needs of life. In fact its importance can be traced to the birth or civilization itself. The availability of safe and adequate drinking water has a direct bearing on the working conditions and health of the people and their capacity for optimum production. Water borne diseases and death and particularly of children every year and the drudgery of women could be directly attributed to a lack of adequate potable water. Inadequate sanitation and poor hygienic practices. It is important to recognize first the basic right of all people to have access to safe water and sanitation at an affordable price.

Public Water and Women's Empowerment:

Provision for water, both drinking and a domestic purpose is intimately linked with women's empowerment. Access to water gives power to women. Collection of water both for drinking and washing, cleaning etc. Is mainly a women's job, although men may assist occasionally. Easy availability of water may mean a greater degree of safety and security. Fetching water from the distant places may not only mean physically tiresome, but also risky for their sexual safety. A significant aspect of the water scarcity is that the burden of bringing water from distant sources has fallen on women irrespective of age. Women in several rural and even in urban households have to face hardships in lack of easy access of drinking water and other domestic purposes. Women, as the water carriers and end-users are directly connected with water. Women and young girls often spent five to six hours a day for water fetching from distant place, not only they pushed and rushed themselves in crowd for water collection from water tanker, which is a regular phenomena of every day life (Sara, 2000, Soni, 2008).

Scarcity of Water continues in Rural Areas:

The problem of water has been given in successive Five Year Plans. But there are a large number of villages in different states which continue to suffer the scarcity of water problem. In the following paragraphs an attempt is made to analyse the attitudes of GP members towards the provision for public water.

Table – 12
Right to Free Movement

Public Water	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No	%	No	%
1. Great extent	--	--	--	--	--	--
2. Some extent	80	40	30	25	110	37
3. Never	120	60	90	75	210	63
Total	200	100	120	100	320	100

Data presented in Table – 12 reveal that a majority (63%) of the respondents said that the Gram Panchayats never bothered about water facilities in villages. Water scarcity reaches to the peak during summer, when most bore wells go dry. Women have to go long distance to collect a pot of water.

A comparison of the attitudes of men and women shows that a majority of both men and women have said that the Gram Panchayats have not done, in fact could not do, anything to improve the water position. Men members expressed their complaints against govt. Officials, Taluk and Zilla Panchayat members who decide the fate of the Gram Panchayat members who are passive spectators of rural development.

Public / Private Latrines:

The International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade programme was launched by the Govt. in 1981 with a view to providing the population with protected water supply and basic sanitation facilities over a period of Five years.

Sanitation is used to define a package of health related measures. It denotes a comprehensive concept of the methods of disposal of human and other liquid or solid waste (Choudhary and Rajkuthy, 1998). Special emphasis for sanitation was laid in the 9th Five Year Plan. The sanitation coverage in terms of individual household, latrines at the beginning of the 9th Five year Plan was 16.20 percent of total rural households. National Sample Survey, 54th Round report published in July 1999 indicated that 17.5 per cent of the rural population was using the latrine. The NFHS –II said that 20 percent of household had latrines in their house (Ponnuraj 2002).

Construction and use of latrines is a complex issue in rural areas. In a study conducted by Tandle (2006) found that latrines were constructed by rural people under the Karnataka Integrated Rural Water Supply and Environmental Sanitation Scheme. But in course of time latrines were abandoned due to lack of water supply. It was observed that Gram Panchayats were helpless to take any initiative because policies were outlined by taluka and Zilla Panchayats. Respondents were asked to indicate their opinion about Gram Panchayats efforts to provide latrines, individually and collectively in the sample villages.

Table – 13**Measures undertaken by Gram Panchayat to improve Sanitation – Latrine - position**

Sanitation Position	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No	%	No	%
1. Great extent	--	--	--	--	--	--
2. Some extent	67	34	19	16	86	27
3. Never	133	66	101	84	234	73
Total	200	100	120	100	320	100

It could be seen from Table – 13 that 73 percent of the respondents pointed out that no measures have been undertaken to improve the sanitation in rural areas. But 27 percent respondents said that Gram Panchayat have taken up measures to some extent, Brick and cement enclosures have been constructed for women outside the village as a form of open roofless latrines. A majority of the women (84%) and men (70%) were of the opinion that Gram Panchayats have not bothered about latrines for rural women.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS SUPERVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES :**PHCs and Anganwadis :**

Primary health centres and Anganwadis are the two main sources of health services for women in rural areas.

Primary Health Centre:

Primary Health centres have come to be established as the basic agents of health care in rural areas. The PHC occupies a key position in nation's health care system. The PHCs are the principles institutions providing integrated health services to the rural population to the rural population Dileep Mavalankar and Vinubhai Patel (1998) in their article “Primary Health Care” under Panchayat Raj in Gujrat. Perceptions of Health services Staff” have come to the conclusion that Panchayats have not paid very much attention to the health functions and hence PHCs are no better under Panchayats than they might be under State Control.

Abdul Majeed Khan(2004) in his article “Panchayats in the Health Sector” has come to the conclusion that elected Panchayat officials lack knowledge about the schemes. Health care activities in rural areas depend on the cordial relationships between Panchayat President and health department officials (Khan 2000)

Anganwadis :

Anganwadis are established by the govt. to promote the development and welfare of small children and adult women in rural society. The PHCs mainly provide services for the smooth delivery while the Anganwadis treat pregnant and lactating women and children by taking care of their food and medicine. Developmental agencies in society, especially in rural society, can function effectively when they are properly supervised by GPs, Taluk and Zilla Panchayats.

It was observed during data collection that most PHCs and Anganwadis were not properly equipped with required machines and apparatus, Doctors and nurses never attend PHCs regularly. Patients preferred to take treatment from Private Doctors. Kakar and Chopra (1992) have shown that 66.6 percent of the Anganwadis in villages had one room plus open space. There is large scale corruption in PHCs and Anganwadis.

Table – 14

Supervision of Health Services – PHCs and Angawadis

Right to Free movment	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No	%	No	%
1. Great extent	20	10	10	08	30	10
2. Some extent	40	20	20	16	60	20
3. Never	140	70	90	76	230	70
Total	200	100	120	100	320	100

Data presented in Table – 14 show that 70 percent, an over whelming majority, had said that Gram Panchayats were not interested in the smooth functioning of the PHCs and Anganwadis. A few women members said that Gram Panchayats were engaged in earning their livelihood. They all attended meetings when called for. Panchayat duties were not considered full time activities. The main reason for the lack of interest was their illiteracy and ignorance. Panchayat Secretary played a significant role in managing the Panchayats. Data also showed that both men and women had negative views.

Supervision of Employment Projects by Gram Panchayats :

Employment in general and self employment in particular, is intimately connected with women's empowerment. Self employment in the context of rural women acts as a link between domestic world and work world. It helps them to earn fairly reasonable amount without affecting their familial and domestic responsibilities. Self employment brings women out of home and exposes them to external forces such as public, market media, sellers and buyers, prices of commodities etc. It enables women to come in contact with men and women other than the family members, kith and kin. It instills the skills of communication to deal with customer, whole sales and middle men. It also helps women to learn the art and science of negotiation and bargaining.

Govt. projects :

In order to provide greater empowerment to women the Govt. of India has launched several

schemes for women's employment. The schemes would be implemented through Gram Panchayats. Chetan and Krishna Murthy (2004) made study of the scheme viz Swarnajayanti Gram Sawrozgar Yojana for empowerment of rural women in Karnataka. With the launching of the Ninth Five years Plan (1997-2002), a number of schemes were initiated with a bias for empowerment of rural women.

The latest schemes are Navagram Yojana and NREGP. While the former aims at creating a new village with major facilities the later aims at creating job opportunities for poor women. The Stree Shakti Scheme generally provides loans to purchase buffaloes.

Table – 15
Supervision of Employment Schemes by GPs

Supervision of employment schemes	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No	%	No	%
1. Great extent	20	10	10	08	30	09
2. Some extent	60	30	30	25	90	28
3. Never	120	60	80	67	200	63
Total	200	100	120	100	320	100

It could be seen from Table - 15 that 63 percent, a majority, were not aware of the schemes and their relevance to women's empowerment. No panchayat member including Chairman and Vice Chairman ever tried to evince interest in the implementation of the schemes. A majority of the respondents believed that implementation of schemes was the duty of the govt, officials. The Secretary did much of the execution of employment schemes. More women (67%) than men (60%) have negatively answered the question. It was also observed that their interpersonal relations were strained.

There was no concensus among members about resolutions, policies. Panchayat members never took any personal interest in the development of programmes. Most members suffered from caste prejudices, stereotypes and inferiority complexes.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION :

The Chief aim of the study is to know the attitudes of Gram Panchayat members towards empowerment of rural women. The main contention of the paper is that mere access to power structure does not enable the Gram Panchayat members to undertake developmental programmes due to the low socio economic background of the rural areas and Gram Panchayat members. Data have shown that a majority of the respondents had unfavourable attitudes towards empowerment of rural women.

A majority of the Gram Panchayat members could not undertake any collective programmes such as public water and sanitation, health services and employment project, what is needed is not mere reservation of quota for the SCs & STs and women, but large scale developmental programmes in sectors like economic, health and infrastructure, should be simultaneously implemented.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Anil Sutar (2007) "Caste and patriarchy in the emerging women's Leadership in panchayats : A study from Karnataka" Social change June 2007 Vol./ 37 No.2.
2. Dileep Manvalankar & Vinubhai Patel (1998) "Primary Health Care" under Panchayat Raj in Gujarat : Perceptions of Health Services Staff" social change March Vol 28 No.1

- 3 Hezel D' Lima (1993) "Participation of Women in Local Self Government" in (Ed) S.Kaushik *Women's Participation in Politics* New Delhi : Vakas.
- 4 Jaiswal, R (1998) "What Anganwadis Need most " Yojana Feb
- 5 Jayapal P & K K.Draavidmani (1997) " Women Panchayats Presidents" *Social Welfare* Vol.44 No.1
- 6 Kalkar, D.N. and S. Chopra "Family Planning through Better MCH – A Study of Aanganwadis" *IASSI, Quarterly* Vol.II No.2.
- 7 Khan A.M. (2000) "Status of Decentralization in Panchayats Raj Institutions in State of Gujarat" *Research Report*, New Delhi NIHFV
- 8 Khan, A.M. (2004) Panchayat in the Health Sector" *Social Change* Dec. Vol. 34 No.4
- 9 Manikyamba P, (1989) *Women in Panchayat Raj Structures* New Delhi : Gyan.
- 10 Mavalankar, D & Vinubhai patel (1998) "Primary Health Care under Panchayat Raj in Gujarat ; Perceptions of Health services Staff" *Social Change* March Vol. 28 No.1
- 11 Punraj, S. (2002) "Rural Sanitation : Agenda for future policies, programmes and strategies" *Kurushetra* Oct.
- 12 Rashmi Arun (1996) "Role of women in Panchayat Raj" Vol XLI *The Administrator*.
- 13 Sara, A (2000) In Search of a Drop" Women and Drinking water management in Rural Gujarat ((India) "A case of SEWA" *Institute of Rural Management* Anand Gujarat.
- 14 Soni, J. (2008) "Women and water Management ; Need for women empowerment" in (Ed)U.Kalpagam & Jaya Arunachalam *Rural Women and Development in India issues and challenges* New Delhi ; Rawat.
- 15 Sudha Pai (2000) "Pradhanis in the New Panchayats : A study from Meerut District" in K.Saksena (Ed) *Women in Politics* New Delhi ; Gyan.
- 16 Tandle, N.T. (2006) *An Evaluation of Rural Development Programmes in the Hyderabad Karnataka ; A case study of Four village of Gulbarga Dist*" Unpublished thesis Gulbarga University, Gulbarga

Publish Research Article International Level Multidisciplinary Research Journal For All Subjects

Dear Sir/Mam,

We invite unpublished research paper.Summary of Research Project,Theses,Books and Books Review of publication,you will be pleased to know that our journals are

Associated and Indexed,India

- * International Scientific Journal Consortium Scientific
- * OPEN J-GATE

Associated and Indexed,USA

- EBSCO
- Index Copernicus
- Publication Index
- Academic Journal Database
- Contemporary Research Index
- Academic Paper Databse
- Digital Journals Database
- Current Index to Scholarly Journals
- Elite Scientific Journal Archive
- Directory Of Academic Resources
- Scholar Journal Index
- Recent Science Index
- Scientific Resources Database

Golden Research Thoughts
258/34 Raviwar Peth Solapur-413005,Maharashtra
Contact-9595359435
E-Mail-ayisrj@yahoo.in/ayisrj2011@gmail.com
Website : www.isrj.net