

Political Empowerment of Women through Panchayati Raj Institutions: Assessing the Impact and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

Women have played an equal role in human growth throughout history. In actuality, a country's total success can be determined by the status, employment, and labour that women undertake in society. A nation's social, economic, and political advancement will stall if women do not participate in national activities. In actuality, the majority of women's home responsibilities are coupled with economic pursuits and the use of their labour and skills to generate additional revenue for the family, enabling them to live comfortably. Women are considered to be on equal with men and the "better half" of society. Realising that women are a man's "better half" is being worked on. They share a great deal of responsibility and carry out a variety of tasks in managing the household, including caring for domestic animals, farming, rearing, feeding, and other household chores. However, the most crucial task that women must now fulfil more responsibly is their active involvement in politics. One of her top goals should be the political empowerment of women, and society and governments alike must take action to encourage women to enter the political sphere. Participation in local self-governments offers first steps in this regard because they are more accessible to rural residents. Panchayati Raj institutions have long been seen as a way to achieve good governance, and the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution was implemented with the intention of improving governance and giving women, schedule castes, and schedule tribes more political clout.

In rural India, Panchayati raj institutions-which function as grassroots units of decentralised democratic self-government-have been viewed as a tool for socioeconomic change. Two crucial provisions for women's participation in decision-making and development plan formulation have been made at the local level by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992. A minimum of one-third of Panchayat members and chairpersons must be women, according to this amendment. The most significant way to promote socioeconomic development is through grassroots participation. People are thought to be empowered and included in the decision-making process when power is decentralised to the Panchayati. Being nearer to the populace allows local governments to better utilise resources and respond to local needs. Only when there is widespread participation in governance can a nation's democratic system be guaranteed. Therefore, India has implemented a system of democratic decentralisation called as Panchayati Raj in order to accomplish this goal.

KEYWORDS: Panchayati Raj Institutions, Local Government, Political Participation, Political Empowerment, Political Advancement, Women Empowerment, Constitutional Provision.

INTRODUCTION

Everyone has the right to choose their own path in life and their own destiny, according to the concept of empowerment. It is a violation of human rights to deny empowerment to significant segments of the population. Women's empowerment is essential to achieving equality, ending poverty, and creating a better society for everyone because of

the universal disadvantages they face. Women are empowered when they are inspired and encouraged to make their own decisions in life. According to the idea of women's empowerment, women are capable of realising their goals. They have their own choices in life and possess inner beauty and strength. It describes a setting in which women are given equal control over decisions at the political, economic, and personal levels. It is a standard by which women's status is determined. Its goal is to dismantle the religious, social, and traditional attitudes that prevent women from having equal status and opportunities. Nowadays, the foundation of the humane approach to development is the idea of empowerment. Since women make up half of the human population, it is imperative that they participate in all processes of development. For this reason, women's empowerment has emerged as the primary focus of all development policies. Social, political, economic, property, and personal rights are all part of women's empowerment. It aims to end all types of gender-based subjugation, exploitation, and discrimination. It holds that men and women are both equal human beings. They possess the capacity for self-assertion. They are free to choose how they want to spend their life. They see life in their own way and from their own point of view. As a result, they ought to be able to make decisions for themselves and carry them out independently. It is a procedure meant to alter the character and course of systemic forces that, in a particular situation, marginalise women and other underprivileged groups (Shruti 2014, p. 7).

The notion of women's political empowerment is distinguished by two characteristics. Process is the first, and agency is the second. Accordingly, women's political empowerment is the process through which they actively participate in taking charge of their own lives by increasing their options. In local government bodies, it is therefore the process of gaining the ability to make strategic decisions in areas where this ability has been lacking or restricted. Institutions of the Panchayati Raj are an agency for women's political empowerment in India. Women's political representation is essential to strengthening democracy and promoting gender equality. There are observable political and economic benefits as well. More women in politics have been linked to better policy outcomes, less corruption, and less conflict, according to research. Women leaders also promote greater involvement of women in the workforce and economic and developmental growth. In fact, the critical mass theory states that a "considerable minority" of women in governance structures has a significant influence on policy (Mishra 2017, p. 169). According to the theory, women's representatives in politics constitute the "critical mass," whose presence should not only guarantee that women are descriptively represented in the political and governance landscape but also lead to significant policy changes for the empowerment of the female population. In order to rectify past injustices and the cultural, social, and economic obstacles associate with women's political marginalisation, many nations, including India, have implemented gender quotas (Sharma and Handa 2022, p. 36).

Legislated gender quotas have, in fact, been successful in improving the political representation of women; nations with such quotas have a 7 percentage point higher representation of women in local governments than nations without them. Legislative gender quotas for local elections have been implemented in 88 countries as of January 2023. When India's 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act went into force in 1993, it set aside one-third of the elective seats for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), which are local government bodies in rural areas. In India, a multifaceted and diversified federal polity, more than 1.45 million women hold local decision-making positions thirty years after the law's passage (Singh and Srivastav 2022, p. 5). The presence of women in local governance was added as a new criterion in the 2023 Global Gender Gap report, which raised India's position by eight spots to 127. Women's presence in local governance

has reached over 40 percent in just 18 of the 146 nations surveyed.

Among the nations with the highest rates of female participation in local governance is India (44.4 percent of all elected local government representatives are female). This puts India ahead of its Global South counterparts, Brazil (15.7 percent), Indonesia (15.7 percent), and China (28.1 percent), as well as Global North nations, such as Germany (30.3 percent) and the UK (35.3 percent) (Ministry of Panchayati Raj 2024, p. 1). In the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a target on women's political engagement highlights the significance of women's leadership at the local level in advancing and maintaining democracy and accomplishing the SDGs. Since "Local Government" is a state issue, panchayats are generally under the jurisdiction of state governments. Through the corresponding State Panchayati Raj Acts, panchayats are established and run. Nevertheless, in accordance with its mandate, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) has major initiatives, plans, and policies that are provided in Annexure along with the achievements in order to make Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) an efficient, transparent, and effective vehicle for local governance, social change, and public service delivery that meets the interests of the local population. The Constitution's Article 243D guarantees reserved seats in Panchayats for women, members of the Backward Class, Scheduled Tribes, and Scheduled Castes (Bhasin 2016, p. 4).

The State Panchayati Raj Acts and Regulations of 21 States and 2 Union Territories allow for a 50 per cent reservation for women in panchayats. To extend the provisions of Part IX of the Constitution to tribal inhabitants living in Scheduled Areas as defined by clause (1) of article 244 of the Constitution, the Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 was passed (Ministry of Panchayati Raj 2024, p. 1). According to this Act, the gram sabha has extra authority to protect the culture and way of life of the tribal people. The vital connection between gender equality, development, and local governance is becoming increasingly apparent. Women are crucial in highlighting local interests, influencing developmental outcomes, and guaranteeing sustainable development in the spirit of decentralised governance. In the true spirit of inclusive and decentralised democratic government, research indicates that women political representatives have strengthened sustainable development at the grassroots level by ensuring better distribution of critical public goods than men.

Women help to make local communities more responsive and equitable by promoting gender equality, highlighting inclusivity, and giving priority to family-supporting policies. Even though the number of women voters in India was gradually rising, women's political participation was not given much importance until the 1990s. In order to enable women to engage in political processes that had previously been dominated by men, the 73rd Constitutional Amendment aimed to overthrow the ingrained systems of male-dominated political patronage and pervasive traditional institutions in rural areas. When the amendment was first proposed in the early 1990s, gender-related indicators showed the significant barriers women encountered when they first engaged grassroots politics (Srivastav 2016, p. 1).

Rural women's literacy rate increased from 34 per cent in 1992–1993 to 65.9 per cent in 2019–2021. The median age of marriage for women in the 20–49 age group also improved, from 16.2 years in 1992–1993 to 19.2 years in 2019–2021 (UN Women 2023, p.1). Additionally, rural women's overall fertility rate decreased from 3.7 children per woman in 1992–1993 to 2.1 in 2019–2021. India has seen a rise in the number of women in local government in the decades after the amendment. When women lead communities, public goods are delivered more effectively, and preconceived notions about women's leadership skills are lessened. This paper attempts to review the role of women in local governance in rural India (at the panchayat level) over the years, delineate the achievements, and analyse

persisting challenges. The paper also presents policy recommendations for enhancing women's participation in local governance. The paper draws insights from secondary literature, including books, research articles, news reports, and survey reports in this domain.

The Evolution of Constitutional Provisions of Panchayati Raj Institutions

There have been numerous national and worldwide efforts to expand women's electoral representation during the 1990s. Action plans are created at the international level by organisations like the United Nations (UN) Commission on the Status of Women and the Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU). According to the Beijing Platform for Action, "Women's equal participation in decision-making can be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account, as well as a demand for simple justice of democracy" (UN Women 2023, p. 2). The premise that parliaments continue to be a crucial arena for decision-making is embodied in the measures to improve women's participation in the decision-making process that have been adopted globally as part of the Beijing Platform of Action's implementation.

All over the world in the 1990s, there was an increased attention to the issue of women in public decision-making. The issue has been taken up by the UN bodies and highlighted in the Beijing Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women and national plans of action based upon it. It has also been taken up by bodies such as the Inter Parliamentary Union and the International Institute of Democracy and Electoral Assistance. Following the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts as well as the 81st Constitutional Amendment Act, women's political empowerment has emerged as a major concern in India as well. The last allows women to be reserved in Parliament, while the first two allow women to be reserved seats in grassroots bodies. India's democratic constitution gave women the same political rights as males, including the ability to vote as adults regardless of their caste, class, religion, location of birth, level of education, or property (Sharda 2023, p. 49). Therefore, it acknowledged the necessity of women's free and active political engagement in order to allow them to help establish the new nation and vice versa. However, a retrospective analysis reveals that the march that began under Gandhi, Nehru, and Ambedkar on the principles of social, economic, and political justice as well as gender equality stalled somewhere in the early stages.

There are three levels of government in India's federal political system: the national, state, and local. There are two types of local-level institutions of self-governance: PRIs in rural areas and municipal bodies and town councils in urban areas. Rural areas are home to a sizable majority of India's population- 65 percent. This makes the PRIs a vital instrument of political representation that effects everyday governance and wellbeing for considerable portions of the public (Singh and Srivastav 2022, p. 6). The panchayat system is made up of councils that are in charge of managing local public resources at the village (gram panchayat), block (panchayat samiti), and district (zila parishad) levels. Residents of the area elect the council members. The amount of people and villages that the gram panchayat covers can vary greatly, and this variance is seen in different states. In most states, a *pradhan* (council chief) is directly elected by the local populace, who also vote to choose council members. Political parties usually nominate candidates for these posts, although they have to live in the villages they are trying to represent. The *pradhan* has no power to veto decisions made by the council, which is empowered to make decisions by majority vote.

The concept of encouraging local self-government, as enshrined in Article 40, was situated within the non-enforceable Directive Principles of State Policy of the Indian Constitution without any specific reference to women's representation, despite the long history of local

village-level structures of self-rule. The 20-member panchayat samiti should co-opt or designate two women who have a interest in work among women and children, according to the 1957 Balwant Rai Mehta Committee, which was established to investigate how India's community development program operated in order to address decentralisation difficulties. Following this recommendation, the Maharashtra Zila Parishad and Panchayat Samiti Act of 1961 permitted the nomination of one or two women to each of the three PRI bodies in the event that no female candidate was elected. Only six of the 320 female representatives on Maharashtra's panchayat samitis and zila parishads were elected in 1978. This proved that the panchayat system's ability to accommodate female leaders was only marginally impacted by the co-optation or nomination clause. The Committee for the Status of Women in India emphasised in its 1974 report, "Towards Equality," that the government's goals and development strategies had not sufficiently taken into account the issues and perspectives of rural women (Observer Research Foundation 2024, p. 1). In addition, it suggested creating statutory women's panchayats at the local level; nevertheless, it did not support reservations. The Ashok Mehta Committee, which was also known as the Committee on Panchayati Raj Institutions, suggested in 1978 that each panchayat set aside two seats for women. Women should hold 30 per cent of executive-head posts from the village to the district levels, according to the National Perspective Plan for Women.

The defeated 64th Constitutional Amendment Bill of 1989 made the same suggestion. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment (for panchayats at the village, block, and district levels) and the 74th Constitutional Amendment (for municipalities) Acts, which both provided for the reservation of one-third of elected seats for women, ultimately led to the formal incorporation of Panchayati Raj into the Constitution in 1993. A minimum of one-third of the seats reserved under clause (1) must be set aside for women from Scheduled Castes or, if applicable, Scheduled Tribes, as stated in the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act. Furthermore, it stipulates that at least one-third (including the number of seats set aside for women from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat shall be reserved for women (Ministry of Panchayati Raj 2024, p. 4). Such seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat. Women's reservations in panchayats were already being implemented in some states prior to the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, which required the local level to reserve seats for women. Following Maharashtra's 1961 adoption of the Balwant Rai Committee's recommendations, Karnataka implemented a 25 percent reservation for women in the local people's council, or mandal praja parishads, in 1985. Additionally, women from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes were given a percentage as well. Similarly, in 1986, Andhra Pradesh created a 22-25 percent reservation for gram panchayats, with the option to co-opt two women in addition to the elected female members of the panchayat samiti. Over

1.45 million women were eventually promoted to leadership roles in India's local governance, though, thanks to constitutional modifications that had a revolutionary effect (Observer Research Foundation 2024, p. 9). Currently, 20 states have increased the number of women who can be reserved in their PRIs to 50 per cent: Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttarakhand, West Bengal. With almost 50 per cent of the PRIs in some states, like as Karnataka, women have even surpassed this criterion, showing that they are now successful in electoral wards that were not previously designated for them. Women's quotas have shown themselves to be an effective tactic for getting beyond systemic barriers (Shruti 2014, p. 5). New guidelines for the creation and layout of rural

local governments that provide quotas for women were established by the 73rd amendment to the Indian Constitution in 1992. Additionally, the amendment mandates that women hold at least 33 percent of the seats and positions. The quota for women, according to the measure's proponents, will empower them.

Political Empowerment of Women

In the discussion of economic and social growth, increasing women's involvement in all areas of life has emerged as a key concern. Almost all bilateral and international development organisations have announced plans to improve women's participation in social and economic processes. It appears that structural barriers that prevent women from holding political office cannot be removed by universal suffrage. Women are still a minority in terms of political influence and positions held, notwithstanding their numerical superiority. Since women and men must participate equally in all areas of life and at all levels of decision-making for there to be true democracy, government, and development, the topic of women's political empowerment has gained importance in the democratic era. Strategies for political empowerment need to be based on the principles of liberty and equality. Together with equality of opportunity for employment and nomination to office, both of these ideas are protected under the constitution's fundamental rights. In addition to the equal right to vote, political equality encompasses the more significant right to enter the officially recognised, institutionalised centres of power (Bhasin 2016, p. 2). Women worldwide are guaranteed equal citizenship and privileges under democratic systems. In this situation, women must participate in these institutions and processes, obtain access to how the state operates, and share authority over its machinery. The defence of women's rights requires a participatory democracy. Women's participation, which in turn empowers many more women, satisfies the dreams and ambitions of all women who have a strong belief in women's leadership.

Women's growth and the establishment of a gender-equal society depend on their empowerment in all domains, but especially in politics. It is essential to the objectives of peace, equality, and development. The more than fifty-year-old Indian democracy has entered the next century. However, many women are still excluded from the political sphere. Men and women must participate equally and proportionately at all levels of decision-making for there to be a true democracy or for the people to truly participate in government and development (Mishra 2016, p. 3). The advancement of women depends on their involvement in politics. Women's primary responsibilities in communities all across the world are to prepare meals, look after the children, and manage the home. Social standards and ideals vary from society to society. Certain jobs and responsibilities are ascribed to both men and women in certain communities. The majority of developing nations merely acknowledge women's reproductive roles. It is impossible for women to engage in public life in such situations. Therefore, cultural considerations provide a constraint on women's political participation.

The first step towards women's political empowerment is their active involvement in political institutions. In a grassroots democracy, women's early involvement in Panchayati Raj institutions is given the weight it deserves. Although women in local bodies have been granted certain reservations under the current political system, some have abused this, using women as rubber stamps. Their male family members are making the actual decisions. Although women may have overrun the male-dominated Panchayati Raj system, their husbands or other male family members still frequently make the decisions for them. It has been stated that elected female legislators are merely proxy for their male kin. Women must be accorded the respect they deserve in PRIs, and such a system of de facto dominance by male equivalents must be checked (Sharda 2023, p. 50). With the

modifications made to the Panchayati Raj Institution, the political structure and decision-making procedure are plainly visible. Only by implementing appropriate policies and efforts for women's empowerment could the goal of improving their socioeconomic status be achieved. Women must be adequately represented in the political system in order for them to be empowered. By providing for the connection and association of as many women in political matters as possible, even at the lowest level of political action, this goal should be accomplished to the desired degree.

Therefore, the policy of reservation for women has been considered a crucial strategy to maximise their participation at the local level in the freshly established Panchayati Raj Institutions. According to the 73rd amendment to the Panchayati Raj Institution's constitution, women candidates are entitled to one-third of the seats in the Gram Pradhan of the village panchayat, block panchayat, and district panchayat for members of the scheduled caste, backward class, scheduled tribes, and general caste. From a conceptual standpoint, giving women representation in Panchayati Raj institutions could be seen as a crucial planning strategy for reducing the traditional perception of women's status in our society, especially with regard to maintaining their subordination to men, imposing family and societal restrictions on their ability to take advantage of certain opportunities, and a number of other social, cultural, and traditional constraints that hinder them from enhancing their personal lives and status in the current social and economic environment (Observer Research Foundation 2024, p. 5).

As a result, this recently implemented policy would increase the likelihood of achieving greater equality in the process of socioeconomic development, participation in various activities based on mutual understandings, status and role to play in the household, activities carried out outside of the household, and different family decision-making processes between men and women. The status of women representatives in the social environment of the village Panchayats is greatly influenced by a number of factors, including the attitude and intention of elected women towards the start of various development programs and their ability to work towards connecting various segments of the village population with the introduced programs (Bhasin 2016, p. 6). Women's empowerment would consequently grow stronger as a result of this process.

Women's political participation may also be impacted by institutional considerations. Women's participation can be increased by an electoral system that allocates seats proportionately and has more seats per district. Women's participation can be increased by an electoral system that allocates seats proportionately and has more seats per district. Another crucial institutional tool that can ensure a minimum number of female lawmakers is the quota system. India's governance is being transformed by women. Due to constitutional revisions that require the Panchayati Raj Institution System (PRI) or local governments to reserve seats for women, they are being elected to local councils in previously unheard-of numbers (Singh and Srivastav 2022, p. 8). Whether it's a single hamlet or a district or a hundred villages, the women the PRI has introduced into politics are now in charge. The influence of women's admittance into formal government institutions cannot yet be evaluated because the process of rebuilding the country's political and administrative system only began in January 1994. It has changed because of the sheer quantity of women that the PRI has introduced into the political system.

The constitutional change has resulted in a significant change in the proportion of women at different levels of political involvement, from 4-5 percent to 25-40 percent. But because these women are contributing their experience in civic society governance, there is also a qualitative distinction. By doing this, they are bringing poverty, inequality, and gender injustice to the attention of the state. Everyone has the right to participate in national governance, either directly or through representatives who are freely elected, according to

Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Women's opinions and needs will be represented in public policies that have the biggest impact on their lives if they are adequately represented in political activities (Shruti 2014, p. 4). The ability to influence decision making process, planning, implementation, and evaluation by integrating them into the political system" is one definition of political empowerment. It implies political involvement, which includes the ability to vote, run for office, join a party, and be represented in all levels of government. It also effectively impacts decisions, which leads to political empowerment.

The process by which women gain the respect they deserve on an equal basis with men and are able to engage in the political institutions as humane partners in the development of society is known as political empowerment. By incorporating them into the political system, women can play a unique role in forming policies and influencing the decision-making process. This is known as political empowerment. Since independence, Indian women have been under-represented in institutional politics. Over the past 20 years, there has been a greater focus on empowering women by boosting their involvement in political institutions. It has been acknowledged that affirmative action can lead to political empowerment (Bhasin 2016, p. 4). In addition to governing, leadership is required to transform governance.

Good Governance through Elected Women Representatives

As we all know, good governance entails being open, accountable, participatory, and predictable. This logically calls for a gender balance in political decision-making, and it is thought that women's perspectives and ideals can improve and enrich the process as a whole. Therefore, women's political engagement is a crucial component of a nation's overall governing process. One strategy for upending the current power structures is through the political representation of women. One may also argue that women can negotiate gender relations and alter the rules of the game if they acquire productive power, which is the declared objective of empowerment. The aspect of placing women in official positions of authority is the most evident connection between the call for political representation and empowerment. The most obvious component of the term empowerment is power. The evaluation of the structural obstacles that have traditionally kept women out of politics, society, and the economy forms the normative basis for the case for empowering women more broadly and placing them in positions of authority (Shruti 2014, p. 7). The compensatory component of women's empowerment should therefore be viewed as including women in political decision-making bodies.

In addition to showing the effective leadership and governance abilities of women leaders in panchayat-level politics, the reservation of seats for women cleared the path for increased female political engagement. Women's policy preferences frequently diverge from men's, and quotas for women have resulted in the more effective use of local resources in some important areas. According to a survey conducted in all states, women-led communities had better service delivery and reduced levels of corruption (observer Research Foundation 2024, p. 2). Increased funding was allocated to services that were vital to the community, particularly women, such as roads, sanitation, education, and water infrastructure. The survey also found that the village's residents, especially its women, have a less positive opinion of female leaders. The role of the new generation of elected women representatives has grown as a result of increased access to education and heightened awareness of their rights (Mishra 2017, p. 169). They now work on government welfare programs that address everything from livelihoods and entitlements to sanitation, maternal and child health, nutrition and food security, education, childcare services, and social services.

The inclusion of women leaders in gram sabha meetings, which are held at least twice a year to debate local development issues, improves deliberative democracy and inclusive governance. Research indicates that women are more inclined to speak out and engage in meetings with a female elected official because they feel that women are more receptive to their issues and interests. This guarantees that women's policy goals, who would not otherwise participate in decision-making, are taken into consideration. Additionally, studies have shown that there is a greater availability of municipal amenities, schools, healthcare facilities, and fair-price stores in electoral seats identified for women leaders. According to a Ministry of Panchayati Raj study, women-led villages showed a discernible increase in female participation and a higher degree of awareness of women's policy issues. The study also found that village councils with women in designated leadership roles spent more money on roads, drinking water, sanitation, school and health centre maintenance, and irrigation infrastructure (Observer Research Foundation 2024, p. 2).

The role of women in crisis leadership was exemplified during the COVID-19 epidemic. According to a poll, a significant portion of EWRs were organising food, patient hospital beds, and immediate medical assistance for expectant mothers in addition to detecting returning migrants and raising awareness of the illness. Trainings for female local government officials have been started by a number of organisations and institutions in an effort to enhance their knowledge and awareness levels, skill development, and attitude dynamics. These initiatives have shown great success in raising awareness and inspiring women leaders at the panchayat level. Data also indicates that women leaders shown a greater ability to learn how to manage local administrative institutions more quickly than men, despite a number of obstacles (Observer Research Foundation 2024, p. 3).

CONCLUSION

Since societies around the world have realised that women have not only been denied their legitimate rights but have also been treated as second-class citizens despite making up nearly half of the world's population, women's empowerment has become a hot topic of discussion and acceptance in modern times. Women were consigned to a lower social standing and made dependent on men by both the capitalist and feudal forms of production. As J. S. Mill correctly noted, it was impossible to attain the highest level of happiness for the largest number of people if women were not empowered. Women are empowered when they are inspired and encouraged to live their lives as they see fit. The issue of Indian women's empowerment has gained attention as a result of the 73rd, 74th, and 81st Constitutional Amendment Acts. Women's positions in grassroots political organisations, such as the PRIs, are reserved for them under the first two Acts, whereas the third Act reserves seats in the highest legislative body's parliament. "Equality of results" can be achieved by quotas and other constructive methods.

With the establishment of PRIs in our country a woman gets an opportunity to prove her worth as a good administrator, decision-maker or a good leader. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 is a milestone in this regard. It provides women a chance to come forward. This experiment is proving to be a big success particularly by providing opportunity to women to come out of their houses and participate in administrative and political field. It has to be considered that the inclusion of well qualified women in village Panchayati at the initial state of the interlocution of Panchayati Raj Institution in rural areas would be an important instrumental measure in planning for improving social status and empowering women. Women make up half of our nation's population. It is our responsibility to support women in the world's largest democracy. Universities, non-governmental organisations, and the government must all play a significant part in

providing women with an appropriate position. If represented at the village Panchayati level, this group of women may effectively rise to the occasion, address issues pertaining to women's betterment, take the lead in decision-making, and offer appropriate suggestions for raising women's standing in meetings. It gives women more power over how services are planned and delivered, as well as how resources are managed, which may be advantageous. Many women are running against men in municipal politics, and advancing gender-related agendas is seen as a step towards gender parity.

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