Original Article

# Role of Women in Panchayati Raj System: Experience and Prospects

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## Abstract

Panchayati Raj is considered for good governance. The 73rd constitutional amendment was made with a view for better governance and to provide political space to Scheduled caste, Scheduled tribe and women. But the effective presence of women in the Panchayat was negligible, whereas they are even not respected. The suggestions given by elected women in Panchayats are not considered and are pressurized by their husbands against taking decisions. The participation of women elected in Panchayats should be encouraged and the lacuna can be bridged by regular training. Women in India are primarily considered as a biological body limited to sexuality, marriage, reproduction and domestic duties. In the history as well as socially, women are considered subordinate to men. In politics also, women have to remain dependent on father, brother, son or husband. Moreover, illiteracy among women, lacking of quality leadership and forced purdah system are the main drawbacks of role of women in Panchayati Raj. Also women lack self-esteem, skill, confidence and social presence and that effects work in Panchayats. There are few examples of women in Panchayats who are really doing great work and are respected for their work. Overall representation of women and their role in politics at state and national level is minimal.

**Keywords** – *Panchayat, Skill, Women*

## Introduction

Panchayati Raj institution is 100 years old which means that villages in India were like little Republic and governed by Panchayat. Panchayati Raj was formed in India on24th April1993 under the 73rd Amendment act. The structure and process of Panchayati Raj was to involve women in governing and development of villages. After 43 years, women were considered as the changing group of local councils in India. After the formation of Panchayati Raj institution, 25-40% women participated in this institution. Women participation is trying to improve poverty, inequality and health issues (Kaul and Sahni, 2009).

The International Agricultural development funding agency funds for development projects for women. They have listed four factors for women empowerment which are-

1. Mobility of women and her social interaction.
2. Type of employment.
3. Resources accessed and control by women.

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4. Women's role in decision making at family and community levels.

Moreover other factors like status of women in family, her age, her educational background help in empowerment of women. The 73rd amendment also helped in revitalization of Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Women. The article 243(D) of the legislation provides reservation to Scheduled caste and Scheduled tribe in their area. The Panchayati Raj institution focused on protection of women and providing a better, secure position in society. Moreover 73rd amendment of Indian constitution also provides 33% reservation for women in Panchayats. This led to more women participating and also taking leadership positions in Panchayati Raj institutions. Their participation has helped in self-development and empowerment. The successful women educate girls and as parent dream for a better future for their daughters(Dak et.al, 2008).

## Materials And Methods:

This study was a type of interactive method from January 2022 to May 2022. Three selected villages which had women as Sarpanch was selected for the interactive session.

List of villages visited

| Sr No. | Name of village | Taluka | District |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ambli | Dholera | Ahmedabad |
| 2 | Lupkaman | Daskroi | Ahmedabad |
| 3 | Mahijada | Daskroi | Ahmedabad |

## Data Collection:

The data was collected with interactions with the Sarpanch, Members, ASHA Workers and members of the respective village.

**Table – 1: Ambli Village, Taluka- Dholera, District – Ahmedabad**

| Parameters | Answer | Parameters | Answer |
|---|---|---|---|
| Name of Sarpanch | Smt. Indrajayuba Chudasma | Age | 58 years |
| Elected Year | 2019 | Term | 5 years |
| Total Members | 5 Women And 4 Men | Social Stigma | Purdah system exist |
| Establishment | Before 500 Years | Number of Houses | 500 of Village |
| Voters | 1200 | Population | 3000 |
| Dispensary | Sub Center | Water Supply | 24 × 7 |
| Water Tax | Sarpanch Collects Yerlys | Emergency Service | 108 available |
| Corona Vaccination | Vaccination Given | Mamta Day | Celebrated every year |
| Field Area | 15000 Bigha | Farmers | 70% |
| Crops Grown | Jowar, Wheat, Chana | Total Population Rajput | OBC- 70%, (General)-10% and SC- 20%. |
| Men and Women | 55% and 45% | Domestic Cattles | Cows and buffaloes |
| Dairy | Milk Sold to Uttam Dairy | Drainage System | Underground |
| Defecation | No Open Defecation | Road | RCC type with interior residential blocks |
| School | Upto 8th Standard | Number of Students | 187 |
| Aaganwadis and Asha Workers | Available | Toilets | In their own homes |
| Ration Cardand Food Items Supplied | All villagers Get Rice, Wheat, Sugar, Oil, Chana and Iodized Salt | Power Supply | 24 *7 |
| Ujjwala Scheme | All Have Cylinders At Home | Funds Received | Gujarat Government, Central Govt. and District Panchayats. |
| Audit | Every Year | Gram Sabha | Established under Government resolution |

**Table – 2: Lupkaman village, Taluka- Daskroi, District – Ahmedabad**

| Parameters | Answer | Parameters | Answer |
|---|---|---|---|
| Name of Sarpanch | Smt Soniben Gobarji Thakore | Age | 65 years |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Elected Year | 2021 | Term | 5 years |
| Total Members | 6 Women And 4 Men | Social Stigma | Purdah system does not exist |
| Voters | 1700 | Name Of Deputy Sarpanch | Smt. Ramilaben Bharatji Thakore |
| Dispensary | Not Available | Water Supply | 24*7 |
| Water Tax | Paid by Government | Emergency Service | 108 available |
| Corona Vaccination | Vaccination Given | Men and Women | 60% and 40% |
| Crops Grown | Jowar, Wheat, Rice, Bajra, Grass | Total Population | OBC- 50%, General - 40% SC- 10%and ST-10% |
| Dairy | Milk Sold to Private Dairy | Domestic Cattles | Cows and buffaloes |
| Defecation | No Open Defecation | Road | RCC type with interior resid-ential blocks |
| School | Up to 8th Standard | Number of Students | 305 |
| Aaganwadis and ASHA Workers | Available | Toilets | In their own homes |
| Bank Account 24 *7 | All Villagers Have. | | Power Supply |
| Ujjwala Scheme | All Have Cylinders at Home. | Funds Received | Taluka member, District member and MLA |
| Audit | Every Year | Drainage System | Underground |

**Table – 3: Mahijada Village, Taluka- Daskroi, District – Ahmedabad**

| Parameters | Answer | Parameters | Answer |
|---|---|---|---|
| Name of Sarpanch | Smt Amratiben Amrutbhai Thakore | Age | 54 years |
| Elected Year | 2021 | Term | 5 years |
| Total Members | 5 Women and 1 Men | Social Stigma | Purdah system exist |
| Establishment of Village | Before 5000 Years | Corona Vaccination | Vaccination given |
| Voters | 1700 | Population | 5000 |
| Dispensary | Not Available | Water Supply | 24*7 |
| Water Tax | Sarpanch Collects Yearly | Emergency Service | 108 available |
| Field Area | 700 Bigha | Farmers | 70% |
| Crops Grown | Wheat and Rice | Total Population | OBC- 40%, ST- 40%, General and SC- 20%. |
| Men and Women | 60% and 40% | Domestic Cattles | Cows and buffaloes |
| Dairy | Milk Sold to Uttamand Private Dairy | Drainage System | Underground |
| Defecation | No Open Defecation | Road | 60% RCC type with interior residential blocks |
| School | Up to 8th Standard | Number Of Students | 280 |
| Aaganwadis and Asha Workers | Available | Toilets | In their own homes |
| Ration Card and Food Items Supplied | All Villagers Get Rice, Wheat, Chana Dal And Tuvar Dal. | Power Supply | 24 *7 |
| Ujjwala Scheme | All Have Cylinders At Home. | Funds Received | Zillapanchayat and Taluka Panchayat |
| Audit | Every Year | Industry Located | Yes |

## Discussion:

The Sarpanch and members at Ambli village require a high school building and a new Panchayat building for their future. The deputy Sarpanch and members at Lupkaman village need a dispensary and 'Gruh Udyog' set up for their village and for their next generations. The Sarpanch and members at Mahijada village also

want a good dispensary and regular city bus service like AMTS (Ahmedabad Municipal Transport Service) for proper development of their village.

## Conclusion

The villagers of Amli village, Lupkaman village and Mahijada village are happy under their respective leadership. The school building is old and needs renovation. Women in Lupkaman village want to do business and require proper training and guidance. These villages under Ahmedabad district are doing good work for the welfare of the people.

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There are no conflicts of interest.

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