



## An assesment to the empowerment of women with reference to women representatives participating in panchayats of Arunachal Pradesh

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### Abstract

The process of empowerment is multi-dimensional and it enables women to realize their full destiny and powers in all sphere of life. A women's empowerment begins with consciousness-perceptions about herself and her rights, her capabilities and her potentials, awareness of how gender and socio-culture and political force affect her. In the present study an attempt has been made to assess the empowerment of women participating in the panchayats of Arunachal Pradesh with the help of certain questionnaire, especially design to assess that are they really empowered or not?.

**Keywords:** empowerment, panchayati raj institution, participations, assessment, 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendment act

### 1. Introduction

Empowerment of women cannot be achieved until women were given an equal share of participation with that of men in the decision making forum. The passing of 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act, 1993 by the government of India with the policy of empowerment of women aims at eliciting their participation in decision making process in Panchayati Raj Institution. Participation of woman in Panchayat provide them an opportunity to take part in public life, interact with different section of rural population, develop personnel and higher level of leadership and thus to improve their socio-economic and political perceptions. A women's empowerment begins with consciousness-perceptions about herself, her rights, her capabilities, her potentials, and awareness of how gender, socio-culture and political force affect her. According to the Jakarta Declaration, Empowerment of women is not only an equity consideration; it was also a necessary precondition for sustainable economic and social development. Involvement of women in the political arena, and in decision making roles is an important tool for empowerment. The process of empowerment is multi-dimensional and it enables women to realize their full destiny and powers in all sphere of life.

### 2. Objectives of the study

1. To assess the level of their confidence building after being elected as panchayat leaders.
2. To understand their views regarding the reservation of seats in Panchayat.
3. To assess their freedom of expression of opinion, sense of responsibilities, their capability as leader after being elected as panchayat leaders.

### 3. Methodology of the study

The empirical study through field surveys has been carried out to understand and assess the empowerment of women. The study has been conducted in the three Sub-Divisions of East

Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh Viz. Ruksin, Pasighat and Mebo. The sample of study comprise of 61 elected women representatives from each 2003 and 2008 panchayat election and 60 elected women representatives from 2013 panchayat election. Data for the present study has been mainly collected from field survey by interviewing the elected women panchayat members with the help of specially design interview cum questionnaire.

### 4. An assesment to the empowerment of women representatives

Empowerment has been defined as a change in the context of a woman's life, which provides her increased capacity for leading a fulfilling human life. It gets reflected in external qualities such as health, mobility, education and awareness, status in the family, participation in decision-making, and also at the level of material security. It also included internal qualities such as self-awareness and self-confidence. With this assumption the study made a detail assessment to know that, are women representatives of the sample study really empowered or empowering themselves after getting involvement into grassroots democracy. To know their views we asked them certain sets of question.

#### Q.1. "After becoming a women leader in PRI, do you feel more confident about yourself?" (Table-1)

Table 1 shows the majority 56.0 per cent of the women representatives feel that their confidence level has become higher after being elected as a leader in Panchayati raj institution. However, some section (13.74%) of the women representatives feel that getting involvement into panchayat does not enhanced their confidence levels. The comparative analyses of the table- 1 shows an increase level of 33.98 per cent of confidence building development after getting involved into Panchayati raj institution among the women representatives from 2003 to 2013 panchayat elections. It shows that the partnership of the women with Panchayati raj

institution has paved the positive impetus to the women in general and women representatives in particular.

**Q. 2. “After becoming a women leader in PRI, do you feel the reservation of seats for women in panchayat should increase from present 33 per cent to 50 per cent?” (Table- 2)**

Table 2 reveals that 71.4 per cent of the women representatives were responded in favour of reservation of seats for the women in panchayat should increase up to 50 per cent. Few of the women representatives were even cited the example of some of the state like- Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tripura etc. where the state government had already increased the reservation of seats for women up to 50 per cent, while expressing their views. The comparative study of the table 2 shows a growth rate of 19.38 per cent in their opinion to increase the reservation of seats for women up to 50 per cent in panchayats from 2003 to 2013.

**Q. 3. “After becoming a women leader in PRI, has the freedom to express your own opinion in the panchayat meetings increase?” (Table - 3)**

Table 3 shows that the majority 68.13% of the women representatives were admitted that their freedom to express their own opinion in the panchayat meetings has got increased. However, participation in the meetings without expressing and influencing own decision is worthless. The comparative study of the table 3 shows 35.82 per cent of an increased level from 2003 to 2013 panchayat election.

**Q. 4. “After becoming a women leader in PRI, has the freedom to express your opinion inside your home increase?” (Table 4)**

Table 4 noted that majority 57.69 per cent of women representatives were admitted that they have more freedom to express their opinion inside their home as before, after getting involved into Panchayati raj. Though marginal this is a good indicator of empowerment through panchayat. It is belief that actual participation by the women representatives in panchayat affairs will positively bring some big changes on them. The comparative study of the table 4 shows in all total 12.54 percentage of an increased level among the respondents from 2003 to 2013 panchayat elections.

**Q. 5. “After becoming a women leader in Panchayati raj institution, has your role and responsibilities in the family change?” (Table 5)**

Table 5 shows that majority (53.30%) of the women representatives has admitted that their role and responsibilities in the family has got changed after elected as a women leader in PRIs. The comparative study of the table- 5 shows that 20.74 percentage of an increased level has been noticed among the respondent from 2003 to 2013 panchayat elections regarding their role and responsibilities in the family has got change as a panchayat member.

**Q. 6. “After becoming a women leader in PRI, do you feel that your workload has increase as compare to your earlier work?” (Table- 6)**

Table 6 shows that the majority (57.14%) of the women

representatives were of the views that their workload has increased significantly as a panchayat member in comparison to earlier days. The comparative study of the table- 6 shows 20.79 percentage of an increased level among the respondent from 2003 to 2013 panchayat elections regarding their workload has got increase after being elected as a women leader in PRIs.

**Q. 7. “Do you feel any change in your literacy skills after attending the training programmes?” (Table- 7)**

Table 7 shows that though a small in number, the majority 40.11 per cent of the women representatives were admitted that their literacy skill has improved after attending the training programmes. The comparative study of the table -7 noted an increased rate of 22.21 per cent on their responds from 2003 to 2013 panchayat elections, regarding the improvement of literacy skill after attending the training programmes.

**Q. 8. “Do you think that your involvement in panchayat disturbs your family relations? (Table 8)**

Table 8 shows that 62.6 per cent of the women representatives are of the view that their involvement in the Panchayati raj institution did not disturb their family relations. It shows that the women in the tribal society has accord a high status and also get full support from the family in their works. The comparative study of the table- 8 shows the 25.82 percentage of an increased level among the respondents from 2003 to 2013 panchayat elections, who do not view that their involvement in panchayat does not disturbed them or their family relations.

**Q. 9. “Do you think that women representatives are more capable than male representatives in PRIs?” (Table 9)**

Table 9 reveals that a slight majority (39.01%) of the women representatives said that they are more capable than their counterparts in the field of panchayat politics. The comparative study of the table - 9 shows that 17.18 percentage of an increased level has been noticed among the respondent from 2003 to 2013 panchayat elections.

**5. Finding and conclusion of the study**

The study shows that women representatives of the district are getting more confidence after participating in the Panchayati raj institution and also admitted that Panchayati raj institution provides them an opportunity to improve their socio-economic and political status by providing reservation in the decision-making bodies of the grass-roots level. Most of them also admitted that, they are good leaders and are also competed their male counterparts in carrying out different capacity of works in the panchayats. The tribal women are bold and energetic enough; the right platform like Panchayati raj institution will give them a long and cherish objectives of the real meaning of introduction to the reservation of seats in the panchayat. Before the introduction of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act, 1993 in India and the adoption of same by the state, the Arunachal Pradesh witness a zero participation of the women in the panchayat politics and the same panchayat was earlier considered as the platform of development and decision making only for the men. Hence,

the women of the state have very short and fresh experience in the grassroots politics of the state. It is observed that the women representatives in the district are not only showing their active presence in the grassroots politics but have also

played a significant role to fulfil the requirements of women in the panchayats and thus will not wrong to say gradually empowering themselves.

**Table 1:** Response of the Respondents to: Raising Confidence after being elected

| Responses      | **PE-2003 | (%)    | PE-2008 | (%)    | PE-2013 | (%)    | Total | (%)    |
|----------------|-----------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|-------|--------|
| Yes            | 24        | 39.35  | 34      | 55.74  | 44      | 73.33  | 102   | 56.04  |
| No             | 12        | 19.67  | 7       | 11.48  | 06      | 10.00  | 25    | 13.74  |
| To some extent | 14        | 22.95  | 11      | 18.03  | 6       | 10.00  | 31    | 17.03  |
| Can't say      | 11        | 18.03  | 09      | 14.75  | 04      | 6.67   | 24    | 13.19  |
| Total          | 61        | 100.00 | 61      | 100.00 | 60      | 100.00 | 182   | 100.00 |

*Source:* Compiled by researcher  
*Note:* \*\* PE= Panchayat Election

**Table 2:** Response of the Respondents to: Increase of reservation from (33% to 50%)

| Responses      | PE- 2003 | (%)    | PE- 2008 | (%)    | PE-2013 | (%)    | Total | (%)    |
|----------------|----------|--------|----------|--------|---------|--------|-------|--------|
| Yes            | 38       | 62.29  | 43       | 70.49  | 49      | 81.67  | 130   | 71.43  |
| No             | 11       | 18.03  | 09       | 14.75  | 07      | 11.67  | 27    | 14.84  |
| To some extent | 7        | 11.48  | 5        | 8.20   | 4       | 6.67   | 16    | 8.79   |
| Can't say      | 5        | 8.20   | 4        | 6.56   | 0       | 0.00   | 9     | 4.94   |
| Total          | 61       | 100.00 | 61       | 100.00 | 60      | 100.00 | 182   | 100.00 |

*Source:* Compiled by researcher

**Table 3** Response of the Respondents to: Increase in Freedom of Expression of Opinion in Panchayat Meetings

| Responses               | PE-2003 | (%)    | PE-2008 | (%)   | PE-2013 | (%)   | Total | (%)   |
|-------------------------|---------|--------|---------|-------|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| Increased significantly | 30      | 49.18  | 43      | 70.49 | 51      | 85.00 | 124   | 68.13 |
| Remained unchanged      | 19      | 31.15  | 11      | 18.03 | 7       | 11.67 | 37    | 20.33 |
| Decreased somehow       | 03      | 4.92   | 0       | 00.00 | 0       | 0.00  | 3     | 1.65  |
| Can't say               | 9       | 14.75  | 7       | 11.48 | 2       | 3.33  | 18    | 9.89  |
| Total                   | 61      | 100.00 | 61      | 100.0 | 60      | 100.0 | 182   | 100.0 |

*Source:* Compiled by researcher

**Table 4:** Response of the Respondents to: Increase in Freedom of Expression of Opinion in Home

| Responses               | PE-2003 | (%)    | PE-2008 | (%)    | PE-2013 | (%)   | Total | (%)   |
|-------------------------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| Increased significantly | 32      | 52.46  | 34      | 55.74  | 39      | 65.00 | 105   | 57.69 |
| Remained unchanged      | 09      | 14.75  | 21      | 34.43  | 17      | 28.33 | 47    | 25.83 |
| Decreased somehow       | 2       | 3.28   | 0       | 00.00  | 0       | 0.00  | 02    | 1.10  |
| Can't say               | 18      | 29.51  | 06      | 9.84   | 14      | 23.33 | 38    | 20.88 |
| Total                   | 61      | 100.00 | 61      | 100.00 | 60      | 100.0 | 182   | 100.0 |

*Source:* Compiled by researcher

**Table 5:** Response of the Respondents to: Change in Role and Responsibilities in Family

| Responses      | PE- 2003 | (%)    | PE- 2008 | (%)    | PE- 20013 | (%)    | Total | (%)    |
|----------------|----------|--------|----------|--------|-----------|--------|-------|--------|
| Yes            | 27       | 44.26  | 31       | 50.82  | 39        | 65.00  | 97    | 53.30  |
| No             | 12       | 19.67  | 11       | 18.03  | 09        | 15.00  | 32    | 17.58  |
| To some extent | 13       | 21.31  | 11       | 18.03  | 8         | 13.33  | 32    | 17.58  |
| Can't say      | 09       | 14.76  | 08       | 13.12  | 4         | 6.67   | 21    | 11.54  |
| Total          | 61       | 100.00 | 61       | 100.00 | 60        | 100.00 | 182   | 100.00 |

*Source:* Compiled by researcher

**Table 6:** Response of the Respondents to: Increase in workloads

| Responses               | PE-2003 | (%)   | PE- 2008 | (%)   | PE-2013 | (%)   | Total | (%)   |
|-------------------------|---------|-------|----------|-------|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| Increased significantly | 29      | 47.54 | 34       | 55.74 | 41      | 68.33 | 104   | 57.14 |
| Remained unchanged      | 10      | 16.39 | 08       | 13.11 | 07      | 11.67 | 25    | 13.74 |
| to some extent          | 14      | 22.95 | 13       | 21.31 | 07      | 11.67 | 34    | 18.68 |
| Can't say               | 8       | 13.12 | 6        | 9.84  | 05      | 8.33  | 19    | 10.44 |
| Total                   | 61      | 100.0 | 61       | 100.0 | 60      | 100.0 | 182   | 100.0 |

*Source:* Compiled by researcher

**Table 7** Response of the Respondents to: Change in literacy skills after training programmes

| Responses      | PE- 2003 | (%)    | PE-2008 | (%)    | PE- 2013 | (%)    | Total | (%)    |
|----------------|----------|--------|---------|--------|----------|--------|-------|--------|
| Yes            | 20       | 32.79  | 20      | 32.79  | 33       | 55.00  | 73    | 40.11  |
| No             | 12       | 19.67  | 19      | 31.15  | 13       | 21.67  | 44    | 24.17  |
| To some extent | 22       | 36.07  | 09      | 14.75  | 10       | 16.67  | 41    | 22.53  |
| Can't say      | 07       | 11.47  | 13      | 21.31  | 4        | 6.67   | 24    | 13.19  |
| Total          | 61       | 100.00 | 61      | 100.00 | 60       | 100.00 | 182   | 100.00 |

*Source:* Compiled by researcher

**Table 8:** Response of the Respondents to: Do you think that your involvement in panchayat disturbs your family relations?

| Responses      | PE-2003 | (%)    | PE- 2008 | (%)    | PE- 2013 | (%)    | Total | (%)    |
|----------------|---------|--------|----------|--------|----------|--------|-------|--------|
| Yes            | 19      | 31.15  | 11       | 18.03  | 9        | 15.00  | 39    | 21.43  |
| No             | 30      | 49.18  | 39       | 63.93  | 45       | 75.00  | 114   | 62.64  |
| To some extent | 5       | 8.20   | 06       | 9.84   | 4        | 6.67   | 15    | 8.24   |
| Can't say      | 07      | 11.47  | 5        | 8.20   | 2        | 3.33   | 14    | 7.69   |
| Total          | 61      | 100.00 | 61       | 100.00 | 60       | 100.00 | 182   | 100.00 |

*Source:* Compiled by researcher

**Table 9:** Responses of the Respondents to: 'More Capable in Leadership'

| Responses      | PE- 2003 | (%)    | PE- 2008 | (%)    | PE- 2013 | (%)    | Total | (%)    |
|----------------|----------|--------|----------|--------|----------|--------|-------|--------|
| Yes            | 19       | 31.15  | 23       | 37.70  | 29       | 48.33  | 71    | 39.01  |
| No             | 22       | 36.07  | 25       | 40.98  | 21       | 35.00  | 68    | 35.16  |
| To some extent | 09       | 14.75  | 6        | 9.84   | 6        | 10.00  | 21    | 11.54  |
| Can't say      | 11       | 18.03  | 7        | 11.48  | 4        | 6.67   | 22    | 12.09  |
| Total          | 61       | 100.00 | 61       | 100.00 | 60       | 100.00 | 182   | 100.00 |

*Source:* Compiled by researcher

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