



## Problems of women village panchayat presidents: A study with special reference to scheduled caste in Tamil Nadu

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### Abstract

**Background:** Despite the long journey, India, 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitution Amendment Act was enacted in 1992, which came into force in 1993 in whole Indian states to promote rural governance and rural development with the help of community participation, and the 11<sup>th</sup> schedule was incorporated in Indian Constitution which provides 29 subjects. This act provides autonomous power to enact welfare policy in favour of all communities within their jurisdiction subjects. This act provides good governance through people participation and people are directly involved in the decision-making process of rural government with the help of most disadvantaged communities such as women and Scheduled Caste. Because the Scheduled Caste and women are among the most disadvantaged communities in India regarding their education and access to commons and they are denied even their basic rights also.

**Aims and Objectives:** The present study covers two objectives: 1. to determine the socio economic background of Scheduled Caste (SC) women panchayat presidents in Sivaganga District, and 2. to analyze the SC women panchayat president's role and responsibilities and performance towards developmental activities, 3. To study the historical perspectives of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitution Amendment Act, 4. To find out the relations between public and SC women to promote good governance, 5. to gather people opining about SC women's role in panchayat activities.

**Research Questions/Hypotheses:** Why are governments providing reservations for women particularly SC women in local body elections? What are the role and responsibilities of SCs women panchayat President to strengthen good governance? Whether 73<sup>rd</sup> constitution amendment act provides full power to reserved categories? Whether SC Women Panchayat Women (SCWPP) is acting independently without any barriers from others? Whether SCWPP performances are well? What are the attitudes of non SCs communities to work under SCWPP? The study assumes that the Scheduled Castes Women Panchayat President in Tamil Nadu is performing better to promote good governance at the local level.

**Method/Study Design:** Both primary and secondary data are using this study. Secondary data collected from the various government documents and Census of India. The Primary data collected through case study method and focus group discussion. The case study method and FGD are a very popular form of qualitative analysis and involve a careful and complete observation of social unit be that unit a person, a family, an institution, a cultural group or even the entire community. The case study method is a technique by which individual factors whether it is an institution or just an episode in the life of an individual or a group is analyzed in its relationship to any other in the groups. In Siva Ganga district, 43 seats are reserved for Scheduled Caste women in the position of Village Panchayat and these 43 village panchayat presidents were included in this study.

**Conclusion:** The study found that the 73<sup>rd</sup> constitution amendment act has given power to the people particularly Scheduled Caste women and they create a welfare policy to the overall development of rural development. It concludes by saying that Scheduled Castes Women Panchayat Presidents are performing well for the good governance through community participation and the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment is a milestone in empowering SC women which pushed them to participate or contest in state legislative assembly or parliament election. This act makes them participate in the decision making process in their house as well as public.

**Keywords:** *dalit* women, Village panchayat, panchayat president, gram sabha

### Introduction

Local governments in rural India are known as panchayats. The word 'Panch' means five and panchayat denotes the forum of five village elders which decided the affairs of the village in ancient India. In recent times panchayat raj has come to mean the system of elected government below the state level. The 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitution Amendment Act has introduced a uniform three tier panchayat raj system in India.

It is widely recognized that village committees which were characteristic of agrarian economics have existed in India,

from the earliest times. These panchayats were the pivot of administration, the centre of social life, an important economic force and, above all, a focus of social solidarity. So much so that Charles Matcalfe, acting British Governor General in India in the 1830's had called these village committees little republics. It is a historical fact that local self-government in India. In the sense of representative institutions accountable to the electorate was the creation of British rulers. The government resolution of 18<sup>th</sup> May 1882, during Lord Ripon's vice regal tenure, providing for local boards consisting of a

large majority of elected non-official members and presided over by a non-official chairman, was considered the Magnacarta of Local democracy in India. By 1925, eight provinces in British India had passed acts for establishment of village panchayat acts, by 1948, 20 native states and village panchayat acts. These statutory panchayats covered only a limited number of villages and generally had a limited number of functions.

In independent India, after community development programmes (1952), those at helm of affairs realized that real progress in rural development could not come about without an agency at the village level which could represent the entire community assume responsibility and provide the necessary leadership for implementing development programmes. The recommendation of the team for the study of community projects and national extension series, headed by Balwantrai G. Mehta (1958) that public participation in community works should be organized through statutory representative bodies was a watershed.

By 1959 all the states had passed panchayat acts and by the mid 1960 panchayats had reached all parts of the country. There was enthusiasm in rural India and a feeling had gripped the peoples that they had said in the affairs affecting their lives. Those were the promising days of panchayati raj institutions in India, when rural folk hoped that they would lead to Gram Swaraj. A report of the Ministry of community development in 1964-65 stated that younger and better leadership was emerging through the PRIs and there was fairly high degree of satisfaction among the people with the working of the PRIs. The appointment of the Ashok Mehta Committee in 1977 marked a turning point in the concept and practice of panchayat raj. The second phase of local self-government in India began when the West Bengal government took the initiative in 1978 to give a new life to its panchayats along the lines of the Ashok Mehta Committee recommendations.

Other noteworthy features of the second phase were: 1. A high level of political participation among the rural voters with the lessening influence of caste, 2. The emergence of a new, youthful, literate rural leadership, 3. A substantial devolution of powers and resources to the local bodies, and 4. The participation of political parties created large scale enthusiasm among the village. The second phase of panchayat raj disturbed the earlier balance between officials and non-officials. Consequently a process of trial and error and of adjustment was inevitable in order that the viewpoints of the official and non-official side be appreciated by the other. May 1989 the government introduced the 64<sup>th</sup> constitutional Amendment Bill in parliament to confer statutory status of panchayati raj. The bill was introduced without sufficient spade work and it raised several questions about federalism. The underlying issue was that any move to revitalize the local bodies and introduce a new system of governance below the state level could be effective one if accompanied by genuine federalism; both in theory and practice at the national level.

Government found no uniformity of the panchayat raj system, hence 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional Amendment Act enacted in 1992. The significance of the 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendment act of 1992 is that it not only institutionalized the panchayat raj system, but also initiated India's largest exercise in democratic

decentralization. This act created a uniform three tier structure of panchayat raj at the district, block and village level, providing transfer of responsibilities and tax powers from the state government to the village panchayat. Panchayat were assigned 29 rural developmental activities which can be related to fitness and population stabilization and XI schedule incorporated into Indian Constitution.

### **Reservation and Village Panchayat**

The concept of reservation is not new and it has its own history in Indian states. The reservation policy had emerged during the pre-independence period. The *Dalit* movement in Tamil Nadu had started since end of 20<sup>th</sup> century to demanding political participation. After 1852 Indian independence movement and *Dalit* movement had been started for the purpose of just social order partially *Dalit* insisted independence from untouchability and so called Caste Hindu. In this background, the discussion of women reservation has come up in mainstream political areas. After independence, many political parties, pressure groups had been demanding reservation for women in parliament and state legislative assembly. In spite of many attempts by the various people's opinion, the government gave reservation in local government which covers 33% seats in local body election in 1992. Legally 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of seats were given to women. All the Indian states have equally implemented these reservations for women, SCs/STs (the most have reservations for OBCs as well), and bringing almost 1.6 million representatives from these groups into elected positions making the Panchayats the nursery of future leadership. Even the government has failed to give reservation for women in parliament and state legislative assembly and 33% of women reservation act has not been enacted yet due to political reasons.

### **Scheduled Caste Women**

The Constitution (73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment) Act, 1992 has reserved 33 percent seats for women are quite well aware of their rights and responsibilities as members of the panchayats and possess adequate knowledge about their surroundings, especially what goes on around them concerning politics and economic development, contrary to this, the rural women in the country is illiterate and politically less of not active at all, they are considered subservient to males in the society hierarchy. One just cannot afford to ignore these hard realities of the Indian rural society. In view of this therefore, the provision of reservation for women in the panchayat is looked upon with a sense of uncertainty. The work *Dalit* is a Sanskrit work, which means broken, downtrodden, oppressed, exploited, destroyed or crushed. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar often described the untouchable as broken people. The *Dalit* are socially weak, economically needy and politically powerless, despite the protective policies followed by the government under provision of the constitutions. In India there are 16.6% of people belonging to Scheduled Caste and Nearly 8.1 % of people belong to Scheduled Caste women (Census of India: 2011).

### **Review of Literature**

The following exciting studies and articles have been

considered for new research and present study is connected with performance of women panchayat president, Scheduled Caste women in Panchayat and village panchayat president.

Robert Tannenbaum and Weshchler (1961) in their study "leadership and Organization" have analyzed the behavioural aspects the ways in which all members or an interaction group influence one another, the identify leadership only those interaction events in which intended influences are consummated. To repeat, they define leader as interpersonal influences, exercise in situation and directed, through the communication process towards the attainment of a specified goal or goals leaders always involve attempts on parts of the leader to affect influence behavior of a follower and followers of a situation. Raneshwer Thakur (1993) wrote an article on "role of village Leaders". In this article has stated that in the changing village structures the behaviour of the leader is expected to undergo a change from the traditional to the modern approach. There is a tendency towards fulfilling similar aspirations and greater emphasis role and towards development orientation. The participation of leaders is in development activities and their role in inducing others to participate in social activities.

Ranjithkumar, A. and Rajesh Kumar Sinha (2017) <sup>[31]</sup> studied "Sustainable Development through Social Justice: A Study with Special Reference to Village Panchayat in Tamil Nadu". Sustainable development in rural areas is possible only when social justice is ensured. Without social justice, development will only be lopsided. Village panchayats have been given mandates to plan for and implement schemes for social justice in rural areas. However, despite reservation of seats and the post of chairpersons they have failed in this regard. Verma (1994) wrote an article on "rational of reservation". In this article he stated that reservation for Women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in panchayat is not against our concept of equality. It is an extension of the norms of equal treatment meant for undoing the injustice of the past.

Sing and Gyan Prakash Pandey (1998) have analyzed factors responsible for success of failure of panchayati Raj Institutions and identified factors which accused lack of participation of the weaker section such as women. Harijan and Scheduled Castes power and people's participation but it was also for supporting rural development and strengthening the planning process at the micro level. Manimekalai (2005) studied on "Women and Management " in this article she demanded gender equality and equal representation of women in all spheres of activities including political, cultural, economic and education.

Mahi Pal (2004) <sup>[16]</sup> "Panchayat raj and Rural Governance ", experiences of a decade one of the objectives of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment was to give certainly, continuity and strength to the panchayats. The experiences of the functioning of the panchayats reveal that while elections have been held regularly, barring a few states, the states have been slow in developing power to the panchayat bodies, what should be the future line of action for future deepening grassroots democracy to being about socio-economic transformation in rural India. Ranjithkumar, A. (2018) in his study on "Inclusive Policy and Women Development: An Indian Experience", the main objective of this study is; to find out relationship between

literacy rate and women development, to critically discusses the inclusive policy for women development, to examine how inclusive policy promotes upward mobilization among women community. The study said that truly education for women will eradicate poverty in society. The study found that women education policy leads to overall development of women and chinch leads to participation in governance.

Social Justice through Rural Development Programmes was written by Ranjithkumar, A. (2018). The study said that A Village is one of the most powerful weapons for promoting economic and allied activities. He pointed out that rural planning is the process of improving the equality, and economic well-being of communities living in relatively unpopulated areas rich in natural resources. He observed that everyday discriminations have been increasing against SCs in rural areas through MGNREGS. India had launched many schemes in favour of SCs for improvement of their economic, environmental and social situations of the people in rural areas. But they are facing discrimination and atrocities. The study tested the null hypothesis and it is accepted that just social orders cannot be constructed through MGNREGA in a rural area. Ranjithkumar, A. (2015) <sup>[17-33]</sup> wrote on "Social Development via People Participation". They emphasized that the global trend in democratic governance is democratic decentralization and strengthening of the local self-governments as strong grassroots level democratic institutions. Above reviews help to identify the research gap, hence no study has been done by any scholars. In this aspect, present study has been undertaken.

## Methods

The present study is about the role, responsibilities and performance of elected Scheduled Caste women president of Village Panchayat. After 73 years of independence SCs women are placed in public domain at the grass root level. After 1992 local body elections were conducted. Moreover, recently (2019) Tamil Nadu Election Commission has conducted local body elections after a long struggle. In this context it is felt that it is necessary to evaluate the performance of Scheduled Caste women panchayat president with an appropriate form of work. The study tries to understand whether SCs women are performing in good ways. In this aspect, present study covers two objectives: 1. to find out the socio economic background of Scheduled Caste (SC) women panchayat presidents in Sivaganga District, and 2. to analyze the SC women panchayat president's role and responsibilities and performance towards developmental activities, 3. To study the historical perspectives of 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitution Amendment Act, 4. To find out the relations between public and SC women to promote good governance, 5. To gather people opining about SC women's role in panchayat activities.

The case study and FGD are a very popular form of qualitative analysis. The study was conducted during January 2020. After announcement of local body election by Tamil Nadu Election Commission, in Karai kudi the training was conducted for elected representatives and they were oriented regarding power and functions of village panchayat president. Researchers interacted with village panchayat representatives during their tea break, lunch time, and evening.

In Sivaganga district there are 43 seats reserved for Scheduled Caste women and these 43 village panchayat presidents were included in this study. In Sivaganga district, there was a strong federation for women panchayat presidents. Hence, Sivaganga District was purposely taken for this study. According to Census of India (2011), the percentage of the SCs population to total population of the Sivaganga District is 16.8 and 16.6 % of male and 17% of females are living in this district. The percentage of the SCs population to total SCs population of the State is 1.6 and 1.6 % of the male and female are distributed in this district (Census of India: 2011). Sivaganga district is the second least densely populated (316 persons/sq km) district in the State. The sex ratio in the district was 1003, higher than the

state sex ratio of 996. The child sex ratio (0-6 yrs) in the district was 960, which was higher than State sex ratio of 943. The district has recorded literacy of 79.9% (Sivaganga District Hand Book: 2011).

Two kinds of data were used in this study; Primary and secondary sources. The primary sources are; personal interview through discussion with the respondent was conducted by the authors with the help of a well-structured interview schedule. The information thus collected constitutes the primary source of data. Books, magazines, newspapers, Governments reports, and journals are used as secondary sources in this study. Table 1 shows that percentage of the SCs population to the total population of the district in Tamil Nadu.

**Table 1:** Percentage of the SCs Population to Total Population of the Districts in Tamil Nadu

Sl. No.	Name of the District	% of the SCs Population to Total Population of the District		
		Total	Male	Female
1.	Chennai	16.8	16.7	16.9
2.	Kancheepuram	23.7	23.6	23.9
3.	Coimbatore	13.6	13.6	13.6
4.	Thiruvallur	22.0	21.9	22.2
5.	Vellore	24.7	23.8	25.6
6.	Salem	16.8	16.9	16.7
7.	Tirunelveli	16.5	16.2	16.8
8.	Viluppuram	33.0	33.6	32.4
9.	Madurai	13.5	13.4	13.5
10.	Tiruppur	14.5	14.6	14.5
11.	Tiruchirappalli	17.9	17.6	18.2
12.	Erode	14.9	14.8	15.0
13.	Cuddalore	31.0	31.1	30.9
14.	Thanjavur	18.9	19.1	18.7
15.	Tiruvannamalai	25.1	25.0	25.2
16.	Dindigul	20.9	20.9	21.0
17.	Virudhunagar	20.6	20.5	20.6
18.	Kanniyakumari	3.9	3.8	4.1
19.	Namakkal	18.5	18.8	18.2
20.	Thoothukkudi	19.9	20.0	19.8
21.	Krishnagiri	15.5	15.6	15.4
22.	Nagapattinam	31.5	31.4	31.6
23.	Pudukkottai	17.6	17.7	17.5
24.	Dharmapuri	16.3	16.1	16.5
25.	Sivaganga	16.8	16.6	17.0
26.	Theni	19.3	19.4	19.1
27.	Thiruvarur	34.1	34.3	33.9
28.	Ramanathapuram	20.0	20.0	20.0
29.	Karur	20.8	20.6	21.0
30.	The Nilgiris	31.2	30.9	31.6
31.	Ariyalur	24.0	24.5	23.5
32.	Perambalur	31.0	31.0	31.0
	Tamil Nadu	20.0	19.9	20.1
	India	16.6	16.6	16.7

Source: Census of India, 2011

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

The Village Panchayat President details reservations for women, SCs are presented in table 2 and 43 seats reserved for

SCs women, 180 seats are reserved for general women. Hence, present study is chosen; only 43 village panchayats were selected for study purpose.

**Table 2:** Details of Reservation for Village Panchayat President in Sivaganga District

Sl. No.	Name of the Panchayat Union	SC Women	SC General	General Women	General	Total seats for Panchayat President
1	Ilayangudi	7	7	21	20	55
2	Thiruppuvanam	5	5	17	18	45
3	Kallal	4	3	18	19	44
4	Kalayarkoil	4	4	18	17	43
5	Sivaganga	3	2	19	19	43
6	Devakottai	5	5	16	16	42
7	Tirupathur	2	3	17	18	40
8	Manamadurai	5	5	15	14	39
9	Singampuneri	1	2	13	14	30
10	Sakkottai	2	2	11	11	26
11	S. Pudur	2	2	9	8	21
12	Kannankudi	3	2	6	6	17
	Total	43	42	180	180	445

**Sources:** Computed from G.O. (Ms.) No. 102, Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (PR-1) Department, 16<sup>th</sup> September 2016, Government of Tamil Nadu.

The Gram Sabha meetings are organized in various hamlets. Nearly 70 percent of the members of Gram Sabha have participated and most of women are actively participated in the meetings and demand their needs. The SHG's project their needs, especially an SHG building of pushing their group activities. The financial status of the panchayat is clearly read out by the president in the meeting. Along with the subjects refereed by the government, people's demands are clearly analyzed and decisions are taken on them also. In the forthcoming Gram Sabha meeting the panchayat has decided to take up solid waste management and provision of house patta and group houses for the SCs community. To meet the demands several government departments are approached. The voice cooperative, they attend all the meetings and put forth their areas needs. The attendance register for the Gram Sabha is perfectly maintained. Panchayat leaders are people friendly. Gram Sabha is smoothly running and honest and committed.

The panchayat with clean roads, without garbage, proper and regular clear drinking water supply, street lights, group houses etc., impressed the government departments making the panchayat the best, a village development plan was prepared with the cooperation of the officials and the village people. A Participatory Rural Appraisal method was followed for gathering information from the community. Need based demands were taken into consideration. The development report contains details regarding panchayat administration, land water, population, and important facilities available in panchayat, educational institutions, drinking water facility, street lights, sanitation, women and child welfare, transportation, SCs/STs welfare, maintenance of animal husbandry. The Participatory rural appraisal exercise was done with the support of government officials from each department, self-help groups, youth groups and others supportive voluntary organizations.

It is observed that village panchayats preferences are given to cleanliness. Garbage is properly cleared by the Sweepers in the time and drainage is also kept lean. The removed garbage is covered into natural fertilizer through compost pits. The school students are involved in creating awareness among the villagers on the eradication of plastic bags and many campaigns and rallies were also organized on this theme. This motivated several villagers to eradicate plastic bags from the

hamlets. Most of SCs women Succeeded in their attempts because of people's involvement and participation.

Plastics are the major destructive elements and reduced the level of the ground water and affected the entire agricultural activities. SCs women wanted to take action immediately and stressed the importance of the removal of plastic bags from the panchayat area with the involvement of the people. The ward members, the SHG's and youth groups welcomed such ideas of the president and immediately responded to support them. Several rallies and campaigns were organized in their respective village with the help of school students and youth groups. The collected plastic bags are gathered in a godown and decided to utilize them for construction of roads in a few meters. The sanitary complex is maintained by women SHGs. For maintenance purposes they collect Rs.5 or Rs.10 form the user group. All the women and children of this area are utilizing the toilets. The SHG groups of women's panchayat were enthusiastically involved in the removal of plastic bags during the campaign.

The women panchayat president has created a good relationship with the SHGs women because they frequently participated in meetings, suggested solutions to their problems and collaboratively involved them in panchayat activities. Most of the SHG families are engaged in manual handloom work, agricultural work, daily wage employees, MGNREGA and so on. Most of the SHG get financial assistance from the bank for this income generating activity. Weekly meetings of SHGs are held in any member's house on Sunday evening or free times, because they do not have a SHG's building; various personal and public problems are seriously discussed among the SHGs members. The SHG's aim is to not to depend on the government. Everyone should have the tendency to equip themselves for their survival and try to convince everyone to work towards panchayat development. The women panchayat president realizes the potential of SHG's and hence they maintain close links with the groups.

Village Panchayat has storage tanks, public taps, hand pumps, individual tap connection, and open wells are provided and sufficient water is distributed to every hamlet under a shift system. Social hormones are maintained in a smooth way. The non – Scheduled Castes people are very supportive and demand their needs whenever they face problems. The

president visits their areas and their homes during festivals and without a time limitation too.

Scheduled Castes panchayat presidents strongly feel that people centric activities can be generated only when people are mobilized; they are to be conscientious in the process of development. If they are conscientious on development they will start critiquing the current development scenario and decide what types of development they want. Based on the awareness, the need of the people will be assessed and available skills will also be assessed. By assessing the available opportunity to meet the requirements of the society, steps will be taken at the panchayat level to prepare a plan to achieve development. Panchayat, NGOs, SHGs and Block Development Officers will work together to address the issues of the people continuously and people will be mobilized for assessing the need to plan and implement the same. Thus development becomes the people's subject by which government agencies will be relegated to the background.

SCs women are not content with activities carried out in their panchayat. They are interested in and committed to creating careless panchayat leaders dedicated to achieving economic development and social justice. They consider that their panchayat is a laboratory and all experiments successfully carried out in their panchayat should be replicated in other panchayats also by which their model will be emulated and a new movement can be created for development. For this kind of activity they want to create an academy called the panchayat academy. It is not a mealy teaching academy. It is a doer's academy. A village making itself a role model for total development using the panchayat raj system is becoming a learning center for other village what they are given in the programme are: decentralization, democracy, development, social justice, empowerment, economic development, village level planning, participatory planning and village development conflict, and resolution changing the mindset and living conditions.

As it is observed from the field, the author gives the following are the reason for the success in the panchayat: quick decisions are taken during crisis, transparent administration, maintenance of proper account and financial transactions, regular presence in the panchayat office and frequent meetings with the people, first preference given to the really poor and Below Poverty Line, good relationship with other communities, frequently supervision of panchayat activities, openness and closeness with ward members, visits several departments for getting various development activities for the panchayat, and finally women's husband and relative should not involving in panchayat activities.

### Findings

This case study was drawn inferences from SC women panchayat president's practical experiences and views on the functioning of panchayats. It is observed that money played a key role in influencing people rather than popularity and honesty. Most of the respondents belong to middle class families, speak Tamil and some of them speak English also. Though SC women are placed in high positions such as village panchayat president and vice president and counselors at different tiers they feel inferior to others. With regard to the

function and achievement of women presidents, they have done wonderful work like lying of roads, construction of small bridges and threshing floors, attending training programmes and so on. Knowledge about functional and organization link with two tiers is very much limited. It is agreed by them that official cooperation or support is very much essential for a successful panchayat and so they are making good rapport with officials. Knowledge about financial position and government Prgrammes, developmental schemes is limited among the SC women presidents. Selecting beneficiaries is a big task to presidents. Yet they have successfully done it without any bias. The relation between president, vice president and other ward members is smooth. The respondents have understood the importance of village plan exercise. With regard to organizing Gram Sabha meetings, they disagree to have the Gram Sabha insisting on eliminating such lower structure in Tamil Nadu Panchayat Raj System.

### Suggestions

Strategies for improving the performance of SC women president are; direct involvement of SC women president and SC women without husband inference should be made possible and organizing and strengthening SC women's groups as general women's groups is essential. SC women presidents always feel that dealing without government officials is the job of the men. They have nothing to do with the official's educational organizations and nongovernmental organizations, educate the SC women and try to bring an altitudinal change in them. They should be given proper training with regard to their relations with other two tiers and they should also be taught the importance of Gram Shaba is maintaining amicable relations with officials and is promoting people's participation in the various aspects of the panchayat raj system. In village panchyat the powers of SC women president are used by politically powerful groups. This has to be carefully watched by the concerned inspector of panchayat or district collector. SCs women authorities concerned shall take adequate steps to real exercise of the power by the SC president herself.

### Conclusion

To conclude, SC women participation in politics especially in the new panchayat raj system is a historical change or a turning point in the process of India's development. So the implementation year of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act needs to be celebrated as 'Rural Women's Empowerment Year. Actually seeking the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment is a milestone in empowering SC women in the new panchayati raj system which makes them participate in the decision making process. At the same time, it must be recommended that a change is one aspect that cannot give a solution to already strongly existing issues and the crisis of women in general and SC women in particular. They are acting as independently, some time, husbands, relatives; higher caste communities are intervening to SCs women's powers. Women were forced to do so. They had a vision for the development of the village. By taking up sanitation, water supply and environmental problems in the panchayat they effectively addressed the issues of women and children. SCs women are unequivocal that conditions can be created to make the people lead a decent human life. SCs women panchayat

president had realized that people in the rural areas that too the poor are leading life in subhuman living conditions and this condition has to be corrected.

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