

**STRUGGLES AND STRATEGIES OF
ELECTED WOMEN REPRESENTATIVES
IN MAHARASHTRA**



Dr. Chandrakant Puri

**STRUGGLES & STRATEGIES OF ELECTED
WOMEN REPRESENTATIVES IN MAHARASHTRA**

Dr. CHANDRAKANT PURI

Published by:
Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Contemporary Studies
University of Mumbai &
Mahila Rajsatta Andolan
At
University of Mumbai Press,
Vidyanagari, Santacruz (E), Mumbai-400098, INDIA.

@ Author

No part of this work may be reproduced, stored, adapted, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy, microfilming recording, or otherwise, or translated in any language, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner and the publisher. The book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, resold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the prior publisher's written consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published.

The views and opinions expressed in this book are author(s) own and the publisher is not in anyways liable for the same.

- **ISBN : 978-81-931110-3-1**
- **Price: Rs. 200**
- **First Published on 31st March, 2016.**

Published by:

**Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Contemporary Studies
University of Mumbai & Mahila Rajsatta Andolan
Vidyanagari, Santacruz (E), Mumbai-400098. INDIA.**

Printed by:

University of Mumbai Press, Mumbai-400098. www.mu.ac.in

Cover design: Shri Vijay Valanju

**Struggles and Strategies of Elected Women Representatives in
Maharashtra./ Dr. Chandrakant Puri**

RESEARCH TEAM

Dr. Chandrakant Puri

[Principal Investigator]

Ms. Harshita Upadhyaya,

Ms. Deepali Mistry

(Field Investigators)

INDEX

CONTENTS		Page No.
• Acknowledgements		5
• Executive Summery		7
• List of Tables / Charts & Graphs		14
• Abbreviations used		16
Chapter I	INTRODUCTION	17
Chapter II	OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE	28
Chapter III	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	38
Chapter IV	SUMMERY OF CASE STUDIES	69
Chapter V	MAJOR FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCLUSION	84
REFERENCES & BIBLIOGRAPHY		93
ABOUT THE ORGANISATION		99

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study is an outcome of the work of a dedicated team. I am thankful to the Mahila Rajsatta Andolan (MRA) for entrusting the responsibility to carry out this study as its Principal Investigator.

First and foremost, I am thankful to Mr. Bhim Raskar, Director of RSCD for his support. I am also thankful to the investigators - Ms. Harshita Upadhyaya and Ms. Dipali Mistry for their help in data collection. I am particularly thankful to the dedicated team of activists who have taken a lot of pain to collect data in the field. I am also thankful to the staff of the RSCD for their help in data processing and administration.

Most importantly, I am thankful to the University of Mumbai, my organization, particularly the Vice-Chancellor Dr. Sanjay Deshmukh, for encouraging me to undertake such important work

I must thank Ms. Nilambari Gokhale and Dr. Swati Banerjee of TISS for going through the draft and giving useful comments and suggestions. Special thanks to Ms. Zainab Morbiwala for help in copy editing.

My colleagues at the Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Contemporary Studies provided a great support. I am thankful to Ms. Sharmila Sawant for providing secretarial

assistance for writing this report. Lastly, I am thankful to all the community leaders, respondents, key informants and all those who helped us complete this study.

I am very happy that I am able to publish this study for dissemination on the 10th Anniversary of the Rajiv Gandhi Chair in Contemporary Studies who's mandate is Panchayati Raj. Special thanks to the staff of University of Mumbai Press for timely printing of this book.

After in depth interviews with the EWRs, we could understand their daily struggles. Hats off to them for their struggles and for coming out with innovative strategies to deal with the issue at hand. This study will be meaningful if the Government, Policy Makers, NGO activists and citizens understand the problem that these actors of democracy are facing and try to create an enabling environment so that the EWRs are freely able to act as expected.

Dr. Chandrakant Puri

Place: Mumbai

Date: March 31, 2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The research study titled **–“Struggles & Strategies of Elected Women Representative in Maharashtra”** was undertaken by Dr. Chandrakant Puri, Chair Professor, Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Contemporary Studies, University of Mumbai jointly with Mahila Rajsatta Andolan (MRA), Maharashtra & Resource and Support Centre for Development, Mumbai. The overall objective of this research was to study struggles of elected women representatives (EWRs) in Maharashtra while performing their duties and note strategies adopted by them to deal with situations and suggest intervention strategies for enhancing their performance.

Specific objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To study daily struggles of EWR – in family and in politics;
2. To find out strategies to deal with these challenges;
3. To find out best practices adopted by them;
4. To study how their political participation is impacting their family life;
5. To suggest policy recommendations to Government;
6. To suggest intervention strategies for NGOs and political parties.

The study was very significant as there have been various cases of violence against women *Sarpanch* in the State of

Maharashtra. The process of study was initiated in the month of November, 2014 with a brainstorming session and completed in the month of December, 2015. In order to satisfy the objectives of the study, mix method was used. The research questions were answered using both quantitative and qualitative data.

The research is a descriptive one, as it is trying to describe the current status of the EWRs in the rural Maharashtra. The major focus of the research was to understand the hurdles that are holding back women to do their best for developments of their village. Total 100 elected women representative were selected as respondent using Purposive Sampling method and the representative were from 24 districts of Maharashtra.

The report has been divided into five chapters namely – Introduction, Review of Literature, Results and Discussion, Case Studies, Major Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations.

Key findings of the research are as follows:

- Majority of the respondents (56%) are in the age group of 20-40 years and are educated up to the SSC and HSC (59%).
- The percentage of EWRs from the minority community's is as low as 3%

- Majority of the EWRs are in low income category up to Rs. 1 lakh per annum.
- Among the reasons for entries into politics, the factors such as their own interest in politics and family background are the major ones.
- 94% of the women have 'changed' as a person after taking over the position.
- Although the EWRs are achieving the goals set by them, they face several hurdles which include resistance from male members and perception of people towards them. Around 25% of the respondents have stated that they faced ill treatment from the members of the Gram Panchayat and 38% of the women have said that people are doubtful about their abilities to play their role as *Sarpanch*.
- 24% of the EWRs have stated that they constantly live under stress which impacts their personal and professional life.
- 45% of the EWR's family responsibilities have decreased after taking the responsibilities as *Sarpanch*.

- Several obstacles have been faced by women members while discharging their duties but they are finding innovative strategies to deal with the obstacles.

The EWRs have expressed the need of strengthening their capacity as elected representative which will lead to their empowerment. Suggestions given by them if implemented properly will help them function effectively, which will positively impact the development of villages and will result in strengthening grassroots democracy.

The study has recommended-

- Concrete plan of action should be drawn to reduce obstacles and problems faced by EWRs;
- substantially increase the percentage of EWRs from minority communities;
- Implementation of the reservation and quota system in letter and spirit,
- Compulsory attendance of meetings for all the members of Gram Panchayat;
- Conduct of Gram Sabha and Mahila Sabha should be monitored by the review panel,

- Develop guidelines for smooth functioning of the EWRs.
- Provide quality and result oriented training and capacity building program at least three times in a tenure.
- Government should prepare Elected Women Leaders Protection Bill.
- Provision of online toll free counseling program for EWRs.
- Gender sensitive motivated Gram Sevak should be appointed wherever there are Mahila Sarpanchs.
- The Government Officials should be held responsible for non-implementation of schemes, programs & non-utilization of fund.
- The training programs organized should be relevant, sustainable and skill oriented.
- The Gram Panchayat should be equipped with infrastructure & technology.
- The funds, honorarium & travel allowance to the EWRs should be disbursed in time & as per the rule.

- It should be the responsibility of the *Gram Sevak* to maintain the financial & administrative transparency about the work of the Gram Panchayat.
- There should be free legal advice and easy access to the Lawyers in case EWRs faces any legal problems while discharging her duties.
- Two child norms should be scrapped in case of excluded communities such as tribals which restricts her entry into politics knowing the fact that the pregnancies are imposed upon on women.
- Recent Supreme Court Judgment upholding the decision of Haryana State to make educational qualification compulsory for *Panchayati Raj* elections should not be implemented in the State of Maharashtra as it excludes women and other marginalized group from participating in Local Democratic Process.

CONCLUSION:

To conclude, the present research is attempted to look at struggle of the EWR's and also strategies they have adopted while handling crises situation which prove to be the best practices for other elected women representative. The efforts have been also to put forth the issues of elected women representative who are otherwise included as a part

of political process but are excluded largely in the decision making process by largely male dominated Gram Panchayats. We hope that the study will be helpful in making some changes, so that elected women representatives are treated with dignity and are able to perform their constitutional duties without fear to make positive changes in the life of people whom they represent.

LIST OF TABLES

Table No.	Title of the Table	Page No
1.	District wise distribution of respondents	39
2.	Age of Respondents	40
3.	Region wise distribution of Religion of EWRs	42
4.	Annual Income of EWRs	43
5.	EWR's In Gram Panchayat	44
6.	Position Of EWR	45
7.	Nature of changes after becoming EWR	46
8.	Regularity of monthly Panchayat meetings	47
9.	Regularity of <i>Mahila Sabha</i>	48
10.	Women's active participation in the discussion	49
11.	Visits to Gram Panchayat office other than meetings	49
12.	Participation in the routine work of Gram Panchayat	50
13.	Ill treatment after entering Politics & taking over the position.	54
14.	Nature of problem and response by EWRs.	54
15.	Doubting about ability as <i>Sarpanch</i> .	60
16.	Living under pressure	60
17.	Stress due to personal and professional responsibilities & its impact	63

LIST OF GRAPH

1	Distribution of respondents	38
2	Education of EWRs	41
3	Marital status	43
4	Factors favored for entry into politics	45
5	Attendance of Gram Panchayat Member in G.P. meeting	47
6	Percentage of women attending the <i>Mahila Sabha</i>	48
7	Nature of Participation of EWRs	51
8	Obstacles faced by EWRs	53
9	Whether family responsibilities decreased, after coming into position?	64
10	Sharing of family responsibilities	64

LIST OF CHART

1	Religion of EWR	41
2	Nature of pressure	61
3	Strategies to deal with pressure	62

ABBREVIATIONS USED

MRA	<i>Mahila Rajasatta Andolan</i>
RSCD	Resource & Support Centre for Development
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institutions
GP	Gram Panchayat
PR	Panchayati Raj
RGCCS	Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Contemporary Studies
MU	Mumbai University
GPA	Gram Panchayat Act
ZP	Zilla Parishad
PS	Panchayat Samiti
BDO	Block Development Officer
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
EWR	Elected Women Representatives
EMR	Elected Men Representatives
PR	Principal Investigator
SHG	Self-Help Group
PR	Principal Investigator

Chapter-I

INTRODUCTION

Democratic Decentralization refers to the programmes and techniques which imply devolution of governmental powers and responsibilities, decentralization of political institutions, development of local leadership and strengthening the efforts for economic modernization. The institutional arrangement for the policy of democratic decentralization in India is known as '*Panchayati Raj*'. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act brought historic power to the grass-root bodies recognizing them as the third tier of government and creating channel for effective decentralization. (Sharma, Swarn Lata ,2011)1.1.

The words, "democratic" and "decentralization" form the key to the understanding of the expression "democratic decentralization". The word "democratic" explains the nature and purpose of the concept as also its basic claims in an institutional set up. The word 'decentralization' is essentially indicative of the method to realize the end as contained in the word 'democratic'. Decentralization means transfer of planning, decision-making or administrative authority from the central government to its field organizations, local administrative units, semi-autonomous organizations, local governments or non-governmental organizations.

April 23, 1993 is considered to be a landmark day in the history of democratic decentralization as on this historic day, the institution of *Panchayati Raj* was accorded constitutional status through the 73rd Amendment Act, 1992. The same amendment was enacted in the state of Maharashtra in the year 1994. It has been more than two decades since the said act has been implemented. Considerable headway has been made since the enactment of the 73rd and 74th Amendments, which have created PRIs as tiers of local self-rule. Conformity Acts have been passed in all the States for which *Panchayati Raj* was mandated. Many States have devolved functions and powers to local authorities; State Finance Commissions have been constituted and have made recommendations for resource allocations to PRIs. Administrative and democratic decentralization have been made mandatory and most States have made arrangements for periodic elections to local bodies, and have also indicated subjects over which local authorities would have a say. The two decades of Panchayati Raj were critically evaluated at the National Conference at Mumbai University in March 2015 (Puri Chandrakant,2015)^{1,2}.

It has been argued (Lieten,1996)^{1,3} that the current functioning of *panchayats* fares poorly on the criteria of efficacy in service delivery, inclusiveness and accountability. Although national goals and aspirations are supportive of decentralization, the translation of aspirations

into reality requires strengthening the institutions of *Panchayati Raj* institutions.

The grassroots democracy in India today has several challenges. There are legal inadequacies, lack of funds, functions, functionaries and capacity, adverse socio-economic environment, vested political Interests and lack of political will. Efforts are, therefore, needed to empower grass root institutions (Sharma, Swarn Lata ,2011)^{1.4}. On the basis of experiences of past two decades, there is a need to critically review and come to conclusions as to in what direction the third decade of grassroots democracy should head so that the grassroots democracy can become more effective in ensuring inclusive development.

On this background the study entitled “**Struggles and Strategies of Elected Women Representatives (EWR) in Maharashtra**” was conducted by the Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Contemporary Studies and Mahila Rajsatta Andolan, Maharashtra. The main purpose of this research was to look at the struggles of the EWRs and also look at the strategies adopted by them to overcome these hurdles.

CONTEXT OF STUDY

There have been several incidences of violence against women *Sarpanch*, a particular case being in Ahmadnagar district of Maharashtra, wherein woman *Sarpanch* was assaulted by a member of opposition in the year 2014

during the meeting. Interestingly the entire incident was video recorded by her husband. This incidence reflects the fact that violence is not the only issue, there are several other issues involved which impacts the working of the EWRs. It also reflects on political dynamics and how male domination is deeply rooted in our society, which does not allow woman dominance at any level. Women leaders of *Gram Panchayat* today face a huge problem mainly due to the male chauvinism in our society. However it is very interesting to note that in spite of such difficulties and atrocities, the member of EWRs continue to do good job. These women have to fight on several fronts. In fact, their fighting is very easy outside but is difficult within four walls of their house. There are several incidences wherein EWRs have been accused of “Bad Character” as they have to mix with several male members. This accusation is considered to be the worst as the EWRs are not able to cope with it.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The overall objective of this research is to study struggles of elected women representatives in Maharashtra while performing their duties and note strategies adopted by them to deal with situations and suggest intervention strategies for enhancing their performance.

Specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To study daily struggles of EWR – in family and in politics;
2. To find out strategies to deal with these challenges;
3. To find out best practices adopted by them;
4. To study how their political participation is impacting their family life;
5. To suggest policy recommendations to Government;
6. To suggest intervention strategies for NGOs and political parties.

METHODOLOGY

The study included compilation and desk analysis of available secondary information, focused group discussion, interviews with selected women elected representatives, discussion with key informants and detailed case studies.

The study included following tasks:

- **Compilation of Secondary Information and Desk Analysis**

Literature review was undertaken using secondary data mainly using books, journal, web resources and reports of the Mahila Rajsatta Andolan.

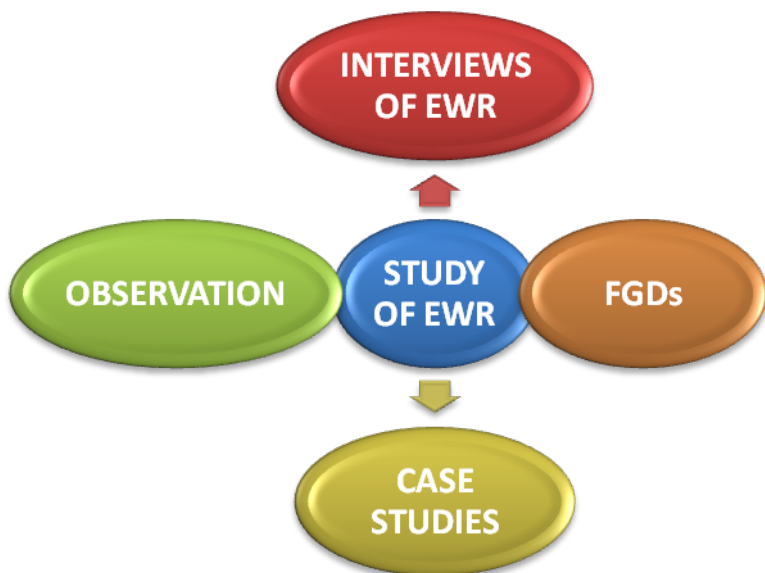
- **Identification of EWRs**

Based on the first hand knowledge of activists of MRA, it was decided to choose respondents from 22 Districts of Maharashtra where the MRA has close contacts. The local activists were consulted during the pilot visits.

- **Preparation of Research Design and Tools**

A brain-storming session was conducted in the month of November 2014 comprising of main functionaries of the MRA, field activists, a few elected representatives and student social workers. The workshop was led by the Principal Investigator wherein along with deciding the research theme, research area, research strategy, appropriate research methodology was evolved. The action plan for the study was also worked out.

Survey tools were prepared by the PR covering essential elements of the scope of this study and based on the objectives of the study. The survey tool was tested in the field and was finalized.



Training of Investigators and Piloting of Tools

The activists who were working in with MRA in the research area were selected for the purpose of carrying out this survey. The field investigators and supervisors deployed for this study were provided with training on the survey tools by the PR. The core group comprising PR, Director of RSCD and his team also accompanied them to a few locations. The tools were finalized after incorporating the feedback from the piloting exercise and time-schedule for the survey was finalized depending on the field situation.

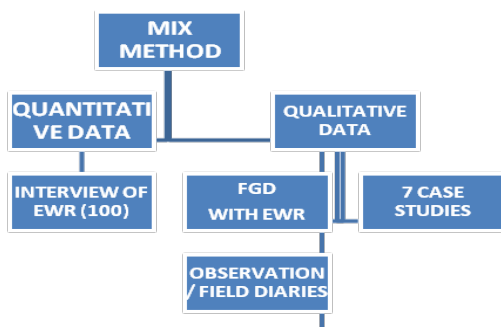
Data Analysis and Preparation of Draft Report

The Principal Researcher monitored the data collection, data-entry and data analysis process. The PR prepared the draft report and shared with the core team. The summary of the draft report containing the results, observations and recommendations of the study was shared among activists, scholars, EWRs and the Government of Maharashtra representatives in a research dissemination conference held on March -30-31, 2016.

RESEARCH DESIGN

A. TYPE AND NATURE OF STUDY:

In order to satisfy the objectives of the study, a mix method was used. The research is a descriptive one, as it is trying to describe the current situation of the EWRs in the state of Maharashtra. The major focus of the research was to understand the concerns that are holding back EWRs to do their best in the development of rural Maharashtra.



B. STUDY AREA:

The universe of the proposed study was EWRs in Maharashtra. The study covered 22 districts of Maharashtra. The MRA works very closely with the EWRs. Based on their contacts, 100 EWRs were selected for the study.

C. SAMPLING METHOD: Non Probability sampling.

Type of Sampling: **Purposive Sampling.** From each region, a few districts were selected. Based on the contacts with the EWRs and their work, the respondents were selected. The efforts were made to be more inclusive in terms of involving the EWRs from all socio-economic backgrounds.



D. SOURCES OF DATA COLLECTION:

- **Secondary sources of data collection:**

The secondary data was collected from the sources such as library, books, journals and articles. The information available on the internet and websites of the Government offices was also used.

- **Primary source of data collection:**

The primary data was collected from the EWRs, Key informants, Government officials, NGO activists, elected representatives etc. The tools of data collection are discussed below.

E. METHODS & TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION:

The primary data was collected through Survey Method using structured Interview Schedule. The other tools included - Focused Group Discussion, Observation and Case Study Method.

F. DATA ANALYSIS AND PROCESSING:

The data was classified into some purposeful and usable categories after cleaning. Then data was coded and was entered into the computer for tabulation and further processing using SPSS. The data was analyzed keeping in mind the objectives of the study.

ETHICAL CONCERNS:

The consent of the respondent was taken before conducting interviews and objectives of the research was communicated. The information given by respondents was kept confidential. No questions were asked which would harm dignity of the respondent. Since investigators were grassroots workers they were aware of the socio- economic background of the respondents. The team was taught to be gender sensitive as the study was related to the EWRs. The data was interpreted as it was recorded. No questions were asked which would lead to emotional distress of the respondent. The genuine data as collected from the field was presented in the form of a report.

CHAPTER-II

OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE

TRACING HISTORY AND STRUGGLES OF WOMEN IN POLITICS:

Politics and power have been considered 'men's domain' in all patriarchal societies across the world. Since patriarchy demarcates 'woman's place' as the 'private' space of household and domesticity, absence and exclusion of women from 'public' space of politics was considered 'natural' – until sustained feminist action in different parts of the world challenged the same. However, women continue to be politically under-represented in most countries of the world. The global participation rate of women in national-level parliaments stands at around 20%. (en.wikipedia.org)(2.1)

The United Nations General Assembly in 1953 adopted the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, which came into force in 1954. It protects women's equal rights to vote, hold office and access public services on par with male citizens within the ambit of the national laws. In 1979, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, described as an international bill of rights for women. (2.2) The Convention is a human rights treaty. Among other human

rights and fundamental freedoms, it provides for equality between women and men through ensuring women's equal access to, and equal opportunities in, political and public life – including the right to vote and to stand for election. (CECI,2010)(2.3) There are also campaigns like the '50/50 campaign' in Europe led by the European Women's Lobby, an alliance of women's non-governmental organisations in the European Union.(2.4) It aims to promotes the equal representation of women and men in all EU institutions and national governments

The quota system is a widely used mechanism by governments to increase the representation of women in governing bodies. "Gender quotas for the election of legislators have been used since the late 1970s by a few political parties in a small number of advanced industrial democracies such as Germany and Norway (Mark P Jones, 1998)(2.6).

Quotas for political representation of women are increasingly being established in many countries. However, "although over 60% of countries have reached at least 10% women in their national legislature, fewer have crossed the 20% and 30% barriers. By February 2006, only about 10% of sovereign nations had more than 30% women in parliament" (Pamela Paxton, 2007) (2.7). Several of the nations such as Brazil, Finland, Rwanda etc. have come out with the innovative practice in quota system.

WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN INDIA:

For Indian women, their first full-fledged entry into the public space of politics can be traced back to the freedom struggle, when women from almost all classes, rural and urban, stepped out of their homes and participated in political action against the colonial rule. Mahatma Gandhi gave the call to women to join the Indian National Congress, as he was convinced that the fight for freedom would not be won without women being a part of it. He asked the women to take up the challenges and organize themselves. Yet, even in these struggles, the status of women remained secondary.

After Independence, the Constitution provided equality in status and opportunity to women, but the world of politics continued to be dominated by men of a particular classes and castes. The Indian Government sought to right the imbalance through the 73rd and 74th Constitution amendments, which came into force in 1993 and provided reservation of one-third of the seats for women nationwide in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). In 2009, the Union Cabinet approved a proposal to increase reservation for women from one-third to 50% at all tiers of PRIs. Although the bill could not be passed by the 15th Lok Sabha, 12 states had already implemented 50% quota for women in PRIs by 2011, Maharashtra was one of them.

The journey to allocate quotas for women in the Parliament and state legislature has been even more difficult. The Women's Reservation Bill, which provides for 33% reservation for women in the lower house of Parliament and state assemblies for 15 years, was first introduced in 1996 after demand was made by several women's organisations. Despite being reintroduced several times after that, the Constitution (108th Amendment) Bill is still pending as all parties are not in agreement over the Bill.

Affirmative action in the form of reservation is required to mend the skewed representation of women in politics. There is also an argument in terms of 'critical mass' by

As Pamela Paxton (2007) says, "Although women's formal political representation is now taken for granted, the struggle for descriptive representation remains. Indeed, gender inequality across all elected and appointed positions persists." Getting elected is not enough. Women's full participation in politics entails "power sharing, profit sharing, co-decision making and co-policy making at all levels of the government and at party level structures."

According to Devaki Jain (1996) (2.8), "There continues to be a resistance to really devolving power and funds from centres of (male) power to the periphery. Women still face considerable handicaps to their involvement in politics; for example, inadequate education, the burden of reproductive and productive roles, a lack of self-confidence and the

opposition of entrenched cultural and religious views.” Therefore, “increasing the representation of women has not automatically led to a more gendered analysis of the issues confronting local government. Nor has it necessarily raised the profile of women's needs and interests in the policy agenda, given that elected women often act as proxies for men's views at the councils, being advised by their male relatives”.

The EWRs do not exercise power in any real sense. To begin with, they lack the confidence, knowledge and experience of dealing with the male-dominated ‘public life’, having been confined to the protective ‘private’ space so far. In most village panchayats, it is the husband of the elected woman panch or *Sarpanch* who rules by proxy, spawning the phenomenon of ‘*SarpanchPati*’. Women merely contest the elections in place of their husbands. Once elected, it is the husband or some other male relative who exercises political power and take decisions. A typical EWR is still expected to take care of her household and family responsibilities, first and foremost, by the residents of the same village she is supposed to represent.” (Jain 1996).

In a study by Shanoor, (2014)(2.9) 70% of respondents in India said that a woman should not ignore her domestic responsibilities even she was an elected candidate while 53% said a woman’s family should decide if she should participate in elections or not. These EWRs have no say in decision-making, and are reportedly not even present at the

panchayat meetings in a large number of cases. Women who do raise their voice and participate face intimidation, humiliation, character-assassination, threats, and other tactics adopted by the dominant men in the village to put the EWR 'back into her place'. She is, after all, a woman.

As Jain (1996) says, "Women's experience of PRI has transformed many of them. The elements of this transformation include empowerment, self-confidence, political awareness and affirmation of identity." However, we must always remember that "PRI reminds us of a central truth: power is not something people give away. It has to be negotiated, and sometimes wrested from the powerful" (Jain 1996).

PRESENT STATUS OF FUNCTIONNG OF PANCHAYATI RAJ IN INDIA

Panchayats are evolving and the states have to go a long way in devolving powers to panchayats to enable them function as institutions of self – government for economic development and social justice of most marginalized section of the society. It is interesting to understand the reasons behind the States shown below who have acquired top 10 positions in 'Incremental Panchayat Devolution Index : 2012-13 '. The first and foremost reason is that all these States except Haryana (33%), has given 50 per cent reservation to women. The States like Himachal Pradesh

and Manipur have provided 51 per cent reservation to women in Panchayat Raj institutions.

Reservation for women at all India level in PRIs is 42%.

Incremental Panchayat Devolution Index: 2012-13

States	Index Value	Rank	Factors behind Incremental devolution		
			Reservation for Women (%)	% of Elected Representative at village Panchayat	Best Practice Initiated
Karnataka	50.83	01	50	95.09	Yes
Rajasthan	92.16	02	50	94.24	Yes
Maharashtra	25.00	03	50	97.11	Yes
Odisha	23.33	04	50	92.97	Yes
M.P.	16.67	05	50	97.99	Yes
Chhattisgarh	11.67	06	50	98.04	Yes
Haryana	08.33	07	33	95.17	--
Bihar	07.50	08	50	90.69	--
Kerala	06.67	09	50	88.23	--
J & K	03.33	10	33	--	--

Source: Strengthening of Panchayat in India : Comparing Devolution across States : Empirical Assessment : 2012-13, P, 98, Ministry Of Panchayat Raj, GOI and Institute of Public Administration , New Delhi.

GOOD PRACTICES BY THE STATES:

On the other hand, one also notices several good initiatives undertaken by respective states some of them are as follows:

- Karnataka Sakala Service Act 2011 of 2nd April 2011. This Act guarantees delivery of essential services to citizens of state within given time period. This Act covers around 11 services pertaining to Gram Panchayat.
- In Rajasthan, an attempt is made to strengthen the District Planning Committees at all three rungs of the Panchayat. Further, extensive guidelines have been issued by government of Rajasthan to revive Standing Committees and strengthen their roles with respect to five departments that look after Panchayat.
- In Maharashtra the project SANGRAM gives online services, computerization, bio-metrics attendance etc.
- Odisha launched Gram Sabha Sashaktikaran Karyakarma and Panchayat Helpline in 2012 for social mobilization and enhancing institutional capability.
- Madhya Pradesh launched Panch Parameshwar Yojana which is an action plan for rural development. Under this scheme, funds and resource are transferred to Panchayat institutions under different criteria.
- Chattisgarh enforced Citizen's Charter through Lok Seva Guarantee Act 2011.

SC, ST AND WOMEN ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES IN PANCHAYATS

Data in the following table shows the presence of elected representative in Panchayat level from different vulnerable social groups like- scheduled caste, scheduled Tribe and women.

(As on 1st March 2013)

States	SC	%	ST	%	Women	%	All
Andhra Pradesh	46,755	18.4	21,078	8.3	85,154	33.5	254,487
Arunachal Pradesh	NA	NA	9,356	100	3,889	41.6	9,356
Assam	1,344	5.0	886	3.3	3,903	36.9	26,844
Bihar	22,201	16.3	1,053	0.8	68,065	50.0	136,130
Chhattisgarh	19,753	12.4	63,864	40.2	86,538	54.5	158,776
Goa	NA	NA	92	5.9	504	32.3	1,559
Gujarat	8,340	7.0	23,719	20.0	39,206	33.0	118,751
Haryana	14,684	21.5	NA	NA	24,876	36.5	68,152
Himachal Pradesh	7,467	26.8	1,215	4.4	13,947	50.1	27,832
J & K	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	4,117
Jharkhand	5,870	11.0	18,136	34.1	31,157	58.6	53,207
Karnataka	17,723	18.6	10,275	10.8	41,577	43.6	95,307
Kerala	867	4.5	120	0.6	9,907	51.9	19,107
Madhya Pradesh	59,537	15.1	107,167	27.3	198,459	50.5	397,209
Maharashtra	22,175	10.9	30,211	14.9	101,466	49.9	203,203
Manipur	21	1.2	38	2.2	836	48.5	1,723
Odisha	16,390	16.2	22,240	22.0	NA	50.0	100,863
Punjab	26,937	32.0	NA	NA	29,389	34.9	84,138
Rajasthan	18,807	17.2	13,777	12.6	54,673	50.0	109,345
Sikkim	77	7.0	418	38.0	NA	50.0	1,099
Tamil Nadu	28,655	24.0	1,194	1.0	41,790	35.0	119,399
Tripura	1,508	26.6	309	5.4	2,044	36.0	5,676

Uttar Pradesh	185,159	23.9	NA	NA	309,511	40.0	773,980
Uttarakhand	12,230	19.9	2,067	3.4	34,494	56.1	61,452
West Bengal	17,605	34.2	4,168	8.1	19,762	38.4	51,423
All-India	568,181	19.4	342,157	11.7	1,364,154	46.7	2,921,381

(Source : Constructed on the basis of : ' Strengthening of Panchayat in India: Comparing Devolution across States: Empirical Assessment: 2012-1'3, p, 45-46, Ministry of Panchayat Raj, GOI and Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi.)

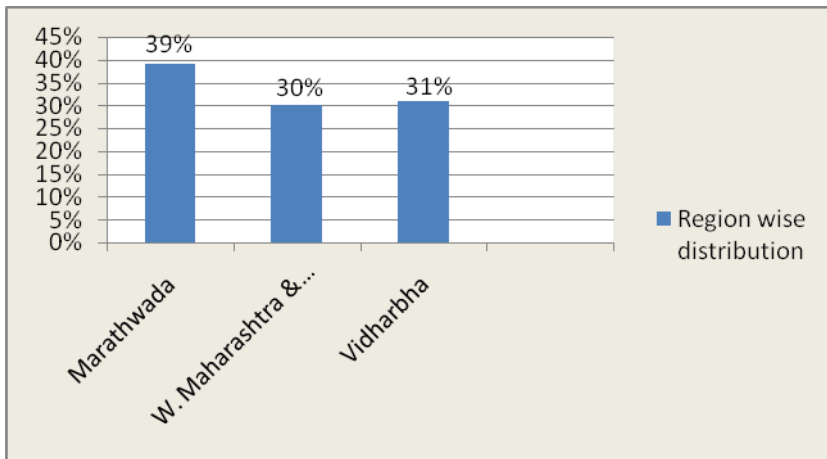
Recently, there have been an increasing number of reports of violence against the EWRs in village panchayats in Maharashtra. It is important to understand the struggles faced by the EWRs, study the strategies adopted by the women themselves to deal with it, and then come up with suggestions so that the EWRs can be empowered in a real sense. The present study by University of Mumbai and MRA aimed at studying Struggles and Strategies of EWRs in Village Panchayats of Maharashtra'.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to understand the struggles of EWRs, a sample of 100 was selected from four regions of Maharashtra which were grouped into 3 for the analysis purpose. Results of the said is discussed below

GRAPH 1: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS



Respondents were selected from four regions namely Marathwada and Western Maharashtra including Konkan (As received responses only from Sindhudurg district and Vidarbha).

The distribution of respondent district wise is given below:

TABLE 1: DISTRICT WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Sr. No	Region	District	No. of EWR's
1	Marathwada	Aurangabad	5
		Beed	6
		Hingoli	6
		Jalna	5
		Latur	5
		Nanded	7
		Parbhani	5
2	Western Maharashtra & Konkan	Kolhapur	5
		Pune	4
		Sangli	2
		Satara	3
		Sindhudurg	11
		Solapur	5
3	Vidharbha	Nagpur	4
		Chandrapur	3
		Gondiya	5
		Gadchiroli	5
		Bhandara	3
		Vardha	2
		Akola	1
		Wasim	3
		Buldana	5
Total no. of EWR's			100

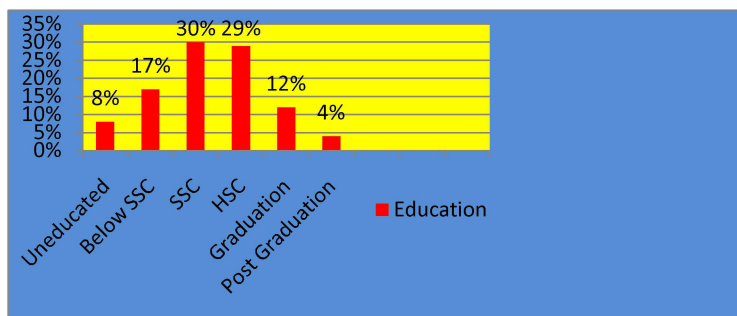
TABLE 2: AGE OF RESPONDENTS.

Sr. No.	Age group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	20 – 40	56	56
2.	40 – 60	36	36
3.	60 – 80	08	8
	Total	100	100

Age is an important component as it helps to understand the trend of entry of women into politics. In the table above, it is seen that women from the age group of 20-40 are 56% which is the majority. The women from 40- 60 age group are around 36%, whereas women above 60age group are only 8%.

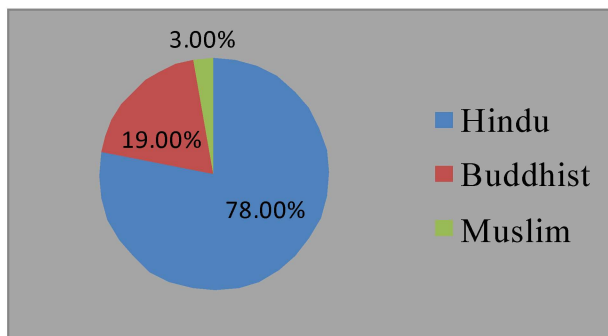
The qualitative data reveals that women in the age group 20-40 are more active in terms of taking initiatives and challenges. Another important aspect is that almost all the EWRs from the age group of 20 to 40 are first timers into politics. From the age group 60-80, 7% of women were first timers into the politics. This shows that amongst all the EWRs more than 50% are first timers into politics.

GRAPH 2: EDUCATION OF EWRS



From the women who were interviewed, it was found that 29% women were able to complete higher secondary education. Only 30% of women have completed their SSC. 12% of women have completed graduation and 4% post-graduation. 8% of women are not educated. This shows that women are still facing constraints in higher education. Needless to say, majority of the respondents are first generation learners.

CHART 1: RELIGION OF EWRS



Majority i.e. 78% of EWRs are Hindu and 19% are Buddhist. Only 3% of EWRs are Muslim. This shows the unequal representation from the religious minority.

TABLE 3: REGIONWISE DISTRIBUTION OF RELIGION OF EWR'S

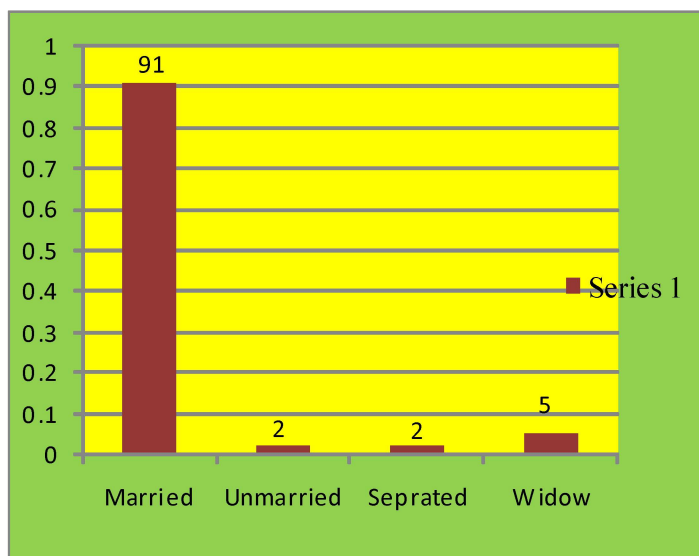
Sr. No.	Region	Religion		
		Hindu	Buddhist	Muslim
1	Marathwada	80%	17%	3%
2	Western Maharashtra	76.9%	17.9%	5.1%
3	Vidharbha	77%	23%	00%

Marathwada: The Marathwada shows highest EWR following Hindu religion with 80%. The second largest religion followed by EWRs is Buddhist with 17%. Lowest percentage of EWRs follows Muslim religion which is 3%.

Western Maharashtra: In Western Maharashtra again Hindu EWRs are 76.9%, Buddhist 17.9 and Muslim 5.1%.

Vidharbha : In Vidharbha Region though majority EWRs belong to Hindu religion, the Buddhist community has more representation with 23% compared to all 3 regions, significantly, not a single representative was found from Muslim religion.

GRAPH 3: MARITAL STATUS



The majority of the EWRs (91%) are married and 2% each are un-married and separated and 5% are widow. The Data reveals that slowly and gradually men are allowing their female counterparts to enter into politics at local level.

TABLE 4: ANNUAL INCOME OF EWRS

Sr. No	Income	Frequency	Percentage
1	Up to Rs. 100000/-	65	65%
2	Above 1,00,000/-	14	14%
3	Not mentioned	21	21%
	Total	100	100%

This shows that majority of the EWRs are under the low income category. Only 17% are with income more than Rs. 1 Lakh.

OCCUPATION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE SARPANCH FAMILY

Most of the members the EWR fall under the occupation of farming, service and labourers. There are various other occupations mentioned like retired clerk, self-employed, working with private sector, cycle store, contractors, fabrication, domestic worker, watchmen, business and many other occupations which also shows that majority of the respondents are not a highly paid occupations.

TABLE 5: EWR'S IN GRAM PANCHAYAT

Sr.No	No. of female members	Percentage
1	Up to 3 members	19%
2	Upto4 members	31%
3	Upto5 members	28%
4	Upto6 members	11%
5	Upto7 members	5%
6	From 8 to 12members	4%
	Total	100%

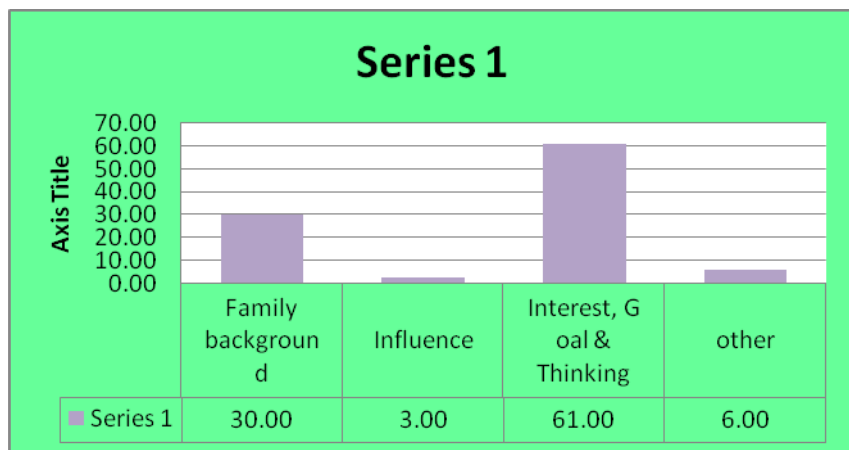
The above data shows the range of women in panchayats in the research area which varies from 31% having up to four members to 4% found in the range of 8 to 12 members.

TABLE 6: POSITION OF EWR:

Sr. No.	Responsibility	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Only Sarpanch	65	65%
2	Other position like ASHA worker, District Office bearers of Political Parties, SHG, Water Supply and Health Committees, Krantijyoti trainer (EWR Master Trainer).	35	35%
		100	100%

Sixty Five EWRs are *Sarpanch*. Remaining 35% of the EWRs are having other responsibilities such as members of other committee, ASHA workers, party functionary etc.

GRAPH4: FACTORS FAVORED FOR ENTRY INTO POLITICS



A majority of the respondents (61%) have stated that their own interest, goal and thinking has led to their entry into politics. This finding is significant as it shows a shift in thinking of the women about entry into politics. 30% had a family background into politics whereas 3% were influenced by their icons in politics. Remaining 6% had no influence or family background.

Table 7: NATURE OF CHANGES AFTER BECOMING EWR

Sr. No	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Gained more responsibility with household as well as politics	21	16%
2.	Change in thinking and understanding of political matters	26	19%
3.	Village people gave respect	19	14%
4.	Became aware of social problems	27	21%
5.	Increase in self-confidence	31	24%
6.	No Change	07	6%
	Total	131*	100%

**Note :The end total is 131* as few of the EWR have responded more than one change that have occurred in their life. The percentage is also taken from the end total of 131* responses.*

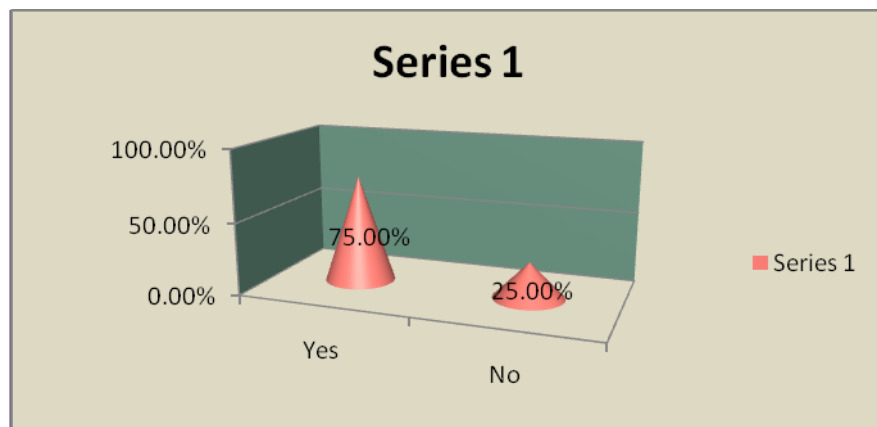
The responses show that as many as 94% of the EWRs have changed after taking over responsibilities. Only 6% did not find any change. Majority of the changes are very positive in nature which has direct link in understanding the village and social issues etc which the EWRs are supposed to handle. Women have stated that they felt encouraged and it has increased their self-confidence.

TABLE 8: REGULARITY OF MONTHLY PANCHAYAT MEETINGS

Sr. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	93	93
2.	No	07	7
	Total	100	100

In case of 93% the monthly meetings are held regularly in the Gram Panchayat.

GRAPH 5: ATTENDANCE OF GRAM PANCHAYAT MEMBER IN MEETINGS



The previous table shows that 93% of the Gram Panchayat do conduct the monthly meetings regularly. In those 93% of Gram Panchayat where meeting take place regularly, around 25% of the members are not present on regular

basis. It is also revealed during the Focus Group Discussion (FSD) that mostly women are not present in the meeting, stating that they have family responsibilities and also they feel out of place as they are not included in the decision making process.

TABLE 9: REGULARITY OF MAHILA SABHA

Sr. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Yes	79	79%
2.	No	21	21%
	Total	100	100%

The Table shows that 79% of Gram Panchayat do conduct Mahila Sabha but 21% do not. Though the majority of the Gram Panchayats conduct the Mahila Sabha, it is considered as a formality.

GRAPH 6: PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN ATTENDING THE MAHILA SABHA

The highest number of women attending the Mahila Sabha is in the range of 75-100 which is only 20%. The lowest numbers of women present for the meeting are upto 25 in case of 15%. This shows that in spite of having directives from the Government, Mahila Sabha are not taken seriously which shows the gender bias.

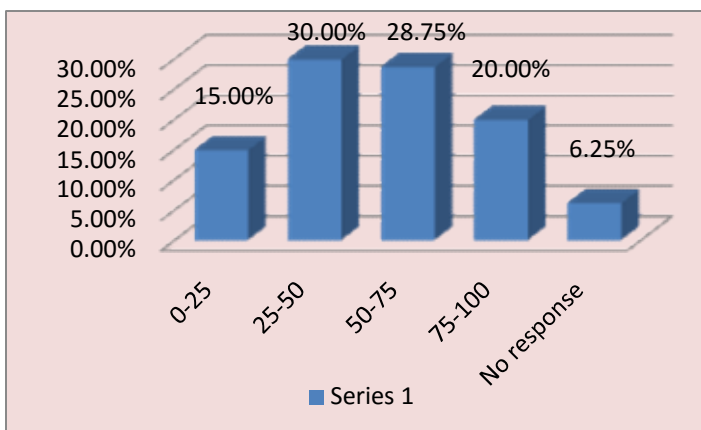


TABLE 10: WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE DISCUSSION

Sr. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	82	82
2.	No	18	18
	Total	100	100

Among the Mahila Sabha conducted, 82% said that the women do participate in the discussion which means, if the opportunity is given, they make best use of it.

TABLE 11: VISITS TO GRAM PANCHAYAT OFFICE OTHER THAN MEETINGS

Sr. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	88	88
2.	No	12	12
	Total	100	100

The result shows that women with family responsibilities also actively take part in the political responsibilities. 88% of the EWRs visit Gram Panchayat other than mandatory meetings. The reasons for not visiting the Gram Panchayat (12%) are as follows:

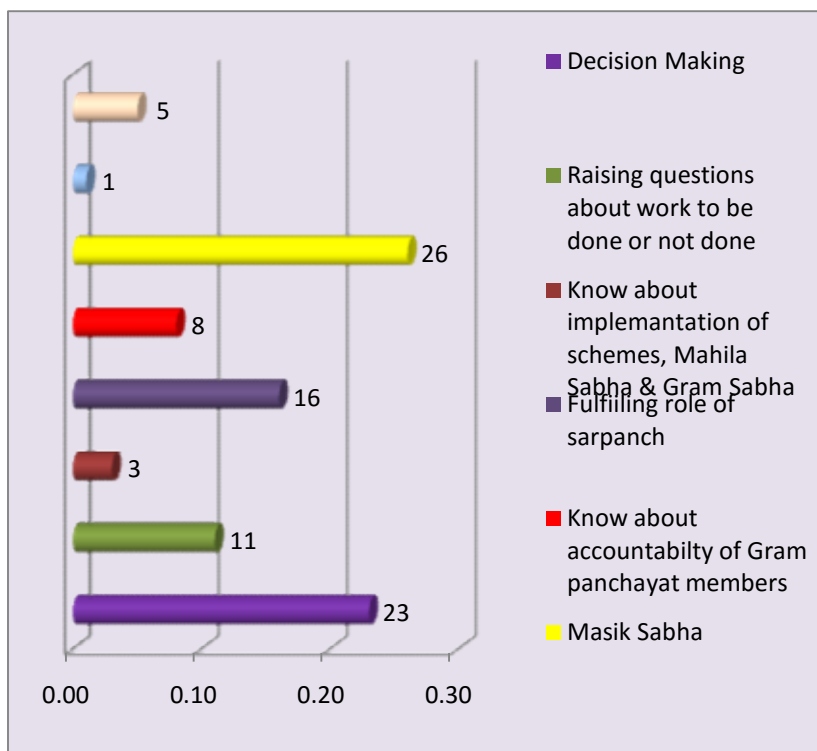
- The EWR's husband is the *Sarpanch*, hence she does not feel important to visit the Gram Panchayat.
- The attitude of people is negative hence does not feel like going to the Gram Panchayat.
- A lot of family responsibilities hence do not get time.

TABLE 12: PARTICIPATION IN THE ROUTINE WORK OF GRAM PANCHAYAT

Sr. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	93	93
2.	No	7	7
	Total	100	100

Majority of the 93% of women are participating in the Gram Panchayat work and only 7% are not.

GRAPH 7: NATURE OF PARTICIPATION OF EWRS



The women are participating in the areas such as Mahila Sabha, Gram Sabha, solving problems of village, conducting monthly meetings and discharging duties as a *Sarpanch* which includes taking decision in important matters. They are also keenly interested in gaining knowledge about schemes and understanding accountability as EWR.

ACHIEVEMENTS LISTED BY THE RESPONDENTS:

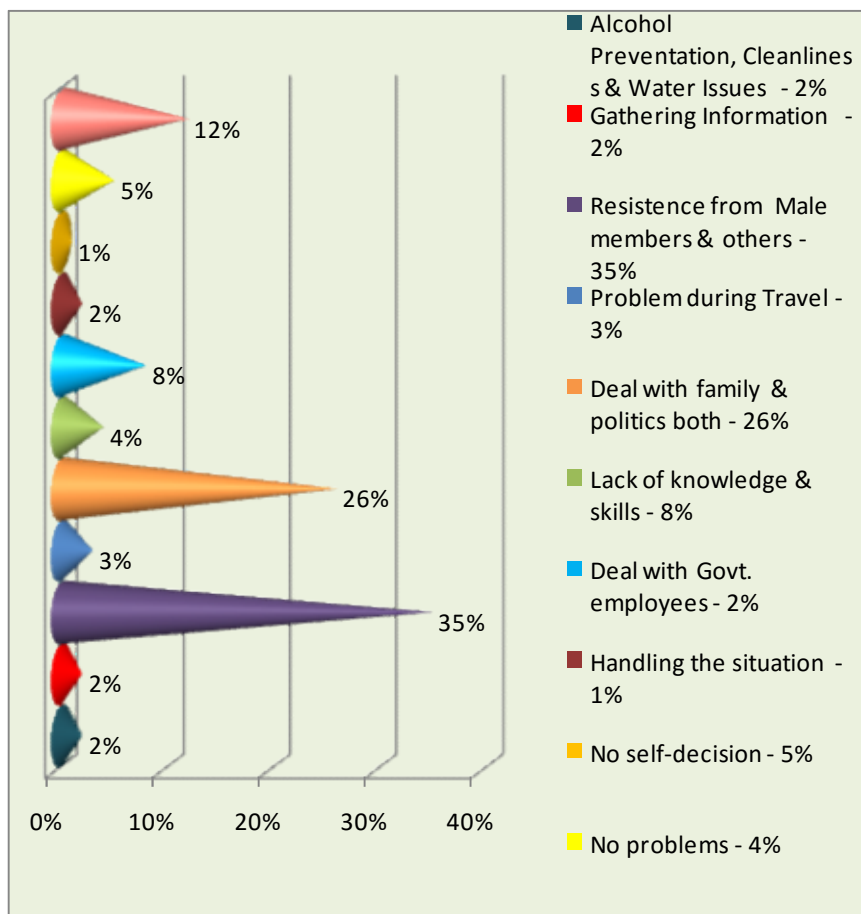
Various achievements have been mentioned by the EWRs during the course of the interview. Majority of the achievements were more common across villages such as constructing roads, improvement of water facilities, improving quality of rationing through Public Distribution System, constructing toilets to prevent open defecation and implementation of housing scheme (*Gharkul*) etc.

Apart from these, efforts have also been made to utilise funds allocated for various groups like Dalits and backward communities, implementation of pension scheme for senior citizens, plantation and Jalswarajya (water sanitation) projects, empowerment of women through Self Help Groups and so on. Some of the villages have also been awarded with prestigious 'Nirmal GramPuraskar' by the Government.

REASONS FOR NON-COMPLETION OF TASKS BY EWRs

Reasons listed for not completing the tasks include low participation of the villagers, lack of administrative support and scarcity of funds required for the project etc. Many tasks were not completed due to no support from the Panchayat members or no confidence motions passed against them.

GRAPH 8: OBSTACLES FACED BY EWR



35% of EWR constantly face resistance of the male members from the Gram Panchayat or the male members from the village. 26% said that they have to deal with both family and politics. 8% have stated that since they are first timers, the lack of knowledge and skills cause a huge problem for them. 5% of them also stated that they have no role in the

decision making in the house or in the Gram Panchayat. A sizable 12% did not give any response. Around 4% did not face any problem.

TABLE 13: TREATMENT AFTER ENTERING POLITICS & TAKING OVER THE POSITION.

Sr. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	22	22
2.	No	78	78
	Total	100	100

Majority of the 78% of EWRs did not face any kind of ill treatment. However, 22% did face the ill-treatment from the male members of the Panchayat or the village members.

TABLE 14: NATURE OF PROBLEMS FACED AND RESPONSE BY THE EWRS

Sr. No	Nature of problems faced	Action taken
1	The male members brought financial matters at her home late in the night and pressurized to sign cheques. When she denied signing it and working beyond the office hours, she was harassed by doubting her working	She fought back and publicly told in the meeting saying that the pressure tactics won't work with her.

	skills and ability.	
2	A No Confidence Motion was passed against her.	Lodged a case against the members in the Court and won the case.
3	As soon as she started taking decision as Sarpanch, other male members started non-cooperation.	She continued with her work.
4	Governmental officials do not understand the concerns of the people and they do not work seriously. They delay in the work affects the progress of the village.	Since he is appointed by the Government, nothing can be done. There is no use even if we complain to the higher officials.
5	Since the EWR was women and from the Dalit community, had to face verbal abuse and harassment. Asked her to sign blank cheques and behaved very inappropriately with her.	Suffered humiliation as it was her lone battle being a women and being a dalit.
6	In the Gram Sabha meeting, EWRs got secondary Status. She was let down by other people in the meeting	She went through the situation and raised issues concerning the village.
7	Faced a lot of caste discrimination, verbal	Could not do anything.

	abuse and physical abuse	
8	Husband creates a lots of problem for her	No Response
9	Was treated badly because she belongs to the Nomadic Tribe	Could not do anything.
10	Husband tried to take her position as Sarpanch by hoisting the Flag and Sitting on the chair meant for the Sarpanch during the Gram Sabha	She spoke with her husband and made him understand that this is her duty and right and he should not interfere in it.
11	Was not able to organize Gram Sabha as male members were not keen to attend the Sabha.	She spoke with the members and made them understand that this is their duty rather than choice
12	Was not given the Chair of a Sarpanch.	She had to fight back and ask for her chair.
13	While taking a decision in Gram Panchayat meeting, she was kept busy with other tasks so that she does not influence the decision making.	She conveyed her displeasure at the next meeting.
14	Was harassed and abused. A fake case was also lodged against her.	Legal action was taken.
15	Was pressurized by the panchayat members to	She fought with the people.

	behave as per their wish. Was rumored to be characterless.	
16	Continuous arguments over petty issues.	She fought with the people.
17	No Confidence Motion was passed against her	She fought with the people and appealed to the higher authorities.
18	Character assassination	No Response
19	An opposition member tried to kill her	Took the case in Panchayat and police.
20	Was pressurized to resign from the post of Sarpanch by opposition members	She steadily took the responsibility thus increasing her confidence and not falling for the opposition members.
21	She wanted to work hard and had the knowledge, but couldn't do much as the male members weren't co-operative.	No action
22	Whenever she worked for the betterment of village by going against the members of Panchayat, the members started to create obstacles in her work.	With the help of Gram Sabha, she continued to do her work.
23	The Sarpanch was not allowed to spend the fund for the Dalit community.	She continued to use for the said community
24	The compound wall	Denied giving any money

	construction work was stopped by the people of the village and Sarpanch was asked to give money as compensation.	as it was for the development of the village.
25	The male members of the Panchayat try to create obstacle and do not follow decision taken by EWRs.	By being adamant, the members had to accept her decisions.
26	Whenever EWRs did any good work for the village, without any reason she was let down by the male members and created trouble for EWRs.	She faced the situation.
27	While dealing with a problem of water in the village, she was physically abused	She faced the problem and went ahead with her work.
28	While working on village issue, EWRs faced a lot of political pressure	Took meetings with the political people and made them understand how the issue is important for the village
29	The members tried to see only the negative points of the project that was put forward by EWR	Ignored and did her work
30	The male members of the village created obstacle	All the women came together and worked on it

	for the work of women in the village	
31	Her husband is the Sarpanch of the village and that is why he neglected her in all meetings. Never took any suggestion from the women in the Panchayat	She made her husband realize that what he was doing was not right and need to stop such behavior.
32	Facing conflict situations	Discussed with the panchayat members and dealt with the situation.
33	She has been told that she should not interfere with the work of Panchayat.	Kept doing her work.
34	She was not allowed to talk in the Panchayat.	She talked about her concerns.
35	She wanted to work on a project but was not allowed by the people of the village.	No Response
36	Gram-Sevak does not provide information	Gained information about scheme and budget from other sources.

TABLE 15: DOUBTS ABOUT ABILITY AS SARPANCH

Sr.No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	38	38
2.	No	62	62
	Total	100	100

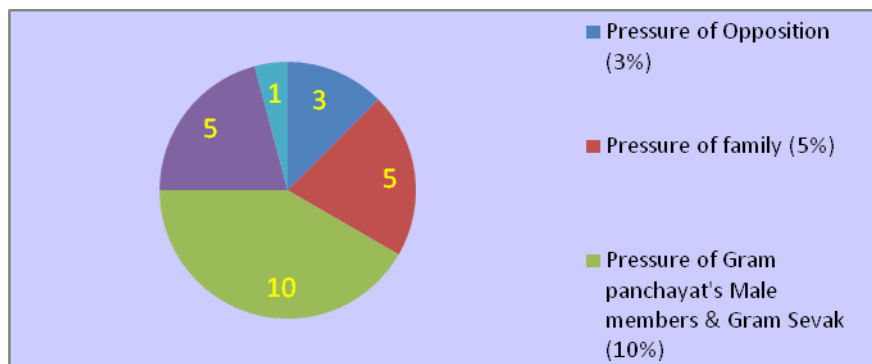
Majority of the members i.e. 62% did not felt that the people had any doubt about their ability as Sarpanch. However, 38% said that they did face problems as people did doubt their ability to handle the position of Sarpanch.

TABLE 16: LIVING UNDER PRESSURE

Sr.No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Yes	24	24
2.	No	76	76
	Total	100	100

It is a very positive trend that against the popular feeling that EWRs are under constant pressure, 76% said they are not under the pressure any more.

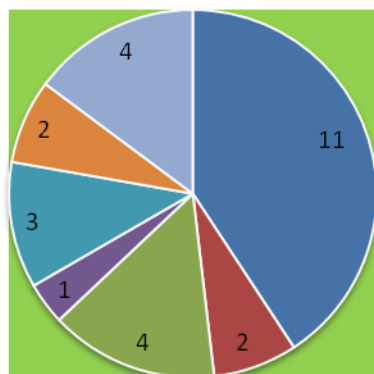
CHART 2: NATURE OF PRESSURE



The 24% who are under pressure have given following response.

- Majority of the EWRs faces constant pressure from the Gram Panchayat male members and Gramsevak , basically regarding the work or decision making of the Panchayat.
- Faced pressure from family.
- The pressure from opposition members is constant.
- Faced stress due to caste discrimination.

CHART 3: STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH PRESSURE



- Try to deal with problems (11)
- Give Rajinama (Resignation) (2)
- Talk with people, who have expertise (4)
- Make a group of women members & protest against Panch members (1)
- Ask help from Husband (3)
- Gaining information about politics & scheme (2)
- Listen to male members say (4)

The majority of EWRs try to cope with the pressure themselves. They try to go by the flow and deal with the situations. A few EWRs also said that sometimes the pressure is so high that they resign from the post of Sarpanch. While some try to deal with it by gaining information and talking to people who have expertise about dealing with the problem. It is heartening to note that the EWRs are trying to come out from their comfort zone and deal with the pressure they are facing from all corners.

TABLE 17: STRESS DUE TO PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND ITS IMPACT

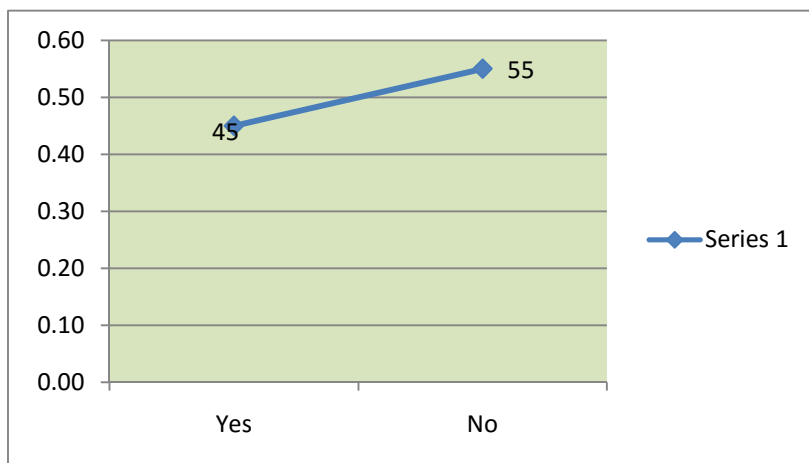
S.No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	57	57
2.	No	43	43
	Total	100	100

Majority (57%) of women are stressed about dealing with their personal and professional life. But around 43% of them say that they are not stressed and are able to cope up with the stress by dealing with both the responsibilities.

IMPACT OF STRESS:

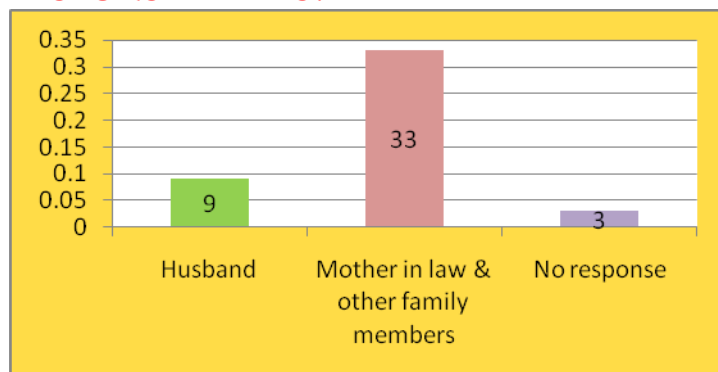
- Health related problems.
- Loneliness.
- Tiredness.
- Mental pressure.
- Dilemma over whom to listen to
- Fights at home
- Fights at home results in taking out frustration on children.
- Constant disputes

GRAPH 09: WHETHER THE FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES OF EWRs DECREASED



Only 45% of EWRs shared that the family responsibilities have decreased after coming into politics which shows the acceptance of the role of EWRs in the family.

GRAPH 10: SHARING OF FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES?



It is seen that only 9 EWR's husband readily took the household responsibilities to support their wives, 33 EWR's mother-in-law or other family members took up the family responsibility. It was also seen that in these 33 of EWR's family members who took up the household work were female members from the family. This still shows the gender biases.

HOW DO EWRS PLAY THE DUAL ROLE OF SARPANCH AND A WOMAN IN THE HOUSE?

- a.** Adjustment of timing
- b.** Able to manage both roles effectively and systematically
- c.** Husband carries out the professional responsibilities
- d.** Co-operation from the family while dealing with personal as well as professional issues.

OBSTACLE FACED BY EWRS:

- Male perception of looking at Sarpanch as "women" and neglecting her capabilities as the EWR.
- Dealing with the complex village problems and finding appropriate solution.
- Facing problem in organizing Gram Sabha/ Mahila Sabha / monthly meetings.
- Lack of technical information.
- Lack of understanding of politics

- Lack of support from the male members in the Panchayat and in the village.
- Pending work at the Government Offices.
- Non-Cooperation from Government Officials.
- Travelling to another place, especially with male members.
- Facing No Confidence Motion.
- Non involvement in decision making process.
- No support from Gram-sevak.
- Low participation of women.

STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME THESE OBSTACLES:

- Increase self-confidence and facing the opposition of male members and villagers
- Follow-up of work at various levels
- Gaining information about politics and schemes
- Working together as women
- By discussing with the person who created the problem
- Help from the village people
- Support from the family
- Legal action
- Help of Mahila Rajsatta Andolan (MRA)

NEEDS TO EMPOWER THE EWR

However, during the interviews and FGDs many EWRs have expressed need to empower themselves by going

through training, capacity building workshops, acquiring information about Government Schemes, laws and building their knowledge, skills and attitudes to become effective leader of the village.

RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE EWR'S OF MAHARASHTRA

Based on the focus group discussion, following recommendations were given by the EWRs. :

- Appointment of motivated officers with women Sarpanch, preferably women.
- Capacity building of Government personnel.
- Better implementation and accountability in the Schemes.
- Execution of reservation policy.
- Sustainable and relevant training on PR schemes.
- Punish Government officials for delaying work.
- Every village should have a full-fledged Gram Sevak and Gram Vikas Adhikari.
- Easy access of technology for EWR's like Sangram cell.

- Disbursement of funds in time.
- Gram-sevak should maintain transparency with the Sarpanch about all the decisions taken and also about GRs passed by the Government.
- Access to easy Legal advice.
- Access to Government Resolutions, laws and policy at panchayat level.
- Honorarium and meeting allowance for the Sarpanch be disbursed on time.
- Establishment of inter- panchayat network.
- Zero pressurization policy by the Political Parties.
- Effective district helpline for EWR's.
- Strong law for the safety of women leaders and women from marginalized communities.
- Scrap two child norms in Local Self Government.
- Passing of 'Mahila Rajsatta Sanrakshan Vidheyak which is submitted to the Government of Maharashtra by the MRA.

CHAPTER-IV

SUMMARY OF CASE STUDIES

Sr. Number	Name of the EWR
1.	Jayatai Kurne
2.	Jyoti Meshram
3.	Mayatai Sorate
4.	Kushavart Bele
5.	Amprapali Kewte
6.	Archana Jatkar
7.	Ratnamala Vaidya

1. JAYATAI KURNE

Jayatai Kurne hails from Herle village in Hatkngale taluka, Kolhapur district. She wanted to put an end to the private money lenders domination and decided to establish a 'Bachat Gat' small savings group/ Self Help Group (SHG). As the number of SHG members grew to 70, the money lenders realized that their dominance was being challenged. Jayatai named her SHG as the "*Kalpana Chawla bachat gat*". The SHG received support from Santram Charitable Trust who was run by Sumitra Datar and SubhashGurav.

In 2007, women from the SHGs encouraged her to contest the *Panchayat Samiti* election. They convinced her that if she won, they would be satisfied. They believed that it would give her the power to work better. SHGs campaigned to gather support for her. Meanwhile Jayatai asked a former MLA to give her a ticket from the Congress committee. She was denied and instead he gave it to a family member. Jayati took up the challenge and contested elections against the candidate supported by Congress Party. Jayatai was independent with no political backing whatsoever. The news spread like wild-fire in the village and groups that had previously neglected her, approached her and promised her their support as she was village candidate. Seeing her popularity, many SHG members mobilized funds for her campaign, they collected money, rallied empty stomach....her popularity was spreading. She won

the election and was elected as the chairperson of the *Panchayat Samiti* on March 13, 2007.

Jayatai got an opportunity to manage Hatkanagle, the largest backward block in Kolhapur district. But the period between 2007 & 2009 was a period of immense struggle. However her interactions with MRA gave her support to move ahead. She believes that her past experience of implementation of Nirmal *Gram* scheme helped her get oriented towards *Panchayat* activities and build association with *Gram Panchayat* members. She was aware of women's issues and their ground realities, had worked with the youth, gained an understanding on social work from Comrade Yashwant Chavan and all this proved to be useful in her new role as an elected leader. She wanted to maintain her association with activists, leaders, institutions and organizations.

Her participation in anti-liquor campaign alienated her political party. She was denied facilities by the party and was not supported in her everyday tasks. She was kept away from filing her candidature and giving an interview in the local media as her popularity was upsetting the local leaders who were patrons to the political party. In the last few years, she has witnessed the twist and turns in her budding political career but she has managed to overcome hurdles and today she is a successful EWR.

2. JYOTI MESHRAM

After 55 years of panchayat being constituted, one seat in the Gram Panchayat of Kotgal was reserved for woman candidate from the Scheduled Caste. For those men who were well established and considered themselves as superiors, this came as a rude shock. She contested and won the election. As the post of the Sarpanch was also reserved for a woman elected representative, the opposition tried to use money and muscle power against her. To aggravate the situation further, a member of the Legislative Assembly of the Gadchiroli constituency fired bullets in the air and terrorized the people in one of his election campaign rallies. This incident injured several people. Even under such circumstances, 11 candidates from the Scheduled Caste were elected. Being the only woman elected representative among the eleven, she was elected as the Sarpanch on November, 2002.

People from the upper caste were shocked by the fact that though they have the majority, a candidate belonging to the SC community has become *Sarpanch*. They tried to create obstacles in the working of the Panchayat. In the first Gram Sabha held in December 2002, they protested against one topic in the agenda of the meeting relating to “the right of the Sarpanch and Secretary to carry out financial transactions”. Forcefully, they made a resolution that the Sarpanch and the Secretary would have no authority in financial transactions. Her basic right, by the virtue of being

the Sarpanch, was denied. However this resolution was not approved in the village council (panchayat).

Written notice about this non-approved resolution was sent to the Zila Parishad (District council) of Gadchiroli. But the officers there did not take note of it. Therefore it was forwarded to the higher authorities in Nagpur. The higher authorities informed me that as the nine people who supported this resolution were also the elected representatives of the people, no action could be taken against them and asked me to complain to the concerned regional office. She did not lose hope, and continued her struggle to achieve financial rights as the Sarpanch. She was determined to take to task all those members who denied her rights, under the provisions of the Gram Panchayat Act. She also did a systematic follow-up of the entire case. As a result in July 2003, her financial rights as the Sarpanch were restored.

The male dominated society could not handle this defeat. Therefore in August 2003, they passed a no-confidence resolution. She did not give up and complained to the district authorities about this. Once more the male members of the Gram Panchayat were defeated. But even after all these incidences, they did not keep quiet and co-operate. They continued to harass and interfered in her work in all possible ways. When she complained to the police about this harassment, they ignored it saying that it was a political matter!

Even under such circumstances, she did not keep quiet. She forwarded complaints against the 9 male members of the Gram Panchayat to different higher authorities and demanded strict action against them. As a result the 9 members of the Gram Panchayat were dismissed.

3. MAYATAI SORATE

Mayatai Sorte was born in the small village of Kharola, Taluka Renapur. She was born in a Dalit family. Both her parents worked as farm laborers. Her family was surrounded by poverty. To top it, her father had married for a second time. Therefore, since childhood, Mayatai and her mother were left without any support.

Majority of the Dalit households were dependent on the ration shop for food on account of the low wages paid to them and seasonal unemployment. But the ration shop dealer was involved in corrupt practices and was supported by the Village Patil. The dealer would not supply food grains on time. When he gave ration, it would be less than the actual amount allotted on the card. All of a sudden he would stop the supply and announce that the stock of food grains was over. Women had to face a lot of troubles because of this. They had realized that that shopkeeper is perpetuating injustice on us. They were angry about it, but were clueless about what to do. In the meantime, the women read in the newspaper of a program being Organized in Latur on the rationing issue. They started collecting money and were successful in sending one woman for the program. Later a

discussion was held in the women's group about the information and written material that was given in the program.

Soon after that the women went in a large group and confronted the ration dealer. They asked him to produce the documents such as his registration papers, register of accounts, the etc. When he was unable to produce genuine documents, the women gave written complaints against him and demanded that ration should be distributed fairly. Later the women also went to the rationing Officer at the Taluka level and launched a complaint against the ration dealer of their village. But it was of no help, as the local ration dealer and the Taluka Rationing Officer were working hand in gloves with each other!

The women, however, did not give up and went to the District officer. The officer at the district level was a woman. She assured of rightful action against those guilty. The officer herself came to the village, raided the ration shop in the village, carried out investigation and later sealed the shop. But then the village politics came alive and the Village Patil started pressurizing the women to take back their complaint. Two women who were leading agitation were called by the Village Patil on his bungalow and held back for one full day and night. Mayatai was one of them. The villagers were so terrorized by the Village Patil, that even the women's husbands made no efforts to set them free!

However the next day, all the women of the village came together outside the Patil's house and demanded, 'Either the 2 women be set free or all of us be captured! We all had launched the complaint.' Over time, the ration dealer was penalized. The villagers started receiving their proper share of ration. Mayatai continues to lead the women of her village in the struggle on various issues and has been elected by the villagers as a member of Gram Panchayat.

Mayatai gradually started working on formation of SHG groups and women's organization. Mayatai, along with a colleague from the village had gone to Latur to attend a programme of women's organization. The programme was to be held in the hall of a hotel that had lodging – boarding facilities. The school teacher saw the women entering this lodge and that was it! He spread around vulgar rumors about the two women. "These women go to hotel rooms!" he publicized. All men of the village looked at the two with doubting and accusing eyes, the other women stopped talking to them.

Mayatai and her colleague, however, could not understand why people's behavior towards them had undergone this drastic change! After a month or so, a woman from the village finally said, 'You two had gone in the hotel at Latur. The school teacher had seen you going there himself. He was the one to tell the entire village about it! That is why no one is talking to you.' The two women were shattered on

hearing this. They were feeling ashamed and had no clue where to hide their faces!

But they decided that they would bring out the truth! They decided that the teacher (who had spread the news) should be felicitated on his achievement of being awarded as the “Best Teacher”. From their own money they brought a shawl, coconut, garland for him and felicitated in front of the entire village. After all the respected villagers had given their speeches, Mayatai got up to gave her speech. She asked that teacher, ‘with whom did you see us going inside the lodge? What were we doing there?’ The teacher retaliated, ‘I haven’t spoken about you to anyone!’

At this instance, the villagers, who had kept quite till now got angry and said, ‘You were the one who told us that these two women go to hotel rooms!’ When the teacher saw the entire village rise against him, he apologized to Mayatai and her colleague in front of the entire village. Other women present there repented that they had accused and doubted the two women.

Once again the SHGs and women’s organization’s work started with a new enthusiasm. Now the villagers were even ready to sacrifice their lives over Mayatai.

4. KUSHAVART BELE

The story is of Mrs. Bele, one of the prominent veterans in the field of social change. Now a trustee of “Gramin Mahila Vikas Sanstha”. She tries to cater the issues faced by women in her village. Mrs. Bele was married at the age of 12 years, as a child she was always keen about education. She somehow managing her family, children completed 10th standard. She always knew the importance of education and that’s why she jumped into teaching the children from backward class and caste. She started giving non formal education for them. While doing this she faced loads of obstacles especially from her family. The family members were not accepting the fact that she is stepping outside the house. She was cursed by her family members, beaten by her husband and in-laws, she was not allowed in the home for whole day. The people in the society where no sensitive towards her. Women in neighborhood could not accept the fact that she was stepping out of the house. She still continues to do what she wanted to do.

She says, “ I always wanted to do something for betterment of the society. In the year 2000 I was elected as Gram Panchayat member and Mahila Rajsatta Andolan turned out to be a great help. I had no political background. I was nervous about the fact. It was with the guidance of the people here I was able to perform well by utilizing the knowledge I got from here. I was able to cope different situations as they came to me. Now I woke with confidence.

Also in this period my husband supported me. My aim was to bring in the change of the status of women in the society. I wanted them to stand equal with men. I mobilized the women in the village and brought about some differences in the village. We banned tobacco, started organizing Mahila Sabha, and encouraged women for more participation in the Gram Sabha. While trying to achieve all this I had to face many problems. It wasn't easy for collecting the women together as they were a lot hesitant to come in front and feared of harassment. While dealing the issues in the Gram Sabha, I was said to be dumb for dealing the subject. Whenever I stood up for flag hoisting, people just left their seats. It was demoralizing. In all the ups and downs Andolan helped me lot. It gave me all the information required, thus making me confident about myself. I further worked on the Mahila Budget, as it was never utilized. Also worked on the Gharkul Yojana."

After being a Panchayat member, she later on became the Sabhapati of Zilla Parishad of Latur District. She spoke, " I am well recognized and respected in Zilla Parishad, as I did work hard. When I first joined the Zilla Parishad in 2007, none of the women there were ready to work. Corruption was high at the office. Working there was a different level of challenge. All I knew I had to work and that is why I am here. I was able to achieve a lot when in ZP. While talking about her success, she feels bad about the work she wasn't able to complete." Under Bharat Nirman Yojana I wanted to provide facilities for water supply to villages. I and the

Deputy engineer worked hard for the project. We organized the community meeting with them, meetings with the Sarpanch and Panchayat's. We worked really hard for a year, but couldn't complete as no Gramsabha Resolution was passed for this project. I faced a lot Political pressures. They were not ready to accept me. I think I did my best but couldn't get the support as needed from the people." She further adds, " I have no fear now working with people. When I see back, things has changed for better. I was felicitated by then Chief Minister Vilasrao Deshmukh. I am ready to face any obstacle, but there is just one fear that comes in mind. People pointing out to my character.As it had happened before. During the election of the ZP, the opposition party rumored about my character. They rumored that I worked as a pimp in Mumbai city. I wasn't able to work for a year and was under police protection. I did filed a case against the political party with MRA. They helped to have a *morcha* against it. The whole case was resolved."

About the balance she maintains between her job and home. She said "Tarevarchi Kasrat" (walking on the tight rope and striking balance). As a women I am expected to complete my household work and then go for my job. My children and husband do give me some kind of assistance, but the large junk falls on me. My husband mostly looks into the organization work, which lessens my burden. My daughter helps me in the household work. My time duty is only from 10am – 8pm. Only if any emergency comes, like a

women is facing domestic violence. Then I have to leave my house out of the time frame. The rest of the time is for my family commitments.”

“There is a change in the attitude of society now. Women are coming forward and wishing to do something for the society. Women don’t get the kind the respect that they should get.

5. AMPRAPALI KEWTE

27-year-old **Amrapali Kevte**, elected in 2011, is the current Sarpanch in the district of Yavatmal. In spite of not having any experience in local government, she quickly mastered the demands of her position, and in the span of four years she had accrued a number of accomplishments: she had created ten women’s support groups, resolved numerous disputes between caste communities, and secured an assortment of grants to be used in various projects—such as a Backward Region Grant in order to make her village alcohol free etc.

6. ARCHANA JATKAR

Archana Jatkar is the two-time elected Sarpanch of Pokhari in the Yavatmal district of Vidarbha, and is an ardent contributor to the policies being made in her village. She put effort towards building roads in order to connect her village to surrounding schools, since many girls were

leaving school prior to tenth standard due to poor road access. She also built a well in the village to alleviate the burden placed on women to transport water 2-3 kilometres from the next village.

7. RATNMALA VAIDYA

Ratnamala Vaidya, a Panchayat member in ZillaParishad, is also Vice Chairman of the Education Committee and Secretary of the Water Supply Committee in Bhandara district. One day, in 1995 she slapped the Sarpanch of her ward in response to an insult he had made regarding her caste. When she was taken to the police she told them that as a result of his caste-based slur, the Sarpanch himself was in violation of the Dalit Atrocity Act, which had been established in 1989. Impressed by her legal knowledge, the authorities dismissed the complaint against her.

TO CONCLUDE....

The candour and unassuming demeanour with which they share their stories belies the ferocity they bring to their political battles. They acknowledge the others contribution in their successes. One marvel at the tremendous strength of character which has been such a significant factor in the success of their achievements: their empowerment was a result of their refusal to ignore their responsibility to others; they became who they are because they refused to accede. Each of these women is admired and cherished by

their communities, though all admit that challenges remain for women in the Panchayat Raj.

Several of these EWRs are source of inspiration to many. Since they are successful EWRs, they are consulted by many new and old EWRs from nearby areas. Thousands of Women from villages have rallied behind them, which have resulted in strengthening Mahila Sabha and Gram Sabha where Pro-women decisions are taken. They have become modern 'Savitri's' , who are becoming icons of women development.

CHAPTER-V

MAJOR FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

GENERAL

1. From the literature review it is found that grassroots democracy in India has several challenges
2. Politics and power has been considered a 'man's dominant area' in all patriarchal societies across the world and India is not an exception to it. In spite of huge efforts at the international level there is still inequality in terms of number of women in Politics.
3. The 'Quota System' which is widely used by the various Governments has increased the women participation in politics at all levels.
4. In India, the reservation at local level has been implemented ranging from 33% to 50% but the women participation in the Parliament and State Assembly remains as low as 10%.
5. Once women enter politics, they face huge problems and obstacles.

FOLLOWING ARE THE MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE PRESENT STUDY:

6. Majority of the respondents (56%) are in the age group of 20-40 .
7. Majority of the EWRs are educated up to the SSC and HSC only (59%).
8. The percentage of EWRs from the minority religious communities, especially Muslim religion is as low as 3% in spite of their high population.
9. Majority of the 91% EWRs are married.
10. Majority of the EWRs (83%) annual income is less than Rs. 1.00 lakh, which is under the low income category.
11. Family members of most of Sarpanch are mostly in agricultural, agricultural labour or in the service sector and negligible percentage found in Government jobs.
12. Majority of the Gram Panchayat i.e. 73% has up to 9 members.

13. Among the reasons for entry into politics, majority of the 61% has led to their into politics because of their own interest, goals and thinking.
14. It is very interesting to note that 30% of the women have family background in politics.
15. Majority of women have seen positive changes after becoming elected representative. 94% of them have stated that they have 'changed' as a person after taking over the position.
16. Majority of the 93% of the respondents said that the monthly meetings of Gram Panchayat are held regularly. However, around 25% of the members are not regularly attending the meeting.
17. Around 79% of the respondents have stated that Mahila Sabha is held regularly though the number of women attending the meetings regularly is low.
18. The elected women representative felt that the attitude of majority (78%) male members have been positive towards them.
19. 88% of the EWRs visit Gram Panchayat Office other than for the monthly meeting which shows that women are actively taking part in the decision making process.

20. Achievements of EWRs have been analyzed, which shows positive result. However, the respondents have also felt that they could not complete the expected work because of several hurdles faced by them.
21. Majority of the elected women representative have felt that they have several obstacles in achieving the goal set by them, including resistance from male members, while travelling to the Tahasil and District places, while dealing with family and politics both, lack of knowledge and skills and while dealing with Government employees.
22. It is interesting to note that 38% of the women have expressed that people are doubtful about their abilities to play their role as Sarpanch.
23. 24% of the elected women representative have stated that they constantly live under pressure because of Gram Panchayat male members and *Gramsevak* and from opposition political parties.
24. It is important to note that though EWRs work under pressure, they have learned coping mechanisms as well. The stress is also because of dual responsibilities that they share, which affect their family life and work.

25. In case of 45% of EWRs the family responsibilities have decreased after taking the responsibilities as Sarpanch. Other family members share their responsibilities. In case of 20%, responsibilities are shared by their husband.

26. Several obstacles have been faced by women members while discharging their duties. This was also evident from the case studies. However, they have also found out innovative strategies to deal with the obstacles.

Majority of the EWRs have expressed the need of strengthening their capacity as elected representative which will empower them. Majority of the respondents have also expressed the need to make some changes in existing law/practices and have given charter of demands which if implemented, will smoothen the functioning of EWRs in the state of Maharashtra.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the present research was attempted to look at struggles of the EWR's and also strategies they have adopted while handling crises situation which prove to be the best practices for other elected women representative. The efforts have also been to put forth issues of elected women representatives who are otherwise included as a part of political process, but are excluded largely in the decision making process by largely male dominated Gram Panchayats. We hope that the study will lead to a way forward in transforming existing gender relations and increased women's political participation at the grassroots. We also hope that the women elected representatives are treated with dignity and are allowed to perform their constitutional duties without fear.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. At least 33 % women's participation in Parliament and State Assembly should be reserved.
2. Concrete plan of action by TASK FORCE should be made to reduce obstacles and problems faced by EWRs..
3. The percentage of EWRs from minority communities is very low which should be increased substantially.
4. The reservation of women and other social categories has increased their participation in politics. Hence, all efforts should be made to implement the reservation and quota system in letter and spirit.
5. Except some exceptions, it should be made compulsory for all the members of Gram Panchayat and other local bodies to attend the meetings regularly.
6. Gram Sabha & Mahila Sabhas which are mandatory should be held & monitored regularly and Government machinery should send review report.
7. EWR's face several hurdles while discharging their duties. The Government should take a stock of it and develop smooth functioning guidelines for them.

8. Among many obstacles faced by EWRs, lack of knowledge and skills has been stated by the EWRs, hence quality and result oriented training and capacity building programme should be organized, at least three times in a tenure.
9. The EWRs have been ill treated by their male counterparts. Government should make prepare Elected women leaders protection bill.
10. Government should start online toll free counseling program wherein the EWRs can discuss their problems with the counselors.
11. Gender sensitive Motivated Gram Sevak should be appointed wherever there are MahilaSarpanchs.
12. The Government Officials should be held responsible for non-implementation of schemes, programs & non-utilization of fund.
13. The training programs organized for the EWRs should be relevant, sustainable and skill oriented.
14. The Gram Panchayat should be equipped with infrastructure & technology.
15. The funds, honorarium & travel allowance to the EWRs should be disbursed in time & as per the rule.

16. It should be the responsibility of the Gram Sevak to maintain the financial & administrative transparency about the work of the Gram Panchayat.
17. There should be free legal advice and easy access to the Lawyers in case EWRs faces any legal problems while discharging her duties.
18. Two child norms should be scrapped especially for the women from the excluded communities.
19. Recent Supreme Court Judgment upholding the decision of Haryana State to make educational qualification compulsory for Panchayati Raj elections should not be implemented in the State of Maharashtra as it might exclude women and other marginalized group from participating in Local Democratic Process.

REFERENCES

- 1.1. Swarn Lata Sharma, 2011, Democratic Decentralization and Grass Root Democracy in India: Challenges and Solutions,
- 1.2. Puri Chandrakant (Ed), 2014, Two Decades of Panchayati Raj in India, Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Contemporary Studies, University of Mumbai.
- 1.3. Md. Nazrul Islam, 1996, Decentralisation, Transparency, Social Capital and Development, Mittal Publications.
- 1.4. Ibid
- 2.1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_General_Assembly (As assessed on April 17,2016)
- 2.2 <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/> (As assessed on April 17,2016)
- 2.3 <http://www.ceci.ca/assets/uploads/PDF-EN/Politique-galitEN-6volets.pdf>
- 2.4 <http://www.womenlobby.org/-50-50-campaign-2012-2014-?lang=en>

- 2.5 Troid Skard, 2012, Women in Politics: Nordic Experiences, Association of Local and Regional Authorities.
- 2.6 Mark P Jones, 1998,[Gender Quotas, Electoral Laws, and the Election of Women Lessons from the Argentine Provinces](#), Comparative Political Studies, Sage Publications.
- 2.7 Pamela Paxton; Melanie M. Hughes & Sheri L. Kunovich, 2007: "Gender in Politics", Annual Review of Sociology.
- 2.8 Devki Jain, PANCHAYAT RAJ: WOMEN CHANGING GOVERNANCE; for Gender in Development Monograph Series #5, UNDP. New York, 1996.
- 2.9 Shanoor,(2014) Rampant Violence Against Women In South Asia

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Bhargava, B.S., *Grass-root Leadership in Panchayati Raj Institutions*, New Delhi, Asish, 1979.
2. D. Bandopadhyay, "Rajiv Gandhi and the Third Tier of Governance", *The Pioneer*, August 20, 1994.
3. G. Palanithurai, "Report of the Training Programme Conducted for Gram Panchayati Presidents-Dindigul and Sivaganga Districts", (sponsored by CAPART), Rajiv Gandhi Chair for Panchayati Raj Studies, 1998.
4. George Mathew, "Panchayati Raj: The will is missing," *The Hindu* (12-12-91).
5. M. Vinayak, "The West Bengal Experience", *Frontline* (May 27 – June 9, 1989).
6. M.R. Biju, *Dynamics of New Panchayat Raj System : Reflections and Retrospections*, New Delhi, Manas Publications, 1998.
7. Mathew, George (ed.), *The New Panchayati Raj in Karnataka : An Evaluation*, ISC, New Delhi, 1992.
8. Mathur, M.V. and Narain Iqbal (eds.), *Panchayati Raj, Planning and Democracy*, Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1969.

9. Meenakshi Sundaram, S.S., *"Empowerment: Women Through Panchayati Raj"* Administrator, 40 (3), July-September, 1995.
10. Mitra, Jyoti, *Women and Society-Equality and Empowerment*, New Delhi, Kanishka Publisher, 1997.
11. Navlakha, Gautam, *"Under the Guise of Women's Empowerment : Fate of Rajasthan's Sathins"*, Economic and Political Weekly, 30(27), 8 July 1995.
12. P.C. Mathus, *Political Dynamics of Panchayati Raj*, New Delhi, Konark Publishing, 1991.
13. Pai S 1998. Pradhanis in new Panchyat: Field notes from Meerut District. Economic and Political Weekly.
14. <http://www.krepublishers.com/02-Journals/S-HCS/HCS-03-0-000-09-Web/HCS-03-1-000-09-Abst-PDF/HCS-03-1-029-09-071-Sahni-S/HCS-03-1-029-09-071-Sahni-S-Tt.pdf>
15. <http://www.indianjournals.com/ijor.aspx?target=ijor:ajrs sh&volume=3&issue=6&article=003>
16. Pattanaik, B.K., *"Gender Justics, Women Empowerment and Maternal Health"*, Yojana, 40(11), November 1996.

17. Puri Chandrakant, (ed) Two Decades of Panchayati Raj in India', RGCCS, Mumbai University, March 2014.
18. R.N. Prasad, *"Patterns of Rural Government in Mizoram : Retrospect and Prospect"*, P.S. Dutta (ed.) *North-East and the Indian State – Paradoxes of a Periphery*, New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, 1995.
19. R.P. Joshi, (ed.) *Constitutionalisation of Panchayati Raj: A Reassessment*, New Delhi, Manas Publication, 1998.
20. Raghubir Sahai, *Panchayati Raj in India : A Study*, Allahabad, Kitab Mahal, 1968.
21. Saxena, Kiran, *"Empowerment of Women: The Indian Context"*, *Indian Journal of Political Science*, 55(4), October-December, 1994.
22. Sharma, Sudesh Kumar, *Panchayati Raj in India : A Study of Reforms at Centre-State Level Since Independence*, New Delhi, Trimurti Publications, 1976.
23. Shiviah, M. et. Al., *Panchayati Raj in India*, Hyderabad, National Institute of Rural Development.

24. V.B. Athreya and K.S. Rajeswari, *Women's Participation in Panchayati Raj: A Case Study from Tamil Nadu*, (Sponsored by Women's Commission), M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai, 1998.
25. Viswanathan, Sujatha, "Grouping Women for Economic Empowerment" *Yojana*, 41 (3), March 1997.
26. Wieringa, Saikia, "Women's Interests and Empowerment: Gender Planning Reconsidered", *Development and Change*, 25, October, 1994.

**RAJIV GANDHI CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY STUDIES,
UNIVERSITY OF MUMBAI**

The Rajiv Gandhi Chair in Contemporary Studies was established by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India through the University Grants Commission in the year 2006 which has now evolved into an autonomous Centre of the University. The Centre works within the broad theme of Globalization, Democracy and Development. The areas of interest are primarily on the theme of Panchayati Raj and Local Governance, Impact of Technology on Society, Secularism & Nation Building along with other areas of contemporary relevance.

The functions of the Centre are -to coordinate and to provide a think tank in the area of studies; to provide a forum for inter university level dialogues, to design and execute capacity-building programs; to strengthen the role of Universities in Public Policy making; to conduct short-term courses in the concerned disciplines and publications of proceedings.

Being an inter-disciplinary social science research centre, the RGCCS has registered 17 doctoral scholars so far who are working on various themes of contemporary relevance. The Centre is currently engaged in several policy and action research, consultancy and organizes public policy dialogues, seminar, conference and workshop to fulfill its objectives.

For further details: <http://mu.ac.in/portal/rajiv-gandhi-centre-for-contemporary-studies/>

Tel. 91-22-26532048 / Email: chandrakant.puri@mu.ac.in

MAHILA RAJSATTA AANDOLAN-RSCD

Mahila Rajsatta Andolan i.e. campaign with Women in Governance is one of the key programs of RSCD – Resource & Support Centre for Development which is actively involved in people centered development through self-empowerment of villages & Panchayat women leaders since last 21 years. It is registered as trust in 1994. RSCD's core competence is, facilitating marginalized as actors of their own development. The organization has a team of 104 women leaders with 24250 memberships and an association of 2000 elected women learners. Savitri Academy is a strong wing of RSCD with 467 Panchayat trainers. The RSCD is providing consultancy to Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Bangladesh.

RSCD is an active supporter of few state institutions like Yashada, Livelihood mission, State Health mission & MAVIM as a knowledge partner and liaison with TISS, University of Mumbai & SNDT University for academic studies. RSCD is also an active member of LOGIN- Asia (Local governance initiative & network) & Solution Exchange of UNDP, New Delhi.

KRANTIYOTI Training Module developed by RSCD for Panchayat Women Leaders has been initiated by State Election Commission and executed further by Yashada & RDD, Government of Maharashtra and is closely associated with MAVIM, State Anganwadi Committees & National Health Mission, Maharashtra. MRA is initiated by RSCD in 2000 & actively working in 25 districts of Maharashtra.

For further details: <http://mahilarajindia.org/> Tel. 91-22-27577587 / Email: rscd.1994@gmail.com