

**Women Empowerment through Village Panchayat: A case study of Mollem  
Village Panchayat**

Course code and Course Title: PS 301 & Dissertation

Number of Credits: 8 Credits

Submitted in partial fulfilment of Master's degree

MA in Political Science

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### DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that the data presented in this Dissertation entitled, "Women Empowerment through Village Panchayat: A case study of Mollem Village Panchayat" is based on the results of investigations carried out by me in the Political Science Programme, D.D Kosambi School of Social Sciences and Behavioural Studies, Goa University under the Supervision of Mr. Ravaji Gaunkar and the same has not been submitted elsewhere for the award of a degree or diploma by me. Further, I understand that Goa University or its authorities will be not be responsible for the correctness of observations / experimental or other findings given the dissertation.

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### COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation "Women Empowerment through Village Panchayat: A case study of Mollem Village Panchayat" is a bonafide work carried out by Ms. Saili Shashi Usgaonkar under my supervision in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of the Arts in the Discipline Political Science Programme at the D. D. Kosambi School of Social Science and Behavioural Studies, Goa University.



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am thankful to my guide Mr. Ravaji Gaunkar for his expertise, advice, patience and for providing an intellectual impetus to my dissertation entitled "Women Empowerment through Village Panchayat : A case study of Mollem Village Panchayat".

I would also like to thank, my Teachers and in the Political Science Programme, Prof. Rahul Tripathi, Dr. Prakash Desai, Dr. Alaknanda Shringare, Dr. Shardha Naik, Ms. Prachi Naik for their guidance and support throughout the Master Programme.

I would also like to thank non-teaching staff of Political Science programme, Smt. Vrunda and Smt. Pooja for their co-operation and help throughout the Master Programme.

I also thank staff of the Mollem Village Panchayat, for their cooperation and providing valuable information for my dissertation.

I am also thankful to the library staff of Goa University for lending their help.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the respondents from the Mollem Village Panchayat for allotting their valuable time for making this dissertation complete.

I also expressed my sincere gratitude to my best friends for their extreme support and help.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed directly or indirectly in the completion of my Dissertation.

Finally, my special thanks to my beloved parents and family members for their constant moral and financial support.

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## **Chapter – I**

### **Introduction**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Women's constitute half of the country's population. Their role in society is not confined to a mother, daughter, sister, wife, or friend. They play an active role as energetic leaders and social activists in various fields. In the earlier years, patriarchal society had suppressed women. They were treated as inferior in the family. According to a United Nations study, more than two-thirds of the world's illiterate population is constituted by the women, and 80% of the world's refugees are women. In many countries across the world gender discrimination against the women could be seen in various ways.

India is largest democratic and complex country in the world. Even in 21<sup>st</sup> century, people follow their customs and traditions. These customs and traditions became the part and parcel of society. During ancient times, women were honoured by society as Janani which means mother, Goddess. They had special position and place in society. But with the passage of time, due to crude interpretations and practice of customs and traditions their position had been changed. Women were forced live in restricted space and became victims of various forms of patriarchal restrictions. Gradually patriarchal society imposed various forms of ill practices on women such as sati practice, dowry, female infanticide, child marriage etc. Birth of girls considered as shameful act.

Gradually the fight for women's empowerment grew strong in India with the enactment of social reforms were large number of men took the active participation in order to help the women to get their status back in the society. In India the status of women in the last few millennia has passed through a lot of changes. The whole 19th century was considered the

period of women's century all over the world. But since the emergence of British rulers and missionaries from England and other parts of Europe ultimately brought some changes in the social and cultural life of the Indians. The missionaries were favoring women's education and as a result of that they set up several schools for girls in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. The government initiatives with regard to women's education were remarkable and from the 19th century onwards education for girls in India took an enormous step and stood against the patriarchal norms which were against women's education. However in the Post-Independence era the movement for women empowerment was slowed down in India. As some women felt that there is no need to fight against the colonizers and some were satisfied with the council promised of giving them equality, which ultimately brought a ray of hope for women's Uniform Civil Code (Article 44) and gave Universal Adult Franchise which further arises the problems like increasing the rate of oppression, discrimination, dowry deaths, unemployment, declining sex ratio, lack of healthcare and infant mortality, etc. (Roy, 2009)

In history women have demonstrated as the most deprived groups who suffered the most. They were the victims of abuse, molestation, violence, ill-treatment, malnutrition, rape, poverty. Even after India is being called multicultural, multi-lingual, multi-racial and multi-religious as a sub-continent the women face problems here and there. Only the circumstances are differed from society to society, state to state and place to place. But even in recent times the situation of women has not improved. They are still living in the old stigma which earlier society had imposed.

Even though we are living in the 21st century the Act of domestic violence is still carried out, even honor killing is practice in most part of India. Being India is one of the advanced country, the women are still disallowed to use mobile phones, choosing their dress or

profession, participation in political activities, very little freedom in case of marriage and reproductive matters and henceforth so on. However there is the general belief that women have been suffering in every age and country from their protectors such as father, brother, uncles, neighbours, husband, partner and other in childhood. Thus the question of women's rights was a world question as old as human race. In all phases of human life the women is regarded as the inferior or secondary. Women are the victims of social, political, economic subordination. Even today apart from reservation of seats for women in the election, there is hardly any political party which gives independent ticket for women candidate to contest for election. So one can say that democracy became meaningless and paralysed unless it gives 50% of its population to participate in the decision making process and join in other social, economic and political activities.

The issue of women's empowerment has gained importance since the second half of the 20th century. But it was deeply ingrained in the form of government policies and programs until the declaration of the 'Western Decade' in 1975. Even though the Indian Government made it applicable to all its citizens irrespective of sex, color, creed, or caste soon after independence, it was confined only to the paper. At the same time, the majority of women remained powerless until the last decade of the previous century. Thus the issue of women's empowerment through various participation in developmental activities has become one of the important tasks to perform. Also with enactment of 73rd Constitutional Amendments Act in 1992, it gave a ray of hope for women's in local self government with reservation of one third percent of seats which gives them an opportunity to direct participate in the election processes and make one's self empowered. In spite of their equal contribution in society, they still struggle for all forms of inclusion and justice. Moreover, the women from rural areas of Mollem village face several challenges. The state government has initiated several



mechanisms to provide a platform for women's empowerment in rural areas. In the present research, the empowerment of women through village Panchayat Institution: a case study of Mollem shall be studied.

### **Research Question**

Does the Village Panchayat Mollem have any role in women's empowerment?

### **Hypothesis**

The Village Panchayat Mollem is part and parcel of rural life and is vital to women's empowerment in Mollem.

### **Objectives**

To study the profile of Mollem Village Panchayat.

To study the women's perception on women's representation in village Panchayat

To examine women's perception regarding the Village Panchayats role in empowering women.

To study the facilities available to womens in the Village Panchayat

To study the impediments of women empowerment in Village Panchayat.

### **Literature Review**

Ashish Bose article in his article 'Empowerment of women: How and when? Stated that women's issue is lately also called "gendered issue." the Author focuses on the importance of 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment initiatives for women's empowerment in contemporary India. The 24th of April of every year is celebrated as "Women Empowerment Day". The landmark legislation encourages the participation of women in the political field. The Author also highlights

corruption issues and believes that women ensure more transparency in governance than males. Further, strengthening the grassroots democracy orientation program is important for awareness generation and advocacy. The Author appreciates the World Health Organisation for sponsoring a program for women's National Profile on Women, Health, and Development." In conclusion, the Author pointed out that neither legislation nor the Government can empower women, but they should empower themselves individually and collectively.

Indrani Bagehi in her article on 'The Struggle for Women's Empowerment in India.' She has mentioned that gender equality in education builds an equal society and helps to boost economic growth. Education and economic empowerment give women the courage to acquire their dreams. Thus she believed financial independence is essential for every woman, especially women from villages, to find their voice and space.

Bidyut Mohanty's article on 'Panchayati Raj, 73rd Constitutional Amendment, and Women'. Highlights the importance of the landmark 73rd (constitutional amendment) in the history of a woman's life. The Act provided the provision of one-third of the total seats to women in local self-government institutions across the country. As the Author rightly pointed out, the Government of Orissa has mandated that the vice- chairperson post would be reserved for a woman wherever the chairperson is a male. The Author also put across that Indian Culture and social ethos have become an influencing factor that affects women's empowerment. It's also being revealed that female members are less corrupt than their male counterparts. The Author has also mentioned the "Laxmi Mukta Schemes," whereby women have been given land.

Mahi Pal's article on ' Women in Panchayat: Experience of a training camp.' Stress on various presents the issues/problems raised by the women and the future agenda for effective governing of panchayats by them. The Author pointed out that women have still been given less importance in making decisions. Economic independence is considered a pre-condition for the political empowerment of women. So overall training- cum- awareness building programs followed by workshops should be organized for women empowerment.

G. Vidya Sagar Reddy (2015), in his book on 'Women Empowerment', emphasized empowering women to participate in full-fledged economic life across all the sectors of economies. He says the private sector is a key partner in advancing gender equality and empowering women. The term empowerment is the most frequently used in development dialogue today. But here, it also involves the corresponding side of the debate where significant political and economic interests can activate the same critical mass to promote their selfish motive by making women the instruments and furthering the disempowered. Further, the Author stressed that in Independent India, women participate in a larger form of all activities, such as education, sports, politics, media, art, and Culture, and initiate different forms of economic and educational development such as workforce participation and land and property rights.

Keshab Chandra Mandal( 2013), in his article on " Concept and Types of Women Empowerment," the primary objective is to address the challenges and realities of different situations by engaging the Government, political decision-makers,NGO's and actors to come forward for ensuring women's all-round development for making an India a developed country. The Author pointed out that since the second half of the twentieth century, the issue of women empowerment has gained much more importance among scholars of universities

on both national and international platforms. The Concept was deeply ingrained after the 'Women's Decade' declaration in 1975. The Author, in his work, mention the different type of empowerment like, social, political, psychological, economic and educational, and various methods of empowerment. The Author cites John Stuart Mill's "The Subjugation of Women" and Mary Wollstonecraft's "Vindication of the Rights of Women."

## **Methodology**

For this study, both primary and secondary data will be used. The primary data shall be collected through a structured respondents' questionnaire.

## **Characterization**

The research work is divided into five chapters as follows;

### **I - Introduction**

The first chapter is introductory, which includes the introduction of the study followed by the Research Question, Hypothesis, Objectives, a brief account of literature related to the empowerment of women and Village Panchayat, Methodology, characterization etc.

### **II- Conceptual Analysis**

The second chapter elaborates on the Concepts such as empowerment, its Meaning, Definition, Features, Types of empowerment, Need for empowerment, Constitutional provision, Legislations for women's empowerment, institutional mechanisms – that is, the role of the women's commission, Overview of Goa Panchayati Raj 1994 legislation and Village Panchayat Institution

### **III- Profile of Village Panchayat Mollem**

The third chapter focuses on the Mollem Village Panchayat. It's a demographic view of the village panchayat's economic, social and political initiatives for empowering women.

### **IV- Data Collection**

The fourth chapter includes the survey and data analysis. The Data was collected through a structured closed-ended questionnaire, in-depth interview techniques, Observations schedules etc. chapter also contains pie charts wherever necessary.

### **V- Findings, Conclusion and Suggestions**

The last chapter includes the overall study of the topic and different suggestions/ conclusion

## **Chapter -II**

### **Conceptual Analysis**

#### **Introduction**

Historically, women have been demonstrated as the most deprived group who suffered the most. They were the victims of abuse, molestation, violence, ill-treatment, malnutrition, rape, and poverty. India is called a multicultural, multi-lingual, multi-racial, and multi-religious sub-continent; the women faced problems here and there. Only the circumstances differ from society to society, State to State, and place to place. In recent times, the situation of women has not improved up to the mark. They are still living with the old stigma, earlier imposed on them by the patriarchal nature of society. We live in the 21st century, but women have still been facing the worst forms of domestic violence, such as dowry, rape, honor killing, etc., in many parts of India. They are the victims of social, political, and economic subordination. Even today, apart from reserving seats for women in Elections, hardly any political party is willing to give fair tickets to women candidates to contest for Election. Democracy becomes meaningless and paralyzed unless it provides equal opportunities to 50% of the population (women) to participate in the decision-making process for their empowerment and development.

The issue of women's empowerment has gained importance since the second half of the 20th century. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to live with dignity and respect. India, after Independence, incorporated the crucial provisions to oblige the UDHR commitments towards women in our country. Accordingly, there are calls for policymakers to pay more attention to social and human development, including women's empowerment. Presently the issue of women's empowerment is a global phenomenon. Recently the term 'empowerment' has been replaced with 'development.' Women's

empowerment is imperative and crucial for the overall development of society and the nation. One of "the most common use of the term "empowerment" refers to increasing the power of the vulnerable group (Mandal, 2006, p.18). Sushama Sarah states, "Empowerment is an active, multi-dimensional process which enables women to realize their full identity and powers in all spheres of life."( ibid) According to Arundhati Chattopadhyay, Empowerment is multi-dimensional and refers to the expansion of freedom of choice and action in all spheres (social, economic, and political) to shape one's

### **Empowerment**

Empowerment is a process that increases the capacity of the individual or group to make choices and later aims to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. However, the dictionary meaning of empowerment is "to enable." Thus empowerment is an enabling process where power is used to enable action. Power is often related to our ability to make others do what we want, regardless of their wishes or interest. In social science, power links it to the ability to achieve a desired outcome, sometimes referred to as power to. In most cases, power is thought of as a relationship, as the exercise of control by one person over another, or as power over. Thus, empowerment means gaining or accessing control over the self or control over the various resources available in a given environment and over the ideology that determines the power relationship. One of "the most common use of the term "empowerment" refers to increasing the power of the low-power group, so that it more nearly equals the power of the high-power group." (Mandal, 2006, p.18). Further, Women empowerment refers to women's liberation from socio-economic restraints or constraints.

As we know, around 50% of the country's population comprises women, and many women remain dependent on their partners due to a lack of employment opportunities. Even during

the feminist wave in India, only a few women led the battle to raise women's core issues in society. Most of the Indian population lives in villages, where women perform multiple roles effortlessly per day and thus are considered the backbone of every community. Women's roles, including caring mothers, loving daughters, and sisters, were hardly rewarded in traditional societies but subject to subordination and discrimination. The main reason behind such discrimination, inequality, and exploitation of women is due to sex which is a biological fact.

Empowerment is not a new concept. According to Perkins, the idea of empowerment can be applied in various. Page and Czuba State three fundamental issues available to understand the empowerment theory. Firstly when it deals with empowerment, it is multi-dimensional, as it occurs in sociology, psychology, politics, economics, and other dimensions. Secondly, it appears at various levels, such as groups, individuals, and communities. Thirdly it is a social process that associates with others.

### **Definition of empowerment**

Rappaport defines empowerment as a process mechanism of individuals, organizations, and communities acquiring control over their lives.

Zimmerman defines empowerment as a social process in various dimensions that help people gain control over their lives.

Gauthier states empowerment in the context of controlling the action in a distinct way to control their lives.



World Bank defines empowerment in terms of freedom of choice and action.

Malhotra argues for empowerment by dealing with various aspects. Such as empowerment is the process of gaining power and control over the decision and resources. In addition, empowerment refers to Independence, dignity, choices, control, and capacity for their own lives and social interaction.

Thus, there is no precise and single definition of empowerment and its measurement. It varies from situation to situation and person to person. Empowerment theory refers to "empowerment- oriented" which aims to improve living standards, allowing every individual to develop their skills, solve problems, etc.

### **Types of empowerment**

There are also different forms of empowerment through which people can be empowered.

Individual empowerment – refers to Individual belief to understand once own capacity for personal freedom and choices. Individuals believe they have the power to change the given situation or circumstances.

Gender empowerment means that all gender identities can and should contribute to society. Its main aim is to lift everyone and recognize that everyone has an equal place in society regardless of gender identity.

Social empowerment means that you believe you can make a difference in society. Through social empowerment, people can raise their voices against harmful or toxic aspects of their society. E.g. Participating in a human rights agitation to address societal issues.

**Educational empowerment-** It is based on one knowledge and its application for personal development. It helps individuals grow their intellectual horizons, well-being, and potential for empowerment. It is considered one of the single most instruments in transforming the social, economic, and political field. As per United Nations Development Report 2011, without proper education for all children, especially girl child, the objectives of gender empowerment can not be achieved. Keshab stated that "if one male child is literate personally he alone becomes educated but if one girl child is educating the whole family becomes benefited."(Keshab, 2006, p.20) Education is the base for all types of empowerment. It creates self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-sufficiency among people. It shows a ray of hope by increasing social, political, intellectual, cultural, and religious consciousness. It also broadens the length of mind by removing all kinds of bigotry, superstition, and narrowness, enhancing fellow feeling, tolerance, etc. Women's educational empowerment begins with equal educational access to women.

**Political empowerment** refers to women's capacity to speak freely and fearlessly. It enables women to participate in decision-making wherever possible, both in the private sphere and in the public domain. It explores women to understand the democratic processes and principles to govern society. It believes in increasing the diversity of voices and opportunities in the political sphere. For example, women's universal franchise was the main objective of the early feminist across the world. Based on this idea, fair representations have gained popularity worldwide in contemporary times.

**Psychological empowerment-** It encourages and develops empathy towards increasing psychological consciousness. One becomes psychologically empowered only when one

understands the impact of various biases and social norms on multiple types of behavioral actions. It enables women to overcome emotional stress.

### **Need for empowerment**

By empowering women in India through equal opportunities, which eventually allow them to contribute in the economy as one among the productive citizens.

With the enactment of higher literacy rates and equal pay for equal work, it will create a better condition for women where they are able to thrive economically and rise out from the stigma of poverty.

Empowerment is also needed for protecting women and girls from domestic violence and abuse by challenging the stigmas against the reporting of crimes that would create a much safer society.

By improving female political representation, it makes it possible for women to serve as role models or inspiration for young girls and it also allows a platform to bring awareness to the issues which are affecting women in India.

### **Constitutional provision for women empowerment**

India's constitution is one of the lengthiest constitutions in the world. The Constitution of India has all the provision to empower the women. The principle of gender equality enshrined in Indian Constitution in Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles. The Constitution of India not only grants equality to women but it also gives the power to the State to adopt the positive discrimination in favour of women for their all round development.

Article 14 stress on Equality before law and equal protection of law to women in India. The law protects the women and give them opportunity to live dignify life.

Article 15 (1) says State shall not discriminate any citizen especially women on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth etc. But in fact under clause (3) state has to make special provision in favour of women and children.

Article 16 provides equal opportunities to women in matters of public employment. This article gives equal access to women to hold important public positions.

Article 23 state action to ban all sorts of trafficking in human and forced labour.

Article 39 direct the State to initiate policy towards securing women equal right to get adequate means of livelihood and equal pay for equal work especially to women.

Article 42 direct the State to make special provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief.

Article 46 says that the State should promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and protect them from social injustice and other all forms of exploitation.

Article 47 says State should raise the level of nutrition and standard of living condition of the people especially women.

Provisions of 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendment act of 1992 provides 1/3 reservation of seats in local bodies of Panchayats and Municipalities for women.

### **Legislations for women empowerment**

Several important legislations are also enacted which aim at empowerment of women in India as follows.

The maternity benefits act 1961;

This Act deals with "Payment of medical bonus" to every woman who is entitled for maternity benefit along with that they shall also be entitled to receive a medical bonus of one thousand from her employer.

The Dowry prohibition Act 1961;

This Act prohibits the payment, request or acceptance of a dowry during the times of marriage. "Dowry" is defined as a gift demanded or given as a precondition for a marriage. Demanding the dowry during the time of marriage is considered as a punishable imprisonment for up to six months along with fine of up to Rs.15000. If the amount is higher than the imprisonment also risen to 5 years along with fines.

The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976;

This Act deals with providing equal remuneration for men and women workers and Prevention of discrimination on the grounds of sex in the matter of women's employment.

The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956;

This was the primary law dealing with the status of sex workers. According to this, prostitutes can carry out their practices privately but not legally solicit customers in public. As long as it is done solely or individually and voluntarily, a woman can use her body in exchange for economic benefits.

The Medical termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971;

This Act was enacted by the Indian Parliament in the year 1972 with the purpose of reducing the incidences of illegal abortion and also the maternal mortality and morbidity. This Act clearly mentions the procedure through which Pregnancy can be terminated, so as per to these the pregnancies which are not exceeding 12 weeks may be terminated through a single opinion of one doctor. However, in case of pregnancies which are exceeding 12 weeks but less than 20 weeks need the opinion of two doctors for terminating the pregnancy.

Following are the criteria of the persons who are qualified to conduct the abortion.

- Women whose physical and mental health were at risk through the pregnancy.
- The women who are expecting the birth of a possibly handicapped or malformed child.
- Rape
- Pregnancies in unmarried girls who are under the age of eighteen through the consent of a guardian.
- Pregnancies occur through the result of failure of sterilization.

The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987;

The Sati practice which was first abolished in 1829, was revised and made completely illegal in the year 1887. This Act provides more effective prevention of the commission of sati and its glorification and other matters connected through incidental.

The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006;

This Act prohibits the ceremony of marriage among the groom or the bride whose age is below the marriage (18 years in case of girls and 21 years in case of boys) in order to eradicate the child marriage from the society. This Act also provides relief to victims and enhances the punishment for those who promote or practice such marriage.

The Pre-Conception & Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994;

This Act was enacted by the Parliament of India to stop female foeticide. The main purpose of these Act is to ban the use of sex selection techniques before or after conception and also to prevent the misuse of prenatal diagnostic strategies for sex selective abortion.

The Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place (Prevention, Protection and) Act, 2013;

The Domestic Violence Act 2006.

Domestic Violence is also known as the violence against women. So among that, dowry is considered one of the most important factors responsible for cruelty and ill-treatment against the women. However Civil Law does not address this phenomena entirely, so thus in order to protect the women from domestic violence, the Bill was introduced in the Parliament "The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2006". These acts provide more effective protection to the constitutional rights of the women and also protect them against the domestic violence which is occurring within the family. It also provides the civil remedy for the implementation of rights of women such as Right to residence, Maintenance, Protection, Custody and compensation.

## **Policies and Program for Women's Empowerment**

After Independence, the Government of India adopted a welfare-oriented approach to developing and empowering women in India. Women's empowerment is included in the planning process in India. In the fifth five-year plan, there is a shift from the 'welfare' to a 'development' approach. Subsequently, later in the sixth five-year plan adopted a multi-disciplinary approach by focusing more on health, education, and employment. The seventh plan, objectives was to raise women's economic and social status through a beneficiary-oriented program which will provide direct benefits to the women. Eight five-year plan, there is a definite shift from the 'development' to 'empowerment' of women. To achieve the objectives of five years plans, the Government created an environment where it reflects women's issue by articulating many policies. Some of the crucial documents include The National Plan of Action For Women (NPA) adopted in 1976 became the guiding document for women's development. **The National Policy for Children (NPC)** was adopted in 1974. It believes children are the country's future, and the State has to accept the responsibility as it of its own and make the necessary improvement.

**The National Expert Committee on Women Prisoners** was also adopted in 1986 to examine women prisoners' condition and made important recommendations regarding the reforms related to women prisoners. Even **The National Perspective Plan for Women (NPP)** was adopted from (1988 -2000) and mainly focused on education as a practical tool for women's equality. **The National Nutrition Policy (NPP)** 1993 deals with adopting necessary measures for the healthy nutritional status of women, children, and the country. **The National Plan of Action For the Girl Child ( NPA)** 1991-2000 is a multi-sectoral plan which ensures the protection, survival, and development of children by building a particular gender sensitivity for girl children and adolescent girls. So, in addition to these, there are also



many other women-specific policies related to women's issues, like **National Policy on Education (1986)** which emphasizes women's participation in the vocational, technical, and different professional educational levels. There are also policies like **National Health Policy (NHP)**.

The Government of India declared 2001 as the year of women's empowerment. To commemorate the said declaration govt. of India announced a national policy for the empowerment of women. The main objectives of this policy were to recognize all the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women on an equal basis with men in all spheres, such as political, economic, socio-cultural, etc., by strengthening the legal mechanism to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. Following are some of the govt. of India program to achieve the 2001 policy objectives as

Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY)

Prime Minister Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)

Swadhar

Sarva Shiksha Abikan (SSA)

Indira Awas Yojana (IAY)

Matritva Sahyog Yojana

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

### **The National Commission for Women**

1) The function of NCW is to inquire, investigate and examine all matters related to safeguarding the interest of the women as per to the constitution and other laws which are enforced.

2) The NCW has to annually present the report to the central government.

3) The NCW also entitled to make recommendation as per the report to the Union and State regarding to improve the conditions of the women.

4) The NCW also played a role in reviewing the different law and simultaneously suggest the amendment.

5) The NCW take up the violation cases related to the provision of the constitution and other laws of the women.

6) The function of the NCW was to take up the Suo-moto notice related to the deprivation of women's rights, non-implementation of laws and other issues related to women.

7) It also takes up educational research and other promotional work to find out different ways to represent women in all phases of their life and improve their condition.

8) The NCW also involves in planning which is related to socio-economic development of women, Inspection in jali, remand homes etc where women are kept as prisoners.

### **Panchayat and women empowerment**

Panchayati Raj Plays a vital role at the grassroots level. The idea of local governance is not new in India. Local governance existed and functioned at different points. After Independence, the institution of local Government was legalized through various legislations and amendments. The 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment act of 1992 is considered as a milestone in the process of womens empowerment. Through this amendment state brought many changes in the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions. It added a new Part-IX to the constitution

Part. It incorporated the details of articles from 243 (A) to 243 (O) focusing on the Panchayat's functioning. In addition, to it, the Act also added a new Eleventh Schedule to the constitution. This Act has provided the practical shape to Article 40 which says, 'The State should take steps to organize the village panchayat and a lot them with such powers and authority which enable them to function as units of self-government. To give effect to the 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment, the Goa Government enacted Goa Panchayati Raj Act 1994 and adopted a two-tier local governance structure in rural areas. i.e. Village Panchayat (Gram Panchayat) at grass root local level and Zilla Panchayat at the District level.

### **Goa Panchayati Raj Act 1994**

Goa is a unique state in India, known for its local institution popularly known as 'Gaokaria', the local self-government, which has a remarkable history dating back to ancient times. The indigenous people of Goa set up the institution of local self-governance called as Gaunkari system. The settlers of the villages were called 'gaunkars' who organized themselves into "communities." The primary objective of gaunkari was to manage and govern agrarian resources and relationship.

After liberation, the President of India prioritized the Goa Daman and Diu Village Panchayat Regulation 1962 under Article-240 of the Constitution of India. This regulation provided a way to set up a single-tier Panchayati Raj System in the Union territory of Goa Daman and Diu. Thus for the first time, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI's) came into existence in the Union territory of Goa. As per that Regulation, in every Panchayat, one seat was to be reserved for women, and the term of the Panchayat was four years. However, in most of the States in India, the PR system collapsed due to loopholes and lack of uniformity. But later same was corrected through 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment

In the year, 1994 State of Goa promulgated an ordinance, namely: the Goa Panchayat Raj Ordinance, 1994. But later on, the ordinance was converted into the bill, namely The Goa Panchayati Raj Bill, 1994, introduced in Goa Legislative Assembly and became an act "The Goa Panchayat Raj Act 1994. As per this Act, every Village Panchayat had an organizational Structure.

### **Features of the Act**

#### **Gram Sabha ( Article 243A)**

Gram Sabha means a body that consists of persons who are registered in the electoral rolls relating to a village within the area of Panchayat at the Village level. The Gram Sabha may perform the function and exercise power at the village level as the legislature of a State provides the law.

#### **Constitution of Panchayat ( Article 234B)**

The Panchayat is defined as the institution of self-government for rural areas. The Act provides the hierarchical structure of Panchayats; at Village Level Village Panchayat at intermediate level Panchayat Samiti, and district level Zilla Panchayat. However, according to clause (1), Panchayat, which is at the intermediate level, may not be constituted in a state where the population is not more than 20 lakhs.

#### **Composition of Panchayats ( Article 243 C)**

The state legislature may make provisions regarding the composition of Panchayats. Panchayats in Goa are classified into A, B, C, and D categories. The categories are drawn based on the population of the Panchayat. Further, each Panchayat comprises wards, which

are filled through direct elections. The Act accommodates the affirmative actions mechanism for the representations of the people, especially the marginalized sections.

#### **Reservation of seats (Article 243 D)**

As per the provisions, keeping seats reserved for SC, ST, OBC, and Women in the Panchayat is mandatory. All the seats shall be filled through direct elections. This act systematically acknowledges the women's representations in panchayats through the methods of reservations within reservations.

#### **Duration of Panchayats (Article 243 E)**

The term of elected representatives and Panchayat council is five years. It can dissolve before the expiry of the tenure.

#### **Disqualification of Membership ( Article 243 F)**

The Act provides reason and procedure for the disqualification of the representatives of the panchayats.

#### **Powers, Authority, and Responsibility of Panchayats ( Article 243 G)**

The legislature of the State gives the Panchayats power and authority, which is considered necessary for the functioning of institutions as self-government. Such law may also contain provisions for the devolution of powers and responsibilities on the Panchayat at the appropriate level.

#### **Powers to impose Taxes and Funds of the Panchayats ( Article 243 H)**

The Legislature of the State authorized the Panchayat to levy and collect such taxes, duties, tolls, and fees as per the procedure prescribed.

#### **State Finance Commission ( Article 243 I)**

The State Governor constitutes a State Finance Commission to review the Panchayats' financial position and make specific recommendations, such as the distribution of leviable taxes, duties, and tolls between the State and Panchayat and also take the grants-in-aid from the integrated fund of the State.

#### **Audit of Accounts of Panchayats (Article 243 J)**

The Legislature of the State makes provisions for the maintenance of accounts and auditing of accounts. This provision enables the Panchayats to keep the financial transaction records for accountability and transparency.

#### **Election to the Panchayats ( Article 243 K)**

The Panchayats elections are conducted regularly by the State election machinery. State election commission prepares electoral roll for the smooth and participatory electoral processes at local elections.

#### **Addition of Eleventh Schedule (Article 243 G)**

This schedule contains a list of the following matters for Village panchayats.

1. Agriculture
2. Minor irrigation, water management, and watershed development.
3. Fisheries
4. Animal husbandry, dairying, and poultry

5. Land improvement, implementation of land reforms, land consolidation, and soil conservation.
6. Rural Housing
7. Drinking water
8. Fuel and fodder
9. Social Forestry and Farm Forestry
10. Minor Forest produce
11. Non-conventional energy sources
12. Poverty alleviation program
13. Khadi, Village, and Cottage industries
14. Liberties
15. Cultural activities
16. Family welfare
17. Women and Child Development
18. Public Distribution System
19. Markets and fairs
20. Technical training and vocational education.

## **Chapter -III**

### **Profile of Village Panchayat Mollem**

#### **Introduction**

Mollem village is situated in Dharbandora Taluka of South Goa District, Goa. It is surrounded by Western Ghats on the East and Dudhsagar rivers on the West. The total geographical area of the Village is 5268 hectares. The Mollem village is popular for the Bhagwan Mahavir Sanctuary and Mollem National Park and shares the Eastern border with Karnatakan State. The main highway i.e NH4A passes through Mollem and connects Goa to Belgaum and Hubli. Mollem Village Panchayat comprises of a total 442 households and 729 houses. The total population of the Village is 2450, out of which 1287 are male and 1163 are female. According to the data of Village Panchayat Mollem, there are 1848 voters (971 male and female 577). There are 455 Ration Card holders; 59 are BPL families. There are two Revenue villages, Sangodd bhag and Mollem bhag.

As per the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, the Mollem Village Panchayat comes under the C category, which is categorized based on the total population. The village panchayat Mollem has seven wards. The 1st ward is the Jamboli, which has three sub-wards: Nandran, Jamboli, and Gawaliwada (Satpal). The total population of these ward is 589. In Jamboli, is one of the beautiful ward surrounded it by 'Kulagar' (coconut plantation, arecanut plantation, cashew plantations). People also engaged in paddy farming. They use different paddy crops for cultivation like 'Jaya, Jyoti, and karzat'. In this farming process, the women participated on a large scale. Besides human resources, women play an active role in the agricultural field. Regarding the farming process, there is no difference between men and women. The women tried their best to manage their family and other domestic life systematically. So in some sense, it gives women the freedom to participate outside their household life. Prior to



demarcating Bhagwan wildlife sanctuary the residence of Nandran ward were residing in the forest areas under the Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary. In that place, they have their crops plantation like cashew, jackfruit and other fruits and medicinal herbs in a large amount. But the movement of wild animals in their habitation leads to challenges to their life and livelihood. The forest department displaced them to another place by providing compensation and land for building the houses. Govt. took steps to settle their issues and assured them of providing all the facilities in newly settled areas. So Govt. intervention mechanisms for displaced residents helped the women live better lives. Earlier, due to a lack of facilities such as electricity, water, etc., women had more household workload, mainly cooking became difficult due to such lack of basic amenities. Before electrification, people, especially women, depended on traditional lamps (chimani). So after setting down in Nandran, their living condition improved much more. Finally, the third sub- ward is the Gawaliwada where most of the population belongs to the Dhangar community. The main occupation of people is dairy farming. They have goats, cows, and buffalos. The areas of mollem village has sufficient grazing land. Both men and women play an active role in their livelihood activity. Dairy farming is considered one of the essential livelihood occupations that directly strengthened their economy.

The Second Ward is the Mollem, comprised of two sub-ward like, Mollem and Marutinagar. The ward has a market area, and some of the Bhagawan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary areas are under these areas. The office of village Panchayat Mollem is located in Mollem ward. The total population of the ward is 553. Since this ward is closely attached to the NH4A highway, the people are more involved in business activities such as grocery shops, wine shops, tea stalls, hotels, and restaurants. So all these factors give women an opportunity to show their

presence in society by actively participating in the family business activity and making themselves independent.

The Third Ward is the Dukale with four sub-wards like Zarishet, Dukale, the 20-point scheme of Mollem area, and Zariwada. In these wards, the people are more involved in farming and other allied agriculture activities. The total population consists of 552. The name Zariwado is a local name derived from 'Zor' (spring). It is one of the vital sources of water for locals belonging to this Village and nearby areas. People live in harmony with each other. People of this area perform traditional festivals like shigmo, dhalo etc. Traditional cultural ceremonies give women a platform to celebrate their festivals and discuss their common issues and problems. So in this way, various self help group have been formed which aim is to make women self-independent in all forms of life, such as socially, economically, culturally, politically, mentally, etc.

The Fourth ward is the Bondumal which comprises a total of 4 sub-ward; Bharkatem, Bondumol, Cansaulim, and Marad. The total population of this ward is 412. Most of the people from this ward are agriculturalists. They cultivate a variety of crops for their self-consumption. Before mining activities were closed, most people were influenced by mining activities. People from this area also depend on cashew plantations. In Bondumal, there are two temples: one is of the Sateri Goddess, and the other is of Mahadev God. The surrounding area of these places is full of greenery with scenic beauty.

The Fifth ward is the Palaskata which had three sub-wards: Palaskata, Maisel, and Dhat-farm. These areas mainly comprise of Dhangar community. The primary livelihood occupation of people is agriculture and dairy farming. It has a total population of 443. Recently the Forest

Department established the Biodiversity Park, which created employment opportunities, especially for women.

The Sixth ward is the Suctolim, comprised of 5 sub-wards: Suctolim, Deugal, Perumol, Makadyem, and Odamol. Since even after having more sub-wards compared to others but in terms of population, it has only just 313 total population. When it comes to the occupation of the people, they are more inclined towards agricultural activities such as sugarcane plantations, vegetables, cashew plantations, and paddy cultivation—Makadyem area, dominated by the Schedule Tribe Community.

Finally, the 7th ward is the Kajumol which has five sub-wards: Kajumol, Dhat-Sangod, Bhagatmol, Khutyemol, and Tarchemol. It has a total 588 population—most of the areas in this ward are covered for mining activities.

### **Role of Village Panchayat**

Mollem Village Panchayat was established in 1977. The first election was held in December 1977, elected the representative to village Panchayat namely Vithal R. Gaonkar, Mangaldas H. Gaonkar, Vaman V. Khandeparkar, Anandi Sagun Gaonkar, Ramu Fondu Gaonkar. The first Panchayat council comprises one women representative. The second election was held in January 1982; elected members were Vaman V. Khandeparkar, Harischandra Sangodkar, Ramesh Sangodkar, Laxman F. Gaonkar, and Vatsala K. Khutkar. In the second panchayat election, only one women candidate won the election.

### Women's Representatives in Village Panchayat Mollem

Sr.No	Election	Name of the Representative	Position in the Panchayat
1	1977	Anandi Sagun Gaonkar	Panch
2	1982	Vatsala K. Khulkar	Panch
3	1986	Kesar M. Gaonkar	Panch
4	1991	Manisha M.S. Verekar	Panch
5	1996	Sushma P. Sawant - 1996 Mrs. Bhagi Sago Suzre - 1997	Panch Deputy Sarpanch (31.07.1997 to 13.08.1997)
6	2002	Vaishali V. Khandeparkar Pournima Govekar	Panch Sarpanch / Administer (01.02.2002 to 31.01.2007) / (01.02.2007 to 22.05.2007)
7	2007	Smita S. Gaonkar Savita M.G Sangodkar  Vishranti G. Gaonkar	Panch Sarpanch (17.07.2007 to 14.1.2008)  Deputy Sarpanch (28.12.2010 to 17.1.2011)
8	2012	Snehalata Naik  Kalpana Malekar	Sarpanch (28.5.2012 to 27.6.2013)  Deputy Sarpanch (28.6.2013 to 20.2.2017)
9	2017	Tanavi Kerkar  Snehalata Naik	Sarpanch (19.6.2017 to 16.8.2018) (29.06.2020 to 01.01.2022)  Sarpanch (27.12.2018 to 14.3.2019) (17.9.2019 to 26.5.2020) (17.9.2019 to 26.5.2020)
10	2022	Varsha Janu Zore Jani Guno Damekar Pranali Dattaprasad Verekar	Deputy Sarpanch Panch Panch

The above table shows the Women's representative in the Mollem Village Panchayat from the date of establishment of the village panchayat to till now. In the first 1977 election, Mrs. Anandi Sagun Gaonkar was elected as the Panch member, then in the 1982 election,

Mrs. Vatsala K. Khulkar was elected as the Panch. From 1977 to 1991 the village panchayat Mollem had only 1 women representative in each tenure. But since from 1996, the number of women representative increase from 1 to 2 member as Mrs. Susham P Sawant was elected as the panch and Mrs. Bhagi Sago Suzre became the Deputy Sarpanch for the first time, just for one month. This is possible due to implementation of 73rd Constitutional Amendment where it provides 33% of reservations to women in local self government. So again in the 2002 election, Mrs. Vaishali V. Khandeparkar was elected as the Panch and Mrs. Pournima Govekar became the Sarpanch; later, she was appointed Administer of the Panchayat. Than in the 2007 election, the women's representative number increased to 3 members as Mrs. Smita S. Gaonkar was elected as Panch, Mrs. Savita M.G Sangodkar became the Sarpanch and Mrs. Vishranti G. Gaonkar became the Deputy Sarpanch for a certain period. In the 2012 election, Miss. Snehalata Naik became the Sarpanch and Mrs. Kalpana Malekar became the Deputy Sarpanch for a certain period respectively. However in the 2017 election Miss. Tanavi Kerkar was elected as the Sarpanch and she is considered one of the youngest Sarpanch of Mollem Village Panchayat and later on Miss. Snehalata Naik was elected as the Sarpanch. In the recent Panchayat body of 2022, there are 3 women representative namely Mrs. Varsha Janu Zore as the Deputy Sarpanch, Mrs. Jani Guno Damekar and Mrs. Pranali Dattaprasad Verekar is elected as the Panch member respectively. Thus from the above table, we can see the women's active participation in the political process which directly contributed to empowering the women.

#### **Present Panchayat Council (from 2022 to 2027)**

<b>Ward No</b>	<b>Name of the representative/s</b>	<b>Position in the Panchayat</b>
4	Kapil Chandrakant Naik	Sarpanch
5	Varsha Janu Zore	Deputy Sarpanch

6	Vaman Shivram Gaonkar	Panch
7	Vithoba Shaba Malekar	Panch
3	Suhas Suresh Gaonkar	Panch
1	Jani Guno Damekar	Panch
2	Pranali Dattaprasad Verekar	Panch

The above table shows the Present Panchayat Council of Mollem Village Panchayat (from 2022 to 2027). Mollem Village Panchayat consists of a total of 7 representatives among that 4 are male representatives and 3 are women representatives. The Kapil Chandrakant Naik from Ward 04 is the Sarpanch of Mollem village panchayat, followed by Mrs. Varsha Janu Zore from Ward 05 became the Deputy Sarpanch. Other Panch members are Vaman Shivram Gaonkar from Ward 06, Vithoba Shaba Malekar from Ward 07, Suhas Suresh Gaonkar from Ward 03, Jani Guno Damekar from Ward 01 and Pranali Dattaprasad Verekar from Ward 02. One important point to note is that all the women's representative elected wards are entirely reserved for women.

### **Functioning of the Village Panchayat Mollem**

#### **The structure and staff of the Village Panchayat**

Mollem Village Panchayat is a C-category Panchayat comprised of a population between 2001 to 5000. The entire area of Mollem is divided into seven wards. It has limited full-time staff: a peon, Clerk, Gram Sevak, and Secretary. Secretary is the backbone of the Panchayat. The Village council comprises Sarpanch, Deputy Sarpanch, and other Panch members.

### **Proactive disclosure of information**

Mollem Village Panchayat implements the RTI Act 2005. Secretary is the Public Information Officer in Panchayat. Village Panchayat has displayed specific proactive disclosure of information, such as details of the representatives (name, ward, and tenure). List of Panchayat Committee, Map Regional plan, Adarsh Takta of Village Panchayat Mollem where it consists of all basic information about the Village such as the number of population, household, educational institutions, temples, churches, BPL family, voters, Ration Card holders, self-help group etc. Apart from primary information, Village Panchayat also provides various other information related to schemes, etc.

### **Conduct Gram Sabha and Council meetings**

The Village Panchayat conducts regular Gram Sabha meetings. It conveys four ordinary meetings of Gram Sabha on Sundays in January, April, July, and October of every year. It also conveys special meetings every year on 26th January, 15th August, 2nd October, and 19th December. Panchayat Council meets every month to discuss the business of panchayats.

### **Committees constituted by Panchayat**

73<sup>rd</sup> amendment act provides the constitution of various committees of Panchayat, such as Ward Development Committee, Ward Sanitation Committee, Village Education Committee, Social Audit Committee, Garbage Management Committee, Village Child Committee, Bio-Diversity Committee, Health and Sanitation Committee, Road Safety Committee, Village Committee under MGNREGA, Forest Right Committee, Justice Committee, Village Development Committee and other various Committee like production Committee, the Amenities Committee and Village Garbage Committee. The Mollem Village Panchayat has not constituted all the committees. Only a few essential committees have been formed by the

Panchayats. The functioning of these committees is not up to the mark. Most of the time these committees relied on their political representatives. Womens have limited representations and role in the committees.

### **Finance of the Village Panchayat**

As per the Goa Panchayat Raj Act 1994, the village panchayat has its source of revenue. They are authorized to collect taxes and fees. Taxes include house tax, tax on buildings, tax on establishments, etc. Fess related to the issue of various certificates, etc. Panchayat also gets grants in aid from the government to carry out their Panchayat work. Presently Mollem Panchayat received grants under 15 finance commissions. They can also collect their octroi and other matching grants.

### **Village Development Plan**

Village Development Plan is part of the participatory planning activity of the Panchayat. It is the comprehensive development plan of the Panchayat prepared by the Villgae Development Committee (VDC). The primary purpose of the Village Development Plan is to develop the Village in a unified manner, including economic development, infrastructure development, and other aspects of human development i.e., education, health, drinking water supply etc. Village Development Plan (VDPs) ensure holistic and integrated development of the Village. The VDP helps to develop a future vision and roadmap for the overall development of the Village Community with socio-economic well-being and success. The Panchayet spending has been done as per the VDP of the year.



### **Schemes implemented by V.P**

Village Panchayat Mollem is the local institution facilitating the implementation of various government welfare schemes. The Panchayat provides information on various schemes.

People visit the Panchayat to avail the benefits of following welfare schemes.

- Dayanand social security scheme
- Atal Asara scheme
- Rajiv Awaas Yojana 2018
- Griha Aadhar scheme
- Ladli Laxmi scheme
- Mamta scheme
- Antodya scheme
- Kisan card
- Deen Dayal Swasthya seva Yojana schemes

### **Services provided by V.P**

The Village Panchayat Mollem provides various services such as issuing income certificates, birth-death certificates, occupancy certificates, No Dues certificates, residence certificates, character certificates, poverty certificates, divergence certificates, etc. Even village panchayat issues license for the construction/ reconstruction of any structure, license for hotels/shops/ bakery, etc. The Village Panchayat even issued the NOC for water connection, Electricity connection, house repair, road cutting, etc.

### **Issues of the Village Panchayat Mollem**

Mollem Panchayat is a very peaceful Panchayat. Law and order is one of the best in the jurisdiction of Mollem. Recently, some critical issues have arisen in Mollem Panchayat jurisdiction, becoming a burning issue throughout Goa. The state-sponsored destruction of

huge forest trees in the heart of Bagavan Mahavir wildlife sanctuary for three-liner proposed projects, namely double-tracking, National Highway widening, and power transmission lines, has created a fearful and traumatic atmosphere in the Mollem. The state destroyed a huge forest during CoVID pandemic. The Villagers witnessed a very scary situation and call for "Save Mollem" protest to restore and protect Mollem biodiversity. Apart from the mentioned burning issue Mollem Panchayat also has other problems such as unemployment, sufficient basic amenities. The population of Mollem village panchayat highly depended on agriculture and business activity apart from other services. They also highly relied on mining activity, and most of the people were truck owners. But the sudden stoppage of mining had immensely affected the people's livelihood.

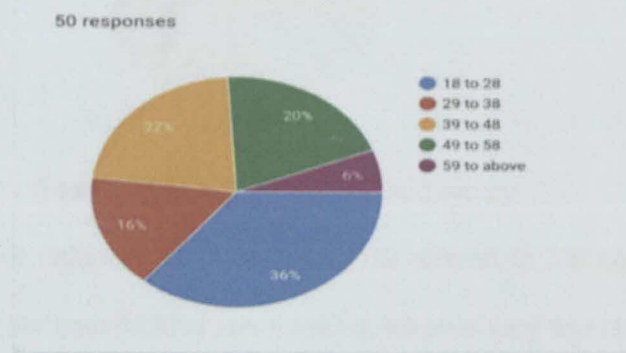
## Chapter - IV

### Data Analysis

The chapter focuses on Data Analysis to examine the respondent's opinions regarding the role of Village Panchayat Mollem in empowering the women within the Panchayat jurisdictions. The structured closed-ended questionnaire was used to collect the Data. A total of 50 respondents' samples are used in the field study.

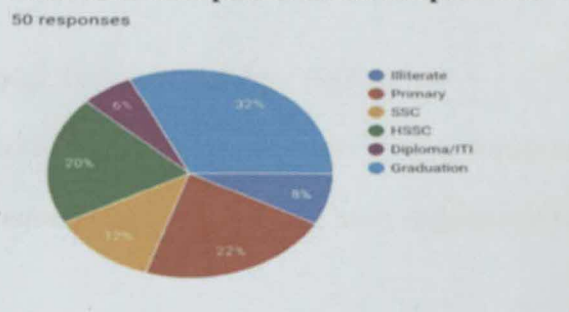
#### 1. Profile of the Respondents

Chart: 1.1  
Age-wise Profile of the Respondents



The above pie chart depicts the age group of women respondents in the village panchayat Mollem. It is clear that the majority (36%) of the women are from the age group between 18 to 28 years old, followed by 22% of the women from the age group of 39 to 48 years. 20% of the women are from 49 to 58 years old. 16% are from the age group of 29 to 38 years. Very few (6%) of the respondents are above 59 years of age.

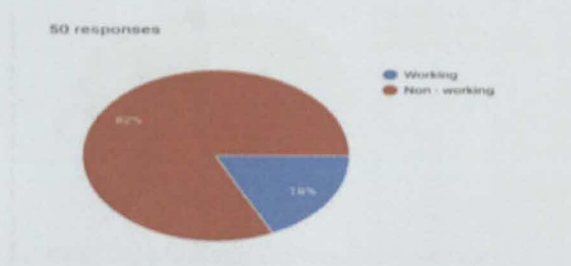
Chart: 1.2  
Education-wise profile of the Respondents



Source: Data collected from field survey

The above pie chart shows the Educational Qualifications of women in the Village Panchayat. Among that, 8% of women are illiterate, 22% have done primary schooling, 12% are SSC passed, 20% are HSSC passed, and 6% have done Diploma/ITI. 22% of the respondents are graduates. 32 % of the respondents are illiterate.

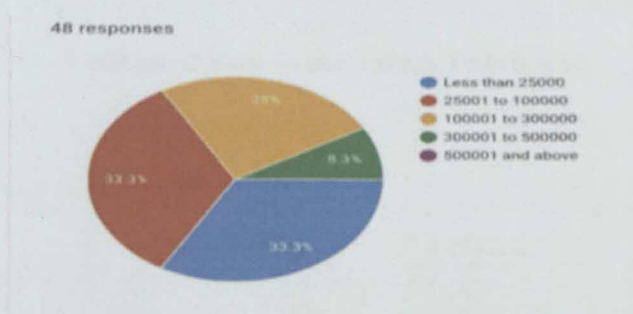
Chart: 1.3  
**Occupation-wise profile of the Respondents**



Source: Data collected from field survey

The above pie -chart depicts the occupation of the women in Village Panchayat Mollem. Most (82%) women are household or non-working, whereas very few (18%) work.

Chart: 1.4  
**Income wise profile of the Respondents**



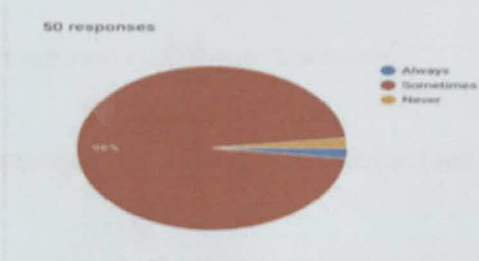
Source: Data collected from field survey

The above pie chart shows the Annual income of the women family members of the Village Panchayat Mollem. An equal number (33.3%) and most respondents have less than one lakh

annual income. Very few (8.3%) respondents have 300001 to 500000 annual incomes from all sources. None of the women above five lacks yearly income.

2. Visit to the Village Panchayat

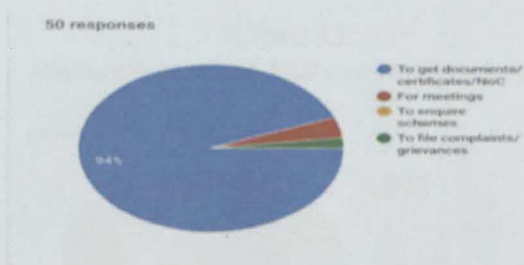
Chart 2.1  
Respondents' Visit to Village Panchayat



Source: Data collected from field survey

The above pie chart shows the data concerning the question: How often do you visit the Village Panchayat? Most (96%) people said they sometimes visit the Village Panchayat. Very few equal numbers of respondents always visit the Panchayat, and some never Data collected from field surveys visit the Panchayat.

Chart: 2.2  
Purpose of Visit to the Village Panchayat

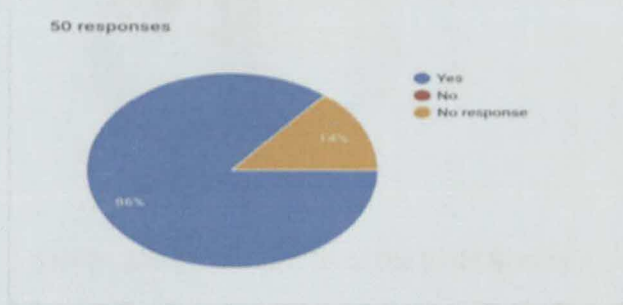


Source: Data Collected from the Field Survey

The above pie chart reveals respondents' opinions on purpose visits to the Village Panchayat. According to the data, around 94% of women visited the Village Panchayat to get documents/ certificates/NOCs. However, only 4% visit for meetings, whereas 2% visit to file complaints/ grievances. At the same time, none of the women visits the village panchayat to enquire about schemes.

### 3. Behaviour of the Panchayat staff towards women

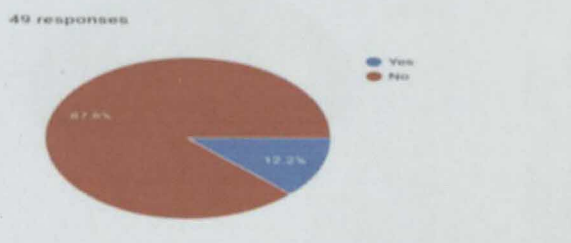
Chart:3.1  
Respondent's opinion on the Behaviour of the staff



Source: Data Collected from the Field Survey

The above pie chart shows the response to the question on Behaviour and cooperation. The response indicates that women are satisfied with Panchayat staff behavior and cooperation. 14% of the women did not respond to the said question.

Chart: 3.2  
Women's comfortability in the Panchayat



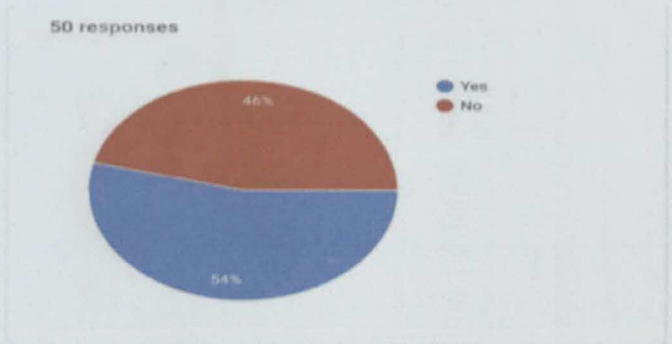
Source: Data Collected from the Field Survey



The pie chart analyses the response to the question on women's comfortability in the Panchayat. Around 87.8% of women expressed comfort in the Panchayat, whereas 12.2% felt uncomfortable in the panchayat/ meeting.

4. Reservation to the women in Village Panchayat

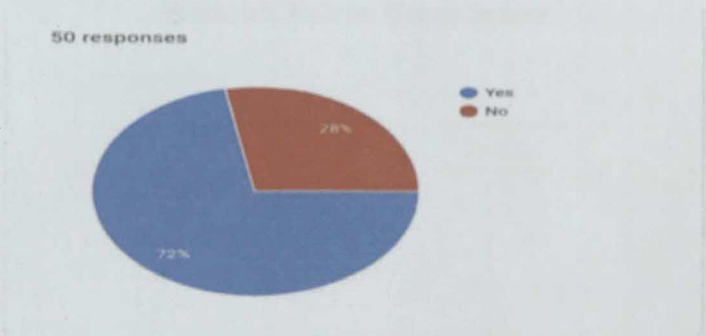
Chart: 4  
Women's awarness on the reservation



Source: Data Collected from the Field Survey

The above chart indicates women's awareness of reservations to women in Village Panchayat. 54% of women are aware of the reservations to them in Village Panchayat, whereas 46% of women respondents said they are unaware of such reservations.

Chart: 4.1  
Women's Perception on the Benefits of Reservation

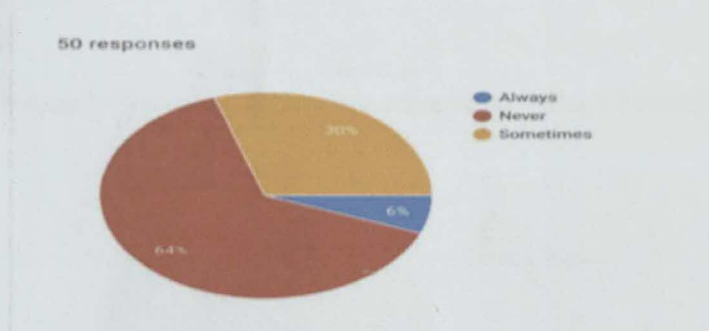


Source: Data Collected from the Field Survey

The above pie chart shows women's responses to the benefits of political reservation to women. Those who were aware of the reservations said that it benefits them to a great extent. At the same time, few are unaware of the benefits of reservations.

## 5. Gram Sabha

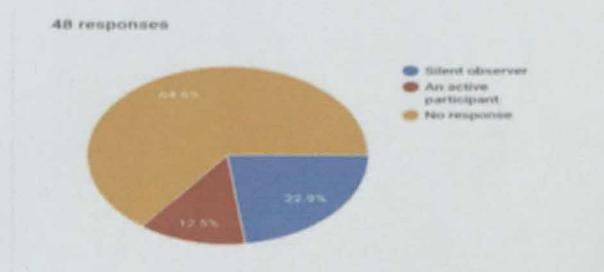
Chart: 5.1  
Perception of Women on Gram Sabha Attendance



Source: Data collected from field survey

The above pie chart shows the data related to the question asked to women of Mollem Village panchayat: How often do you attend the meeting conducted by the Gram Sabha? As per the collected data, around 64% of women never participated in Gram Sabha meetings. 30% of the women attend the meeting of Gram Sabha sometimes, whereas only 6% of women always attend the meeting of Gram Sabha.

Chart 5.2  
Women's Role in Gram Sabha



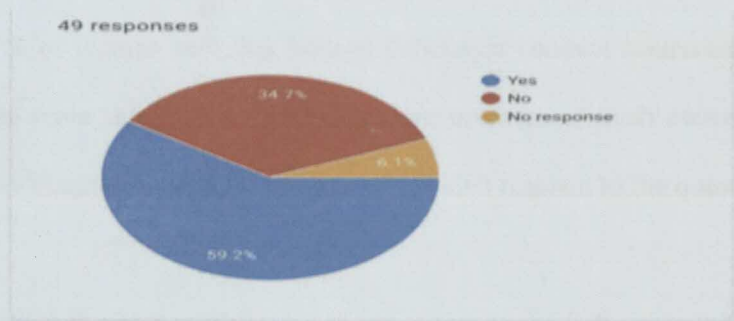
Source: Data collected from field survey



The above pie chart shows the figure related to the question asked to the women of Mollem Village Panchayat: What has been your role in Gram Sabha? The majority 64.6%) of women respondents did not respond to this question. However, 23% of women said they prefer to remain salient observers. At the same time, only 12.5% of women participate actively in Gram Sabha meetings.

6. Welfare Schemes

Chart: 6  
Women's Perception on welfare schemes of Village Panchayat



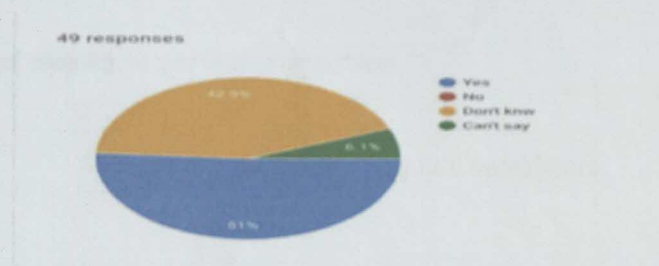
Source: Data collected from field survey

The above pie-chart figures out the respondents' opinion on the following question: Are you the beneficiary of any schemes of the Panchayat? 59.2% of women are the beneficiaries of schemes, whereas 34.7% of women are not beneficiaries of any schemes, 6 % of whom didn't respond.

## 7. Awareness Programm

Chart: 7

Women's Perception on awareness program of Village Panchayat



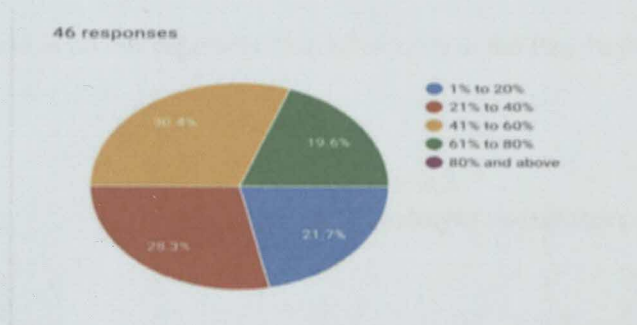
Source: Data collected from field survey

The above graph indicates women's Perceptions on awareness programs in Village Panchayat. 51% of women said that Village Panchayat conduct awareness programs for women. At the same time, 42.9% of women are unaware of such awareness programs undertaken by Village Panchayat. Very few (6%) didn't respond to the question.

## 8. Trust in elected Representatives

Chart: 8

Women's Trust on elected representatives



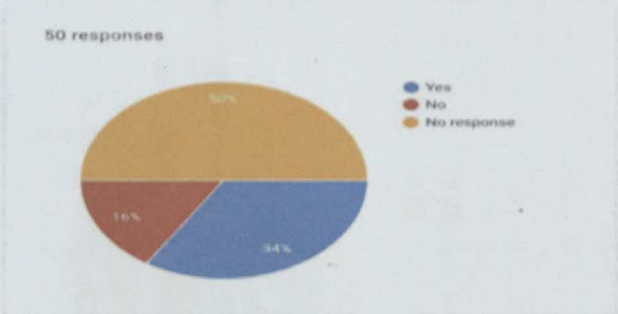
Source: Data collected from field survey

The above pie chart shows women's Trust in their elected representatives. As per the data, nearly 30.4% of women have 41% to 60% of Trust in their elected panch. Whereas 28.3% of women have 21% to 40% of Trust, around 21.7% of women have 1% to 20% of Trust, and

very few women, around 19.6%, have 61% to 80% of Trust. But none of the women have 80% to above Trust in their elected panch.

9. Representation of women in various committees

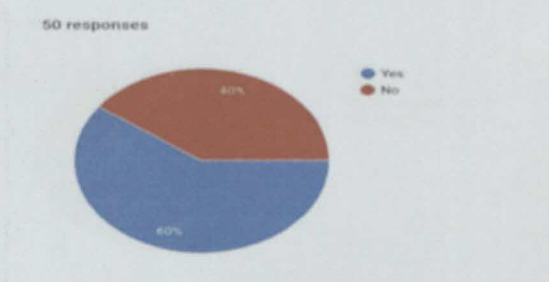
Chart: 9.1  
Women's Representations in Committees



Source: Data collected from field survey

The above pie chart reveals women's perceptions of women's representation in various Panchayat committees. Half of the respondents didn't respond to the question. Of those who answered the question, 34% said they represent in the panchayat committees, whereas 16% opined that there is no fair representation of women in the Panchayat committees.

Chart: 9.2  
Functioning of Panchayat committees

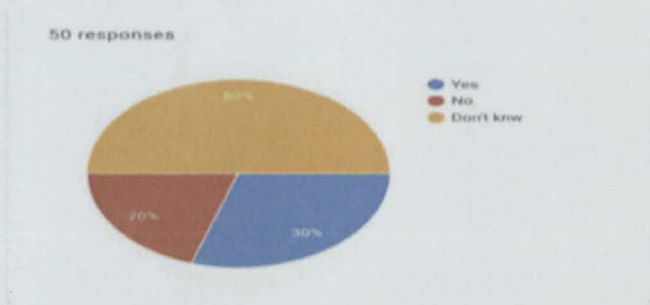


Source: Data collected from field survey

The above graph indicates the women's Perceptions on the functioning of Panchayat Committees. 50% said Panchayat committees function somewhat, whereas 40% said Panchayat committees are not working properly

10. Guidelines for Women's Safety

Chart: 10.1  
Display of guidelines for women's safety in VP.

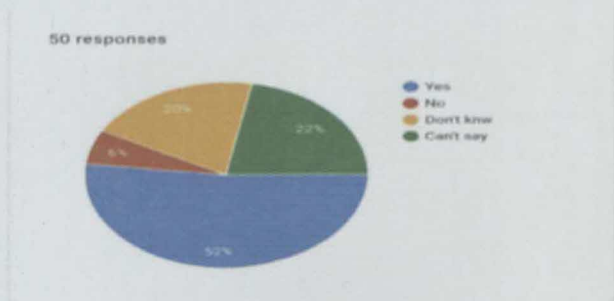


Source: Data collected from field survey

The pie chart shows the women's opinion on a display of guidelines displayed by Village Panchayat for Women's safety. Half of the women are not aware of any display of guidelines. 30% of the respondents are aware about the display of guideline. Whereas 20% of the women said, no guideline has been displayed in the Panchayat.

11. Employment Generation

Chart: 11.1  
Womens perception on employment generation



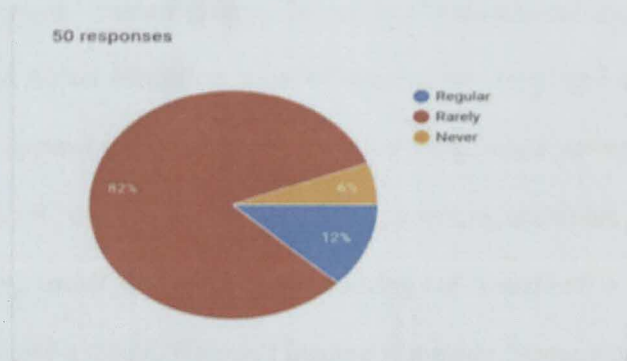
Source: Data collected from field survey



The above pie chart shows women's Perception on the Village Panchayat initiative to generate employment opportunities for women. 52% of respondents said Panchayat makes efforts to generate employment opportunities. Whereas few respondents said Panchayat has made no efforts to generate employment.

12. Organising skilled based activities

Chart: 12.1  
Women's Perception on Skilled based activities



Source: Data collected from field survey

The above circle graph shows the data related to the skilled-based activities organized by village Panchayat for women. Most (82%) of the women said Panchayat rarely organizes skilled-based activities for women. 12% of the women said Panchayat regularly conducted the activities. Very few (6%) said Panchayat never conducted skill-based activities for women.

## **Chapter – V**

### **Findings, Conclusion, and Suggestions**

#### **Finding**

##### **Profile of Rural Women**

Mollem Village is one of the beautiful rural villages, surrounded by scenic beauty. The women's typical rural life is visible and adds to Mollem village's beauty. In Mollem Village, there is harmony among women groups. In terms of educational qualification, very few women have pursued higher education, most of which have completed up to SSC and HSSC. Since most people depend on agriculture and other small-scale activities, pursuing higher education was difficult, even with the problem concerning transport facilities. Regarding women's occupations, most women are non-working but contribute a lot to household and agriculture activities. As a result, Women's income is meager. Some women have engaged in temporary work, but their remuneration is low compared to working women in other areas, especially in urban areas.

##### **Reason for visiting Panchayat**

It is observed that the women do not regularly visit the Village Panchayat. Most of the time, those who visit the Panchayat only get the required documents/ certificates/NOC's because, according to the Goa Panchayat Raj Act, every Village Panchayat has enshrined this power. Apart from that, most of them never visit the Village Panchayat for meetings such as Gram Sabhas or other inquiries about schemes. There are different reasons for women not visiting the Panchayat, such as lack of information about meetings and their busy schedules in household work. Lack of timely transport to visit the Panchayat for meetings. Etc.

### **The behavior of Panchayat staff toward women**

The behavior of the staff towards women is very cooperative. Women never feel uncomfortable or fearful; instead, they ask questions confidently. The staff behavior towards the women and men is the same as; they never discriminate based on gender, and they treat everyone equally.

### **Reservation to the women in Village Panchayat**

In terms of the Panchayat Reservation, most of the women lacked exact knowledge of it. But most believed that political reservation would help to empower them. It enables them to represent women folk in the decision-making forum in Village Panchayat. Thus it gives them a platform to address their common and specific issues in the Panchayat. With the help of political empowerment, it is also possible to empower women in terms of economic, social, cultural, and so on. Many women reveal that in today's time, political reservation has become the need for an hour through which women can avail equal opportunities with men. Apart from their culture and social life, they can show their more significant presence in politics not only at the local level but also at the national and international levels. So they express that reservation should continue till total women empowerment and equal representation in decision-making forums.

### **Gram Sabha**

Gram Sabha is the common place to assemble and discuss the village issues. Most Mollem women never attended the Gram Sabha meetings called by Panchayat. Very few women attend the Gram Sabha meetings, but their role in the discussions is a silent observer. Women face obstacles when it comes to the Gram Sabha meeting. Firstly, the women are unaware of

the date of holding the Gram Sabha meetings—secondly, the issue of travel to attend the meeting at Panchayat.

### **Welfare Schemes**

In Mollem, most of the women received benefits from welfare schemes implemented by the government of Goa. Schemes like Griha Aadhae plays an essential role in the lives of rural women in the Mollem area. But at the same time, some women can not afford it because their husbands are government servants. Some marginal women have not yet received the benefits of such schemes. As revealed by the women, their file is pending due to the proper required documents and enclosures. In such cases, they expect intervention from the Village Panchayat.

### **Awareness Programme**

Regarding awareness programs, the village Panchayat conducts various programs for villagers; one of the most successful is the mega health camps for women. Before the pandemic, the Panchayat organized skilled-based activities for women, such as cooking, tailoring, and rangoli classes. Panchayats also conduct various competitions for women, such as rangoli-making competitions, healthy diet food, garland, or fat-making competitions. But awareness programs of schemes and training related to Self Help Groups for women are lacking in the initiatives of Panchayat.

### **Trust in elected representatives**

Trust is an essential component of transparency and accountability. Women in Mollem have varying degrees of trust in elected representatives. It is very from woman to woman. Trust often measures in terms of honesty, simplicity, attitude and representative capacity to serve



the electorate. Some women showed the highest trust in elected representatives, while others revealed the slightest degree due to elected representatives' egoism and self motives.

### **Representation of women in various committees**

As per the 73rd amendment act, the Goa Panchayati Raj Act provides provisions to various committees in the Panchayats. These committee members are finalized in the Gram Sabha meetings of the Panchayat. Mollem panchayat does oblige to the requirements, but not all the committees are constituted by the Panchayat. But in the case of fair representations of women in various committees, they are lacking behind. Only elected women are becoming part of this committee. Also, these committees are not functioning up to the mark.

### **Guidelines for Women's Safety**

Nowadays, displaying safety measures is mandatory for all institutions, and in fact, it is a part of the proactive disclosure mechanism under the RTI Act 2005. Mollem Village Panchayat, there is no display of signage and guidelines for women's safety. Many women reveal that Panchayat should give more attention to women's safety by displaying guidelines and creating awareness.

### **Generating employment opportunities**

Mollem being a rural beautiful village, Magavan Mahavir wildlife sanctuary and Dudhasgar waterfall are important attractions for the tourist. If properly managed, it can become a vital source of employment for the locals. Locals are unhappy over cutting thousands of forest green in the Mollem Sanctuary. They believe that Panchayat can play a better role to protect the same. In fact, Mollem is the best place for eco- tourism. There are few or almost nil

employment generation opportunities in the Mollem panchayat. Revival of Mollem agro-ecology can boost women's employment in Mollem Village.

### **Conclusion**

The Mollem village is a remote area in the Dharbandora Taluka, a recently carved taluka. The village is known for its scenic beauty and shares the densely forested region at the Goa-Karnataka border. Its rurality is clearly visible through the prism of the area's ecology, culture, and overall demography. Mollem women are simple, honest, and hardworking, facing many obstacles in their way. They play an important role in family and household activities. But when it comes to public life, they have their challenges. This can be addressed by way of a multiple empowerment approach. The political empowerment at the local self-government is the best way to empower women. Both women and institutions have to take interest and initiative for the overall development of women and Village Mollem. Since very few women attend and visit the Gram Panchayat. Empowering women can pressure the Panchayat for more responsive and accountable toward women's issues.

### **Suggestions**

1. Panchayat should create more awareness regarding the schemes and different policies for women. They should also carry out awareness through door-to-door communication/campaigning.
2. Mollem Women shall come forward to understand its agro-ecological rich natural resources for their livelihood. They should be self-empowered.

3. Panchayat should use the digitalized communication mode to spread information related to women's issues.
4. Every panch member should work efficiently in their particular ward to make the women aware of different initiatives adopted by Village Panchayats for women.
5. Panch members have to work hard to win the trust of the people on them. At least in the month, i.e., on Sunday, the panch should conduct meetings to provide updates regarding developmental activities.
6. Better communication should be there among the women and their elected representatives, and both should respect each other's views on different matters.
7. Village Panchayats should encourage active and inactive SHGs by providing wider opportunities for starting small-scale businesses. Along with that, the Panchayat should also launch a digitalized app for women's safety. Simultaneously, the Panchayat should take active initiatives by establishing the pink force police patrolling, specifically in village areas.
8. Panchayat requires a holistic and participative approach to create awareness, conduct workshops on various schemes and policies, and make villagers vigilant and empowered, especially women.
9. Panchayats should generate more employment opportunities, especially for life skills.

10. Panchayat should take the initiative to bring together all the SHGs to work jointly to achieve their common empowerment goals.
11. Women should regularly visit the Panchayat, attend the meetings, and demand equal representation in committees, planning, and decision-making.

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## **Appendix**

### **Questionnaire**

Sir/Madam, I am Saili Usgaonkar, pursuing MA in Political Science at Goa University, Taleigao Plateau. As a part of my study, I am doing a dissertation on the topic of Women's Empowerment through Village Panchayat: A case study of Mollem Village Panchayat Dharbandora- Goa. Therefore your response to the set of questions is important to complete my study. I ensure you that all the information given by you will be kept confidential and used for study purposes only.

Respondents Name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Ward: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Part I – Respondent's Detail**

1. Age: 18 to 28, 29 to 38, 39 to 48, 49 to 58, 59 to above.
2. Educational Qualification: Illiterate, Primary, SSC, HSSC, Diploma/ ITI, Graduation.
3. Occupation: Non-working, Working – Govt / Private
4. Family Structure: Joint family, Nuclear family
5. Annual income: less than 25000, 25000 to 100000, 100000 to 300000, 300000 to 500000, Above 500000
6. Marital Status: Married, Unmarried, Widow, Divorcee

#### **Part II -- Empowerment**

- 1) How often do you visit the Village Panchayat?  
A) Always  
B) Sometimes  
C) Never
- 2) Purpose of visit to Village Panchayat  
A) To get documents/certificates/NoC  
B) For meetings  
C) To enquire about schemes  
D) To file complaints/grievances
- 3) Does your village Panchayat staff cooperative? A) Yes B) No C) No response
- 4) Have you ever felt uncomfortable in the Panchayat/ meeting? A) Yes B) No

- 5) Are you aware of the reservation of women in Panchayat? A) Yes B) No
- 6) Do you think that political reservation helps women for their empowerment?  
A) Yes B) No
- 7) How often do you attend the meeting conducted by the Gram Sabha?  
A) Always B) Never C) Sometimes
- 8) What has been your role in Gram Sabha? A) Silent observer B) An Active Participant
- 9) Are you beneficiary of any schemes of the Panchayat? A) Yes B) No C) No response
- 10) Does your Village Panchayat conduct an awareness program for women?  
A) Yes B) No C) Don't know D) Can't say
- 11) How effective do you think is Panchayat for the development of the Village? 1-2-3-4-5
- 12) How much trust do you have in your elected Panch at the Panchayat level? 1-2-3-4-5
- 13) How much trust do you have in Village Panchayat? 1-2-3-4-5
- 14) Do you have fair representations of women in various committees constituted by your Village Panchayat? A) Yes B) No C) No Response
- 15) Do the committees active in their work? A) Yes B) No
- 16) Is there any guideline displayed by Village Panchayat for Women's safety?  
A) Yes B) No
- 17) Do Village Panchayat generate employment opportunities for women?  
A) Yes  
B) No  
C) Don't know  
D) Can't say
- 18) Do your Panchayat organize any skilled-based activities for women?  
A) Regular  
B) Rarely  
C) Never
- 19) Any Suggestions/incidents related to women's empowerment \_\_\_\_\_