

# **ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS IN HIMACHAL PRADESH: A PROFILE OF ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES IN 2021**

## **ABSTRACT**

*[The passing of the Seventy-Third and Seventy-Fourth constitutional amendment in India the structure of governance has changed and the rural and urban local self-governance has gained powers. The Panchayati Raj Institutions are playing an important role in rural development as the inclusion of 29 subjects in the 11<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Indian constitution has empower the rural local bodies. The committed and qualified young representatives in the PRIs can contribute immensely and utilizes their powers. Present paper analyzes the profile of the PRIs representatives of Himachal Pradesh. The Government of Himachal Pradesh has increased the number of gram panchayats to 3615 which previously was 3226 in 12 districts and 82 development blocks. The election for rural local self-government in Himachal Pradesh held in three phases on the month of January, 2021. The present paper is an effort to compile the data related to the profile of Panchayat Raj Institutions and its representatives who have been elected in the election based on the secondary information available with the related government departments. This paper will be beneficial for the policy planners and researchers to carry forward their research work on different dimensions.]*

**Keyword:** Panchayati Raj Institutions, Himachal Pradesh, PRIs Representative, Profile

## **INTRODUCTION**

Panchayati raj institutions forms the third strata of the decentralized structure of the government of India, the two being the Central government and State government. It is widely recognized that self-governing village communities characterized by agrarian economies had existed in Indian from the earliest times. Not only are they mentioned in the *Rig Veda*, which dates from approximately 1200 B.C., there is also definite evidence available of the existence of village 'sabhas' (councils or assemblies) and 'gramins' (senior persons of the village) until about 600 B.C. These village bodies were the lines of contact with higher authorities on matters affecting the villages (Institute of Social Science, 1995).

India had, from ancient times, developed a number of systems of community-based management of local affairs. In most of the country these institutions were known as panchayats, which means, literally, a council of five persons. Their functions bordered on local governance akin to what was developed in other countries during their agrarian phases like the Russian 'Mir', German 'Mark' and the medieval 'Manor' of England. However, in most parts of India, the panchayat system was based on the age-old caste system, social status and family. During British rule in India, in the latter part of 19th century the local self-government concept was introduced first in the town areas and later in the villages.<sup>1</sup> Since then, it took more than hundred years for the local self-government bodies to become part of the Indian Constitution. These bodies are termed panchayats,<sup>2</sup> but are now democratic institutions with new content. (Mathew, 2003)

The present form of the PRIs is contribution of numbers of committees that has been constituted over the period of time.

### **EMERGENCE OF 73<sup>RD</sup> CAA**

**Balwant Rai Mehta Committee, 1957:** This committee was appointed to monitor the functioning of the Community Development Program, 1952, and National Extension service, 1953 and to recommend ideas to improve their efficiency. The committee suggested democratic decentralisation that came to be known as the “Panchayati Raj System.” The committee also suggested the three-tier system at the village, block, and district levels. **Sadiq Ali Committee, 1964:** This Committee was constituted to report on the working of gram sabha in Rajasthan. Problems identified like illiteracy, Poor representation of women, Avoidance of meetings by the Sarpanch to escape questions, Meetings not being properly publicised, The villagers used to be unaware and didn't attend the meetings. **G.L. Vyas Committee, 1973:** This Committee stated in order to rectify the dysfunction in the system recommended compulsory attendance of Sarpanch in every meeting, statutory recognition of gram sabha, meetings should be in May-June and

---

<sup>1</sup>Around the trading centers the British rulers constituted municipal corporations as early as 1687 (Madras) and in 1870 Lord Mayo got a resolution passed by his council for decentralisation of power to bring administrative efficiency. During Lord Ripon's viceroyship in 1882, the government resolution providing for local boards with elected representatives was the watershed

<sup>2</sup>On December 22-23, 1992, the parliament of India passed two Constitution Amendments (73 and 74) and on April 24, 1993 they were incorporated as Part IX for the panchayats and Part IX A for municipalities. In December 1996 the parliament extended the 73rd Amendment to the schedule V areas where tribal populations predominate. Gram panchayats constitute the lowest level in the three-tier local government system. The panchayat at the village level covers about 2,000-5,000 population in north India and in southern states 10,000-15,000. The next level is the intermediate (block/tehsil/mandal) panchayat, constituted at the sub-district level, corresponding to between 40- and 45-gram panchayats on an average. The highest level is district or zilla panchayat

January-December, compulsory attendance of patwari. **Ashok Mehta Committee, 1977:** The Committee recommended a two-tier system in panchayats, regular social audit, regular elections, reservation of SCs and STs. **G.V.K. Rao Committee, 1985:** This Committee was the first committee to recommend providing constitutional status to Panchayati Raj Institutions. **L. M. Singhvi Committee, 1986:** This Committee recommended the establishment of Nyaya panchayats, enhancing the financial resources of panchayats. The Committee also recommended the establishment of a separate judicial tribunal to deal with the cases regarding elections or any other matters of panchayats. In September 1991, 73rd Constitutional Amendment Bill was introduced by the Lok Sabha and was passed by the same on 22nd December 1992. Rajya Sabha passed the Bill on 23rd December 1992 and it received the President's assent on 20th April 1993 and came into force on 24th April 1993.

### **SEVENTY-THIRD CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ACT-1992**

The Seventy-third Constitution Amendment Act-1992 have been brought into force by the government notification on 24<sup>th</sup> April 1993 which has very important features such as panchayats became the institutions of self-government, gram Sabha for each village or group of villages comprising all the adult members registered as voters in the gram panchayat area, three-tier system of panchayats at village, intermediate block and district levels, reservation for the weaker section such as Schedule Castes (SCs), Schedule Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in proportion to their population in the state and initially 33 per cent for Women now this reservation has been increased to 50 per cent in the approximately 20 states including Himachal Pradesh. The provision of an independent election commission in the state for superintendent, direct and control of electoral process and preparation of electoral rolls as there is five-year term and elections to constitute new bodies shall be completed before the expiry of the term. As per this 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act the panchayats will receive adequate funds for carrying out their functions. Grant from state government will constitute an important source of funding but state governments are also expected assign the revenue of certain taxes to the panchayat. In some cases, the panchayat will also be permitted to collect and retain the revenue it raises. There is provision for the establishment of finance commission to determine the principles on the basis of which adequate financial resources would be ensured for panchayats. The above

provisions under the said 73<sup>rd</sup> CAA has played the important role in the rural transformation in the last 26 years.

The Panchayati Raj Institutions has important role to play for the development of the villages as expected by the father of nation Mahatma Gandhi of ‘village swaraj’. The 11th Schedule of the Indian Constitution was added by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act in 1992 and the eleventh schedule (Article 243G) which entrusted 29 functions to Panchayats (Ministry of Panchayati Raj, 2019).

The role of the PRIs representatives is very significant to carry out the dynamic activities at the panchayat level, because post-73<sup>rd</sup> CAA the panchayats are the power center empowered to implement the variety of rural development schemes, ensuring the people participation at Gram Sabha level, ensure the youth participation, women participation, public services delivery at grass root level. Only well qualified, committed young representative can undertake modern function of PRIs at local level in transparent manner.

The traditional panchayats have undergone tremendous changes, prior to 73<sup>rd</sup> CAA the powers were limited with the panchayats and panchayat had been doing the traditional works like adjudicating the domestic conflicts between the families and villages. There were less development works due to non-availability of funds and powers, therefore even non-literate mostly respectable senior citizen had been always been there in the traditional panchayats. The enforcement of 73<sup>rd</sup> CAA amendment has transformed the role of PRIs representatives in many folds. PRIs representatives having dual responsibilities first accountability towards the society second the role in the implementation of various poverty alleviation programmes also some time called as government’s flagship programmes. The responsibility of community mobilization at gram sabha level, identification of beneficiary to many welfare schemes in transparent manners and prepare the annual plans under ‘Gram Panchayat Development Plan’ by holding the meetings at up-gram sabha or Gram Sabha level. Therefore, to undertake such dynamic or multidimensional functions with full responsibility and accountability is possible if the more and more young, dynamic, educated and committed candidates are taking interest in these rural local bodies.

## **OBJECTIVES**

To study the profile of elected representatives in PRIs of Himachal Pradesh w.r.t. the youth and women participation their educational, economic background.

## **METHODS AND MATERIAL**

To achieve the objectives of the present papers secondary data have been compiled from the different annual reports of Panchayat Raj Department, Department of Economic and Statistics, major part of data have been extracted from the website of state election commission which have been compiled for the Panchayat election-2021 online. In this local bodies' election, the state election commission has collected data related to the socio-economic background of the candidates participated and elected in the election of all gram panchayats except for Lahaul block of district Lahaul and Spiti and Pangi block of Chamba district. and Data compiled from these secondary sources has been tabulated then analyzed after calculating simple percentage.

## **PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS IN HIMACHAL PRADESH**

Panchayati Raj system in Himachal Pradesh was established under the provisions of the Himachal Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act, 1952 in the year 1954, prior to this only 280 Gram Panchayats existed in the state. Soon after the enactment of the said Act the number grown up to 466 Gram Panchayats in the year 1954 and gradually this number was increased to 638 during the year 1962. After the merger of the hilly areas of Punjab in 1<sup>st</sup> November, 1966 in the state and number of GPs rose to 1695. In the merged areas, a three tier Panchayati Raj system was in existence under the provisions of the Punjab Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad Act, whereas two-tier system was prevalent in the then State of Himachal Pradesh. With a view to bring uniformity in the Panchayati Raj system of the old and the newly merged areas, the Himachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, 1968 was enacted on 15th November, 1970 and the two tier Panchayati Raj system was established throughout the State. Besides this the Nayaya Panchayats were also in existence in this State for discharging judicial functions. During the year 1977 the Nayaya Panchayats were abolished and the judicial functions were transferred to the Gram Panchayats. After the enactment of the said Act in the year 1970 the existing Gram Sabhas were reorganized /bifurcated from time to time and new Gram Sabhas /Gram Panchayats were established. Himachal Pradesh came in to being on 25<sup>th</sup> January, 1971, therefore the growth in the number GPs is being compiled in following table from the year 1972-2020.

**Table: 1. Gram Panchayatsin Himachal Pradesh-1972-2020**

<b>Sr. No.</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of Gram Panchayat</b>	<b>No. of GPs increased</b>
1.	1972	2035	-
2.	1978	2357	322
3.	1985	2597	240
4.	1991	2757	200
5.	1995	2922	165
6.	2000	3037	115
7.	2005	3243	206
8.	2010	3243	0
9.	2015	3226	-17
10.	2020	3615	389

Source: Department of Panchayati Raj, Himachal Pradesh

Table shows that since biggening number of the gram panchayats have been increased time to time depending on the scope identified by the concerned department and the government. Analyzing the increase till now the highest number of gram panchayats i.e., 389 GPs have been added in 2020 followed by 322 GPs in 1978, 240 GPs in 1985, 206 GPs in 2005 and 200 GPs in 1991 and so on. Meanwhile, there growth in the number of gram panchayats have been negative in the years 2015 as in the year, 2015 due to inclusion of 17 Gram Panchayats in the Municipalities the numbers of Gram Panchayats are 3226 and due to creation of new Panchayat Samiti namely Shri Naina Devi, District Bilaspur the number of Panchayat Samitis are 78 in this State. The number remained unchanged in between 2005 and 2010.

**Table:2 District wise distribution of Area, Population, Rural Population and Number of Gram Panchayats in Himachal Pradesh**

Sr. No.	District	Area (Sq. KM)		Population		Rural Population		No. GPs in Previous Election	No. of Gram Panchayat in 2020-21 Election		No. of GPs increased	Average Population per GPs
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		Number	Percent		
1.	Bilaspur	1167	2.1	381956	5.6	356827	93.4	151	176	4.9	+25	2027
2.	Chamba	6522	11.7	519080	7.6	482972	93.0	283	309	8.5	+26	1563
3.	Hamirpur	1118	2.0	454768	6.6	423338	93.0	229	248	6.9	+19	1707
4.	Kangra	5739	10.3	1510075	22.0	1423794	94.3	748	814	22.5	+66	1749
5.	Kinnaur	6401	11.5	84121	1.2	84121	100	65	73	2.0	+08	1152
6.	Kullu	5503	9.9	437903	6.4	396512	90.5	204	235	6.5	+31	1687
7.	Lahaul & Spiti	13841	24.9	31564	0.5	31564	100	41	45	1.2	+04	701
8.	Mandi	3950	7.1	999777	14.6	937140	93.7	469	559	15.5	+90	1676
9.	Shimla	5131	9.2	814010	11.9	612659	75.3	363	412	11.4	+49	1487
10.	Sirmaur	2825	5.1	529855	7.7	472690	89.2	228	259	7.2	+31	1825
11.	Solan	1936	3.5	580320	8.4	478173	82.4	211	240	6.6	+29	1992
12.	Una	1540	2.8	521173	7.6	476260	91.4	234	245	6.8	+11	1943
<b>Total</b>		<b>55673</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>6864602</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>6176050</b>	<b>90.0</b>	<b>3226</b>	<b>3615</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>+389</b>	<b>1708</b>
Source: Statistical Year Book of Himachal Pradesh 2019-20, Department of Economic & Statistics, Himachal Pradesh, Shimla and Department of Panchayati Raj Department, Government of Himachal Pradesh, Shimla, 2021												

The district wise geographical area wise distribution shows that out the total 55673 sq. km. maximum 24.9 per cent comes under district Lahaul & Spiti, followed by Chamba with 11.7 per cent, 11.5 Kinnaur and district Kangra with 10.3 per cent. As per census 2011, out of the total 68,64,602 persons in the state district Kangra is highly populated with 22.0 per cent population of the state followed by Mandi with 14.6 per cent, Shimla 11.9 per cent, Solan 8.4 per cent and Chamba & Una with 7.6 per cent population in these both districts. As per the census-2011 majority of the population around 90 per cent is rural, two districts Kinnaur and Lahaul & Spiti are with 100 per cent rural population. There are seven districts namely Bilaspur, Chamba, Hamirpur, Kangra, Mandi and Una where the rural population is more than the average of state rural development or can say that in these districts more the 90 per cent population is rural. Prior to the present 2021 panchayat election there were total 3226-gram panchayats which have been increased to 3615-gram panchayats in 2020-21 PRIs election. The new gram panchayats have been added on the basis of area and population in the state and total 389-gram panchayats are added. Mandi district was on the top where 90 new gram panchayats are added followed by Kangra with 66 new GPs, Shimla 49 GPs, Solan 29 GPs, Chamba 26 GPs and Bilaspur where 25 new GPs have been added. Average 1708 population is there on one gram panchayat.

**Table:3 District wise Seats in PRIs of Himachal Pradesh-2020**

Sr. No.	District	ZP	BDC	President	Vice-Presidents	Ward Members	Total
1.	Bilaspur	14	97	176	176	1140	1603
2.	Chamba	18	136	309	309	1771	2543
3.	Hamirpur	18	125	248	248	1435	2074
4.	Kangra	54	359	814	814	4835	6876
5.	Kinnaur	10	45	73	73	389	590
6.	Kullu	14	103	235	235	1387	1974
7.	Lahaul & Spiti	10	30	45	45	227	357
8.	Mandi	36	249	559	559	3271	4674
9.	Shimla	24	201	412	412	2309	3358
10.	Sirmaur	17	120	259	259	1601	2256
11.	Solan	17	118	240	240	1547	2162
12.	Una	17	113	245	245	1557	2177
<b>Himachal Pradesh</b>		<b>249</b>	<b>1696</b>	<b>3615</b>	<b>3615</b>	<b>21469</b>	<b>30644</b>

Source: State Election Commission, Himachal Pradesh, 2021

The above table reveals that there is total 30644 PRIs representatives in the state comprising of 249 Zila Parishad, 1696 Block Development Councils, 3615 Panchayat Presents

(Pradhan), 3615 Vice-Presidents (Up-Pradhan) and 21469 ward members. District Kangra is the biggest districts from where the highest number of representatives belongs to, followed by districts Mandi, Shimla and Chamba. Lowest PRIs representatives belongs to district Lahaul & Spiti and district Kinnaur, both are tribal district cover majority geographical area of the state. The chairperson and vice-chairpersons are to be elected at districts and blocks level from the elected ZP and BDC members from any wards related wards which are already counted.

#### **UNANIMOUS ELECTION IN PANCHAYAT ELECTION-2020-21**

The government of Himachal Pradesh promotes unopposed election of panchayats by notifying some cash prizes. The idea for this promotion was to minimize the contradictions among the peoples due to political differences. So that, the implementation of different rural development programmes could be implemented at the grass root level in harmonious ways.

**Table:4 Unopposed Elected Gram Panchayat in the PRIs Election 2020-21**

<b>Sr. No.</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Block</b>	<b>Number of Gram Panchayats Election</b>
1.	Kinnaur [23]	Kalpa	04
		Nichar	05
		Pooh	14
2.	Una [02]	Bangana	01
		Una	01
3.	Kangra [1]	Pragpur	01
4.	Shimla [13]	Kupvi	04
		Theog	01
		Mashobra	02
		Jubal Kotkhai	03
		Narkanda	01
		Rohru	01
		Rampur	01
5.	Kullu [01]	Ani	01
6.	Solan [03]	Dharmpur	01
		Kunihar	01
		Nalagarh	01
7.	Sirmaur [35]	Shillai	11
		Rajgarh	05
		Pachhad	02
		Sangrah	05
		Nahan	01
		Paonta Sahib	11

8.	Mandi [11]	Sadar	01
		Karsog	03
		Seraj	03
		Balichowki	03
		Chountra	01
		Drang	01
9.	Bilaspur [02]	Sadar	01
		Jhandutta	01
10.	Lahaul & Spiti [11]	Spiti	11
<b>Total</b>		<b>33 Blocks</b>	<b>102</b>

Source: Department of Panchayati Raj, Himachal Pradesh, Shimla, 2021

Above table reveals that in the 2020-21 PRIs election in Himachal Pradesh there were 102-gram panchayats elected unanimously. Out of the total 103 unanimously gram panchayats highest 35 where GPs belongs to district Sirmour followed by Kinnaur 23 Gram Panchayats, Shimla 13 GPs, Mandi 11 GPs and Spiti block of Lahaul & Spiti district 11 GPs (in Lahaul& Spiti, this election was held only in one block i.e.,Spiti in these three phases, the election for Lahaul block will take place in the month of June or July). There are total 13 GPs in Spiti block and out that 11 GPs are elected unanimously.

## **PROFILE OF THE CANDIDATES PARTICIPATED AND ELECTED IN THE PANCHAYAT ELECTION -2020-21**

### **YOUTH PARTICIPATION**

In the National Youth Policy-2003, ‘youth’ was defined a person of age between 13-35 years, but in the current Policy Document, the youth age-group is defined as 15-29 years with a view to have a more focused approach, as far as various policy interventions are concerned (National Youth Policy-2014). Youth in the age group of 15-29 years comprise 27.5% of the population (Census of India, 2011).

**Table:5 Age wise classification ofCandidatesParticipated and Elected**

Sr. No.	Age Group	Nomination		Total Candidates		Elected	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1.	21-30	31335	32.14	24371	31.22	9223	34.51
2.	31-40	35078	35.98	28377	36.35	10030	37.53
3.	41-50	19803	20.31	16172	20.71	5105	19.1
4.	51-60	9287	9.52	7574	9.7	1981	7.41
5.	60 and	1999	2.05	1578	2.02	388	1.45

	above						
<b>Total</b>		<b>97502</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>78072</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>26727</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: State Election Commission, Himachal Pradesh, 2021

Table shows the age wise distribution of the candidates who file participated and elected in the 2021 PRIs election in the state. There was total 97502 candidates who filed nominations in this election and after withdrawal of around 19.9 per cent candidates finally 78072 contested election on various posts. Further, 26727 candidates got elected on various position in this election. Out of the total 37.35 per cent elected candidates falls under the age group of 31-40 years followed by 34.52 per cent in the age group of 21-30 years and 19.1 per cent in 41-50 years age group. If the first two age groups i.e., 12-30 and 31-40 years are counted together to calculate the youth participation then it becomes 72.04 per cent.

### **PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN, SCs AND STs**

The 73<sup>rd</sup> CAA provides the equal opportunity for all the weaker section of the society such as Schedule Castes, Schedule Tribes, Other Backward Classes in proportion to its population and for women it is 50 per cent.

**Table:6Category wise reservation, nomination and elected PRIs**

Sr. No.	Category	Reservation		Nomination		Elected	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1.	Unreserved	11852	40.5	48753	50	10497	39.27
2.	SC Women	4198	14.34	10866	11.14	4056	15.18
3.	SC	2397	8.19	7275	7.46	2099	7.85
4.	ST women	971	3.32	2626	2.69	995	3.72
5.	ST	558	1.91	1671	1.71	489	1.83
6.	OBC women	209	0.71	1159	1.19	309	1.16
7.	OBC	168	0.57	1239	1.27	256	0.96
8.	Women (other)	8914	30.46	23913	24.53	8026	30.03
<b>Total</b>		<b>29267</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>97502</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>26727</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: State Election Commission, Himachal Pradesh, 2021

Table reveals that out of the total 29269 seats, 40.5 per cent were under unreserved category but the percentage of candidates who filed the nomination was 50 per cent and finally elected was even less than the reserved figure i.e., 39.27 per cent. Then 30.46 per cent (8914 seats) were kept reserved for the category of women (other), the total candidates who filed

nomination in the same category was 24.53 per cent and finally 30.03 women got elected this category. In one way, 40.5 per cent seats were under unreserved category but among all who filled nominations constitutes 50 per cent candidates. Meaning, if we analyze the participation of different categories participation on the basis of nomination filed in this election, it is evident that candidates from reserve category are less who are filing nomination as compare to the unreserved category.

## **WOMEN PARTICIPATION**

The traditional institutions of local governance have not given space for women. Many of the factors that hindered women in the earlier system continue to exist and operate in rural areas. In fact, gender as a phenomenon hardly ever appears in a pure form. It is almost always alloyed with caste, class and religious factors. Through the implementation of reservation in panchayats women have got an opportunity to raise their concerns and opinion in Gram Sabha. Their experiences in the PRIs have also been varied and at times startling (Tiwari, 2008).

**Table: 7 Gender wise classification of candidates participated and elected**

Sr. No.	Gender	Nomination		Candidates		Elected	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1.	Male	55390	56	42228	54	12587	47.1
2.	Female	42110	43	35843	45	14140	52.9
Total		97500	100	88071	100	26727	100

Source: State Election Commission, Himachal Pradesh, 2021

The gender wise data shows that out the 97500 candidates who filed nomination in this election, there were 56 per cent males, candidate who finally contested election after withdrawal were even more than female i.e., 54 per cent but the share of females increased even more than males i.e., 52 per cent who are elected in these PRIs election. It means females have been successful to be elected in rural local self-government after contesting election even from unreserved category.

## **ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF THE PARTICIPATED AND ELECTED CANDIDATES**

The economic background of the representatives at PRIs plays an important role in their performance and some time candidates as government provide certain honorarium to these

representatives and salary. So, the representatives have to have some source of income or passion to work as professional social worker as whole timer without expectation of any monetary rewards other than the entitled honorarium.

**Table:8Economic statusof the candidates participated election and elected in PRIs**

Sr. No.	Economic Status	Nomination		Candidates		Elected	
		Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage
1.	APL	79563	81.6	63622	81.49	21822	81.65
2.	Tax payer	981	1.01	792	1.01	262	0.98
3.	Non-Tax Payer	7504	7.7	6064	7.77	1971	7.37
4.	BPL	9454	9.7	7594	9.73	2672	10.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>97502</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>78072</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>26727</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: State Election Commission, Himachal Pradesh, 2021

In these elections out of the total candidates who filed nomination, 81.6 per cent were from above poverty line (APL) category followed by 9.7 per cent below poverty line (BPL), 7.7 per cent non-tax payers and mere 1.01 per cent were under tax payer category. The candidate after completing withdrawal process were 78072, out of which 81.49 per cent were from APL category, 9.73 per cent from BPL, 7.8 per cent non-tax payer and just 1.01 were tax payers. Finally, the candidates who elected in this election were 26727, in which 81.65 per cent were from APL category, 10 per cent from APL category, 7.37 per cent from the category of non-tax payers and just 0.98 per cent were tax payer who got elected in this election.

## **EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND REPRESENTATIVES**

The powers and responsibility of the local bodies are very dynamic and multifarious of nature and educated panchayat representatives can discharge their responsibility in more efficiently as compare to the non-literate representatives. There is debate going on to include some sought educational qualification as minimum eligibility criteria for the public representatives. The scenario of educational qualification of PRI's representatives is as under.

**Table: 9 EducationalBackgroundcandidates participated and election in 2020 Panchayat Election**

Sr. No.	Educational Background	Nomination		candidates		Elected	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1.	Non- literate	1556	1.6	1209	1.55	504	1.9
2.	Higher	15558	15.96	12266	15.71	4200	15.7

	Secondary						
3.	Matriculates	46642	47.84	37710	48.3	12401	46.4
4.	Below matric	22433	23.01	17910	22.94	6635	24.8
5.	Graduates	7802	8.0	6198	7.94	2079	7.8
6.	Post-Graduates	3511	3.6	2779	3.56	908	3.4
<b>Total</b>		<b>97502</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>78072</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>26727</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: State Election Commission, Himachal Pradesh, 2021

The education profile of candidates who participated and elected in this election shows that there were only 1.6 per cent non-literate candidates who filed nomination out of total (97502), 1.5 per cent non-literate out of total (78072) who finally contested election and 1.9 per cent non-literate candidates who got elected.

The literate candidates who finally got elected PRIs election-2021 were highest 46.4 per cent matriculates, followed by 24.8 per cent below matric, 15.7 per cent from higher secondary, 7.8 percent graduates and 3.4 per cent post-graduates.

## FINDINGS

- Area wise tribal districts cover majority of the areas but lower number of gram panchayats are there.
- Population wise district Kangra is the biggest districts and also higher number of the gram panchayats are there.
- The number of gram panchayats are increased in the all the districts based on the scopes such as area, population and revenue villages and total 389 new gram panchayats are added to the previously existing panchayats.
- In the PRIs election -2021 a significant number i.e., 102-gram panchayat are elected unanimously and highest number of new gram panchayat are elected university in district Sirmaur where 35-gram panchayats were elected unanimously. In some districts like Sirmaur, Kinnaur, Shimla and Spiti block of Lahaul Spiti has significant number of GPs elected unanimously, so it is important to learn the process of unanimous elections, their performance w.r.t. the people participations in Gram Sabha and day to day panchayat affairs and implantation of different rural development schemes.

- In the present election a significant number of the youth have participated and elected as PRIs representatives with more than 72 per cent to the total representatives in the state which is good sign if this motivation is converted in the performance too.
- Category wise participation reveals that the candidates from unreserved category are participating more than the candidates from the reserved category in the local self-government election process.
- Around 53 per cent women have been able to elect in the PRIs election, the figure is more than the reservation given in the state i.e., 50 per cent.
- Economically, the majority of the candidates more than 80 per cent, who are participating in these panchayat elections were from APL category and just 10 per cent were from the category of below poverty line.
- Education background of candidates participating in the election process and got elected as representative is encouraging as there 97.1 per cent representative who are literate or educated from below metric to post-graduate level.

## CONCLUSION

Statistically, the participation of the youth and women in rural local bodies election-2020-21 are exemplary to neighboring states and state itself and it would be interesting to work on the performance of gram panchayats led by the young and women leaders as more than seventy-two percent youth and fifty two percent women can become the change makers. The significant number of panchayats are being elected unanimously in the state but the process of this unanimous election needs to be monitored by the election commission and ensure that this process should not be in contrary to the provision of constitutional provisions. Further it should be debated that in the democratize set up the promotion of these unanimous election is justified., because keeping the cash prizes by the state seems that government is discouraging the democratic process. The essence of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act is to ensure fair and inclusive democracy at the local level and to ensure transparent and effective development the dividend of more youth and women in PRIs should be harnessed by doing their capacity building and further observe their performance in different platforms with respect to the functioning at Panchayat, Block and District levels, implementation of different welfare or flagship programmes of state as well center government to check the rural poverty and performance with

transparency and inclusive participation at gram Sabha level. The success stories of these related panchayats should be recorded by the related departments to motivate others in the state and country at large.

## REFERENCES:

- Annual Administrative Report (2019-20) Department of Panchayati Raj, Government of Himachal Pradesh, Shimla
- Azhruddin, Mohd (2018), The Role of Panchayati Raj Institution in Rural Development: Measures to improve their functioning, Indian J Soc & Pol 05 ( I ) :2018:21-24 Special Issue (UGC listNo.47956),ISSN:2455-2127(Online)pp.21-24 <https://www.ijsp.in/admin/mvc/upload/5I05THE%20ROLE%20OF%20PANCHAYATI%20RAJ%20INSTITUTIONS%20IN%20RURAL.pdf>
- Census of India-2011, [www.censusofindia.gov.in](http://www.censusofindia.gov.in)
- Department of Economic & Statistics (2019-20) Statistical Year Book of Himachal Pradesh, Government of Himachal Pradesh, Shimla
- Institute of Social Science (1995), Status of Panchayati Raj in The States of India-1994, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi.
- George Mathew, Panchayati Raj Institutions and Human Rights in India, Economic and Political Weekly, Jan. 11-17, 2003, pp 155-162
- Ministry of Panchayati Raj (2019), Basic Statistics of Panchayati Raj Institutions Government of India,2019,[https://www.panchayat.gov.in/documents/20126/0/Statistical+handbook\\_MoPR+02082019.pdf/4988ca1b-4971-1f3b-54e7-980228eb47f9?t=564729098415](https://www.panchayat.gov.in/documents/20126/0/Statistical+handbook_MoPR+02082019.pdf/4988ca1b-4971-1f3b-54e7-980228eb47f9?t=564729098415)
- Ministry of Youth Affairs (2014) National Youth Policy, Government of India, p.9 <https://yas.nic.in/sites/default/files/National-Youth-Policy-Document.pdf>
- State Election Commission, Himachal Pradesh, Shimla, <https://sechimachal.nic.in/> Accessed on 2/05/2021
- Tiwari, Nupur (2008) Women in Panchayati Raj, Indian Journal of Public Administration Vol. LIV. No. 1, January-March, 2008, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0019556120080103>