

Economic and Political Empowerment of Mahila Gram Pradhan Special Reference to Dehradun, Uttarakhand: An Empirical Study

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Abstract:

This study examines the economic and political empowerment of women at the grassroots level, with a specific focus on *Mahila Gram Pradhans* in Dehradun district, Uttarakhand. It aims to analyse the extent and nature of women's participation in local governance and their control over economic resources within the framework of Panchayati Raj Institutions. The study further explores how institutional reforms and government policies have influenced women's roles in decision-making and rural development.

Adopting a mixed-methods approach, the research combines primary data collected through surveys and interviews with *Mahila Gram Pradhans* across all six blocks of Dehradun district, along with secondary data and existing literature. The findings highlight that while increased political representation has created new opportunities for women leaders, significant challenges persist, including patriarchal norms, limited access to resources, and constraints in exercising independent authority.

The study reveals that economic empowerment plays a crucial role in strengthening women's participation in governance, enabling them to contribute more effectively to community development. At the same time, political empowerment enhances their decision-making capacity and leadership roles. The paper argues that strengthening both dimensions of empowerment is essential for achieving sustainable gender equality and improving governance outcomes at the local level.

Keywords: Empowerment, Women Empowerment, Political Empowerment, Economic Empowerment, Panchayati Raj.

INTRODUCTION:

Empowerment refers to the process through which individuals or groups acquire the capacity, rights, and agency to make informed decisions and exercise control over their lives and communities. In the context of gender, women's empowerment enables women to participate fully in economic, social, and political spheres, enjoy equal rights, and access opportunities that promote autonomy and leadership. Among the various dimensions of empowerment, economic and political empowerment are particularly significant, especially for women occupying leadership roles such as Gram Pradhan (village heads) within the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in India.

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Economic empowerment enhances women's ability to access, control, and manage financial resources, make independent decisions regarding income and expenditure, and contribute actively to household and community development. Grassroots initiatives such as microfinance programmes and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) have been recognized as important mechanisms for promoting women's entrepreneurship and financial independence (Kabeer, 2005). Similarly, women's economic and political participation is widely regarded as a key indicator of democratic development and social justice (Desai & Thakkar, 2007). However, structural inequalities, institutional barriers, and socio-cultural norms have historically constrained women's participation across multiple domains in India. Despite their substantial contributions to both formal and informal sectors, women's labour force participation has declined in recent years (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2018).

Political empowerment strengthens women's participation in governance processes, decision-making, and policy formulation, while also challenging entrenched patriarchal structures. The interaction between economic and political empowerment enables women to function independently, assert their rights, and contribute meaningfully to grassroots democracy.

In India, a major step towards enhancing women's political participation was the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992, which mandated the reservation of one-third of seats for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions. This reform significantly increased women's representation in local governance (Government of India, 1992). Building upon this foundation, the state of Uttarakhand, established in 2000, introduced progressive measures to further strengthen women's participation in rural governance. Notably, the state increased the reservation for women to 50 percent across all tiers of Panchayati Raj Institutions in 2010. This policy initiative created leadership opportunities for a large number of women, many of whom had no prior experience in formal politics.

The growing presence of women leaders in Panchayats in Uttarakhand has contributed to improvements in various aspects of rural development, including sanitation, drinking water, healthcare, and education. Women Gram Pradhans have increasingly engaged in budget planning, implementation of development projects, and monitoring of local governance processes, thereby enhancing transparency and accountability at the grassroots level. Their leadership has played a critical role in promoting inclusive governance and addressing community-specific needs.

Several studies have examined the economic and political empowerment of rural women in Dehradun district, offering diverse insights. An empirical field study conducted in Bhauwala village of Sahaspur block highlighted the economic invisibility of rural women and emphasized the need for multi-dimensional empowerment strategies, including access to education, health, and assets (Vohra & Bahukhandi, 2021). Qualitative research has also demonstrated that collective action and community-based organizations foster political awareness and strengthen women's engagement with Panchayati Raj Institutions (Sharma & Sudarshan, 2010). Similarly, a mixed-method study found that participation in Self-Help Groups enhances women's financial autonomy, decision-making capacity, and social solidarity, although variations persist across socio-economic groups (Rana et al., 2020).

Further, a comprehensive study based on both primary and secondary data identified multiple dimensions of empowerment, including access to resources, political participation, and social recognition, while also highlighting persistent socio-cultural constraints (Rahman, 2007). Another study, based on interviews and focus group discussions with women leaders, observed variations in awareness levels, developmental perspectives, and leadership effectiveness, alongside challenges such as limited institutional support and prevailing social barriers (Thapliyal, 2017).

Despite these contributions, there remains a significant research gap in understanding the combined dimensions of economic and political empowerment among Mahila Gram Pradhans across all six blocks of Dehradun district. Most existing studies are limited in scope, focusing either on specific villages, selected blocks, or particular aspects of empowerment. Therefore, this empirical study seeks to address this gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of the economic and political empowerment of women Gram Pradhans across the entire district, offering a more holistic understanding of their role in grassroots governance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

In this Empirical study, we took 220 Women Sarpanch as a sample drawn from the 6 blocks *Raipur, Doiwala, Sahaspur, Vikasnagar, Kalsi, Chakrata* of Dehradun district, in Uttarakhand. But only 209 Women Sarpanch responded and 11 Women Sarpanch didn't responded. So, we took only 209 samples. In this study, we discussed personal profile of the Women Sarpanch include political aspects by the help different questions which highlighted their work and leadership quality in Economic and Political Sphere. To know the personal characteristics of the women sarpanch individual profile of the women sarpanch has been designed by including different factors like age, caste, marital status, education, and then Economic and Political aspects.

EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT OF MAHILA GRAM PRADHAN:

To know the personal profile of women sarpanch there have discussed various questions regarding their age, caste, marital status and education. On the basis of the data regarding personal profile of women sarpanch we found that at the grassroot level of Dehradun in Uttarakhand maximum participation of women sarpanch is medium age group (25-30yr, 18.3percent), (30-40 years, 43.4 percent), (then 40-50 years 25.6 percent women sarpanch), (and least old age 50-60years women sarpanch 8.2 years). On the basis of caste we found that most of the women sarpanch are schedule tribal (ST) class. Actually, the seats are reserved for the tribal women in panchayats, and the some part of the area of study is tribal area. On the basis of marriage the maximum number of women sarpanch are married which is a good or positive sign. As they can get support from their family members and take part in leadership or decision making process. Similarly on the basis of education mostly women sarpanch have gained education and majority of them have done higher secondary education (37.4 percent) and secondary education (29.2 percent).

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF MAHILA GRAM PRADHAN:

To understand the Economic Status of Women Sarpanch tables highlighting the number of questions which cover Economic level which given below-

❖ Annul Income:

A family's annual income is the total money earned by all members in a year, including wages, salaries, business profits, and investments. It's a key indicator of financial health, helping determine how well a family can afford essentials like food, housing, healthcare, and education. A stable income allows of future planning, savings, and a better quality of life, while a low and irregular income can lead to financial stress. Annual income also effects access to support programs, opportunities, and lifestyle choices. Managing it wisely is crucial for current stability and long-term well-being.

Table 1:

S.No.	Options	Frequency	Percent
1	10 Thousand To 50 Thousand	35	16.0
2	51 Thousand To 1 Lakh	65	29.7
3	1 Lakh To 3 Lakh	97	44.3
4	More Than 3lakh	12	5.5
5	Total	209	95.4

Source: Based on Primary Data Collection from the Field

❖ **Opinion on Women contribution in the economic development of the family:**

Women have played a transformative role in their families’ economic growth, moving beyond traditional household roles to actively contribute through jobs, self-employment, and financial decision-making. Their income improves housing, healthcare, and education, directly supporting long-term family stability. Women also manage household budget and savings, ensuring resources are using wisely. Beyond finances, they shape future generations by raising and educating children with values like hard work and resilience. Overall, women’s economic participation strengthens families and drives broader social progress.

Table 2 :

S.No.	Options	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	199	90.9
2	No	5	2.3
3	Don't Know	5	2.3
4	Total	209	95.4

Source: Based on Primary Data Collection from the Field

❖ **Use of salary:**

It important for women to use their earning to help cover household expenses, as this not only supports the smooth running of the home but also fosters a sense of independence and responsibility towards the family’s well-being. When a women contribute to essentials like groceries, utility bills, rent or montage payments, and healthcare she play an active role in the day-by-day functioning of the household and strengths her influence in family decisions. This financial contribution ensures an improved balance to family financial management by distributing the financial duties throughout the home and reducing the strain on other family members, such as her spouse or kids.

Table 3:

S.No.	Options	Frequency	Percent
1	Your children's tuition fees	31	14.2
2	Household expenses (e.g. food, clothing, etc.)	122	55.7
3	Paying any loan or EMI	11	5.0
4	Savings	45	20.5
5	Total	209	95.4

Source: Based on Primary Data Collection from the Field

❖ **Opinion on Equal pay of Men and Women:**

Fairness, equality, and social justice are the foundations of the notion that women and men should be paid equally for equal labour. A gender pay gap not only undervalued women's work but also reinforce social inequality. When women are paid less than men for the same roles, or occupying the same positions, it sends a message that their contribution is less important. Even equal skill and experience, women still earn less and average worldwide. Over time, this gap affects their lifetime earnings, savings and financial independence, limited their ability to invest in healthcare, education, or business. Equal pay is not just fair it's essential for true economic and social progress.

Table 4:

S.No.	Options	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	194	88.6
2	No	15	6.8
3	Total	209	95.4

Source: Based on Primary Data Collection from the Field

❖ **Self-help groups currently working in village:**

In villages, self-help groups (SHGs) play vital role in empowering women, promoting financial independence, and strengthen community development. These groups usually forms by women who come together to save money, access credit, and support each other out in difficult time. They provide women and opportunity to exchange knowledge and abilities and give them the opportunity to obtain micro financing that can help them sustain their families, start or grow small companies, or enhance their standard of living. The value of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) goes above their financial advantages; they give women a platform to develop their self-esteem, leadership skills, and feeling of community while also assisting them in realizing their combined power and influence. SHGs are crucial for women sarpanch, or women in leadership positions in rural government, since they provide as a training ground for leadership and decision-making abilities in addition to supporting economic development.

Table 5:

S.No.	Options	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	201	91.8
2	No	8	3.7
3	Total	209	95.4

Source: Based on Primary Data Collection from the Field

❖ **As An Economically Empowered Woman Feel Changed In Yourself As A Member Of Panchayat:**

As a panchayat member and economic empowered woman, a woman sarpanch often experience a powerful shift in how she sees herself and her role of society. Gaining financial independence and holding a leadership position gives her a new sense of confidence, self-worth, and identity beyond traditional household duties. She started to see herself not just for her family, but as a decision-maker who can influence the development of her area and advocate for their rights and needs of other women. This change in perspective often brings a deep sense of pride and responsibility, as she realizes her voice matter and that her actions may inspire and empower other around her.

Table 6.1:

S.No.	Options	Frequency	Percent
1	Feeling Strong and Happy	166	75.8
2	Not much Change in Life	43	19.6
3	Total	209	95.4

Source: Based on Primary Data Collection from the Field

❖ **Change in Family perspective:**

A woman's economic empowerment not only transforms her personal life but also positively influence her family dynamics. When women become financially independent, she gains the ability to participate in important decisions, manage resource, and contribute of her household's financial future. This shift often leads to more balanced and respectful relationship with her partner, kids, and extended family, while also giving her a stronger sense of dignity and self-worth. With financial independence, women gain the confidence to make choice about their own lives whether it's saving for the future, building a career, or investing in their own education. It empowers them to take control of their goal and create a ripple effect that benefits both their families and locality.

Table 6.2:

S.No.	Options	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	190	86.8
2	No	19	8.7
3	Total	209	95.4

Source: Based on Primary Data Collection from the Field

POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT OF MAHILA GRAM PRADHAN:

To understand the Economic Status of Women Sarpanch Tables highlighting the number of questions which cover Economic level which given below-

❖ **Interest in Politics:**

It is state that if someone has interest in any kind of work then he/she can devote his/her more contribution to the work. Similarly, when women have interest in politics they will actively take part in it. Otherwise sometimes they take part in politics by forced or to take some undue advantage. So *Mahila Pradhans* were asked about their interest in politics.

Table 7:

S.No	Options	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	173	79.0
2	No	27	12.3
3	No answer	9	4.1
4	Total	209	95.4

Source: Based on Primary Data Collection from the Field

❖ **Opinion on act of Voting as per own discretion**

Being able to vote freely and make independent choices is a core part of democracy and personal freedom. For women, the right is powerful it allows them stand up for their rights, influence decisions, and help shape policies that reflect their needs and aspirations. When women vote on their own terms, it's not just about casting a ballot; it's a strong expressing of empowerment and a step toward greater equality.

Table 8:

S.No.	Options	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	196	89.5
2	No	13	6.0
3	Total	209	95.4

Source: Based on Primary Data Collection from the Field

❖ **Membership of political organizations:**

For *Mahila Gram Pradhan*, being involved in political organization is a key step towards gaining greater influence in politics. It gives them a voice in decision-making, helps promote gender-equality, and ensures that women's issues are heard and addressed. Their active participation also encourage more women to get involve, challenges traditional gender roles, and helps build strong leadership skill leading inclusive and representative governance.

Table 9:

S.No.	Options	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	114	52.1
2	No	95	43.4
3	Total	209	95.4

Source: Based on Primary Data Collection from the Field

❖ **Take Panchayat meetings by themselves:**

Mahila Gram Pradhans rely on panchayat as a vital platform for active participation in local governance. These meetings empower them to raise their voices, for the needs of their area, especially on issues of affecting women. By being part of the discussions, they can influence related to women's rights, access to resources, and overall community development. Missing these meetings can meaning losing the chance to be heard and weakening the ability to advocates effectively for women's concern.

Table 10:

S.No.	Options	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	155	70.8
2	Sometimes	53	24.2
3	Never	1	.5
4	Total	209	95.4

Source: Based on Primary Data Collection from the Field

❖ **Opinion on it is a good idea to elect a woman as the Pradhan of the village:**

Choosing women as candidates for *Gram Pradhan* in local self-governments plays a crucial role in promoting equal representation and ensuring that women's perspective are including decisions –making. Women leaders are often well-positioned to address community-specific issues especially those affecting women and families. They also as inspiring role models for future women leaders and help

foster more inclusive and responsive governance to local policies that better reflect the needs of the entire community.

Table 11:

S.No.	Options	Frequency	Percent
1	Strongly Agree	46	21.0
2	Agree	161	73.5
3	Strongly Disagree	2	.9
4	Total	209	95.4

Source: Based on Primary Data Collection from the Field

❖ **Opinion on reservation is necessary in the Center and state Legislatures:**

Reserving seats for women in local self-government at both the state and federal levels are essential for promoting gender empowerment and ensuring their representation in decision-making. This policy encourages women to take an active role in politics and helps break down long-standing structural and societal barriers that have limited their participation.

Table 12:

S.No.	Options	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	204	93.2
2	No	5	2.3
3	Total	209	95.4

Source: Based on Primary Data Collection from the Field

❖ **Opinion on Political Ambitions:**

After completing their term, women senators should be encourage to stay ambitious. This motivation can inspire them to take on bigger leadership roles, champion important social causes, and serve as role models for the other women. Keeping this momentum going helps ensure they remain active in politics and make an greater impact in local government.

Table 13:

S.No.	Items	Options	Frequency	Percentage
1	Take part in election again	YES	139	63.5
		NO	70	32.0
		TOTAL	209	95.4
2	Take Part In Politics	YES	11	5.0
		NO	198	90.4
		TOTAL	209	95.4
3	Take Part In State Or National Politics	YES	24	11.0
		NO	184	84.5
		TOTAL	209	95.4
4	No Ambitions	YES	47	21.5
		NO	162	74.0
		TOTAL	209	95.4

Source: Based on Primary Data Collection from the Field

DIFFICULTIES FACED BY WOMEN SARPANCH:

1. The standards of a patriarchal society:

It's a common assumption that males should be in leadership positions. Male family members (husbands, fathers, or brothers) may still make choices for a woman even after she has been formally chosen as a sarpanch. This approach, which is sometimes called "proxy sarpanch," compromises the woman's power and real involvement in government. The study in Dehradun revealed that traditional norms often limit *Mahila Gram Pradhans* from fully exercising their authority. Due to fear social backlash, many are discouraged from speaking openly in meetings or asserting their rights. This lack of independence weakens their ability to make decisions or manage resources effectively. Patriarchal attitude not only reduces their visibility in leadership but also impacts their confidence and equal participation in local governance.

2. Gap in education and training:

We discovered throughout the study that a large number of *Mahila Gram Pradhan* would have little formal schooling because of pressure from their families. They may find it challenging to: Recognise administrative processes, Analyse government budgets and policies, effectively communicate with officials. Their confidence and decision-making efficacy are impacted by this incapacity. By this limitation their male family members take advantage of their positions and they only do work of signature without understanding the work of administration.

3. Limited availability of financial resources:

The *Mahila Gram Pradhan* of the Dehradun district claims that although they are chosen to manage and direct village development, many of them lack the power to make financial choices. Due to cultural biases and gender discrimination, women are often not trusted to manage village finance, which is handled by male relatives or officials. This limits their ability to plan or implement development projects. Many also lack training in budgeting and government schemes, making financial management even more challenging.

4. Gender Based Discrimination:

According to *Mahila Pradhan* they often do not receive equal treatment from male colleagues, government officials, or even members of their own areas. Their ideas and opinions are frequently overlooked or dismissed simply because they are women. In meetings or decision-making spaces, they may not be given the chance to speak freely and are often interrupted or talked over by men. This kind of treatment can undermine their confidence and discourage them from participating fully and actively in leadership roles. This shows that women and their respect, women sarpanches sometimes have to put in more effort than males.

5. Absence of Social Support Systems:

The study finds that, unlike male counterparts, many *Mahila Pradhans* lack access to peer support, mentorship, and informal political networks. These connections are vital for guidance, collaboration, and navigation of decision-making processes. Without them, *Mahila Pradhans* may feel isolated, struggle with administrative tasks, and become more vulnerable to influence from male relatives or colleagues. This lack of support limits their effectiveness and ability to drive meaningful change in their area.

6. Difficulty faced in Balancing between Administrative and Domestic work:

As said by women sarpanches in survey some *Mahila Pradhans* are still required to carry out their common household duties, such as cooking, cleaning, child care, and elder care, even when they are elected to a leadership post. Because they have taken on a public position, these household responsibilities remain unchanged or vanish.

SUGGESTIONS:**1. Change the thinking of male leaders and Mahila Pradhan families by workshops :**

The elected woman is reduced to a symbolic figure through proxy leadership, in which male relatives often referred to as "*Pradhan pati*" exercise power over decision-making. Social institutions that are patriarchal and believe that women are unable to taking charge on their own are the foundation of this technique. To solve this, it is crucial to strictly enforce the laws that limit non-elected people from interfering. To guarantee that *Mahila Pradhans* may operate freely and to hold male proxies accountable, laws must be tightened. Also, community-level awareness efforts should be started to remove gender stereotypes and advance the acceptance of women in leadership positions. *Pradhan* responsibilities may be held more open and responsible by promoting active community involvement and supervision.

2. All official transactions and financial accounts must be overseen by the elected Mahila Gram Pradhan:

Financial transactions are handled on their behalf by male officials or family members. In the process of reducing openness, this also compromises their independence and capacity to decide on matters pertaining to development. To address this issue, the governments should ensure that elected *Mahila Pradhan* are given fully authority to manage official transactions and bank accounts. Secure systems, such as digital access or biometric verification, should be in place to prevent misuse. Providing with financial literacy training covering budget, auditing, and digital banking tools which empower them to manage finances confidently and independently. Dependency on male clerks can also be decreased by hiring women accountants or support personnel at the panchayat level.

3. Dedicated support for gender awareness:

To tackle deep-rooted gender bias in local governance, there must be a strong focus on gender sensitization at all level. Regular training for both men and women in panchayat can help break stereotype and build mutual respect. Awareness campaigns highlighting the achievement the *Mahila Pradhans* can help normalize women in leadership. It's also essential to uphold legal rights that allow women to chair meetings, sign documents, and make decisions independently. Safe spaces like peer groups and women-only forums can boost their confidence, while support from male allies and equal participation in panchayat committees can further reduce gender inequality. Challenging discrimination is key to helping *Mahila Gram Pradhan* lead effectively and fairly.

4. Safeguards, specialized complaints procedures, and creating a social network:

Strong legal protections are required to counter this, with legislation addressing political intimidation, workplace harassment, and gender-based violence being swiftly put into effect. It is essential to set up specific problem settlement processes at the district or block level where women sarpanches may report abuse in a secure and private manner. To ensure that they address any complaints fast and effectively, police and administrative staff members also need to be made aware of the particular risks faced by women in leadership positions. To encourage respect for women leaders and deter public humiliation or exclusion, community-level awareness campaigns should also be carried out. Creating leadership forums and peer support networks for women sarpanches may also offer common ways to overcome stigma and opposition, as well as emotional support and group strength. It is possible to safeguard and enable *Mahila Pradhans* to completely and courageously engage in local government and economic development by tackling social stigma and harassment through institutional, legal, and community-based remedies.

5. Crèches or community childcare facilities close to panchayat offices:

According to the study redistributing home duties through awareness programs that support gender equality within families is something that society has to strongly strive for in order to overcome this. Sarpanches can concentrate on their work without worrying about their children if government and panchayat bodies set up community childcare centers or crèches next to their offices. This would help women leaders. It can also be beneficial to schedule meetings and formal events flexibly to accommodate the availability of women representatives. They may seek domestic support when necessary and reduce financial stress thanks to elected female leaders. Male family members must be actively supported and encouraged to share home duties. The establishment of a more equitable and encouraging work and home environment can put women sarpanches in a better position to participate actively in development and governance initiatives.

6. Digital platforms and responsibility structures:

According to the Women leader there should be encourage polite and fair interaction with women leaders, all local government employees and bureaucrats should be required to complete gender-sensitization training. To ensure fairness, clear procedures must be in place to guarantee timely responses to all official requests, regardless of the sarpanch's gender with penalties for bias and unnecessary delays. Appoints district-level liaisons officers or setting up dedicated help desks can support *Mahila Gram Pradhans* in navigation complex bureaucratic processes. Additionally, regular audits and public performance reviews of officials can help to promote accountability and reduce inefficiency.

CONCLUSION:

This empirical study on the economic and political empowerment of *Mahila Gram Pradhan* in Dehradun, Uttarakhand, highlights the significant progress made towards gender-level governance at the ground level. The introduction of 50% reservation for women in Panchayati Raj institutions has not only increased their numerical representation, but also made a place for their voice in local decision making processes. Through this research, it is clear that the participation of women in the form of *Pradhans* has brought noticeable changes in the village regime, especially in areas such as health, education, water supply, hygiene and welfare of women. This study reveals that political reservations of *Mahila Gram Pradhan* have greatly increased their representation in local governance. Economically, the *Mahila Gram Pradhan* has gained better access to public resources, government schemes and development funds. While many still face challenges such as limited financial autonomy or lack of prior experience in public money, exposure with leadership roles and opportunities are gradually helping them to create confidence and ability. Also in institutional, social, and structural barriers still prevent meaningful participation, particularly in political and economic decision-making. It limits the autonomy, discrimination based on gender inequality, lack of financial resources, and insufficient supports for capacity-building are common issues faced by *Mahila Gram Pradhan*. However, the study also shows that empowerment is not the same throughout the board. Many women still act as a "proxy sarpanch", using real control with male family members. Deep roots are important barriers, lack of patriarch, lack of education and insufficient training. Despite these limitations, the overall influence of the leadership of women in panchayats has been largely positive.

Finally, while still a long way to go, the journey of the *Women Pradhan* in Dehradun is an important step towards inclusive and participation regime. Strengthening the initiative of capacity-making, continuous support from the government, and community sensitization may further increase the economic and political empowerment of women leaders at the ground level.

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Notes:

1. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment marked a critical step by reserving one-third of seats in Panchayati Raj Institutions for women, significantly enhancing grassroots political participation.
2. The Uttarakhand Government's 2010 decision to mandate 50% reservation for women in panchayat bodies further catalyzed change, especially in rural governance. This has not only increased women's representation but also reshaped local governance dynamics.
3. Assess the impact of women leadership on rural development and governance. We also understand the personal and community-level transformations which brought about by the inclusion of women in grassroots governance.
4. On July 25, 2019, the Uttarakhand High Court provided significant relief to those wishing to contest the State Panchayat elections, ruling that individuals with more than two children are eligible to contest the election. The decision given by Chief Justice Ramesh Ranganathan and Justice Alok Kumar Verma said, "Section 8 (1) (R) announced that the Panchayati Raj Institute will not apply only to cases as per the above provision, as per the disqualification of contesting elections to the Panchayati Raj Institute. (Times of India, September 20, 2019)

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