

# Women in Panchayati Raj

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## Challenges Faced by Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) in Panchayati Raj Institutions

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### Context

- The **73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992** provided **33% reservation** for women in PRIs, with some states extending it to **50%**.
  - Despite this, **patriarchal norms, lack of experience, and political pressure** hinder women's leadership.
  - The Ministry of Panchayati Raj formed a **committee (Sept 2023)**, chaired by **Sushil Kumar**, to assess these challenges.
  - Findings are based on **four regional workshops** in 14 states, engaging governments and EWRs.
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### Key Challenges

#### 1. Lack of Political Experience

- Many EWRs lack **administrative knowledge** and struggle with governance.

#### 2. Gender-Based Discrimination

- Women are often **ignored in meetings**, with officials preferring male counterparts.

#### 3. Patriarchal Norms

- **Purdah system, male dominance**, and social restrictions limit women's participation.

#### 4. Political Pressure & Threats

- **Intimidation, coercion, and misuse of No Confidence Motions** weaken women's authority.

#### 5. Socio-Economic Disadvantages

- Many EWRs belong to **SC/ST/Minority groups**, facing additional discrimination.
- **Domestic responsibilities** further limit their governance role.

## 6. Lack of Training & Mentorship

- **No structured programs** to enhance leadership or guide new EWRs.

## 7. Short-Term Reservation

- **5-year reservation cycle** is too short for leadership development.

## 8. Weak Legal Deterrence

- Laws against **proxy rule (Pradhan Pati, Sarpanch Pati)** are poorly enforced.
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## Recommendations & Way Forward

### 1. Strengthen Legal Framework

- **Strict penalties** against proxy rule and coercion.

### 2. Capacity Building

- **Leadership training, financial education, and mentorship programs** for EWRs.

### 3. Structural Reforms

- **Extend reservation tenure** beyond five years for continuity.

### 4. Awareness & Gender Sensitization

- **Campaigns to change societal attitudes** and promote women's leadership.
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## Conclusion

- **Legal, structural, and social reforms** are needed to **empower EWRs**.
- Implementing these changes will **strengthen grassroots democracy** and ensure **effective women's leadership** in PRIs.

