

## **Role and Developmental Activities of Women in Panchayati Raj Institution of Kathua District**

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**ABSTRACT** Constitution of India was amended by way of 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment in 1992, wherein constitution and establishment of Panchayats was made mandatory. It was the resolve of the Parliament to take democracy to the grassroot level, which culminated in the carrying out of this amendment. A period of eighteen years has passed since 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment and the present study was undertaken with an effort to study the role and development activities of women in Panchayats. The study was conducted in all the blocks of Kathua district of Jammu Division. A total of 23 women respondents from all blocks were randomly selected for the study. The tool used for obtaining information was an Interview Schedule. The findings revealed that majority of the women elected as Panchayat members were married, belonged to joint families and were mostly educated. They were mainly housewives before joining politics. Husbands of majority of the women motivated them and provided full moral support and stood by them throughout elections. Economic independence was the main motive in joining politics as stated by majority of them. The women faced tremendous administrative problems, and had inadequate knowledge about working of panchayats. They could not exercise their right of freedom of expression as their husbands or other male members did not support them. A lot more still needs to be done by the Government in training and empowering the women to exercise their authority at all the three levels of Panchayati Raj institutions, local NGO's and government organizations need to come forward to train women for this role.