



Full Length Research

## **Analysis of Political Representation of Village Panchayat Presidents among Women: A Study with Special Reference to Rural Local Body Election in 2019, Tamil Nadu**

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**Abstract:** In 1992 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitution Amendment Act was enacted which came into force in 1993 in whole Indian states to promote rural governance and rural development with the help of community participation and 11<sup>th</sup> schedule was incorporated in Indian Constitution which provides 29 subjects. This act provides autonomous power to enact welfare policy in favour of all community within their jurisdiction subjects. This act provides good governance through people participation and people are directly involved in the decision making the process of rural government with the help of most disadvantaged communities such as women and women are among the most disadvantaged community in India in terms of their education and political participation. Why governments are providing reservation for women in local body election? What is the role and responsibilities of women panchayat president to the strengthening good governance? Whether 73<sup>rd</sup> constitution amendment act provides full power to reserved categories like women? Whether Women Panchayat Women are acting independently without any barriers from others? The study assumes that Women Panchayat President in Tamil Nadu is performing better way to promote good governance at the local level. Secondary data are using this study. Secondary data collected from the various government documents and Local Body Election Result - 2019, Tamil Nadu State Election Commission, Chennai, Tamil Nadu. The main Objectives of the study are; To critically examine women political representation in village panchayat, To understand age group distribution of women political representation in village panchayat, To find out women and men difference point among elected representatives of village panchayat presidents in Tamil Nadu, and To find out the progress of women's political participation in rural local government. The study found that the 73<sup>rd</sup> constitution amendment act has given power to the people particularly women with 33% of reservation. The 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment is a milestone in empowering women which pushed to participate or contest in state legislative assembly or parliament election. This act makes them participate in decision making process in their house as well as public.

**Keywords:** Political Representation: Body Election: State Election Commission: Panchayat Presidents: Tamil Nadu; India.

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### **1.0 Introduction of the Study**

In Tamil Nadu Panchayat is popularly known as a traditional local self-governance in villages which functioned under the Banyan tree, headed by five elders sitting along with the village people (Dorairaj, 2013; Shamsul, 2008). The discussions are mostly relating to resolving the village people's disputes, basic needs and execution thereof. The 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 aims to empower people through direct participation in decision-making process and implement development programmes at the grass-root level. This Act has instituted a policy of political reservations in local self-governance for the historically disadvantaged social group i.e. women. This Act gives more opportunity to the people belonging to disadvantaged social groups to contest in elections and become Panchayat Presidents to uplift and empower the people of their own Panchayat. This brought new reservation strategies for women in Panchayat Raj Institutions, which was the major step towards democratic decentralization of all the communities. In reality, the Panchayat Raj system has provided some political space for the women Panchayat Presidents and elected representatives, but in practice they are restricted by various factors while carrying out their legitimate duties. Interference of multifarious kinds and discrimination of various sorts have constricted their performance not only as Panchayat Presidents but also as common citizens. Since the enactment of the Tamil Nadu Panchayat Act 1994. The 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment of Indian Constitution provides decentralized power to the local people through the local self-governance model. This local self-governance model creates a holistic opportunity to all the sections of the society to engage in the governance process to develop their local area.

There are four major components playing a vital role in determining the women Panchayat Presidents to participate in the local self-governance (Zondi et al., 2021). Based on the legal provisions, there are four reasons to take part in the local self-governance, (i) reservation in the local self-governance opens up the door for women to participate in the local self-governance process in their local area (ii) the family background of the individuals play a vital role to participate in the local self-governance (iii) the local leaders are inspired by the national political leaders, political party's ideology and philosophy to take part in the governance system (iv) there are well educated young people and elders interested to serve the community with legal power and support mentioned in 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act (Tsegaye, 2021; Oseni & Odebiyi, 2021). The reservation, family background, political background and education are the four major pillars for the participation of women Panchayat Presidents in the local governance system. Effective participation leads to good administration, awareness about duties and responsibilities and its fulfilment thus enabling a barrier free environment (Teltumbde, 2011; Madonda et al., 2021). The above said factors on the whole enable and empower the women Panchayat Presidents.

The Women Panchayat Presidents' participation is closely associated with their empowerment in the community. This empowerment is often determined by their leadership abilities, execution of power and development programmes, and community engagement in the governance process, cooperation and coordination of other key stakeholders of the Panchayat (Palanithurai, 2005; Rai, 2007). These dimensions of empowerment are not clearly understood by the current women Panchayat Presidents. The leadership of the Women Panchayat Presidents has close connection with people engagement, cooperation and coordination of the members of the Panchayat with respect to execution of the development programmes. The self-sustained village and people centred administration are possible only through empowerment of the women Panchayat Presidents with their active participation in the local self-governance. The Government of Tamil Nadu enacted Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994, (Tamil Nadu Act 21 of 1994) which came into force on 22.4.1994. On December 2019 and January 2020, Tamil Nadu State Election commission has conducted rural local body election in 27 districts which is represented in table 1. Election was conducted in 9624 village Panchayats, and 2 nominations were not received for the post of village Panchayat president, in Panchayat from Dharmapuri district and another one Panchayat from Thanjavur district. Finally 9622 village Panchayat presidents were selected.

### **2.0 Review of Literature**

The following exited studies and articles have considered this study is connected with political participation of women, panchayat president, and village panchayat president. Rajesh & Ranjithkumar (2017) studied on "Sustainable Development through Social Justice: A Study with Special Reference to Village Panchayat in Tamil Nadu". Sustainable development in rural areas is possible only when social justice is ensured. Without social justice, development will only be lopsided. Village panchayats have been given a mandate to plan for and implement schemes for social justice in rural areas. However, despite reservation of seats and the post of chairpersons they have failed in this regard. Manimekalai (2005) study on 'Women and Management' in this article she demanded gender equality and equal representation of women in all spheres of activities including political, cultural, economic and education. Social Justice through Rural Development Programmes was written by Ranjithkumar (2018). The study said that A Village is one of the most powerful weapons for promoting economic and allied activities. He pointed out that rural planning is the process of improving the equality, and economic well-being of communities living in relatively unpopulated areas rich in natural resources. He observed that everyday discriminations has been increasing against SCs in rural areas through MGNREGS. India had launched many schemes in favour of SCs for improvement of their economic, environmental and social situations of the people in rural areas. But they are facing discrimination and atrocities. The study tested the null hypothesis and it is accepted that just social orders cannot be constructed through MGNREGA in a rural area.

Ranjithkumar (2015) stated that the present global trend in democratic governance is democratic decentralization and strengthening of the local self-governments as strong grassroots level democratic institutions. Such institutions with appropriate safeguards for weaker sections fulfil the aspirations of wider sections of the public. They provide opportunities for their own governance and effective delivery mechanism for poverty alleviation and rural development, irrespective of caste, creed, religion and gender. These are the best agencies to facilitate the process of decentralized planning. The process of socio-economic development in rural areas gets priority focus by channelling the resources and development efforts to meet the community needs as per their own priorities. He pointed out that people don't have sufficient knowledge about Panchayat Raj Institutions and the various development programmes implemented for the benefit of the people. The participation of the people in the gram Sabha and village panchayat is not satisfactory. The success of democratic decentralization and development administration at the grassroots level depends wholly on the extent of the participation in the grassroots governance. Palanithurai's (2001) "The Genre of Women Leaders in Local Bodies: Experience from Tamil Nadu" explains the process of recruitment of women leaders to the local bodies and how they handle power in their institutions. It analyses the problem of the women leaders while performing their roles and responsibilities. Different types of leaders with varying backgrounds and intentions have come to these positions. In the given environmental setting how they struggle to perform their function has been analysed in this work. It indicates the need of the hour for the women leaders to perform their roles efficiently. At the end of the five years' tenure how the women leaders look at their space and how they design their public life have also been analysed in this article.

Palanithurai (2002) written an article on "Impediments of Empowerment of Women: Experiences of Elected Women Representatives in Panchayats in Tamil Nadu". He investigated the problems faced by the Elected Women Representatives. This article brought up light on the ways and means of tackling the problem, what the needs of the leaders are, and how they can be met by outside organizations. Palanithurai (2004) in his article "Women in Governance for Development at Grassroots" explains how women at the panchayat level have perceived space for governance as a place for development and most of their governance efforts will address development issues. This article shows how in spite of their inexperience these leaders have come to grips with their new assigned role in a patriarchal society. Their perception of this new role has made much of the difference in their approach towards social, developmental and governance related issues. George Dimitrov (2018) discussed performance and problems faced by elected women village panchayat presidents in panchayat raj institutions. He rightly pointed out women panchayat presidents are being nominated by their male counterparts of the family when the panchayat is reserved for women. Women panchayat presidents after winning the election are not allowed carrying out their duties in the panchayats. Mostly the panchayat is under the control of the panchayat officials and by their husband. Numerous studies on the political representation of women have come from researchers and academics. No study has come forward to discuss the political representation of women in the local body elections in 2019. Hence we try to come forward to analysis of Analysis of Political Representation of Village Panchayat Presidents among Women in rural Local Body Election in 2019, Tamil Nadu

### **3.0 Objectives of the Study**

1. To critically examine women political representation in village Panchayat
2. To understand age group distribution of women political representation in village Panchayat
3. To find out women and men difference point among elected representatives of village Panchayat presidents in Tamil Nadu
4. To find out the progress of women's political participation in rural local government.

### **4.0 Research Methodology**

Secondary data are using this study. Secondary data were collected from the various government documents and Local Body Election Result - 2019, Tamil Nadu State Election Commission, Chennai, Tamil Nadu. The concept of reservation is not a new one and it has its own history in Indian states. The reservation policy had emerged during the pre-independence period. The social movement in Tamil Nadu had started to demand political participation in democratic process. In this background, the discussion of women reservation has come up in mainstream political areas. After independence, many political parties, pressure groups demanded reservation for women in parliament, state legislative assembly, and local government. In spite of many attempts by various people's opinion, the government gave reservation in local government which covers 33% seats in local body election in 1992. Simple frequency table, population pyramid are using this study. Legally 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of seats were given to women. All the Indian states have equally implemented these reservations for women, and brought almost 1.6 million representatives from these groups into elected positions making the Panchayats the nursery of future leadership. Even the government has failed to give reservation for women in parliament and state legislative assembly and 33% of women reservation acts have not been enacted yet due to political reasons. The present study tries to discuss the following research questions are; why are governments providing reservation for women in local body elections? What is the role and responsibilities of women panchayat presidents to strengthen good governance? Whether 73<sup>rd</sup> constitution amendment act provides full power to reserved categories like women? Whether Women Panchayat Women are acting independently without any barriers from others? The study assumes that Women Panchayat President in Tamil Nadu is performing better way to promote good governance at the local level. Based on research questions, the study is undergone.

**5.0 Result and Discussion**

Table 1: District wise distribution of political representation of village Panchayat President by Gender

Sl. No	Name of the District	Representation		% of Representation		Difference Point (W – M)
		Women	Men	Women	Men	
1	Ariyalur	107	94	53.2	46.8	13
2	Coimbatore	123	105	53.9	46.1	18
3	Cuddalore	415	268	60.8	39.2	147
4	Dharmapuri	138	112	55.2	44.8	26
5	Dindigul	169	137	55.2	44.8	32
6	Erode	124	101	55.1	44.9	23
7	Kanyakumari	53	42	55.8	44.2	11
8	Karur	81	76	51.6	48.4	5
9	Krishnagiri	189	144	56.8	43.2	45
10	Madurai	237	183	56.4	43.6	54
11	Nagapattinam	235	199	54.1	45.9	36
12	Namakkal	173	149	53.7	46.3	24
13	Perambalur	64	57	52.9	47.1	7
14	Pudukkottai	275	222	55.3	44.7	53
15	Ramanathapuram	251	178	58.5	41.5	73
16	Salem	216	169	56.1	43.9	47
17	Sivaganga	263	182	59.1	40.9	81
18	Thanjayur	313	275	53.2	46.8	38
19	The Nilgiris	21	14	60.0	40.0	7
20	Theni	76	54	58.5	41.5	22
21	Thothukudi	228	175	56.6	43.4	53
22	Tiruchirapalli	227	177	56.2	43.8	50
23	Tiruppur	146	119	55.1	44.9	27
24	Tiruvallur	312	214	59.3	40.7	98
25	Tiruvannamalai	480	380	55.8	44.2	100
26	Thiruvarur	234	196	54.4	45.6	38
27	Virudhunagar	271	179	60.2	39.8	92
Total		5421	4201	56.3	43.7	1220

Source: Computed from Local Body Election Result - 2019, Tamil Nadu State Election Commission, Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

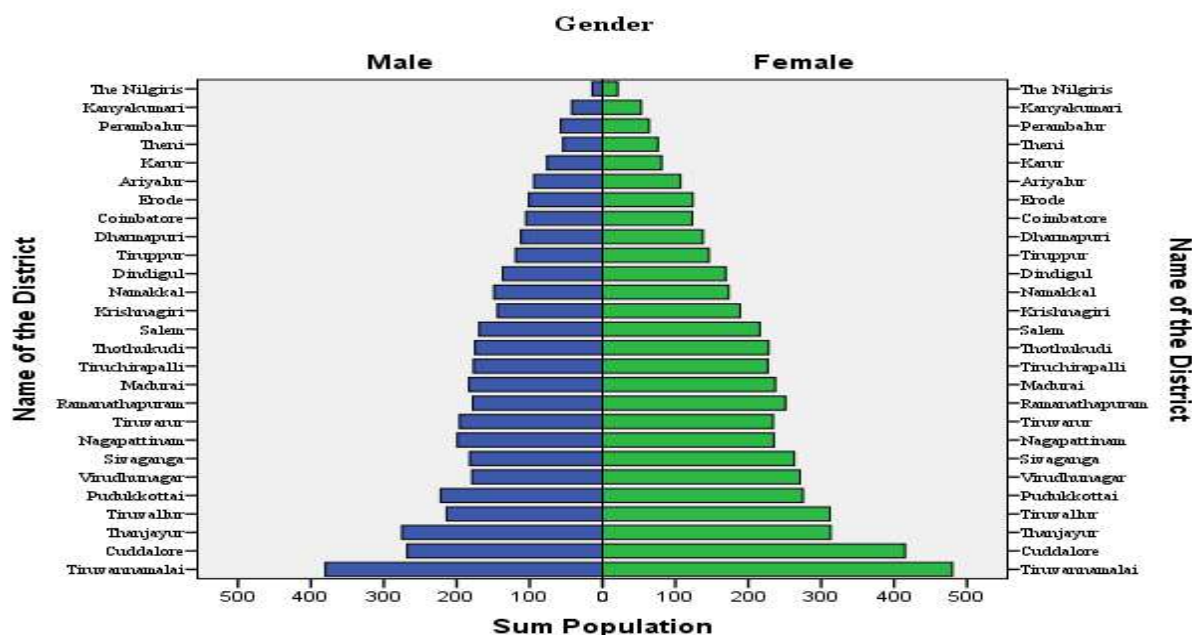


Fig 1: District wise distribution of political representation of Panchayat President

Table 1 shows the District wise distribution of political representation of village Panchayat President by Gender. There are 9624 village Panchayats in Tamil Nadu, out of which 9622 local body elections were held. Election not conducted for 1 village Panchayat president in Dharmapuri and Thanjavur district. There are 860 village Panchayats in Tiruvannamalai district and followed by Cuddalore (683), Thanjavur (588), Tiruvallur (526), Pudukkottai (497). There are 35 village Panchayats in the Nilgiris district, which has the lowest number of village Panchayats in the Tamil Nadu districts. The distribution of women presidents (5421) is higher than male presidents (4201). Women and man difference point is 1220. Cuddalore (60.8%), Virudhunagar (60.2%) and Nilgiris (60%) districts have the highest women representation and Karur (51.6%) district has the lowest women representation. It is observed that % of women representation in rural local government is higher than men which means women are ready to participate in political activities. It is evidence that more than 50% of women's political representation has taken place in rural areas. I feel that the reservation of women helps to participate in rural local government. The 73 Constitutional Amendment Act mandated a reservation for women and the acts said that not less than one-third reservation for women out of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election. I can say that the objectives of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act have been fulfilled and it can be extended to state legislative assembly as well as parliament which help political representation of women at the national level. Although the reservation for women in the Assembly and Parliament has been extended, it must be ensured that the reservation for women in SC and ST is provided. Fig. 1 shows the District wise distribution of political representation in Panchayat President by Gender. Women political representation is higher than male political representation.

Table 2: Details of political representation of Village Panchayat President by Gender and age group

Sl. No.	Age Group	Representation			% of Representation to total representation of Tamil Nadu		
		Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	% of Total
1	21-35	377	1440	1817	3.9	15	18.9
2	36-50	2239	2958	5197	23.3	30.7	54
3	51-60	1071	752	1823	11.1	7.8	18.9
4	Above 61	514	271	785	5.4	2.8	8.2
Total		4201	5421	9622	43.7	56.3	100

Sources: Computed from Local Body Election Result – 2019, Tamil Nadu State Election Commission, Chennai, Tamil Nadu & Computed from Institute of Grassroots Governance (IGG) (2020): Analysis on Demographic Status of Elected Village Panchayat Presidents in Tamil Nadu -2020, Vol.1, Institute of Grassroots Governance, Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu.

Table 2 shows details of political representation of village Panchayat presidents by gender and age group. Age group has been divided into four categories namely 21-35, 36-50, 51-60, and above 60 (IGG: 2020). Majority (54%) of political representation come under the age group of 36-50 years and 8.2 % of political representation come under the age group of above 61 years. Women representation is higher than men's representation in the age group of 21-35 years and 36-50 years. Men representation is higher than Women representation in the age group of 51-60 years and above 61 years. Youth Women representation (15%) is higher than youth men representation (3.9%). Youth Women and Youth men's difference point is 11.1 which is the highest difference point compared

to other age groups. The data evidence that rural and community development is shifting to youth women’s hands. It states that the future of social change can be possible through youth women’s representation. In future, the participation of youth women in politics will be very important and it can be changed to assembly as well as parliament election also. According to Census of India (2011) Youth is defined as a person of age between 15-24 years. The National Youth Policy 2003 covered the age group of 13-35 years. The National Youth Policy 2014 recommends the age group of the youth to be 15-29 years. The Commonwealth of Nations has categorized 16-24 age groups as youth. The Tamil Nadu State Youth Policy covers the age group of 15-35 years. It is highly noted Political representation of women above the age of 51 is declining. After 51 years, men’s political representation is higher than women’s representation and women’s representation is very low compared to male.

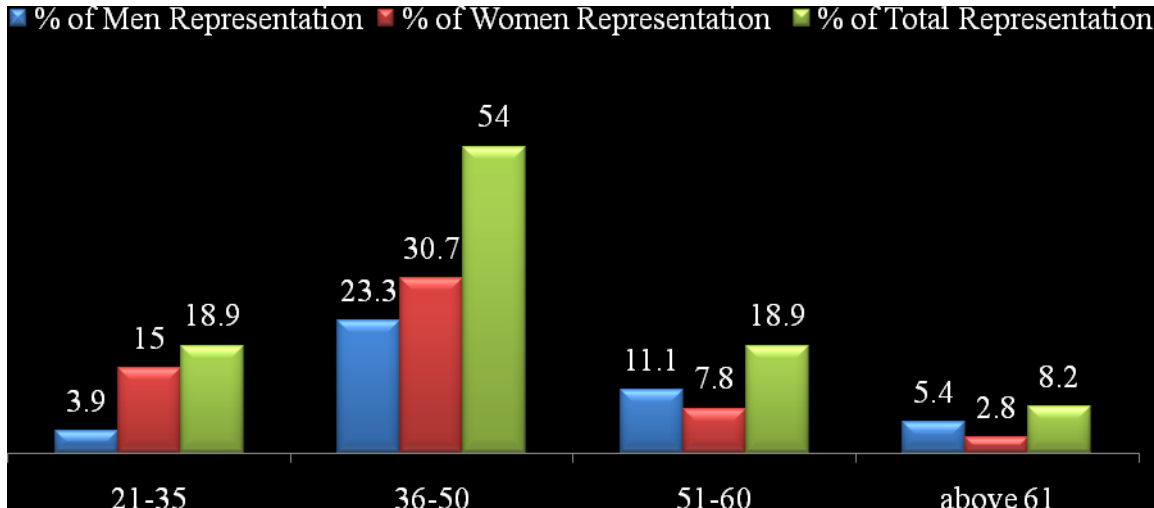


Fig 2 (A): Details of political representation of Village Panchayat President by Gender and age group

Fig. 2 (A) illustrates % of political representation of village Panchayat presidents by gender and age group. Majority (54%) of the elected representatives belong to the age group of 36-50. Of these, 30.7 % and 23.3 % of the elected representatives are women and men respectively. From 21 ages to 50 ages women representatives (45.7%) is higher than man representatives (27.2%). Male representatives (16.5%) are higher than women representatives (10.6%) above the age group of 51 years. It is observed that after the age of 51 women are not ready to contest local body elections in rural areas. Fig. 2 (B) demonstrates the political representation of Village Panchayat Presidents by Gender and age group. Out of 9622 elected representatives, 781 representatives are above 61 age groups. Of these 271 and 514 of the elected representatives are women and men respectively and 8.2% of senior citizens were elected as Gram Panchayat Presidents. The data highlighted that senior citizens are not ready to contest local body elections in rural areas.

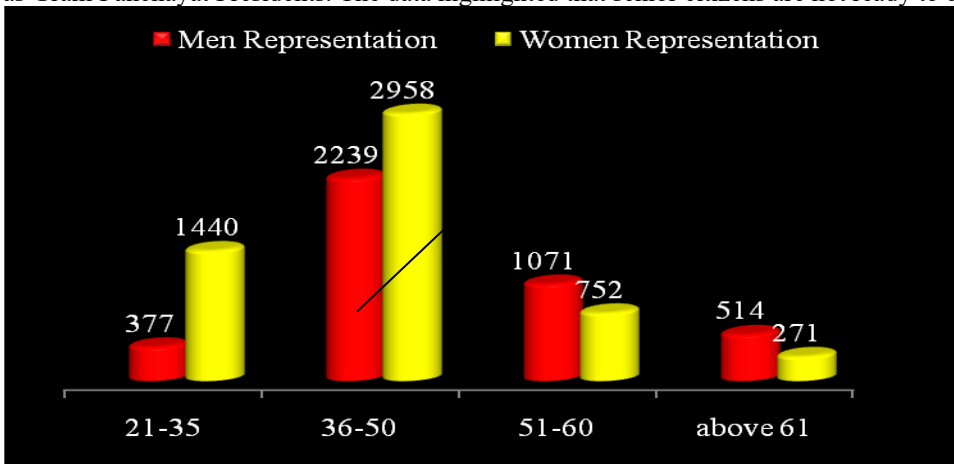


Fig 2 (B): Details of political representation of Village Panchayat President by Gender and age group

Table 2, Fig 2 (A), and Fig 2 (B) shows the political representation of Village Panchayat Presidents by Gender and age group. The study finds from the data that most of the elder persons are not ready to contest local body elections and young people are eager to contest village Panchayat president elections. It is noted that the political participation of women in local government has been declining since the age of 51. The present researcher tries to understand what are the reasons for the low participation of women in the post of village Panchayat president after the age of 51? Social Insecurity, Health illness (Physical and Psychological), and Stress have been influenced to low level of political representation among rural women.

Table 3: District wise distribution of Political Representation of Village Panchayat President in Tamil Nadu between ages group of 21-35

Sl. No.	Name of the district	Female	Male	Total	F - M Difference Point
1	Ariyalur	38	9	47	29
2	Coimbatore	36	4	40	32
3	Cuddalore	108	23	131	85
4	Dharmapuri	47	15	62	32
5	Dindigul	44	5	49	39
6	Erode	23	7	30	16
7	Kanyakumari	9	3	12	6
8	Karur	19	4	23	15
9	Krishnagiri	58	16	74	42
10	Madurai	66	20	86	46
11	Nagapattinam	52	26	78	26
12	Namakkal	49	13	62	36
13	Perambalur	20	7	27	13
14	Pudukkottai	70	20	90	50
15	Ramanathapuram	63	13	76	50
16	Salem	56	9	65	47
17	Sivaganga	71	17	88	54
18	Thanjayur#	72	12	84	60
19	The Nilgiris	7	1	8	6
20	Theni	20	3	23	17
21	Thothukudi	50	21	71	29
22	Tiruchirapalli	64	16	80	48
23	Tiruppur	40	13	53	27
24	Tiruvallur	97	24	121	73
25	Tiruvannamalai	142	41	183	101
26	Thiruvarur	51	18	69	33
27	Virudhunagar	68	17	85	51
Total		1440	377	1817	1063

Table 3 shows that District wise distribution of Political Representation in Tamil Nadu between ages 21-35, 1817 representatives were elected as village Panchayat president between the age group of 21-35. Of these 1440 representatives are women and 377 representatives are men. Female and male Difference Point is 1063. There is a big difference between both genders. Thiruvannamalai (142) district has the highest number of women representatives and Nilgiris district has the lowest number of women representatives (7). The Nilgiris and Kanyakumari districts have the lowest difference point(6) and Tiruvannamalai (101) and Cuddalore( 985) are the highest difference points. It is observed that youth political participation is highly taken place in Tamil Nadu local body elections. According to the National Youth Policy 2003 covered the age group of 13-35 years and the Tamil Nadu State Youth Policy covers the age group of 15-35 years.

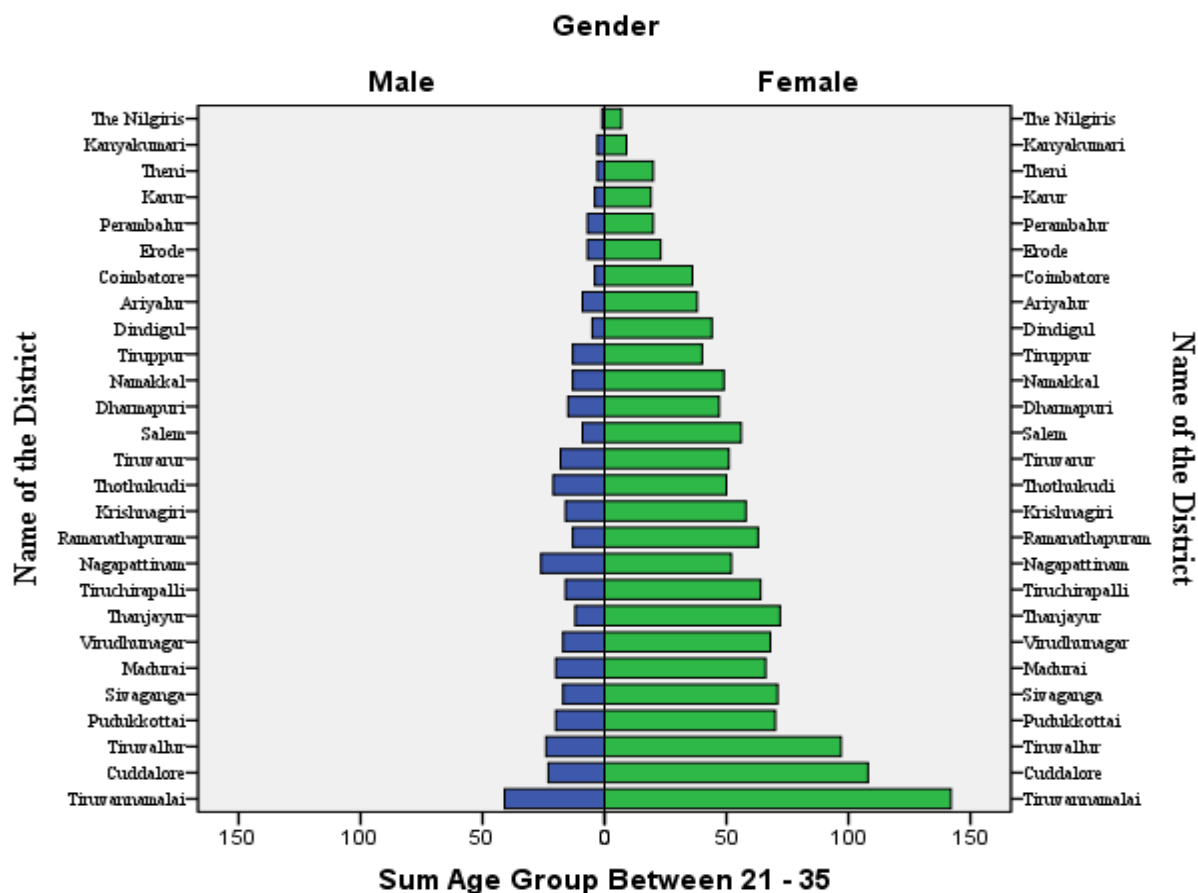


Fig. 3: District wise distribution of Political Representation of Village Panchayat President in Tamil Nadu between ages group of 21-35

Fig. 3 shows the population pyramid of District wise distribution of Political Representation of Village Panchayat President in Tamil Nadu between the age group of 21-35. The figure represents that majority of the women were elected as a village Panchayat president in Tamil Nadu local body election which was conducted in 2019 and 2020.

Table 4: Gender wise distribution of Political Representation of Village Panchayat President in Tamil Nadu between age group of 36-50

Sl. No.	Name of the District	Female	Male	Total	F - M Difference Point
1	Ariyalur	53	44	97	9
2	Coimbatore	74	58	132	16
3	Cuddalore	233	143	376	90
4	Dharmapuri	65	62	127	3
5	Dindigul	93	69	162	24
6	Erode	74	55	129	19
7	Kanyakumari	34	21	55	13
8	Karur	47	45	92	2
9	Krishnagiri	103	86	189	17
10	Madurai	129	93	222	36
11	Nagapattinam	135	90	225	45
12	Namakkal	87	83	170	4
13	Perambalur	36	30	66	6





Table 5: Gender wise distribution of Political Representation of Village Panchayat President in Tamil Nadu between ages group of 51-60

Sl. No.	Name of the district	Women	Men	Total	W - M Difference Point
1	Ariyalur	12	24	36	-12
2	Coimbatore	10	32	42	-22
3	Cuddalore	52	67	119	-15
4	Dharmapuri	18	24	42	-6
5	Dindigul	26	44	70	-18
6	Erode	19	23	42	-4
7	Kanyakumari	8	15	23	-7
8	Karur	13	15	28	-2
9	Krishnagiri	18	30	48	-12
10	Madurai	31	50	81	-19
11	Nagapattinam	42	61	103	-19
12	Namakkal	26	39	65	-13
13	Perambalur	7	13	20	-6
14	Pudukkottai	37	57	94	-20
15	Ramanathapuram	44	47	91	-3
16	Salem	29	46	75	-17
17	Sivaganga	27	50	77	-23
18	Thanjayur	44	70	114	-26
19	The Nilgiris	1	5	6	-4
20	Theni	20	13	33	7
21	Thothukudi	28	35	63	-7
22	Tiruchirapalli	28	39	67	-11
23	Tiruppur	20	33	53	-13
24	Tiruvallur	37	51	88	-14
25	Tiruvannamalai	71	88	159	-17
26	Thiruvarur	38	57	95	-19
27	Virudhunagar	46	43	89	3
Total		752	1071	1823	-319

Table 5 illustrates gender wise distribution of political representation of village Panchayat president in Tamil Nadu between the age group of 51-60, 1823 representatives were elected as village Panchayat president between the age group of 51-60. Of these 752 representatives are women and 1071 representatives are men. Female and male difference point is -319. Data show that males representatives were elected more than women in the age group of 51-60. Female and male difference point is 7 in Theni district which means that this district's people have given opportunity to women representatives. According to Census of India, 2021, the rural male population (290880) is higher than female population (284538). Male are prepared to choose the female representatives. Men think that women's political empowerment in rural areas is very necessary to meet rural development. The lowest female and male difference point is -26 in Thanjayur which means that this district's people have not given opportunity to women representatives. According to Census of India, 2021, the rural male population (765177) is lower than the female population (789354). Hence, there is a native correlation between rural women population and village Panchayat presidents.

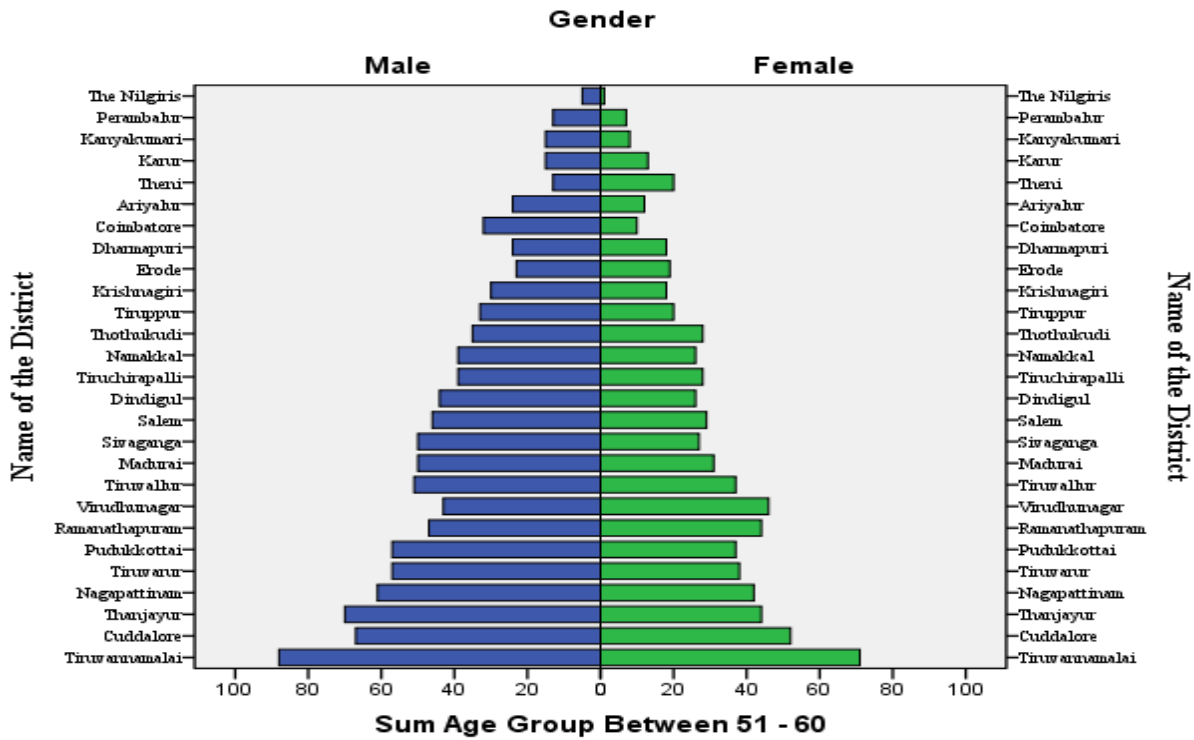


Fig. 5: Gender wise distribution of Political Representation of Village Panchayat President in Tamil Nadu between ages 51-60

Fig. 5 illustrates gender wise distribution of political representation of village Panchayat presidents in Tamil Nadu between ages 51-60. In this age group, elected representatives do not exceed above hundred in all districts of Tamil Nadu.

Table 6: Gender wise distribution of Political Representation of Village Panchayat President in Tamil Nadu above 61 Ages

Sl. No.	Name of the district	Female	Male	Total	F - M Difference Point
1	Ariyalur	4	17	21	-13
2	Coimbatore	3	11	14	-8
3	Cuddalore	22	35	57	-13
4	Dharmapuri	8	11	19	-3
5	Dindigul	6	19	25	-13
6	Erode	8	16	24	-8
7	Kanyakumari	2	3	5	-1
8	Karur	2	12	14	-10
9	Krishnagiri	10	12	22	-2
10	Madurai	11	20	31	-9
11	Nagapattinam	6	22	28	-16
12	Namakkal	11	14	25	-3
13	Perambalur	1	7	8	-6
14	Pudukkottai	10	25	35	-15
15	Ramanathapuram	15	30	45	-15
16	Salem	9	23	32	-14
17	Sivaganga	22	18	40	4
18	Thanjavar	16	43	59	-27
19	The Nilgiris	0	1	1	-1

20	Theni	4	15	19	-11
21	Thothukudi	14	30	44	-16
22	Tiruchirapalli	8	12	20	-4
23	Tiruppur	11	14	25	-3
24	Tiruvallur	12	21	33	-9
25	Tiruvannamalai	30	43	73	-13
26	Thiruvarur	11	18	29	-7
27	Virudhunagar	15	22	37	-7
Total		271	514	785	-243

Table 6 illustrates Gender wise distribution of Political Representation of Village Panchayat President in Tamil Nadu above 61 Ages, 514 representatives were elected as village Panchayat president between above 61 ages. Of these 271 representatives are women and 514 representatives are men. Female and male difference point is -243. Women representatives are higher than male representatives. In India 60+ are considered elderly population or senior citizens. Nearly one tenth percent of the senior citizens were selected to be Panchayat president. It is highly appreciated and senior citizens are actively participating in the political process which helps to create welfare policies in favour of them. The study observed that women Senior citizen representatives (34.5%) were elected lower than male senior citizens (65.5%). The women and men difference point is 4 in Sivaganga district of Tamil Nadu which means that women representatives are higher than male representatives and all other districts are lower than male representatives. The women and men difference point is -26 in Thanjayurdistrict of Tamil Nadu, which means that difference point is high when compared to other districts. In this district, women representatives are lower than male representatives.

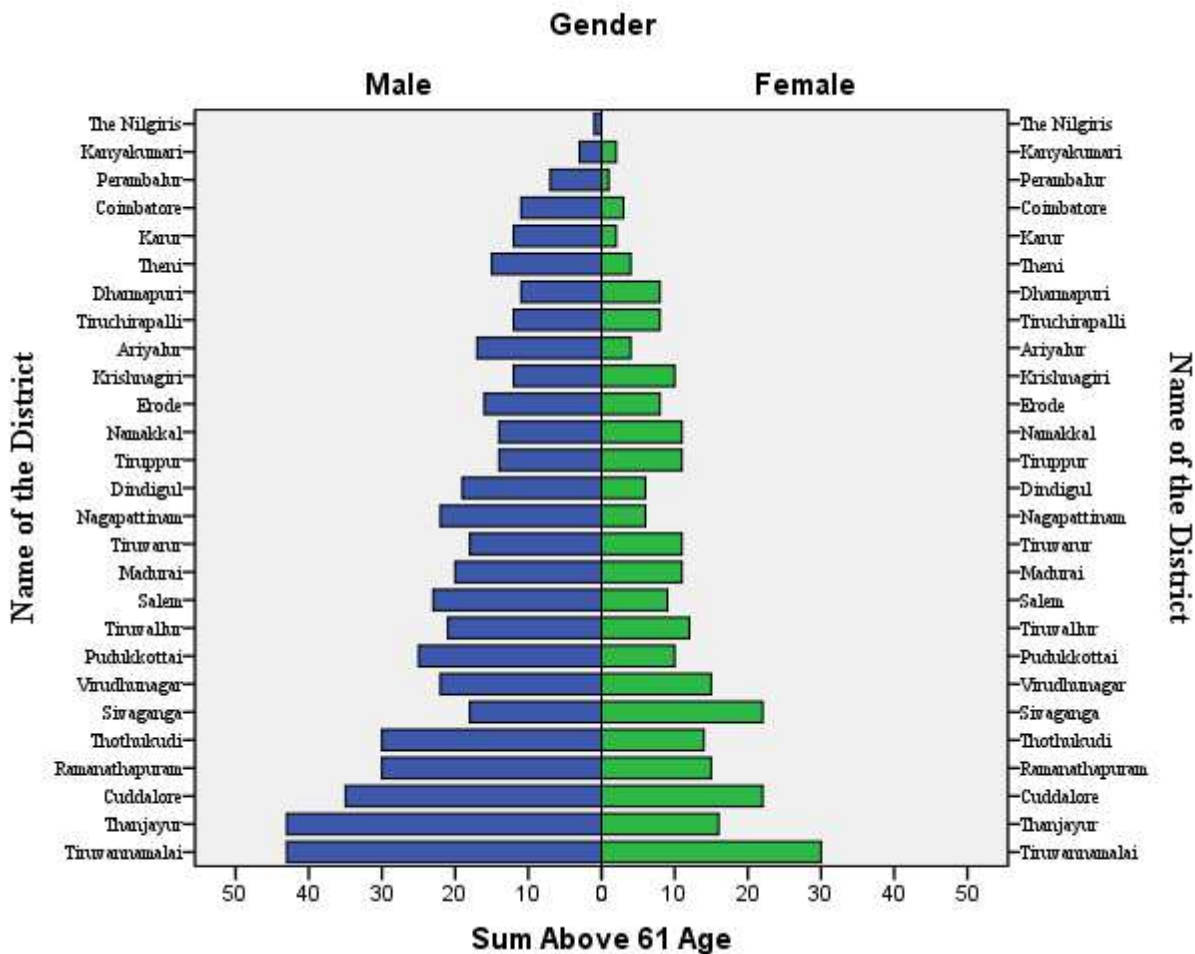


Fig. 6: Gender wise distribution of Political Representation of Village Panchayat President in Tamil Nadu above 61 Ages.

Fig. 6 pyramid shows the Gender wise distribution of Political Representation of Village Panchayat Presidents in Tamil Nadu above 61 Ages. No women representatives selected from The Nilgiris district and population distribution elected representatives are unequally in all districts of Tamil Nadu above 60 years old.

### **6.0 Conclusion of the Study**

The political participation of women in rural local bodies should not be weakened, but strengthened for the effective implementation of programmes through greater involvement of the community, especially through the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment to the Constitution. Through reservation, the Indian Constitution has ensured the provision for the empowerment of women. The women have a better chance of organising themselves and resist the elite in Panchayat Raj elections because of increasing reservations. It is inferred that reservation provides the opportunities to women to participate in PRIs. Therefore, the Government shall continue the reservation policy in the State of Tamil Nadu and to put the last first. The women Panchayat Presidents are facing caste based abuse, violence, discrimination and exploitations at various levels, they could not take innovative actions for the Panchayats' development. The community needs to be sensitized so that they realize that the women involved in the affairs of the PRIs are doing an important job for which they require all support and cooperation. This can be achieved through use of media services, campaigns and inter-personnel communication.

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