



Proxy Oath for Women Panchayat Representatives in Chhattisgarh

Why in News?

The husbands (**Pradhan Pati**) of six newly elected **women panchayat representatives** allegedly took the oath in their place, in Paraswara village panchayat, Kabirdham district, Chhattisgarh.

Key Points

- **Pradhan Pati:** It is a term used in India to describe the **husbands of elected women representatives** in **panchayats (village councils)** who unofficially exercise the power on behalf of their **wives (actual panchayat representatives)**.
 - This phenomenon arises due to **socio-cultural norms** where, despite women holding official positions, their husbands or male family members make decisions and perform administrative duties.
- **Swearing-in Controversy:** A video surfaced on social media, showing the husbands of six newly elected women panchayat representatives allegedly taking the oath in their place.
 - In response to this, **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** of Pandariya Janpad Panchayat was instructed to investigate the matter. He confirmed that action would be taken based on the probe report.
- **Irregular Oath-taking:** The **panchayat secretary** allegedly administered the oath to the husbands of the six elected women representatives instead of the actual representatives.
- **Public Outrage:** Locals and social activists condemned the incident as a **violation of women's empowerment** and demanded strict action against those responsible. They warned that failure to act could encourage similar incidents in the future.

Governance of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)

- **State Subject:** Local governance falls under the jurisdiction of state governments, with PRIs operating as per respective **State Panchayati Raj Acts**.
- **Constitutional Framework:**
 - **73rd Constitutional Amendment Act (1992)** established a three-tiered Panchayat system and mandated **1/3rd reservation for women**, later increased to **50% in 21 states** and **2 UTs**.
 - **Article 243D** provides for **reservation for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Backward Classes** in PRIs.
 - **Article 40** of the Constitution, a **Directive Principle of State Policy**, mandates the State to establish village panchayats and grant them the necessary powers and authority to function as self-governing units.
- The **Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act, 1996**, grants Gram Sabhas in Scheduled Areas special powers to manage natural resources and protect tribal culture and livelihoods.

