

**A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF LEADERSHIP FORMATION IN RURAL
SOCIETY : A STUDY IN GADHINGLAJ TALUKA OF KOLHAPUR DISTRICT**

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

Village communities in India were economically self-sufficient, politically autonomous and socially wellintegrated. These communities possessed amazing stability and they had achived a high stage of social development in the sense that in the form of the village community system an advanced stage of occupational differentiation was functioning excellently within the larger framework of Hindu social and cultural ideals. The landlords and their kin, the priests and the moneylenders all wielded power in their own right. All of these were from high castes.

Under the British rule the rural communities in India felt the presence of a strong and centralized administration. This was something new. But the traditional authority structure in the villages did not change its form or functions. High caste people who had both money and education were the natural leaders of village folk.

The pace of change in the entire Indian social system has increased since independence in 1947. The universal suffrage has enhanced the importance of each individual. It has given rise to an unprecedented political awakening among the masses. In the village communities the introduction of Panchayat Raj and community development programmes are operating at the grass roots of social relationship by tortoise-slow but tor-toise-sure steps. The zamindari abolition has freed the common villager from the economic dependence on the zamindars and the co-operative societies have provided him with an alternative to the moneylenders. The political parties have started operating in the rural society.

Under these forces of change the old power structure is gradually giving way to a new structure of power in the rural community. The pattern of rural leadership, as it exist today reflects a transition from individual to collective, from the hereditary to elective and from ascriptive to functional type of leadership.

Leadership is an important social phenomenon, which challenges the student of sociology, politics and psychology at every turn. It is an etrnal and universal phenomenon.

According to O. Tead, " Leadership is the activity of influencing people to co-operate some goal which they come to find desirable."

THEOROTICAL PERSPECTIVE

The phenomenon of leadership can be viewed in two ways. One it can be regarded as an individual based phenomenon, i.e. a phenomenon which is related to certain attributes and characteristics of leaders personality. The main focus of the approach, would be to explain causation of ' leading ' by taking resource to some of the psychalological attributes of personality. The second approach is with the nature of the social context which gives rise to the phenomenon of leadership. A truely sociological approach to this phenomenon could be seen identifying social groups and categorise (the elites) who perform the function of leading.

Studies on top leadership have assumed ~~these~~ approaches, the elite approach is mainly concerned with the explanation of leadership, mainly concerned with the quaities required of an ideal leaders in charge of groups and organisation. Our study is more closely related to the first approach bcause the individuals in our study are political leaders.

According to Pareto, men are not equal, they differ among themselves in regard to their capacities and capable than others. Defining the class of elites Pareto says, " so let us make a class of people who have the highest indices in their branch of activity and to that class give the name elite. The elite from the upper classes and are usually also the richest." Thus in every sphere of social activity there is a class of superior persons which is termed elite. In a democracy, Pareto's elite includes the rival leadership of all political parties. (Pareto, 1966, 248).

According to Mosca," In all societies - two classes of people appear a class that rules and a class that is ruled. The first class, always the less numerous, performs all political functions, monopolizes power and enjoys the advantages that the power brings where as the second, the more numerous class is directed and controlled by the first in a manner that is now more or less legal, now more or less arbitrary and violent. (Mosca, 1939, 50).

In weber's view every society is divided into grouping and strata with distinctive life style and views of the world, just as it is divided into distinctive classes.

In Indian society, leadership can be of two types as one, by virtue of one's birth in a family he succeeds as the head of the family and that family bring the head of the village automatically takes over the office of the headman. This type of leadership is still in some spheres of social life. The dawn of democracy, however, brought a new type of leadership emerged from the masses. In democracy every individual has equal opportunity to become the leader, but it is noticed that, the emergence of leadership has certain constraints. In Indian situation, the family background, caste and economic and political influence play an important role in determining the leadership.

In Maharashtra, after the democratic decentralization, a new breed of leaders has emerged in rural areas. To know the emergence of new leadership an attempt is made here to study the emerging rural leadership in Maharashtra by taking a taluka as an representative one for to understand the problem.

METHODOLOGY :

A) Objectives of the study :-

The major objective of the study is to understand the social, educational, economic, religious and political background of the emerging rural leadership.

B) Area of the study :-

This study is mainly confined with the elected panchayat samiti, zilla parishad members and M.L.A.'s and M.P.'s from the Gadhinglaj, constituency since 1960 and 1952 respectively.

C) Definition of variables :-

Now, coming to the factors upon which village leadership depends. Having conducted field studies, social scientists

S. C. Dubey and Oscar Lewis have laid emphasis on the following variables :

1) Caste :

Caste as a factor determining leadership is more significant. The caste system has a hierarchical character. Between the highest and the lowest castes there are several intermediate levels. The mere fact of birth in a particular caste gives a good initial start to some and puts obstacles in the way of others. Thus, majority of the village leaders in different spheres come from higher caste groups in a village.

2) Land Ownership :

In a predominantly agricultural society it is natural to expect that land owners are respected members of the community. If this is so, the leadership naturally goes to such persons. Social scientists have found high correlation between land holding and the rural leadership.

FAMILY'S POSITION IN RURAL SOCIETY :3) Family size and position :

The social position of a family plays a very important role in leadership position and is dependent upon giving of death feast, birth feast and elaborate marriages. These occasions are remembered for generations. Family reputation is also judged in terms of the charity given to religious places, community buildings etc. Families who have held official positions are revenue officials as headmen as who have been money lenders are also popular.

4) Age :

Age is still another important factor. Mostly the persons above 50 years are essentially ceremonial leaders and they are leaders by virtue of the respect for their seniority of age and genealogical position in the lineage. They have the authority of the 'grey hair' and wide experience of life.

5) Personality Traits :

A fundamental requisite for leadership in the village is humility is self-abnegation and hospitality. The importance given to these values is reflected in everyday life by the use of conventional expressions and behaviours such as respectful kinship terminology etc. Other traits which are valued are unquestioning loyalty to the group, effective outlook, keeping promises and speaking ability especially at panchayats.

6) Time to be spent for social work :

The need to have sufficient time at one's disposal to devote to the various activities which leaders must carry on, particularly in attending panchayats, in fighting court cases, in collecting contributions. In arranging or attending marriages and in other ceremonial activities, is also an important factor for leadership.

7) Education :

Education is now regarded as one of the important factor because it provides " the key " to the understanding of the 'wide world ' and equips one better to assert one's rights and claim one's dues from officials and the town people.

8) Good contacts :

Having good contacts with the officials and other people is also an important factor. It is natural that persons who have good relations with others in the village are popular and they are at a better position to acquire leadership as compared with those who have contacts only with a limited section of the village population. Contacts with officials is also regarded by the people as an important part of a leader's role.

9) Numerical Strength of the family :

As pointed out by Lewis there is a significant correlation between leadership and family size. To him, the families of the primary leaders are generally larger than those of the secondary.

Sample :

For the purpose of our present study, respondents were selected from Gadhinglaj Taluk of Kolhapur district. Elected members of the Taluka Panchayat Samiti, Zilla Parishad, Assembly constituency M.L.A.'s and M.P.'s elected since 1960 and 1952 respectively. The total number of respondents is 75, however we could contact actually 45 persons only.

Data collection :

The data for the study was collected through interviews. All respondents were interviewed on/ ^{the} basis of a carefully constructed interview schedule.

The major emphasis in data collection was placed on personal interviews. For this purpose an elaborate interview schedule was prepared, taking into consideration the major items on which data was to be collected. These included the family background, family type, education of the respondent, caste and religious background of the respondent, income of the respondent and the party affiliation of the respondent.

The field work for the study was conducted during June 1994 to July 1994. All the local level leaders were contacted personally in their homes or offices. On an average a completed interview took from one and half hours to two hours. The majority of the respondents were in the category of honest respondents, who tried to understand the questions and answer them according to their ability.

Chapterizations :

Keeping in view the theoretical framework and the data collected from our field work the entire discussion have been presented under five broad chapters.

The first chapter is an introductory chapter which deals with the concept of leadership, theoretical perspective and methodology.

The second chapter deals with review of literature on rural leadership.

The third chapter deals with the socio-economic background of rural leaders. In this chapter an effort is being made to describe the basic variables of rural leadership like age, sex, religion, income, education, land holdings, family size, occupation etc.

The fourth chapter deals with the political activities of leaders. In this chapter an effort is being made to understand the recruitment factors of leaders, factors which helped them to secure present positions, political age of leaders, nature of public work done by the leaders etc.

The last chapter includes the summary of findings and conclusions of the study.

=====

References

- 1) Rangnath Rural Leadership Old and New (ed.) Leadership in India in Vidyarthi L.P. Asia Publishing House, Bombay. 1967.
- 2) Tead Ordway Art of Leadership, McGraw Hill Book Co., New York, 1935.