

CHAPTER - II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

An attempt is made to review some of the important studies of rural leadership in India and use them as our frame of reference for our analysis of the empirical data.

Pradipto Roy's¹ study provides some broad features that characterize the type of persons emerging as leaders in the Indian village and the mode of its operation.

- 1) Individual with high income and a high level of living are likely to become leaders in these new organizations.
- 2) People with more education will participate more in these new social organizations.
- 3) Members of large families are more likely to emerge as leaders.
- 4) Age and caste do not seem to determine who will be leaders and who will not.
- 5) The new leaders seem to have a higher level of contact with extension agencies.

- 6) The new leaders are generally a little more secular-oriented than most village people but they are not extremely secular.

It seems that the new leader in village India is a person of high economic status, some education, good contact with extension agencies, a large family, and having a somewhat rational perspective on life.

A study of Rajasthan State by D. S. Choudhary² shows that, the grass root level political system is still, by and large, under the control of a leadership which comes from the larger families higher castes, higher educated sections of society and from these who are economically well to do and have some record of social service to their credit.

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S. R. Mehta's study, "Emerging pattern of Rural Leadership", provides a conceptual framework of responsible factors of leadership to a large extent, leadership is based on

- (1) individual's characteristics like age, sex, or personal qualities

like education, occupation, wealth or income, (2) the numerical or economic dominance of a caste group; and the economic dominance of individuals within a caste group; or occupation which ever is valued high in social hierarchies.

" Dynamics of leadership in village India", by Francis Abraham⁴ is the study of rural leadership in India. In his study he points out that the power under the new condition of change tends to gravitate into the hands of those who operate large farms, maintain connections with government officials, are educated, changeprone and active in local community organizations.

" A study of village Mahali in Punjab" by Harjindar Singh⁵ points out some fundamental contributory factors in rural leadership are, (1) higher caste, (2) education, (3) land ownership. He further shows that the basis of leadership have widened with the rise of general consciousness, the village people now recognize their leaders on different grounds. The common basis are free time, good economic condition, education, reputed family and contacts with officials and others.

The National Institute of Community Development conducted a nation-wide survey on the awareness of community development in village India (Sen and Roy⁶). The study showed that, the leaders of the villages belonged to the upper castes, had higher education and were mostly cultivators.

G. N. Pillai's⁷ study, Social Background of Political Leadership in India, indicate that the most important variables associated with leadership position and party affiliation are the family community age, education, fathers education, occupation and income as well as family background of the wife.

Dr. S. N. Mishra,⁸ has studied Panchayat Leadership in Bihar, with special reference to a village named Darauli. He concludes his study by putting following important points.

- 1) Panchayat leadership is all male.
- 2) Panchayat leaders are young and middle aged.
- 3) Panchayat leaders come mainly from elite castes.
- 4) Panchayat leaders are **literate** and poorly educated.

- 5) Panchayat leaders come from the landless and low land holding group.
- 6) Panchayat leaders come largely from high and middle income group.
- 7) Panchayat leaders come from large and middle sized families which enjoy high status in the village.
- 8) They come from various occupations.
- 9) Persons with less informal influences are becoming the members of the Panchayat.
- 10) Persons even having no interest in community activities become the Panchayat leaders.
- 11) Panchayat leaders are little aware of the present situation and problems.
- 12) Democratic behaviour is essential for Panchayat leadership.
- 13) The attitude of Panchayat leaders is favourable to democracy but to a limited extent and unfavourable to authoritarianism.
- 14) Panchayat leaders lack psychological traits of leadership.

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K. R. Patil's, A Sociological Study Of Panchayati Raj Leadership in Sangli District, a doctoral thesis submitted to Shivaji University, Kolhapur shows that, the basic features of Panchayati Raj leaders are dominant caste, younger generation, good educational background, agricultural occupation, high income (rich peasantry), joint family. Not only that, but all these features are correlated with leadership.

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Rangnath in his article, ' Rural Leadership, Old and New,' shows that, the Indian authority structure had largely been traditional, ascriptive and feudal. Leaders were invariably drawn from among the higher caste groups and in most of the cases leadership was as aspect of the hereditary an family functions. The lower strata of Indian society were totally excluded from occupying positions of political economic or cultural superiority.

He further indicated that, the pattern of rural leadership, as exists today, reflects a transition from individual to collective from the hereditary to elective and from ascriptive to functional type of leadership. Now the villagers have readily accepted the active leadership of the middle and younger age groups.

Rural leadership is a monopoly of the higher castes. An important factor which is associated with leadership and correlated with caste is land-ownership of the higher castes and the jajmany system.¹¹

¹²
Deb and Agarwal's study, Rural Leadership in Green Revolution, shows that, the present rural leadership is not based wholly on the development oriented functions, yet most of the leaders have functional importance in agriculture and welfare activities. The interesting fact is that there is a mixture of tradition and modernity operating simultaneously and, therefore we find most functional leaders have roots in the traditional village activities.

¹³
Andre Beteille advances two arguments on the basis of his study, and suggests that two general changes have increasingly affected the distribution of power in the village. The first of these is the decline in the influence of the old mirasdar class for a variety of reasons. The second is the growth of an elaborate political machinery, linking M.L.A.'s, party bosses, and village leaders, and

making it possible for people to acquire power in ways which were not open before the introduction of adult franchise and Panchayati Raj.

The emerging leaders of the village are not members of the old landowning class. They generally belong to the class of small owner cultivators. Their, power is, to be a large extent, based upon numerical support within the village and political contacts outside it. These two factors, as we have seen, tend to reinforce each other.

The distribution of power has acquired a very dynamic character over the last two decades. In some ways the traditional relationship between caste and power has been reversed where as in the past power was concentrated in the hands of Brahmins, today the village panchayat is controlled by Non-Brahmins and the traditional elite is being pushed into the background.

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Lalit K. Sen's study, "Opinion Leadership in India", points out that, status and authority in Indian villages are still ascribed and the fact is recognised and accepted by all. With changing times, the leaders have sought for other secular forms of power such as holding elective and nominative officer, but the over all effect of their position is the same as before.

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V. M. Sirsikar's study on ' Rural Elite in Developing Society ' also marks a break through in the study of rural leadership. He shows that, the local political system is under the control of a leadership which comes from the richer peasantry which has tradition, social status, wealth and other factors on its side . The gap between 'led' and the ' leaders ' is to say the least, quite shocking from the angles of wealth, land-holdings and property.

He further says that, the hold of the richer peasantry on the whole mechanism of power as it operates at the local level in all fields of life has serious repercussions for both the democratic set-up and socialistic goals.

He has also pointed out that, going through the political career histories of local leaders one gets the impression that there is a tendency towards the concentration of power in the hands of a select few who are able to secure power positions in the major fields.

He further says that, the stability of a leader depends on his ' problem solving ' capacity. The people look to him as a trouble shooter. He has to combine advantages of position and advantages of personality. He is expected to grasp a complex situation and quickly device means to solve the problem.

His study broadly indicated the patterns of rural leadership. It appears that there is a perceptible trend towards concentration of socio-economic and political power. The democratisation of power, involving a democratic society has yet to take place. The poorer sections of the society - the landless labourers and the scheduled castes - continue to be outside the charmed circle. Rural politics and the local political system threaten to be more competitive than constructive. Politics of patronage and bargaining seems to have displaced the politics of social service and sacrifice.

He further pointed out that, ideological content is less discernible than power orientations. But all this does not mean that the picture is bleak. Younger leadership is emerging. The level of their educational attainments shows signs of improvement. Democratic processes are being worked fairly successfully. Elections and elected bodies have become a part of the rural life. In a transitional society like ours a mixture of the traditional and modern is to be expected.

S. N. Choudhary's study, "Dynamics of Rural Power Structure" deals with the dynamics of rural power structure in an Indian village.

The study concludes, that on the whole the socio-economic conditions of upper caste are deteriorating and there has been development in case of middle and scheduled castes and the latter two are no more monolith.

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A. R. Desai's study, " State and Society in India - (Essays in Dissent)" is a volume of various essays on critical observation of social change after independence. He emphasizes the need for studying politics and development in India from historical materialist standpoint. In this volume one essay namely " Emerging Leadership in India ". In this essay he points out the nature of leadership that is consolidating itself in India after independence. He further indicates the social implications of the consolidation of that leadership for the masses in India and for the healthy, normal development of Indian economy, polity and culture as a whole.

A significant advancement in the study of rural leadership has been made by many leading Indian and Western sociologists, India's villages and Indian village M. N. Srinivas¹⁸ and S.C. Dube,¹⁹ respectively village India by Mackin Marriot,²⁰ Rural India in transition

by A. R. Desai,²¹ Studies in Panchayati Raj by Maheshwari,²² village life in Northern India by Oscar Lewis,²³ Leadership and Political institutions in India by R. L. Park and G. Tinker,²⁴ are also important contributions to the study of rural leadership in India.

It can be said on the basis of the studies mentioned above that leaders in Indian villages have higher caste status, higher level of living and greater political awareness than their counter parts in the village.

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