

## CHAPTER SIX

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### LEADERS OF 'HIRA'

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## 1. Introduction

In this chapter an attempt is made to understand the characteristics of the leaders and politics of 'Hira'. The characteristics of the leaders of 'Hira' are dealt in two parts. The first part is concerned with socio-economic characteristics. It is discussed on the background of information of the leaders, namely, age, education, caste, landholding, occupation etc. The second part provides the political characteristics of the leaders considering the factors like party affiliations, party offices held and the political linkages. In the third part of this chapter the internal politics at 'Hira' and its links with the politics in the area are discussed. It mainly involves the struggle of power between opposing leaders and their groups. It provides an analysis of the history of struggle between rival groups from the beginning of 'Hira' till 1984. This will help us in knowing the pattern of co-operative leadership in comparing their socio-economic and political composition with general membership of 'Hira' (See Chapter Five).

In all 35 persons have worked on the Board of Directors of 'Hira' from 1956-57 to 1983-84. Out of the 35 persons who have worked as members of the Board of Directors of 'Hira', 22 are included in the study. The Board of Directors consisted

11 directors. All of them were interviewed for the study. In addition to the 11 sitting directors, 11 ex-directors were also interviewed. Out of the 11 ex-directors 7 were elected directors, 3 were nominated directors and one director was elected once and nominated once. The nominated directors were nominated by the government of Karnataka. These were the local leaders belonging to the ruling party in Karnataka. This data will help to draw a sketch of the leaders of 'Hira'.

Table No. 6.1

Positions held by respondents

<u>Position</u>	<u>Number</u>
Chairman	3
Vice-Chairman	3
Elected directors	12
Nominated directors	3
Elected and nominated directors	1
<hr/> Total	<hr/> 22

Leaders of different positions were included in the study as shown in Table No. 6.1.

## 2. Socio-economic Characteristics of Leaders

In the first part of this chapter, socio-economic characteristics of the leaders of 'Hira' are discussed in terms of age, education, caste, occupation, land-holding etc. Age, education, caste, occupation, landholding etc. usually determine the structure of leadership in a major way. The leaders included in this study are those who hold power, and also those who are seeking power. Therefore what factors make a person to get power or to lose it is a problem of this study. Therefore the socio-economic characteristics of the leaders of 'Hira' are discussed.

Age:

Table No. 6.2

Sample respondents by age

Age	Young	Middle	Old	Total
Sitting directors	-	5	6	11
Ex-directors	-	3	8	11
Total	-	8	14	22

In India age has its own respect. "In traditional society, age has always been an important factor contributing to leadership."<sup>1</sup> Age is considered as one of the determinant factors in the emergence of rural leadership. Age of the

sample directors is classified into 3 categories: Young - 18-35 years, middle - 35-50 years, and old - 51 and above. There was no young director below the age of 35 years among the sample directors. The analysis of data reveals that elderly leaders had occupied seats of power in 'Hira'. Forty-five per cent of the sitting directors belong to middle aged and 55 per cent belong to old aged group. Seventy-three per cent of the sample ex-directors were old.

Education:Table No. 6.3

## Sample respondents by education

Education	Primary	Secondary	Collegiate	Total
Sitting directors	5	2	4	11
Ex-directors	2	7	2	11
Total	7	9	6	22

Co-operative movement upholds the democratic principles like equality, fraternity and secularism. Therefore, the leadership of co-operation should have good educational background. None of the sample directors was illiterate. The analysis of the data on education as given in Table No. 6.3 reveals that 68 per cent of the sample directors had good education. Twenty-seven per cent of them had collegiate

education. One of the sample directors was graduate and two were double graduates. The educational standard of the directors was found to be better than that of the general membership.

Occupation:Table No. 6.4

## Sample respondents by occupation

Occupation	Agriculture	Business	Total
Sitting directors	10	1	11
Ex-directors	9	2	11
Total :	19	3	22

Table No. 6.4 gives the data by occupation. Occupational composition of the directors is biased heavily towards agriculturists. As many as 86 per cent of directors are agriculturists. Fourteen per cent of the directors are in business. The agriculturists dominate the sample. As 'Hira' is established by the sugarcane growing farmers, it is natural that their directors also are agriculturists.

Land holding:

Table No. 6.5

Sample respondents by land holding

Land holding	Upto 10 acres	10-15 acres	15-30 acres	30 acres & above	Total
Sitting directors	2	2	2	5	11
Ex-directors	-	2	8	1	11
Total	2	4	10	6	22

Table No. 6.6

Sample respondents by sugarcane land holding

Land holding	1-3 acres	3-6 acres	6-9 acres	9-12 acres	12 & above	Total
Sitting directors	3	2	1	2	3	11
Ex-directors	1	5	1	3	1	11
Total	4	7	2	5	4	22

Tables No. 6.5 and 6.6 indicate the total land holding and sugarcane landholding of the directors respectively. The analysis of the data reveals that, leadership of 'Hira' is drawn relatively more heavily from large land owners. This conclusion confirms the findings of some studies on rural leadership made in India which show that big landlords

dominate rural leadership.<sup>2</sup> Land ownership is a crucial factor in establishing dominance in the rural society. Big land owners wield more social and economic influence than marginal farmers. "Now as in the past, power in the villages and small towns rests in the hands of the landlords, the small traders and the petty officials who wield the economic and political power of any one area."<sup>3</sup> The persons who owned more than 10 acres of land are treated as higher-middle class farmers and those holding more than 15 acres are rich farmers. The analysis of the data reveals that 11 per cent of the directors were small holders (less than 10 acres) 22 per cent medium holders (10 to 15 acres) and 67 per cent large holders (15 acres and above). Out of the 16 large holders 14 hold 30-60 acres and 2 hold over 60 acres. The possession of more than 10 acres of land is a big asset in the rural society when compared with the rest of the shareholders of 'Hira', having every small landholding ranging from 1 to 3 acres (See Table No. 5.8)

Caste:Table No. 6.7

Sample respondents by caste

Caste	<u>Lingayat</u>		Jain	Brahmin	Maratha	Back- ward	Total
	Gouder	Banajager					
Sitting directors	8	1	1	1	-	-	11
Ex-directors	5	4	-	-	1	1	11
Total	13	5	1	1	1	1	22



Leadership is a group process through which the individuals with initiative and drive may acquire the leadership in a particular group. But the most important point is to see how groups are formed and organised in the society. Groups are always formed with caste affiliations. Traditionally caste was considered a dominant factor in moulding the social and political life of the villagers. Caste system plays a vital role in structuring the leadership in the rural society. The rural social structure in India is based on caste structure and caste identification. Some previous studies on rural leadership in India have also shown that caste is still an important factor which determines rural leadership.<sup>4</sup>

The analysis of the data as given in Table No. 6.7 reveals that the directors are drawn relatively more heavily from the predominant castes of the area. From amongst the sitting directors 8 were Gouder, 1 Banajager, 1 Jain and 1 Brahmin. Out of the total sample respondents there were 13 Gouder, 5 Banajager, 1 Jain, 1 Brahmin, 1 Maratha and 1 belonging to the Backward caste. The analysis of the data, thus, reveals that only one person belonging to backward caste (Kurbar) worked as a director. This backward director also was not an elected director but nominated by the government. In a caste-ridden society it is difficult for minority caste candidates to find a place in the election to the Board. Thus

board members are drawn from the predominant and high-caste groups.

### Sex

Though a small proportion of shareholders are women, no woman could become a director of 'Hira'. Women do not play much of a role in the co-operatives. This is an inference which can be drawn from the data.

### Summing-up

The above survey of the socio-economic characteristics of the directors of 'Hira' indicate the dominance of a particular community on the Board. By and large, high caste, educated, wealthier, middle aged or old aged male agriculturists with larger land holdings and higher stake in 'Hira' have become the directors.

## 3. 3.1) Political Characteristics of Leaders

In the second part of this chapter the political characteristics of 'Hira' leaders are discussed in terms of party affiliation, party offices held, political linkages and the pattern of political linkages. In the early stage of world co-operative movement, political neutrality was considered as one of the principles of co-operation. Political neutrality

was one of the basic principles of co-operation according to the declaration of Rochdale Pioneers. But the co-operative movement could not work on this principle for a long time. Indian co-operative movement was not an exception to this. In India, before independence the political workers as such did not take much interest in the co-operative movement. The movement thus by and large remained free from political influence. In the post-independence period, the politicians have tried to secure control over the co-operatives. Politics did make inroads into the affairs of co-operation in India, particularly in rural areas. The co-operative leaders have been absorbed into political parties by awarding them offices in party and in political institutions. The party affiliations of the co-operative leaders will reveal the influence of political parties on co-operatives. The political importance of co-operatives has enabled the emergence of a new dynamic leadership in rural areas. Co-operative movement was responsible to bring new social and economic values in rural areas. Therefore, it is worth while to study the political socialisation in the rural areas brought about by the co-operatives and the factors of recruitment of co-operative leadership.

Lasswell defined politics as "the shaping and sharing of power."<sup>5</sup> He also stated that the study of politics means

the study of influence and the influential and the terms like "leaders" or "leadership" carries the connotation of persons who are positively engaged in politics.<sup>6</sup> Politics is the process of shaping and sharing of power and a struggle for power. The persons engaged in this process are the power seekers. Robert Dahl defines a political system as any persistent pattern of human relationship that involves, to a significant extent, control, influence, power or authority.<sup>7</sup> Co-operatives have acquired importance in the rural power system, because they wield a lot of power and influence on the rural society. Politics in rural areas can be more effectively analysed if the relations between the leaders and the followers are studied together with proper linkages between leaders in rural areas and the leaders at higher levels.

The politics in rural area is centred around the power positions. The leaders and the followers are interested in grabbing power positions. A co-operative sugar factory becomes the main base of power of the political leaders in the rural areas. 'Hira' reveals concentration of power in the hands of a group belonging to Goudar community. 'Hira' has played a vital role in the dynamics of power and its political influence is significant. It is treated as the citadel in the

political area of Hukkeri and Chikodi Talukas. It has assumed political significance in the power structure in this area. The political parties and the leaders visualise the sugar co-operative as one of the important support structures. The control over sugar factory enhances the influence of the leaders upon rural farmers and the village co-operative societies because both are dependent on the factory resources for the economic development.

The elections in 'Hira' have acquired political importance as the elected directors were generally always partymen. There is power politics in 'Hira' and 'Hira' has become instrumental to political process in the rural area. The rural people are more anxious about the election campaign and the outcome of the election at 'Hira'. Therefore, it may be said that the sugar co-operative is treated as one of the important structures of power in the rural community and a powerful support structure of the political leadership at the higher levels in the district political set-up, and the district political set up has its links with State level leadership. Like the Panchayati Raj the co-operative societies are also a source of power structure, each having its own vote bank.

3.2) Party AffiliationsTable No. 6.8

Sample respondents by party affiliations

Directors	Congress-I	Janata	Non- Partisan	Total
Sitting Directors	3	8	-	11
Ex-Directors	6	-	5	11
Total	9	8	5	22

The data of the party affiliations of the directors of 'Hira' reveal interesting facts. Table No. 6.8 presents the number of directors affiliated to Congress(I) and Janata parties in the sample survey. All the 11 sitting directors were interviewed. Eight of them belonged to Janata party and 3 to Congress(I). The 3 Congress(I) party directors were from Maharashtra area and the 8 Janata Party directors were from Karnataka area of factory. But it is interesting to note that, in spite of the party differences all the 11 directors worked as one group. They contested the 1984 elections to the Board of directors, making a panel and got elected. In spite of the party differences there were no conflicts among them. Out of the 11 ex-directors interviewed, 5 were non-partisan. Though 5

ex-directors interviewed were non-partisan, 4 of them opposed the sitting board of directors and one was neutral. Three nominated ex-directors interviewed, belonged to Congress(I) party and they opposed the sitting board of directors. The analysis of the data reveals that out of the 11 ex-directors, 5 were non-partisan and 6 were affiliated to the Congress(I) party. This indicates that in the beginning years of 'Hira' non-partisan persons could be elected to the Board of directors which changed later on leading to all the directors being members of political parties. The data further reveal that out of the 6 Congress-I ex-directors, 4 were from Karnataka area and 2 were from Maharashtra area. The 4 Congress-I ex-directors from Karnataka area opposed the sitting directors and 2 Congress-I ex-directors from Maharashtra area supported the sitting Board of Directors. These two Congress-I ex-directors belonged to Ratnappa Kumbhar faction in Congress-I party. The Ratnappa Kumbhar faction of the Congress-I in Kolhapur district has always been having close relations with the ruling leaders of 'Hira'.

The analysis of the data also reveals that the split in the National Congress Party in 1969 divided the Congress leaders in the area into two groups. Most of the leaders remained with Congress-O and some younger leaders joined

Congress(I). The Congress-0 party later in 1977 joined hands with other opposition parties in India to make Janata Party. The 'Hira' leaders remained in Congress-0 party and later in Janata party. Those directors like Balasaheb Sarwadi and Malhargouda Patil joined Congress-I, could not find a place on the Board of directors of 'Hira'. Congress-I party ruled in Karnataka upto 1983 but the Board of Directors remained with the Congress-0 upto 1977 and with Janata party since then. Congress-I party tried its best to get control over 'Hira' management but failed.

Table No. 6.9

Sample respondents holding party offices

Party offices	President/ Vice- President	Secretary	Treasurer	Execu- tive Member	Total
Taluka level	-	1	1	3	5
District level	2	-	-	-	2
State level	1	-	-	-	1
Total	3	1	1	3	8

The data revealed that some of the directors interviewed held party offices at different levels. Table No. 6.9 indicates that 9 directors out of the 22 directors interviewed held party



offices at the taluka level, district level and state level committees of the political parties. Basagouda Patil, the leader of 'Hira' became the Vice-President of Janata Party in Karnataka. Vishwanath Katti, a sitting director of 'Hira' became the member of the Executive Committee of Karnataka State Janata Party. He was also elected as a member of Legislative Council of Karnataka and later on as the member of Legislative Assembly. Balasaheb Sarwadi and Malhargouda Patil were elected as members of Karnataka Legislative Assembly on Congress-I tickets. Malhargouda Patil was elected as the Chief Whip of the Congress-I Legislative party.

It may be concluded that nearly 77 per cent of the sample respondents showed their affiliation to the political parties. Non-party sample directors were 33 per cent. It may also be concluded that nearly 41 per cent of sample respondents were holding the party offices. Thus co-operative leaders not only affiliated themselves to the political parties, but some of them occupied positions of power in the party organisations at various levels.

It would be more interesting to explore the pattern of leadership in 'Hira' considering the factors of their recruitment.

### 3.3) Factors of Recruitment

In this part of the chapter an attempt is made to explore

the recruitment factors of co-operative leaders of 'Hira'. It is done in order to know whether the co-operative leaders of 'Hira' were recruited from the rank and file of the political parties. This sort of survey would help to analyse the political process in this area. The sample respondents were asked to state important factors responsible for their entry into public life in the initial period.

Table No. 6.10

Factors of recruitment

<u>Sr.No.</u>	<u>Factors</u>	<u>Preferences</u>
1	Social work	7
2	Religious work	-
3	Peasants' Association	-
4	Co-operative work	4
5	Family background	11
6	Influence of big leaders	11
7	Any other	4

Of the six alternative factors given in the interview schedule, it can be seen by Table No. 6.10 that, influence of big leaders and family background occupied the highest preferences. Some of the respondents mentioned 3 factors, some mentioned only two while a few others stated only one factor. Fifty per cent of the sample respondents, answered

that they entered public life due to the influence of big leaders. They took the names of Appannagouda Patil, Basagouda Patil and Ratnappa Kumbhar. The explanation of this may be found in the support structure of leaders. An ambitious and dynamic leader, who aspires for higher leadership, builds up a support structure for himself by recruiting his own men to various key positions in order to put influence on the community for his own political gains. Leaders mobilise political support to maintain and spread their influence in a particular area. Fifty per cent of the directors also expressed that they were well-to-do and had no economic worries and had a lot of free time, which helped them to enter public life. Seven sample respondents expressed that they had a liking for social work and, therefore, they entered the public life.

The factor of co-operative movement was ranked fourth by the respondents. Four respondents mentioned that the co-operative work was a starting point of their public life. Co-operation is perceived as the cradle of democracy and it serves as a training centre of democratic leadership and cultivates democratic principles. The introduction of co-operative societies provided a new framework for the activities of rural leaders. The co-operative movement helped to enlarge the developmental outlook of rural leaders. The

movement gave leadership in rural area a dynamic form by providing opportunities for youth to express themselves. Therefore, it may be said that the co-operatives have opened up a new avenue for the houths to develop the leadership skills in rural areas.

The sample respondents were asked to state important factors responsible to achieve positions of power in different co-operatives. Table No. 6.11 indicates the factors which helped to get positions of power in co-operatives to the leaders.

Table No. 6.11

Factors helping to get position of power

Sr. No.	Factors	Frequency	Percentage
1	Experience/training in co-operation	4	17.3
2	Social service	11	50.0
3	Family background	09	41.0
4	Political power	05	23.0
5	Relation with political leaders	16	73.0
6	Occupation	-	-
7	Caste	01	4.5
8	Any other	-	-

Most of the respondents named two or more factors responsible to get present position in co-operatives. Sixteen of them (73 per cent) said that they could get positions of power in co-operatives due to close relations with higher political leaders. This indicates that higher political leaders help their followers to get positions of power in co-operatives and thus they create their support structures. Eleven respondents (50 per cent) mentioned that their social service for the public helped them to get positions of power. Nine respondents (41 per cent) cited their family background as the most important factor in obtaining present position. Family background i.e., caste, kinship, and income group also helps to get positions of power. Though caste is very important, only one respondent confessed that caste helped him to get the position of power.

Thus, it may be concluded that, relation with higher political leaders, social service and good family background are the most important factors in helping the rural leaders to obtain their positions of power in co-operatives.



Table No. 6.12

Directors starting political career in  
different organisations.

Sr. No.	Organisations	No.of directors	Percentage
1	Social Associations	-	-
2	Farmers Associations	-	-
3	Political Institutions	07	32
4	Labour Unions	-	-
5	Co-operative Societies	13	59
6	Political Parties	02	7%
7	Educational Institutions	-	-
Total		22	100

The analysis of the data as given in Table No. 6.2 reveals that the political career of most of the directors started with their entry into co-operative societies. They established links with the rural masses through the co-operatives. The power positions in the co-operatives enabled them to increase their political power by utilising the resources of the co-operative organisation. The sugar co-operative wielded more influence than local bodies because it possessed huge resources. The analysis further reveals that 32 per cent of the sample respondents were recruited from local political bodies. This was due to two reasons, (i) the co-operative

movement and the Panchayat Raj both were put in operation with proper assistance and guidance of the state governments. In the initial stage, the community development activities in the sixties and co-operatives did not possess much resources. The decentralisation of administration enabled the development of leadership process in the rural areas of Karnataka and Maharashtra. Therefore, the rural elite tried to enhance themselves to the various positions in the local bodies right from the village Panchayat to the Zilla Parishad in Maharashtra and in village panchayat and Taluka development Boards in Karnataka. As the co-operative movement took momentum it became a powerful social movement bringing into its fold the poor farmers and the weaker sections of society. The co-operatives were also considered as most important agencies of rural development. Therefore the rural leaders perceived that entry into co-operatives makes an easier access to the political leadership and it also helps to build a following.

Another interesting aspect of the recruitment of the directors of 'Hira' is that a few of them without any leadership background were chosen as candidates to contest election. They were elected merely on the ground that they were included in the panel of powerful group led by a leader such as Appannagouda Patil or Basagouda Patil, who had great political

influence. In the elections at 'Hira' voters always voted panelwise. From 1963 to 1984 totally 17 elections took place at 'Hira'. Out of the 17 elections 7 were unopposed and 10 were fought between opposing panels. In all these elections, the ruling panels won. The performance of the opposing panels was very poor. This panelwise election and voting made it possible for the new comers to enter into the leadership arena with the goodwill of the chief leader of the panel. In 'Hira' Appannagouda Patil was the chief leader till his death in 1973 and from 1973 onwards Basagouda Patil was the chief leader. As both were powerful men, they wielded much political influence because of their political linkages with higher leaders of their party in the state and lower local leaders. They had importance in the district politics. They were considered as powerful candidates in the assembly elections. Appannagouda Patil was elected thrice as a member of Karnataka Legislative Assembly.

#### 4. Political Linkages

The co-operative leaders have to establish links with the members of society, informal leaders of caste groups, and formal leaders of political institutions and co-operative organisations in the area. Political alliances have to be made between co-operative leaders and political leaders to capture power positions in the local political system. Co-operative



leaders have also to establish links with higher political and co-operative leaders at district and state levels. These links between the leaders at different levels are called as political linkages. "Political linkages may be viewed as transmission channels established between individuals or groups on the basis of mutual identification and shared political goals."<sup>8</sup> The political linkages are both horizontal and vertical.

Horizontal linkages are the relations of leaders with the members of society, and with leaders of equal level representing different structures of power.<sup>9</sup> They link co-operative leaders with political leaders who have influence in their co-operative society. Horizontal linkages play important role in establishing the leadership. These linkages are informal resulting from birth, social status and caste. Political party affiliations and group loyalty play an important role in linking the leaders. The political linkages between the co-operative leaders and political leaders are the outcome of party decisions.

Links are established by the policy of give and take between the leaders and the members and also between the co-operative leaders and other leaders. The ruling board of directors has wide powers which it can use to establish and strengthen the links. The following powers of the Board are

most important to establish and strengthen the links.

The Board of Directors has power to admit new shareholders and allot shares to them. It may give membership of factory to a number of persons in the same family. Each member gets a bag of sugar every year at concessional rates. The membership of factory also increases the prestige of a person.

The Board has power to appoint permanent and seasonal staff. Local leaders recommend persons for appointment and the directors have power to satisfy them.

The Board decides the price of sugarcane to be paid to the shareholders. 'Hira' has given consistently good price to the sugarcane supplied by the shareholders. This satisfies the shareholders.

The Board has the power to hire trucks, tractors, carts etc., to lift sugarcane from the farms to factory. The Board of Directors deals with the interests of thousands of cane growers and workers and handles business involving an annual turnover of over 25 crores of rupees. Therefore the Board is a very strong body. The directors have numerous opportunities to establish strong links. This gives them a chance to get re-elected. That is why we find the same persons continue as directors for long periods. The horizontal links of the ruling

directors of 'Hira' are very strong.

There are vertical linkages also between the leaders of 'Hira' and the political leaders at the district and state levels. From 1969 to 1983 there was Congress-I party government in Karnataka. But during this period 'Hira' was ruled by opposition party, i.e., Congress-O upto 1977 and Janata party later on. Therefore, there could not be more cordial relations between the government and the 'Hira' leaders. Many sample respondents complained that government tried to obstruct the work of factory. The expansion schemes proposed by the factory were not approved quickly. A co-operative sugar factory has to deal with the Department of Cooperation and the Minister of Cooperation in the government. Some of the sample respondents expressed that the 'Hira' Board of Directors used to be always tense and afraid because the Congress-I government might take some action against the factory.

The Congress-I leaders who were the shareholders of 'Hira' or had been the directors of 'Hira' tried to get control over the 'Hira' Board of Directors, with the help of government. In 1975, the government of Karnataka nominated 6 directors on the Board of 'Hira'. Out of these 6 directors, 4 were Congress-I activists and 2 were government officials representing the department of co-operation and the district co-operative

Bank. The Managing Director of the factory, who was appointed by the government, was ex-officio member of the Board of Directors. Thus, the Board consisted of 11 directors supporting Basagouda Patil of Congress-0 party and 7 directors nominated by the Congress-I government opposed to Basagouda Patil. In the same year 4 directors retired due to completion of their term. The elections in 1975-76 were fought fiercely between Congress-I and Congress-0 panels. Congress-I used all the resources to displace Basagouda Patil. But it failed as members of factory were not ready to take a chance with other leaders. All the four candidates of Congress-I got defeated. Congress-0 won the elections due to very strong horizontal linkages.

##### 5. Interlocking Leadership

In this part of the chapter, the phenomenon of interlocking leadership is discussed. It was assumed that the leadership of 'Hira' was interlocked with other co-operatives and political institutions. Therefore the extent of interlocking of leadership within the co-operative structures and the political structures is studied.

##### Interlocking in Co-operatives

To a considerable extent interlocking of co-operative leadership was found in this study. The factory leaders generally

belonged to feudal families having landed property. They had good economic and social status. They were well-to-do having a lot of free time which they could devote to public activities. They were active and ambitious. They belonged to dominant caste groups. The caste affinity appeals to the rural people. Rural people support their own caste persons as their leaders. These ambitious leaders in order to increase their influence and status tried to capture seats of power in other organisations.

A political party wants its members in key positions in other organisations also. A political leader wants his followers in key positions in other organisations. Thus, political interference and nominations are the important factors in making the co-operative leadership interlocked. A co-operative leader gets positions in other co-operative organisations with the help of his political links. Power has glamour and prestige, so to get more power, leaders want positions of power in other organisations and thus interlocking leadership comes.

Table No. 6.13

## Interlocking leadership in co-operatives

No. of co-operatives	Sitting directors	Ex-directors	Total	Percentage
In two co-operatives	5	3	8	36
In three co-operatives	2	1	3	14
In four co-operatives	2	-	2	9
Total	9	4	13	59

The analysis of the data as given in Table No. 6.13 reveals that the interlocking of leadership is found to a considerable extent. In the sample study 13 leaders out of 22 have occupied at least more than two seats of power in other co-operatives. Only 3 leaders did not occupy any positions of power in co-operatives. Six held positions of power in only one co-operative.

The analysis of data also reveals that the sitting directors of 'Hira' held more positions of power in co-operatives than the ex-directors. Most of the sample respondents had held power positions in past, some for 25-30 years also. Some of them had left these positions to be occupied by their followers. Thus, it can be concluded that the leaders of 'Hira' were involved in interlocking positions to establish their leadership in the co-operative sector in this area.

Interlocking of Co-operative and Political Leadership

In this study it was found that the interlocking of leadership between co-operative and political institutions was not significant. Only 4 leaders out of the sample respondents were found to be holding positions of power in local political bodies.

Table No. 6.14

Interlocking of leadership between co-operatives and local political bodies

Co-operative leaders	No of positions occupied in local political bodies				Total
	Village Panchayat	Panchayat Samiti	Zilla Parishad	Munici- pality	
Sitting directors	-	-	1	-	1
Ex-directors	2	-	1	-	3
Total	2	-	2	-	4

Out of the 11 sitting directors only one was holding a position of power under local political bodies and out of the 11 ex-directors 3 were found to be holding positions of power. Table No. 6.12 indicates that out of the 22 sample respondents two held position in village Panchayats and two in Zilla Parishad.

The data also revealed that 13 out of the 22 sample respondents were the ex-functionaries of the Panchayat Raj institutions. When the survey was conducted, it was found that most of them had voluntarily retired after holding the power positions for a considerable period at the Taluka level. Two of them, Balasaheb Sarwadi and Malhargouda Patil, had become members of Karnataka Legislative Assembly. One, V.M. Katti, had become a member of Karnataka Legislative Council and later on member of Legislative Assembly. V.M. Katti was also the Chairman of Sugar Federation of Karnataka State. One, D.T. Patil, had become the Chairman of District Co-operative Bank. It is also to be noted that the district level local political body in Karnataka, known as District Development Council, is not an elective body. Thus, it may be said that the extent of interlocking of leadership between the co-operative and Panchayat Raj is not significant. It is also true that most of the sample respondents were affiliated to political parties. Most of them were holding positions of power in the political parties. It may be concluded that political and co-operative leadership is thus interlinked.

#### 6. Politics at 'Hira'

In this part of the chapter, internal politics at 'Hira' and its links with politics in the area is discussed. While defining politics Micheal Curtis says -



Politics is organised dispute about power and its use, involving choice among competing values, ideas, persons, interests and demands. The study of politics is concerned with the description and analysis of the manner in which power is obtained, exercised and controlled.<sup>10</sup>

Therefore, the study of politics is concerned mainly with the concept of power. The politics in rural area is centred around the power positions. The leaders and the followers are interested in grabbing power positions. Therefore, the political process goes on when the members of these associations decide as to who should govern, how the decisions should be made and implemented. The politics at 'Hira mainly involves struggle for power between opposing groups. An analysis of the history of struggle between rival groups from the beginning of 'Hira' till 1984 is made.

The Board of Directors in a co-operative sugar factory is a very powerful body. The board has wide ranging powers (Please see chapter three). The board admits new members, appoints the staff and makes purchases and sales. The board of directors of 'Hira' does a business involving annual turnover of over 25 crores of rupees. Therefore, the position of directors is characterised by prestige, power and patronage. It is very attractive to the local leaders. The control of a

sugar co-operative helps to enhance their political influence. The directors of factory are involved in all the elections in this area directly or indirectly. The resources of the factory can be used to win elections to other co-operatives, Panchayat bodies and legislature and also to impress the higher party leaders and ministers. Thus, the factory is a powerful instrument to build a following and to rise high in the political field. There is a two way relationship between the co-operatives and other structures of power. Controlling big co-operatives such as factories helps the leaders to rise in party and in government and this in turn helps them to secure control over other co-operatives. The higher leaders at the district and state level know the strategic importance of controlling these factories for continued domination over the politics of the region. This explains their keen interest in the factory elections. Considering these facts, it is not surprising that local leaders desire to be the directors of the factory.

The recent history of the struggle for power to secure control over 'Hira' is associated with two rival factions. One faction is led by Basagouda Patil. The other faction has no single outstanding leader; it has many leaders, which is led by Balasaheb Sarwadi and Malhargouda

patil. These factions are not formally organised like a political party. Basagouda Patil is a member and leader of Janata Party but there are Congress-I party members also in his faction. He is the undisputed leader of his faction. The other faction is a sort of coalition between many local leaders. Such a coalition is essential as there are more than 6,000 shareholders spread in 6 Talukas of Karnataka and Maharashtra. To get the support of the shareholders from all parts of the area a sort of coalition has to be made. The main leaders of both the factions and their supporters show, on the whole, remarkable stability and persistence in their loyalty to a particular faction. Each faction has its patrons among state level leaders and ministers. Factional following cuts across political parties. Although both factions are led by Lingayat Gouders, each one of them has a following, in different degrees, among minority castes.

In the local context, factions often function like political parties. Each of them takes interest in Panchayat body elections. They hold 'party meetings' to discuss the policies and strategies of their factions. The local people refer to these factions as parties e.g., Basagouda Party and Sarwadi Party. The Basagouda party and the Sarwadi-Malhargouda Patil party have functioned as rival factions in this area for at least 10 years.

### Phases in the Struggle for Power

During the lifetime of 'Hira', there have been 18 elections to the board of directors. Eleven of these elections were contested and 7 were unopposed. In this part of the chapter the struggle for power is analysed through its various phases, highlighting the changes in the nature of leadership and in the style of politics, and the various issues affecting the outcome of their struggle. The story of this struggle can be presented in 5 phases since the establishment of 'Hira' in 1956.

#### Phase-I, 1956-63

##### Nominated Board

The first board of 'Hira' was nominated by the then Mysore State for a period of 5 years from 1957 to 1962. The idea of having a nominated board was to avoid elections and the consequent struggle for power during the formative stage so that the construction of factory could be completed smoothly. The first board consisted of 19 members, out of whom 15 were nominated by the government, the managing director was ex-officio member, one director was to be co-opted by the board and two more to be nominated by the Industrial Finance Corporation, New Delhi. In nominating the

directors, the government took into account the opinion of local leaders, particularly the promoters, such as Appannagouda Patil, who had worked to get the factory established.

Among the 15 nominated, there were 3 representing various governmental departments, namely, Co-operative, Engineering, District Co-operative Bank and the Deputy Commissioner of Belgaum district. Out of the remaining 11, 7 were Gouder, 3 Banajager and 1 Maratha. Almost all the directors were big and rich sugarcane growers except Appannagouda Patil and Basagouda Patil. The three Banajager directors were rich merchants, one each from Gadhinglaj, Sankeshwar and Chikodi. The purpose of taking these rich merchants on the board was for fast share collection. In that period farmers had close contacts with the merchant class. The farmers had to go to the merchants to sell their produce and also to get loans. Paying share amount of rupees one thousand involved some risk. Therefore, the presence of rich, prestigious Banajager directors on the board was useful.

Appannagouda Patil was the main force behind the factory. He was its founder member and the chief promoter. He was born in not so rich agriculturist family. A man educated upto 7th

standard showed his leadership skill in the freedom movement. He threw himself in the freedom movement at the age of 21 and was imprisoned by the British government a number of times. He started his political career in the Congress party with active part in scout education. He took part in Salt Satyagraha and in the Non-Cooperation movement of Mahatma Gandhiji. He was imprisoned for a period of one year and ten months. He was fined Rs. 500/- for picketing before liquor shop, in support of prohibition. He refused to pay the fine and preferred to remain in jail. In 1930, for his attempt of hoisting national flag on a government building, he was sent to jail once again. In 1932, in order to teach him a lesson, the British government confiscated and auctioned his private property. In 1942 movement also, he took a leading part. He is remembered for his underground work of this period. His pivotal role in burning Raibag railway station, looting Kabbur post-bus, destroying telegraph lines from Hukkeri to Sankeshwar and from Hattargi to Sankeshwar, made the British government to declare a prize of Rs. 5,000/- for his arrest. An order to 'Shoot him at sight' was also issued. In 1943, he was imprisoned once again.<sup>11</sup>

After independence new facets of Appannagouda Patil's

leadership were seen. After independence he concentrated on the work of Congress party. He also got involved in educational, social and co-operative work. He became the President of the Belgaum District Congress Party. From 1950 to 61 he worked as the Chairman of Sankeshwar Market Yard. He worked as the Chairman of the S.D.V.S.Sangh, a big educational association in this area and opened two colleges and a number of high-schools and primary schools. Besides this he was a member of Sankeshwar Panchayat as well as District Local Board. He got elected as the member of Karnataka Legislative assembly 3 times in 1952, 1967 and 1973. In memory of his great political, social and co-operative work, his life-size statue was erected at 'Hira' and inaugurated by Dharamveer, the Governor of Karnataka.

Appannagouda Patil gave utmost importance to social and educational work. He was very good in judging people and their abilities, because of which he collected able persons and made them directors of 'Hira'. He was a powerful and dynamic personality and so, has a lion's share in the success of 'Hira'.

As Appannagouda Patil was not highly educated, he did not wish to become the Chairman of the Board of Directors in which highly educated and experienced government officials

sat as members. So, it was thought that appointing S.I. Patil, a law graduate, as Chairman of the Board would be helpful to the factory in the initial stages in getting finance from the Banks and help from the government and in negotiating with various contractors and builders.

Out of the nominated 11 local directors, 3 were from Gadhinglaj Taluka in Maharashtra; 1 from Chikodi Taluka and 7 from Hukkeri Taluka in Karnataka. Thus, the nominated board was composed of the local "economic and social notables." The board was closely associated with the Congress party. It has also to be noted that though S.I. Patil was the Chairman, it was Appannagouda Patil who was the real leader of the Board. He enjoyed great deal of power in the day-to-day affairs of 'Hira', including those connected with the erection of plant and machinery. All the appointments in 'Hira' were made in consultation with him and on his advice.

A member of Maratha community was nominated on the Board to attract members of Maratha community to become shareholders. But the members of Maratha community in Maharashtra area were not enthusiastic in becoming the shareholders in the beginning. This changed later on, when the factory started production, they wanted to become



shareholders but they could not.

Part-II, 1963-66

The first election to the 'Hira' Board of Directors was fought intensely. By 1963 'Hira' had started producing sugar successfully. Other local leaders desired to get directorship of 'Hira'. All those opposing Congress party and Appannagouda Patil joined hands to win in the elections. Appannagouda Panel won elections with overwhelming majority. The Board consisted 11 directors representing 'A' Class members out of whom 6 were from Hukkeri taluka, 2 from Chikodi taluka and 3 from Gadhinglaj taluka. Out of the 11 directors, 5 were Gouders, 4 Banajagers, 1 Ainaru and 1 Maratha. One director was elected from 'B' Class members who was a Brahmin from Hukkeri taluka. Government of Karnataka nominated 3 directors, who were government officials representing co-operative and finance departments. The Board was elected for a term of 3 years.

In 1966, S.I. Patil, the Chairman expired and Appannagouda Patil became the Chairman. In the same year Basagouda Patil, who was a director since the beginning, became the Vice-chairman. G.R. Kanagali, a rich businessman and a landlord, was the Vice-Chairman from 1959 to 1966. He was a Banajager and did not take active part in party politics. He

did not hold position of power in any other co-operative or local political institutions. It may be said that he had no political links. On the contrary, Basagouda Patil was a social and political worker. Born in 1921, in a poor family, Basagouda Patil rose to high positions of power due to his leadership qualities. He was a close confidant of Appannagouda Patil. Basagouda Patil started his political career by becoming the member of Congress party and by taking active part in Congress politics. At the age of 25, he became the member of the Executive Committee of Hukkeri Taluka Congress. He became the President of Hukkeri Taluka Congress Committee from 1948 to 1961. He was the Chairman of Amminbhavi village Panchayat from 1950 to 1959. He also became a member of Taluka Local Board from 1952 to 1959. He was a member of Sankeshwar Market Yard from 1950 to 1961 and became its Chairman in 1962.<sup>12</sup> The various positions of power held by him indicate that he was a politically active leader in Hukkeri Taluka. He took active interest in the establishment of 'Hira'. Naturally, he was nominated on the first board of 'Hira' and later in 1966 became the Vice-chairman. After the death of Appannagouda Patil in 1974, he became the Chairman and the leader of 'Hira'. He has successfully continued the traditions laid down by Appannagouda Patil. His successful leadership of 'Hira' has led him to get many other positions

of power. He became the Chairman of S.D.V.S. Sangh, a leading educational association in this area which runs two degree colleges and numerous junior colleges, high-schools and primary schools. He became the Vice-President of Janata party at State level. He became the President of Karnataka State Federation of Co-operative Sugar Factories.

Though he was not well educated, he showed his leadership skills in co-operatives and carved a successful political career of which the rural society may be proud of. Uneducated leaders are coming from lower classes of society without financial resources and elevating themselves to district level or even to state level. The tremendous work done in co-operative field by Basagouda Patil made him an influential leader in state politics. His leadership was both dynamic and inspiring.

#### Phase-III, 1966-74

During this period of 8 years, 8 elections to the Board took place. Four elections were unopposed and 4 were fought between opposing factions. Opposition was nominal, as the opposition could not secure more than 15 per cent of votes. The ruling faction led by Appannagouda Patil was impregnable and, therefore, important leaders of the opposition did not contest the elections but they supported

those who contested the elections to oppose Appannagouda. Almost the same board continued throughout this period. Appannagouda Patil was the most powerful leader. 'Hira' was the outcome of his efforts, no body had a chance against him in the elections. There was no opposition leader of his stature to compete with him in factory elections. The four elections held during this period were completely one-sided with great majority of shareholders voting Appannagouda Patil panels.

The composition of the Board continued to be the same, i.e., 6 members from Hukkeri Taluka, 2 from Chikodi Taluka and 3 from Gadhinglaj Taluka. In 1972, the Maratha director was discontinued and since then the Maratha community has no representation on the Board of Directors. In the same year G.R. Kanagali, who was a director since the beginning of the factory and Vice-Chairman from 1959 to 1966 was discontinued<sup>u</sup>. In their place two more members of Goudar community were elected. Thus, caste-wise composition of the board in 1972 was, 8 Gouders, 2 Banajagers and 1 Ainaru.

#### Phase-IV, 1974-84

Appannagouda Patil, who was the Chairman and leader of 'Hira' expired in 1974. There was no struggle among the

directors to get the Chairmanship. Basagouda Patil became the Chairman and the leader of 'Hira'. During this period of 10 years, 7 elections took place out of which 3 were unopposed. The elections in 1974 and 1975 were most important. Appannagouda Patil had expired and the leadership was in the hands of Basagouda Patil. All the political opponents of ruling faction and all those who had remained dissatisfied united against Basagouda Patil. In 1974 ex-director and ex-Vice-Chairman, G.R. Kanagali stood for election to challenge the leadership of Basagouda Patil. He got the help of all the opposition groups but he was defeated.

After the split in Congress in 1969, Appannagouda Patil and Basagouda Patil remained in Congress-O. They did not join Congress-I, though it was the ruling party in Karnataka. The Congress-I leaders in Sankeshwar area made a powerful bid for power with the help of government. The government increased the strength of the board from 15 to 18 members. For the first time, government nominated 4 local congress-I leaders on the board of 'Hira'. Their local leader was Balasaheb Sarwadi, who had been elected as a Congress-I member of Karnataka Legislative Assembly. In addition to the 4 Congress-I nominated directors, there were 2 government officials nominated to represent co-operative department and District Co-operative Bank. The Managing Director, appointed

by the government also was the ex-officio member of the board. Thus, there were 11 members on the board supporting Basagouda Patil and 8 members supporting Balasaheb Sarwadi. None of the Basagouda Patil's group on the board defected to Balasaheb Sarwadi group. In 1975, 4 directors of Basagouda Patil group completed their term and election for those 4 vacancies were held. Both the groups fought the elections fiercely, as the group that won the election would get control over 'Hira'. But the efforts of Congress-I were not successful. Basagouda Patil's Panel won the elections and retained power in 'Hira'. The elections in 1976, 1977, and 1979 were unopposed and those in 1978 and 1980 were nominal. Balasaheb Sarwadi faction had realised the futility of contesting the elections. Political rivals of Basagouda Patil had realised that they had no chance of winning the elections.

Elections were not held in 1981, 1982 and 1983 as the government suspended elections to all co-operative societies in Karnataka. During this period of 10 years some changes in the composition of board took place. The 'Ainaru' director who worked from 1963 was discontinued in 1974. During this period gradually many directors working during Appannagouda Patil's period retired and the Board had 7 new faces all of whom were the close confidants of Basagouda Patil.

By these changes Basagouda Patil established complete control over the Board of Directors.

#### Phase-V, 1984 Elections

As elections in 1981, 1982 and 1983 were suspended, the 3-year tenure of all the directors was completed and in 1984 elections to the entire body took place. The opposition leaders believed and expressed at the time of survey that they could not win the 'Hira' elections as elections for the entire body were not held. One third of the members retired every year and election to fill those vacancies were held. The opposition faction argued that as 2/3 of the directors remained in office and in power they used their influence and they could easily win the elections. So, the opportunity which they wanted i.e., election for entire body, were held in 1984. During this time the political scene of Karnataka had changed. In the 1983 Assembly elections Congress-I was defeated and for the first time in Karnataka Janata Party had come to power. As a result Congress-I had decided to fight election to co-operative societies in Karnataka, and try to get control over them. It concentrated more on the producing co-operatives. In Belgaum District, there were 5 co-operative sugar mills and Congress-I decided to fight elections to all of them. Even a cabinet Minister of the

Union government who hailed from this area camped at Belgaum to supervise the elections to co-operative sugar mills in Belgaum district. Balasaheb Sarwadi group made great preparations to fight and to win against Basagouda panel. Balasaheb Sarwadi group had high hopes this time, as elections for the entire board were to be held and as Congress-I candidates had won elections to legislative assembly in 5 constituencies in the factory area. Sarwadi group selected very prestigious candidates. Sarwadi panel included one sitting and one ex-member of legislative assembly, one ex-Vice-Chairman and two ex-directors of 'Hira' and one leader of Farmers' Association. Basagouda Patil included the same members, without any change, whose term on board had expired.

No faction lacked in any resources to fight the election. Use of men, money, material and vehicles was made by both the factions. Each panel collectively appealed to the voters for all the candidates in the panel. For this purpose they distributed leaflets criticising rival panel and highlighting their own achievements and policies. The names and symbols of all the candidates in the panel were printed and distributed. In canvassing for votes, attempt was made to contact each voter individually, usually through influential leaders in the villages. The main leaders



toured their respective areas, visiting voters in villages. The lesser leaders whose influence was confined to a few villages concentrated their efforts only on those villages. The village leaders were asked to teach the voters in their villages the method of voting so that their votes do not become invalid. Some people were sent specially to particular villages where they had relatives to persuade them to support a particular panel. The canvassing for votes of minority castes was generally left to the leaders of those castes.

During the campaign, the Basagouda Patil panel tried to impress on the voters the progress made by the factory during its rule. It pointed out the highest rates paid to the shareholders. It promised to run factory in future in the traditions laid down by Appannagouda Patil.

The Balasaheb Sarwadi panel raised such issues as would turn the voters against the Basagouda panel. They highlighted the supposedly wrong and unjust actions of Basagouda rule over the factory. They charged of unplanned and unscientific harvesting and delay and partiality in harvesting the cane of shareholders. The cane growers are keen to get their cane harvested as early as possible since delay in harvesting involves irrigation and maintenance of

the crop for a longer period, as well as late payment because the shareholders are paid for their cane only after it has been harvested and transported to the factory. Late payment means delay in repaying loans and consequent increase in the amount of interest to be paid. Sometimes there is delay in harvesting the cane of some shareholders. Such shareholders suspected mischief and manipulation on the part of the agricultural staff and directors. The Sarwadi panel decided to exploit this issue to its advantage charging that there was partiality, favouritism and negligence in harvesting. They promised better and scientific form of harvesting. Charges of corruption also against ruling directors were made. The polling went on smoothly on 22.3.1984. Both the panels used jeeps, cars and trucks to carry voters to and from the factory. The voting was 74 per cent.

The results of the election came as a shock to Sarwadi panel and its supporters. Not only all the members of Sarwadi panel were defeated but they got less than 17 per cent of the votes cast. All the members of Basagouda Patil panel were elected and all had roughly equal number of votes. They got about 82 per cent of the votes cast.

### Conclusion

The foregoing account of the struggle for power in

'Hira' reveals certain characteristic patterns and trends which are worth-noting. There has been a significant change in the nature of leadership. In the early stages most of the leaders had no active association with any political party. The new leaders are actively involved in party politics. The voters vote panelwise and all the members in a panel get generally more or less equal votes. Due to panelwise voting, persons without any political background can get elected as directors. These are the dominating trends of the co-operative movement, not very different from the other sugar co-operatives. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the co-operative has certainly influenced the socio-political development of Sankeshwar area. It is also to be noted that, a large number of respondents were frank enough to express that percentage of sincere and devoted leaders was low in Karnataka. A majority of the respondents were not satisfied with the present co-operative leadership in the state. A majority of the respondents were of the opinion that the performance of the co-operative sector in Karnataka was poor, for which they blamed the government, the bureaucracy and demoralised leadership.

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