

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

In this first introductory chapter the problem of the research under study is briefly outlined.

The Government of India launched Community Development Programme on October 2, 1952. It was emphasized that co-operative movement and Panchayat Raj would be the primary agencies for carrying out the community development programme which aimed at the improvement of all aspects of rural life through the efforts of the people. This programme aimed at the reconstruction of rural society. The new social and economic forces generated by large scale development plans and the co-operative movement have affected the social structure and as an impact there have been changes in old values and attitudes.

Although co-operative movement started at the beginning of the 20th century in India, it flourished after India got independence. With the commencement of National Planning, co-operation was accepted as a part of state policy. During the second five year plan emphasis was laid on co-operative marketing and processing. Since then the progress of co-operative processing units especially of sugar factories has been very effective. At the beginning of the first plan there were two co-operative sugar factories in India but

at the end of 1983 there were 200 licenced co-operative sugar factories. The working of sugar co-operatives has provided a new framework for the activities of the rural leaders. The co-operative movement has helped to enlarge the developmental outlook in rural leaders. Sugar co-operatives are mainly organised with the association of farmers. It has become instrumental to the development of rural leadership, evoking 'farmers' class' to acquire the power positions. The sugar co-operative has opened a new avenue for the rural leaders to show their initiative and skill and to attain popular support. In the local political system, sugar co-operatives have gained much significance and they have become centres of social and political changes. Sugar co-operatives play a vital role in the dynamics of power in rural areas.

Leadership plays an important role in moulding social, political and economic life of rural people. After independence the pattern of leadership is undergoing significant changes. While the factors of caste and land ownership still predominate, leadership has become subject to democratic process. Rural India, which is real India, is passing through a period of transition. Therefore the study of rural leadership is the most urgent demand in the field of social research in India today. Compared to olden days

When it was believed that leaders were born with particular traits and attributes, new leadership is viewed more in social and cultural context in which it operates. Leadership does not emerge in vacuum but through various structures of society. The social structure is constituted by many groups. Leadership is the function of the groups which elevate the leader to the position of power. Leadership is an important function of the community social structure in terms of controlling and influencing the behaviour of others in the community. The present study proposes to explore the structure and the pattern of co-operative leadership in a rural set-up. It is a study concerning the process and pattern of the leadership in a co-operative sugar factory.

2. Aim of the Study

The general aim of the present study is to explore the socio-economic and political background that characterises the co-operative leaders. The quality of leadership will determine the success or failure of co-operation and development of our society. The introduction of co-operation is not merely to have economic benefits for the rural community but also to bring democratic values to the villages. Co-operation is advocated on the basis of encouraging local leaders. It would be of immense interest to find out the

impact of co-operation on the leadership process.

3. Scope of Study

The present study focuses its attention only on the leaders of Hiranyakeshi Co-operative Sugar Factory, Sankeshwar (Karnataka). Though the name of the factory is "Hiranyakeshi Sahakari Sakkare Karkhane, Niyamit, Sankeshwar," it is popularly known as "Hira". This popular name is used throughout this dissertation.

Defining a leader in the particular context of co-operative sugar factory was a problem at the outset. There are many types of leaders, formal and informal, traditional and modern, self-appointed and elected etc. Broadly speaking, it was decided to define a leader for the present study, by the office which he is holding.

Two categories of persons were defined as leaders for the study - (a) a person who was elected to the Board of Directors of 'Hira' was regarded as a leader, (b) a person who was nominated by the government to the Board of directors other than representing government agencies.

Thus all members of the Board of directors who have been elected or nominated other than government officials were held eligible for the study and come within the scope of study.

4. Specific Objectives of Study

The general objective of the present study would be to understand the nature of emerging pattern of co-operative leadership. The specific objectives of the study, therefore, would be:

- 1 To study the socio-economic and political characteristics of 'Hira' leaders
- 2 To study the process of 'Hira' leadership
- 3 To study the interlocking of 'Hira' leadership with other co-operatives and political institutions.
- 4 To study linkage process between 'Hira' leadership and political parties and political leaders
- 5 To study the political process and democratic process in the context of 'Hira' leadership
- 6 To offer suggestions for ensuring more effective leadership and democratic control in 'Hira'.

5. Selection of Hira

The selection of 'Hira' for the study was made on the following considerations:

- 1) The researcher had been more familiar with the physical layout of the area of operation of 'Hira' than any

other factory. This eased the problem of travelling and visiting the villages.

- 2) Many of the leaders in this area were known and familiar to the researcher which enabled him to interview every respondent personally.
- 3) There is stable leadership in 'Hira'.
- 4) 'Hira' is progressive, successful and a financially sound co-operative sugar factory.

6. Methodology and Tools

This study is an empirical research based on survey method. First hand data was collected from the field directly by going through the records of 'Hira'. Besides, personal interviews were conducted. Data regarding the structure of 'Hira', its aims, organs and the powers and functions of its organs and its progress were collected from byelaws, annual reports, audit reports and other records of 'Hira'. Details of socio-economic and political characteristics of leaders and shareholders were collected by interview schedule.

The observation technique was also used. The researcher attended a general body meeting and a few board meetings of 'Hira'. The election process also was observed from close quarters.

The interview schedule for the directors included 18 questions and it took about 2 hours or so to complete the interview with a leader. The interview schedule for the shareholders consisted of 13 questions and it took about half an hour to complete the interview with a shareholder. Apart from interview schedule the researcher elicited a lot of information through informal conversations - by meeting local leaders and shareholders. The researcher had sufficient opportunity to have frank and free informal conversations with the people concerned. Thus, the tools used for the survey consist of interview schedules, data sheets, observation and informal discussions. It is felt that informal discussions throw better light.

Sampling

It is generally accepted that leadership studies should emphasize the relationship between the characteristics of leaders and those of the led. Therefore the directors and shareholders of 'Hira' formed the sample for the study. As the purpose of the study is not to build any estimates, but to understand the political process and socio-economic and political profile of the leaders of 'Hira', it was not found necessary to select a fixed percentage sample of directors and shareholders of 'Hira'. But it was decided to cover as many directors and shareholders as time permitted.

In all 35 persons worked as directors of 'Hira' from 1956 to 1984. Some of them had expired, while some others could not be contacted in spite of repeated efforts. All the 11 sitting directors were interviewed. For this, the following procedure was followed: Advanced intimation was given to Basagouda Patil, the leader of 'Hira', that the researcher will attend the meeting of the board of directors. The purpose of visit was explained. Basagouda Patil was requested to impress upon the directors the necessity of giving interviews to the researcher. After the meeting each director was contacted personally with Basagouda Patil's help and interviews were arranged to be held preferably some time at the residence of the member and also at 'Hira'. In all 11 ex-directors were interviewed, out of which 7 were elected, 3 nominated and 1 elected once and nominated once. With regard to these sample members also appointments were taken and interviews were held at their residences. Sixty-six shareholders from 18 villages of 3 Talukas were interviewed. The shareholders were contacted and interviewed with the help of the local leaders.

7. Field Procedure - Establishment of Rapport

The researcher had previous acquaintance with many of the leaders of 'Hira' and he was introduced by these leaders to other members concerned with the study. Most of the leaders

knew that the researcher was a Lecturer in the local college; many of the students of the researcher had been working in the factory and residing in adjoining villages whose help was taken. The leaders, the employees and the shareholders took good interest in the researcher and were friendly with him. Some of the shareholders and leaders became suspicious in the beginning of the purpose of the visit.

8. Limitations of the Study

The main limitation was that of time. A study in rural area needs more time for non-partisan observation and in this sense present study was conducted to a certain extent hurriedly. The setting was too extensive to be covered in the time specified for the dissertation. There was also limited financial assistance and many other difficulties were encountered during the field work.