

---

CHAPTER FOUR

KISAN VEER'S CONTRIBUTION TO  
CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT IN SATARA DISTRICT

\*\*\*

---

## C H A P T E R   I V

### MISAN VEER'S CONTRIBUTION TO CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT IN SATARA DISTRICT

#### HISTORICAL PRESPECTIVE:

The Co-operative movement was first introduced in India with the establishment of Co-operative Credit Societies as a remedy to solve the problem of rural indebtedness and to finance the farmers for their agricultural development. In the very first phase of the credit movement, the newly formed primary societies felt the need of a Central Agency, which may act as a central wheel co-ordinating their activities and assisting them financially and in various other ways for their smooth and rapid development. No proper financial provision was made in the first Act of Co-operative Credit Societies in 1904. " With the rapid growth of the number of societies the tentative management however, soon fell short and special urban banks were established in some provinces for financing co-operative societies. One such society being started in Bombay in the year 1906 under the name of the Bombay Urban Co-operative Society; with the lead given by the late Sir Vithaldar Thackersey and the late Sir Lalabhai Samaldas"<sup>1</sup>. This co-operative credit society was started to

-----

1. Bhagwat L.K. " Central Banks and Banking Union", studies in Co-operation in Bombay State (Bombay: The Bombay Provincial Co-op. Institute, 1951), p.59.

provide capital for rural societies. Later the pioneers of the urban credit societies conceived the idea of starting banks, principally with the object of providing finance to co-operative societies. One of the principal features of its constitution was the scheme of debentures interest on which was to be guaranteed by the government of Bombay<sup>2</sup>. After considerable deliberations between the promoters and the governments, the Bombay Central Co-operative Bank was registered on 22nd October, 1911. The Bank began its operations by taking over the loans allowed to societies in various districts by the Bombay Urban Co-operative Credit Society and also the Tagai loans of government ( under the Agriculturists Loan Act of 1884 ) in a group of 29 villages in the Nira Canal tract<sup>3</sup>.

Thereafter attempts were made to start District Central Banks in many districts, such District Central Banks were formed in the early years in the districts namely Surat, Broach and Ahmednagar. In the year 1914, MacLagan Committee was appointed to take stock of the situation. The report of this committee was later treated as guidelines for the

---

2. See Saraiya R.G., " The Bombay Provincial Co-op., Bank Ltd.," Studies in Co-operation in Bombay State, op.cit., p.75.

3. Ibid., p.76.

development of Co-operative Credit structure and consequently district banks began to crop up since 1916. With the establishment of these district banks, direct financing by the Bombay Central Bank was stopped in the districts having their own district banks. The number of district banks began to increase from 1920 which resulted in transforming the Bombay Central Bank to act as provincial Bank. Thus, the Apex Bank at the State level and district bank at the district level come into existence to cater to the needs of the urban and rural co-operative societies.

The present structure of supplying agricultural finance to the farmers in India could be said to have begun largely since the establishment of Agricultural Credit Department in the Reserve Bank of India in 1935<sup>4</sup>. The present co-operative agricultural credit has a three tier structure. The primary credit society at the base, the district central bank at the intermediate level and the State Co-operative Bank as the apex. Thus the co-operative credit structure is a pyramidal structure which is held together by the Apex Bank.

This existing agricultural credit structure has been evolved mainly after the recommendation's of the All India

-----

4. Hemchand Jain, "Growth & Recent Trends in the Institution Credit in India", Indian Co-operative Review ( New Delhi, N.C.U.,1, Vol.VII No.1, October,1969)p.75.

Rural Credit survey Committee report in the year 1954.

"The District Central Co-operative Bank plays a crucial role in the co-operative credit structure. It functions as an agency linking the primary credit societies with the State Co-operative Bank. The Central Co-operative Bank mobilise resources by accepting various kinds of deposits and by borrowing from the Apex Bank. They as the custodians of the Reserve funds of primary societies. They finance primary societies affiliated to them, impart strength to the primary societies and provide necessary leadership to them and supervise their working. They also provide leadership for the development of the co-operative movement in their districts"<sup>5</sup>. The area of operation of the district Cental Bank is strictly confined to a district. They are allowed to open branches at places where the bank experiences heavy business and also where it can reach the neighbourhood of the villages so that it can credit closer contact with the member-societies, rural farmers so as to faciliatate collection and disbursement of loans to them and to boost the local deposits. " Today the business of the District Central Co-operative Banks in Maharashtra is large. Some of our District Banks have larger business than the Appex

5. Krishnaswami O.R., 'Co-operative Democracy in Action (New Delhi, Somaiya Publications, 1979), p.117.

Co-operative Banks in some States in India"<sup>6</sup>.

THE SATARA DISTRICT CENTRAL CO-OPERATIVE BANK  
AND KISAN VEER:

When India was free from the iron clutches of the British Empire on 15th August, 1947, the standard of living of the agriculturist in particular was very poor. He was found to be under burden of loans of money lenders who were looting the agriculturist. In view of this, it was necessary to undertake the programme for uplift of agriculturists for which the leaders in the district thought that the co-operative movement is the only source for the purpose. One of the prominent leaders in the district. Yashwantraoji Chavan thought over the matter and decided to register a District Central Co-operative Bank in consultation with the other leaders. The leaders were Jaisingrao Chavan, Chief Promoter and Kisan Veer, Balasaheb Desai, Raghnuathrao Patil. They made strenuous efforts to organise this co-operative banks. Kisan Veer contacted the villages and requested them to contribute initial share capital; by doing so he could register the bank. This was named as " North Satara District Central Co-operative Bank Ltd., Satara", in the year 1949. With the working capital

---

6. Gadgil D.R. " Co-operative Banking in Maharashtra",  
 Writings & Speeches of D.R.Gadgil on Co-operation  
 New Delhi, Orient Longmans, 1975, p.118.

Of Rs.4.78 lakhs. This Co-operative Bank due to the efforts of leaders like Kisan Veer, a staunch follower of Shri Y.B. Chavan can be considered as starting point of co-operative ment in the Satara District. All such activities of collecting funds, planning for rural masses<sup>7</sup> was also the job allotted to Kisan Veer by Shri Y.B.Chavan.

There was another Bank in Phaltan Taluka working which was known as Laxmi Central Co-operative Bank Ltd., This bank was financing the agriculturists only in Phaltan taluka. The situation demanded that there should be only one Central Co-operative Bank for the District and the policy of Reserve Bank of India and the Government of Bombay was favourable in this behalf. Due to the efforts made by Kisan Veer this bank ultimately was amalgamated in the " Satara District Central Co-operative Bank Ltd., Satara ". At last this bank was registered on 15th August, 1949<sup>7</sup>.

In the initial stages the members of the Board of Management were nominated by the State Government. The first election of the Board of Directors was held in the year 1951

-----

7. Source, working note of Bank, 30th June, 1980.

and Raghunathrao Patil was elected as the Chairman and continued to remain in the office upto 1964. In 1967-68, there were twentythree branches of the bank functioning throughout the district covering all the talukas of the district.

" The main object of the Satara District Central Co-operative Bank are as follows":

- I) To finance co-operative societies,affiliated to ~~it~~ it and generally to carry on banking business with such societies and public,
- ii) To assess and estimate the credit of affiliated societies,
- iii) To act as a balancing centre for the surplus funds of the societies,
- iv) To develop co-operative societies with in the district"<sup>8</sup>.

#### MEMBERSHIP:

" All co-operative societies affiliated to the bank and individual members as on 15th August, 1947 were considered as original members of other societies and individuals in

-----

8. See Byelaws, The Satara District Central Co-operative Bank Ltd., 1978. p.1.



its area of operation may be admitted as member of the Bank by the Board of Directors. No individual would be admitted to the membership of the Bank without express previous permission of the Registrar therefor. The Maharashtra State Co-operative Bank and the Zilla Parishad, Satara are also eligible for membership of the bank. There is also a provision for accepting nominal members. The persons who are not members of Urban Banks and Societies dispensing security of valuable and requiring finance against the security of gold and gold ornaments. Fixed deposits, government securities, debentures may be admitted as nominal members of the Bank and such nominal members shall have no right to vote or to participate in the management of the Bank in the distribution of profit. However, they may be permitted to attend the general meeting of the Bank and express their views"<sup>9</sup>.

#### MANAGEMENT:

The supreme authority of the Bank shall vest in the General Body consisting of representatives from affiliated societies and delegeates from the individual members of the bank. Each affiliated society, except societies in liquidation

-----

9. Ibid.,p.6.

may sent to the General meeting one of its representatives, such representatives and delegates should not be defaulters in societies concerned and in the district co-operative bank, otherwise they will not be entitled to vote on behalf of the society and the individual members in the General meeting.

An ordinary Annual General Meeting was to be convened within a period of three months, next after the date fixed for making up its accounts for the year under the role, that is before 15th November of every year. A special meeting may be called by requisition in accordance with the byelaws of the bank.

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

The management of the business and affairs of the bank are entrusted to a Board of Directors with consists of not more than twenty four members as under:

- a) Not more than twelve ' Directors ' representing agricultural credit multipurpose, service co-operatives, forming societies of the eleven talukas in the district.
- b) One Director each representing Urban Co-operative Banks and Urban Credit Societies. Co-operative Marketing societies, Industrial and Weavers' Co-operative societies, Agricultural processing co-operative societies, Housing, Consumer, Irrigation

societies, Dairy societies and individual shareholders, societies.

- c) One nominee of the Apex Bank.
- d) The District Deputy Registrar or in his absence Assistant Registrar of Co-operative societies as a nominee of the State Government.
- e) One representative of the Zilla Parishad.
- f) In addition to these, there are two reserved seats for the employees.

The tenure of office of the Board is five years and the election is held at the end of every five years. No representative of an affiliated society which has been classed as 'C' or 'D' at the last audit shall be entitled to become a member of the Board of Directors. No member of the Bank or an affiliated society shall be eligible for election as a Director of the Bank, if he is in default to any society in respect of any dues from him, either as a borrower, or as a surety for such a period as is specified in this behalf.

The Board shall meet at least once in a month. Thirteen members of the Board shall constitute a quorum. The Board is vested with ~~large~~ powers. The byelaws have provided twentyfive powers to the Board. In all day to day matters the Board takes decisions and guides the bank officers to implement these decisions.

THE IMPACT:

From 1966 to 1979 under the leadership of Kisan Veer in the Satara district co-operative Bank has given a good account of itself both in securing the confidence of the public as reflected in their increasing volume of deposits as well as in increasing the pace of the progress of the co-operative movement as reflected in the increased volume of advances to co-operatives as given in table. The over all development from 1969 to 1979 is given in the accompanying table.

PROGRESS OF THE  
DISTRICT CENTRAL CO-OPERATIVE BANK

	At the end of June, 68	At the end of June 79
1. Membership		
A) of affiliated Societies.	1,086	1,334
B) of Individuals.	2,221	1,887
2. Paid up capital.	85.69	365.16
3. Working capital.	852.34	3,414.99
4. Deposits.	528.07	2,386.99
5. No of affiliated Agricultural Credit Societies.	764.00	751.00
6. Advances to the Agricultural Societies.	313.31	373.61

Note: Rupees in Lakhs.

Source: Annual Report 1967-68, 1978-79.

The Satara District Central Co-operative Bank is a special financing agency for co-operative societies and the individual farmers. " In the chain of the integrated structure of co-operative credit, therefore, the central financing agencies play not only a vital role but they are the pivots and the fulcrum on which the structure mainly takes its comentum"<sup>10</sup>.

The progress of the bank as indicated in the given table reveals that the Bank has been able to increase its paid up capital four times during the period accounted in the table. It has also increased its working capital in the like manner. The bank has executed the programmes for financing production activities and for the other Co-operative activities contemplated in the National Plan. " Today's development and expansion of bank was the work of Late Kisan Veer, who had made various efforts for taking bank to the villages and providing financial facilities for the farmers in the district"<sup>11</sup>.

" When Kisan Veer was elected President of the District Central Co-operative Bank in 1967, he decided to establish

-----

10. Gaitonde Y.B. " Integrated System of Co-operative Credit Co-operative", Bombay. 1956. Nadkarni D.M. (Ed), Bombay Purushttam Blög., 1959, p.44.

11. Palnetkar G.H., (Ed.) " Daily Aiyka", Aiyka Printing Press, Satara, 1st Sept., 1980, Article by Bhosale V.D. p.5.

a sugar factory known as " Satara Sakari Sakhari Karkhana". By this he could again bring large number of agriculturialist of six talukas together and inspire them in his new programme. Kisan Veer felt the need of sugar factory as the only source for agricultural development. It is because of his efforts, the proposal for sugar factory was~~g~~l finalised in 1969 and got established in 1970. Its first crushing~~ing~~ season in was held in 1970. Kisan Veer as a founder of the sugar ~~f~~actory, also become the Chairman of this sugar factory and remained Director throughout his life.<sup>12</sup>. It seems Kisan Veer always put the plan of Y.B.Chavan in action. Kisan Veer served as link between Y.B.Chavan's leadership between the rural leaders and State leaders.

The activities of the District Central Co-operative Bank have encouraged the people to start a number of new co-operative societies in various fields. The loan advanced to the agricultural societies were short term and medium term. The medium term loans were advanced to the farmers to purchase milch cows and buffaloes in order to help them to have a supplementary income to improve their economic conditions, such type of Banking policy of Kisan Veer helped him to penetrate in the rural masses, and carve a prominent place as a rural leader.

-----

12. Ibid.,p.6.

In the tenure of Kisan Veer's Presidentship of Satara District Central Co-operative Bank; gained in importance because all plans of development was executed by Kisan Veer. He was the cause for tremendous expansion of branches of bank in the district areas. In his tenure of Presidentship of Bank, he increased the number of branches from 21 to 66, which changed the very shape of the bank, and besides helped to evolve and expand rural leadership.

Kisan Veer's political linkages with state level leadership especially with Shri V.P.Naik, the then Chief Minister of Maharashtra and with Y.B.Chavan national leader belonging to same group, of Kisan Veer could <sup>use</sup> active this position to becoming a Director of State Co-operative Bank in 1969. As a President of District Central Co-operative Bank, besides launching " Satara Sakhari Sakhar Karkhana", he had also planned to finance two other sugar factories in Satara district. The Sahyadri Sakhari Sakhar Karkhana Ltd., (Taluka Karad) and Balasaheb Desai Sakhari Sakhar Karkhana Ltd. (Taluka Patan).

Kisan Veer's nomination on State Co-operative Bank as director helped the launching of two other sugar factories which saw its completion and started crushing sugar cane. For this act of Kisan Veer, he was criticised by various circles, but not perturbed by these criticism Kisan Veer

went ahead in granting loans and also recovered the same within specify time; proving to his critics that they were wrong. Kisan Veer was a man who had foresight in whatever he did.

" By doing so Kisan Veer established a sound foundation for the political leadership of the Congress Party. This also introduced scope for the emerging leadership of Satara district. Sugar factories in Maharashtra can be considered as a source of political power and it is due to these linkages the Congress Party in Satara District has its strong hold; the credit of which has to be given to Kisan Veer.

" In 1973 when Maharashtra was facing serve famine, in Satara District, Kisan Veer's efforts have been laudable. He sanctioned loans to the farmers, helped them in every respect to fight famine conditions.

" To day Satara district is a leading districti in agricultural produce, Kisan Veer saw that irrigation projects where introduced and Satara District has been benefited largely because of the project's like Dhom and Kahanar irrigation projects. Especially Satara Taluka, Koregaon Taluka and Wai taluka, have irrigated agriculture. Kisan Veer alongwith these various co-operative programmes saw the importance of also Dairy farming, Poultries etc., allied to



these project. He sanctioned loans for purchase of cattle and as a result Satara district has made remarkable progress in dairy farming today"<sup>13</sup>.

THE SATARA ZILLA KRISHI AUDYOGIK SARVA

SEVA SAHKARI SOCIETY:

On the 25th January, 1962. the Satara District Co-operative Purchase and Sales Organization was established as a federal body of co-operative societies, and as a district agency to supply the agricultural inputs to the co-operative societies. It was also to act as a sole distributor of improved seeds fertilizers and mixed manure. It was also expected to act as an authorised agent of the state government to procure the commodities under the State monopoly scheme.

Recently it has converted itself in to District Co-operative Society to play a more independent role in organizing effectively the marketing activities and other services to the Co-operative Sector in this district, Previously it used to act as central agency in the district and now it can deal with any single co-operative in marketing and other

-----

13. Palnetkar C.H. (Ed.) " Daily Aiyka, Aiyka Printing Press, Satara, 1st September, 1980, Article by Bhosale V.D., p.6.

business. On its own initiative it can open new avenues of marketing and service stations.

MEMBERSHIP:

The membership of the society is open to all individuals, co-operative societies from the Satara District and to the State Government. In the year 1963-64, the total members were 51 and during the year 1978-79, the number rose upto 124.

MANAGEMENT:

The overall management vests with the Board of Directors consisting of seventeen Directors as under:

- i) Five representatives of the Taluka purchase and sale unions.
- ii) Five representatives of primary societies,
- iii) Two representatives of dairy societies
- iv) One representative of consumer society,
- v) One representative of individual members,
- vi) One member of Scheduled Caste tribes or Nomadic tribes; and
- vii) One representative of the State Government.

The members of the Board of Directors except the nominees of the financing agency and the State Government, are an elected members for the period five years. The qualifications and disqualifications to contest the election of the Board of Directors are given in the byelaws of the society.

ACTIVITIES:

The society's main activities are to distribute the agricultural inputs like fertilizers and seeds. The society produces its own manure mixture under the trade name " Daulat" since 1965. This mixture has been very popular with the agriculturists in the district. The society distributes this mixture and other fertilizers.

The society has also been appointed as an outhorised dealer for distribution of steel for agricultural qoata, by the Zilla Parishad and distribution of cement by the Collector of Satara District. The society supplies agricultural implements, spare parts to the agriculturist on behalf of the Marketing Federation against 'Tagai' loan sanctioned by the Maharashtra State Co-operative Land Development Bank.

DISTRICT CO-OPERATION AND DEMOCRATIC PROCESS:

Co-operation is a voluntary organization of the people, effectively in operation which aims at democratic distribution and production for purposes of services<sup>14</sup>.

A co-operative society being both an economic and a social organization is supposed to function successfully by allowing material benefits to the members without impairing its democratic character, for co-operation is basically a ' people's movement ' for their economic advancement. The State Government is to assist the movement by making suitable loans and statutes to develop it on a firm ground. In the developing countries, especially in India, the State has entered into the co-operative movement as one of the partners. In many big societies and co-operative industries, the State Government has either purchased the shares or provided capital.

District organizations like the District Co-operative Bank and the District Marketing Society Act as agency of the apex institution under the guidance of the Co-operative Department of the Government without losing their autonomy

-----

14. See Marbasse J.P., 'Co-operative Democracy', (New York: Harper and Brothers, V.Edition, 1947), p.307.

in the process of decision making. However, the general policy is framed by the State Government in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India.

This, the District Co-operative Organization are in character federal and democratic units. A village co-operative is a primary association wherein the village people join voluntarily and run the society. These primary societies in turn form taluka Unions. This is an intermediary co-operative structure which provides basic facilities and services to the primary societies. These primary and intermediary societies These primary and intermediary societies in order to implement bigger co-operative planning or to establish co-operative processing units need financial assistance and technical know how. The scattered individual societies with small resources make little impact on the economy and therefore, the federal agencies set the standard and appeal their member societies for development. " A federation is a central organization owned and democratically controlled by the federating units for their benefit. It does not exist for its own sake but for rendering services to the federating units"<sup>15</sup>.

---

15. Krishna Swami O.R., 'Co-operative Democracy in Action (New Delhi, Somaiya Publications, 1976), p.167.

" Power in co-operative, if perceived as an additional credential to one's political career and if the power position in co-operative enhance the political leverage of a leader, the leadership process gets involved in group process which would impair the principle of collectivity. Groups are formed with some sort of affiliation of caste, class or political party, class and politics have posed some problem in co-operative and to some extent they have damaged the image of the co-operative democracy. The leadership in village co-operatives was the out come of the group process with family and caste associations. It was not an out come of democratic process in the real sense"<sup>16</sup>.

Kisan Veer occupied the Chairmanship of Satara District Central Co-operative Bank, from 1966 to 1979. He was unchallenged leader and a strong follower of Yeshwantrao Chavan. It is interesting to see that the higher organisation in co-operative under the garh of democracy.

" Kisan Veer occupied the power position for longer period. He was also the director of 'Satara Zilla Krishi Audyogik Sarva Seva Sakhari Society, and held the office

-----

16. Power S.V., Co-operative Leadership and Politics of Rural Maharashtra (unpublished thesis) submitted to Shivaji University, Kolhapur, 1982, p.266.

since its inception to 1979. Until his death, he was in the office for eighteen years. This shows concentrations of power in the hand of a single leader, or one group points the domination of Kisan Veer as a popular leader in Satara District. Kisan Veer on many occasions was severely criticised by the opposition because of this. The legitimacy for co-operative government lies in the will of certain individual and not in the majority will of the members. This has been put forth as " co-operative oligarchy " which is termed as " Co-operative barons " with the seats of power in the district Banks, Sugar Factories and marketing societies"<sup>17</sup>.

" Indian Social Structure is traditional bound, caste or class-ridden hierarchical and segmental and the economic system is riddled with inequality. Privileged and monopolistic entrenched positions and therefore the social structure and the economic system are not congenial and conducive to democracy. They do not allow for ready emergence of growth of democratic leadership"<sup>18</sup>.

Kisan Veer though contested election to the State Legislative Assembly in 1952 and 1957, he was not elected.

-----

17. Ibid., p.267.

18. Krishnaswami O.R., " Fundamental of Co-operation" (New Delhi, S.Chand & Co.,1978), p.90.

Though he was respected in the political circles of the Congress, he failed to secure votes whenever he contested elections. This makes it amply clear how the caste influenced the elections. The other aspect is, it was only his political links because of which he established as a Congress organizational worker which helped him to dominate the offices in the co-operative societies. It was only with the good wishes of Shri Y.B.Chavan, he could acquire many important offices in the co-operative sector. Co-operative sector in Satara district helped Kisan Veer to accomodate rural leaders in various offices, loyal to Shri Y.B.Chavan's faction because of their political linkages.

#### SATARA DISTRICT- A POLITICAL ASSESSMENT:

■ The Co-operative movement started in the Satara district at the begining of the present century i.e. 1907. The first Agricultural Credit Society was registered at the village Bodhe in Man taluka in 1907. Since then, the principle of the movement gradually gained popularity with social workers and the rural masses. Similar societies were registered in various parts of the districts<sup>19</sup>. Today the movement has

-----

19. See Satara Gazetter (Bombay Director of Government Publication, Maharashtra State, 1963).



covered the entire district undertaking various socio-economic activities. Each talukas in the district is having marketing society. In all seven sugar factories have been registered in the district, out of which five are actually functioning. On 30th June, 1983, there were 2,838 co-operative institution of various kinds. The total membership of these societies rose-up to 4,59,000.

THE CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES IN THE  
SATARA DISTRICT AS ON 30TH JUNE, 1983<sup>20</sup>

Sr.No.	Types of Society	Total No.
1)	Agricultural societies.	753
2)	Taluka Marketing Co-op. Societies.	10
3)	Krishi Audyogik Societies at district level.	1
4)	Sugar co-operatives.	17
5)	Dairy societies.	388
6)	Dairy Union.	7
7)	Ginning & Pressing co-operatives.	6
8)	Fisheries.	10
9)	Poulties.	3
10)	Industrial Societies.	98
11)	Labour Contract societies.	99
12)	Urban Co-op. Bani & Urban Co-op. Societies.	146
13)	Housing societies.	226
14)	Others.	207

20. Source- Zilla Sahakari Board, Annual Report, 1983, pp. 2-3.

Though the Satara District exhibits a bright picture of the co-operative movement; it is to noted, that the movement has flourished and benefitted the people in those parts of this district where canal, irrigation facilities are available. The other parts of the district, namely Man, Khandala, Koregaon and the hilly regions of Wai, Patan talukas have not developed as compared to the talukas like Karad, Satara and Phaltan. These talukas are well developed due to the natural features, having good rainfall and the rivers like Krishna and its tributaries flowing through these talukas. The top leaders who held high position in the local and the State Government belonged to these talukas.

The uneven economic and political development, of the regions largely determine the attitudes of the people and their leaders towards any movement. The leadership which strives for the development of its own catchment area encourages regionalism and groupism in the body politics, factional fights within a district for establishing unchallenged leadership, hamper the organisation and also the movement has been launched. The uneven development of co-operative organization especially the bigger processing units like co-operative sugar factories in certain regions in the district reveal the story of better intra-party rivalry, personal differences, political ambitions among the leaders

of the Satara District. The politics of development is actually felt in those areas of the district where co-operative enterprises have made a remarkable impact on the socio-economic life of the rural people. Co-operatives have become the centres for building leadership and also the hot-beds of politics in rural Maharashtra.

#### DISTRICT POLITICS:

Laswell's definition of politics, as "the study of sharing and shaping of power"<sup>21</sup> is quite acceptable now a days as power is also structured through private and public associations and statutory bodies. Politics cannot be studied unless the infrastructures in a political system are thoroughly analysed.

"A political system is structurally composed of units and their relationships as pointed out by Talcott Parsons "A political system is an agency for mobilizing from its intra social environment and utilizing them to implement its politics"<sup>22</sup>. A political system consists of social, economic and other forces and institutions of a society generating

-----

21. Quoted by Verma S.P., Modern Political Theory, Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, 1975, p.11.

22. Talcott Parsons, Politics and Social Structure, (New York, The Free Press, 1969), p.339.

supports, conflicts and links which are involved in the process of political decisions. While defining politics Michael Curtis says " politics is organized 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 which power is obtained exercised and controlled"<sup>23</sup>. Therefore the study of politics is concerned mainly with the concept of power.

There are three interlinked dimensions of the power structures in this district of Maharashtra. They are the political parties, Panchyati Raj Institution and Co-operative organizations. The decision taken by these institutions have affected the social and political life in the rural areas. These institutions hold much power and influence among the rural people. Politics in rural Maharashtra is central around the power positions. The leaders and the followers are more interested in grabbing the power positions than in constructive and welfare activities. It has become proverbial that there can be no home without Wife and no

---

23. Quoted by Johan S.S., ' Comparative Politics', (New Delhi, Sterling Publishers, 1979), p.6.

politics without power. The power in a society is distributed among various social, economic and political associations. Therefore, the political process goes on, when the members of the associations decide as to who should govern, how the decisions should be made and implemented. Thus the study of the district politics ultimately is the study of power structures in the district.

In a district's political set-up in Maharashtra, the politics of Panchayati Raj also occupies a very important place. The Panchayati system in Maharashtra is composed of three tier structure. At the village level Gram Panchayat at the Taluka level the Panchayati Samiti and at district level the Zilla Parishad. The members of these bodies are elected by means of direct election by the rural people. Zilla Parishad is vested with immense powers' to implement the socio-economic development activities in the district and rural, it has its own revenue and income for the budgetary provision and also receives aid, grants from the State Government for certain development schemes. Due to the introduction of Panchayati Raj the process and development of leadership has gathered momentum in rural areas and these have also become an important source of political linkage.

A number of new leaders are coming from the rural areas because of their direct participation in the politics of local bodies. It should be noted here that in any of these local bodies, the Members of the Legislative Assembly or Council are not included and treated as ex-officio members, as superior leaders or political bosses in the district politics. By keeping the political bosses away from the local political institutions the framers of the Panchayati Act have helped the spontaneous growth of leadership. In the rural area on the contrary the higher leaders should maintain cordial relations with the rural leaders; and try to develop rural leadership or grow grass root democracy. This creates an atmosphere for political bargaining in which from the support of the lower level leader assures the higher level leader. The latter has to reward him by helping him in maintaining his own way over his rivals"<sup>24</sup>.

The rural leaders have become highly influential persons by the virtue of becoming the members of the local political bodies and also by having political links with the higher leaders like legislators or Members of the Parliament. If a higher leader is included in the States or central

---

24. G.Ram Reddy and K.Sheshadri, "Studies of Leadership", in Political System", (Indian Council of Social Sciences Research, New Delhi, 1979), p.106.

ministry; the catchment area of his influence naturally gets expanded and he can muster a good number of rural leaders supporting his leadership, being a Minister, he can patronise the leaders in many ways.

The Panchayati Raj system has created hierarchical structure of leadership in the rural area. This in turn has created a chain of leadership from the village level to the district or State level interlinked with each other. These link-ages are established only through political motives with power orientation. In this context the observation made by Iqbal Narayan and P. Mathus are very illustrative.

They observe; " The linkage between the local and state level or national politics is not based on ideological or political commitment but mainly on consideration of bargaining the political support"<sup>25</sup>. Therefore it is but natural that every aspirant to higher leadership should build support structure in order to elevate himself to the higher position. This presupposes the group formation and group alliances. In the district politics, groups were formed in the name of the leaders who were at the top of the power

-----

25. Quoted by Bhoite K.R. " A Study of Democratic Decentralisation in Maharashtra" (Unpublished Thesis, University of Poona, 1970), p.172.

hierarchy, Kisan Veer and Yeshwantrao Mohite were the group leaders in the district, in addition to this taluka leaders also formed groups joining hands with the village leaders of Panchayati bodies and co-operative units. Kisan Veer was successful throughout his life time for bringing the major group of Taluka leaders on his side". Some of these groups are Bhoite group in Phaltan, Vilasrao Patil group in Karad, Abhay Raje group in Satara, Frataprao Bhosale group in Wai. Group politics and intra-group rivalry for leadership are found in the bigger institutions like sugar co-operative, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad. Internal struggle for power between the competitive group is mitigated by the higher leaders bringing the opposed blocks to compromise.

Thus the top level leaders play a balancing role in the dynamics of power in local politics. Some times with the blessing of the higher leader; one group obviates the group from power by way of passing no-confidence motion.

Co-operatives have acquired a vital importance in the politics of the Satara district. In fact, they have become the feeding centres of politics, Denicl Thorner, in his report had said.



" The impact of politics upon the co-operative seems to be getting heavier and more direct, in several states the leadership of the co-operatives is heavily sprinkled with active politicians"<sup>26</sup>.

The political importance of the co-operative has attained such an importance that its impact was actually felt in State politics also. During elections to the Legislative Assembly etc., the sugar co-operatives show profound influence while allowing the party tickets to their stalwarts. Political parties consider a leader's control over the co-operative in his respective area as an important merit for his candidature in the assembly election. In the last general election of 1980, fifty candidates were put by the political parties from the sugar co-operative sector"<sup>27</sup>.

A number of political leaders are having hold directly or indirectly on co-operatives like sugar factories, co-operative bank and marketing societies. Three members of Legislative Assembly and one member of Legislative Council are having control over the important co-operative enterprises

---

26. Daniel Thorther, " Context for Co-operative in Rural India" in Rural Sociology in India (Ed.) Desai A.R., Bombay, Popular Prakashan, 1969, p.496.

27. See Maharashtra Times (Marathi Daily), 27th May, 1981, P.1 (Bombay, Benntt Coleman & Co.).

in this district. They are Shri P.D.Patil, Chairman of the Sahyadri Co-operative Sugar Factory, Shri Kashavrao Patil, Chairman of the Satara District Central Co-operative Bank and Shri Prataprao Bhosale, who is Minister of Rural Development, Shri Jaywantrao Bhosale, a member of the Legislative Council and Chairman of Krishna Co-operative Sugar Factory. All these members belonged to Congress (I).

The control over the co-operative units vests much power and resources in the hands of the leaders. The rural people in Maharashtra are economically and politically backward. The co-operative sector has brought prosperity to the rural people. The co-operative movement has encouraged them to enter into other economic and agro-industrial activities like Dairies, Poultryes and Processing on their agricultural produce. The big and middle class of irrigated land owners have become quite well-off, due to the assistance and facilities from the co-operative movement.

Prof.V.M.Sirsikar, in his study of " Rural Elite " has concluded that the major benefits of the co-operative movement and other resources of economic and agricultural development have contributed to improve the position of "Rural elites"<sup>28</sup>.

-----

28. See Sirsikar,V.M., 'Rural Elite in a Developing Society' (New Delhi,Orient Longmans,1970), p.189.

The well to do farmers could spare time and money for participating in active politics, Bertrand Russel very aptly points out, " when a moderate degree of comfort is assured both individuals and communities will pursue power rather than wealth. They may seek wealth as a means to power"<sup>29</sup>.

Thus the study of co-operative leadership is both intellectually fascinating and politically relevant. Shri Yashwantrao Chavan, who hails from this district and was at one time the undisputed leader of the State, also felt the immense influence of the co-operative sector and has said that co-operative sector has become a " State within a State ". It's become a den of politicians"<sup>30</sup>.

The present study devoted for the leadership of Kisan Veer, in this district controlled various co-operative institutions from Satara District and remained unchallenged throughout his life, makes an interesting case.

The Socio-economic characteristics of the Satara district shows that leaders at the higher level mostly belonged to

-----

29. Bertrund Russel, "Power", (London: Geovge Allen and Union Ltd.,1960), p.9.

the dominant Maratha caste with higher economic status, and were the stalwarts of the Congress Party. But Kisan Veer was not a land-lord not having a caste status and educational qualifications and hence he enjoyed the power in higher co-operative organization in the district. It shows that he was the leader of the masses. He was not only a co-operative leader, but he made the ground through which the various leaders of district level emerged. Shri Prataprao Bhosale, Shri Laxmanrao Patil and Shri Vilasrao Patil are the leaders today in district politics. These leaders came in the political linkages with Kisan Veer.

Kisan Veer hence played a major role in the political economic, social development of Satara district. Kisan Veer created various voter banks for the leadership of Y.B.Chavan. Kisan Veer's leadership perhaps remained unchallenged upto his last because of his close association with Shri Y.B. Chavan. Hence co-operative movement untilately if assessed has helped the dominant caste to retain their positions as 'Fedral Loards' to continue. It may be pointed that this is one of the method or trends in Indian Democracy. Its not worth while to critise this aspect, instead it would be better to democratise the co-operative movement which will largely depend upon the political awareness of concerned people.