CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

1.1. RATIONALE OF THE PROBLEM

Indian society by now has the experience of more than fifty years of democracy. The holding of elections, from time to time and participating in them has become a continuous process. These elections are held at regular intervals to choose the public representatives at different levels like Village Panchayat, Block Panchayat, Jila Panchayat, Vidhan Sabha and Lok Sabha at the National level. In India both the levels of government viz. Central and State, make the legislation and policies and execute the work by the coordination of public representatives under the constitution and use its powers to execute the work under its direction through bureaucrats.

There are several studies on understanding the above processes and about the participation of the masses in elections. These studies try to understand the interaction process in political and social aspects. Most of the studies have highlighted the inter-relations between the social structure and political institutions. At theoretical analysis sociologists used structural and functional theories in understanding empirical facts. But the experience of freedom, political processes and social development the inter-relation between rural society and urban society changed in comparison of earlier studies during last few years. To understand the key perspective of these changes, some limitations of structural and functional theories were highlighted. So the process is continuous to discover the theories and new aspects. To understand such complex situation of social networks, British Anthropologist J.A. Barnes (1954) gave a theory of ‘social network’ and he used
dynamic condition of European Community to understand this. Some researches have also used this concept in India.

According to A.C. Mayer (1966) during the election the basis of forming groups for election campaigning and to reach the voters in the region, help of local leaders and sometimes of those youths who themselves are not voters is found to play an important role.

According to S.S. Sharma (1977) social network comes out to be an important dimension in election of Pradhans in village Panchayat, continuously elected and sometimes defeated and again winning.

K.N. Sharma (1975) finds those traditional factors e.g. family, caste, kinship playing important role in the formation of social network outside the village. Satish Saberwal (1976) has studied development of social networks due to education, occupational and political mobility in some castes i.e. Balmiki, Ad Dharmi and Ramgarhia of Modelpur town in Punjab.

Effort is also needed to study the change in the perception not only from candidate’s side but also from those who are participating in the network formation, impact of social network on social structure, changed scenario in terms of relationship between formal organisations and also to identify the indicators of change in social structure. Thus, the present study is proposed to focus on such issues at assembly level elections.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the light of the above discussion the present study has focused on the following objectives;

(1) To find out the socio-economic background of the candidates who contested in election and also of those becoming a part of their social network in an
assignably election (in reserved and unreserved constituencies).

(2) To compare and find out the bases of formation of different levels of social networks of contesting candidates in the assembly election (in reserved and unreserved constituency).

(3) To find out the perception of candidate and the member of their networks in the two constituencies.

(4) To find out the impact of social network on social structure and differences between reserved and unreserved constituency.

In the initial proposal, it was proposed that in the first question an effort would be made to collect information on socio-economic background of the candidates and of those who became a part of their social networks, by knowing their age, sex, caste, religion, education, family background economic status and any other left out aspect.

In the second question, effort would be made to find out the bases of formation of different levels of social networks keeping the candidate in the center. The bases may be economic, social including kinship, friendship, political or any other in two constituencies.

In the third question, effort would be made to find out the perception of candidates and members of their networks. In this we would like to know about the different dimensions of perception of candidates and the members in their social networks.

In the last question, after studying, socio-economic background, bases of formation of social network and perception, an effort would be made to find out the impact of social network on social structure.

The above objectives have been studied in assembly elections of 2002 in
two constituencies in western U.P. namely Sardhana and Hastinapur in district Meerut. The first is a general seat and the second is reserved for scheduled castes. The two constituencies have been selected purposively so as to observe variations in the social networks and the bases of their formation because the candidates in the center belong to different background in the fundamental dimension of caste.

1.3 RELATED TERMS/CONCEPTS

Social Network

The term network refers to individuals who are linked together by one or more social relationship. This forms a social network. Examples of social relationship links include kinship, communication, friendship, party, authority and sexual contact. This linkages has been perceived as a social network when such set is used for a specific purpose like winning in an election on the part of the contesting candidate.

Sociometry

A term coined by J.L. Moreno in 1934 in "Who Shall Survive?" and originally developed as a part of a socio-drama approach to interpret social structure.

Sociometry systemizes information from India includes in group concerning who preferred to associate with whom in terms of specified basis or for a given purpose.

An early use by Moreno was to reallocate dormitory sleeping arrangements to minimize conflict among reform school inhabitants. Initial use thus tide the sociometric test to it having direct consequences, though this is now less common. The number of sociometric choice allowed may be either fixed or
not may be ordered; or many express the strength of the link.

Sociometry is widely, used in education and other small group context for understanding clique structure and has it on journal, sociometry. In other context it has been subsumed by social network analysis. This is used here in identifying the levels of network.

**Perception**

The faculty of acquiring sensory experience. Study of the processes by which we gather and interpret visual information is largely the province of social psychologists, which have identified several general principles (laws) of perception, and also some effects upon it of (among other things) motivation and attention. The former includes the phenomenon of the 'figure-ground contrast' that is, how we perceive objects distinctly from where surroundings. It is understood on the part of participants during the process of election, particularly of the candidates.

**1.4. PERSPECTIVES/APPROACHES**

To study basis of social networks, perception and finally the impact of social networks on social structures, there is a need to look beyond some approaches, e.g. system approach and structural functional approach, because in earlier studies, these were holding importance. In present scenario there is a need to look through different perspective. Later on effort would also be made to see the functional utility of these networks in establishing rural-urban linkages. To find out the differences in two constituencies (reserved and unreserved) comparative approach would be taken in to account.

**1.5. UNIVERSE/SAMPLES**

Data have been collected from two assembly constituencies one reserved and another unreserved and also from those who are the members of their
networks, from at least two levels i.e. primary and secondary. Number of respondents have been based on total contestants and all those who are the members of their networks at two levels.

1.6. METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The data have been collected by observation, interviews, communication with the party workers during election time, case study method and comparative approach. To know about social network web approach and sociometry techniques have been used. Apart from this data, secondary sources have also been used e.g. District Census Statistical magazines etc.

1.7. METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

A qualitative analysis have been undertaken of facts collected through observation and case studies. Data collected with techniques of interview and personal information or personal records from respondents have been analyzed quantitatively through simple classification and tabulation. Web technique and sociometry technique have been looked into to indicate the extent of relationship between background factors and network and its impact on social structure.

AREA OF STUDY

For the present study two constituencies have been under taken one reserved i.e. Hastinapur and other unreserved i.e. Sardhana in Meerut district, western U.P.

Hastinapur is a block headquarter of Meerut district. Hastinapur constituency comes under Meerut Lok Sabha and also known as an important constituency of Meerut district. Hastinapur is situated at 35 Km., away from District Head Quarter in the Northeast direction. Hastinapur constituency spreads over 375 square Km. geographical area. It is 16 Km. East-West and 23 Km. from North-South. The population of this constituency is 5,25,430 (According to 2001
Sardhana is a Tehsil of Meerut District in western U.P. Sardhana constituency comes under Muzaffarnagar Lok Sabha Constituency. Sardhana is situated at 20 Km. away from Meerut district head quarter in North-West direction.

Sardhana constituency spreads over 388 square Km. Geographical area. It is 18 km. from East to West and 21 km. from North to South. It is surrounded by Khatauli constituency in the Northeast, Meerut Cantt. constituency in the South-East, Barnawa constituency in the South-East. Sardhana constituency covers two blocks, Sardhana and Daurala.

According to 2001 census, the population of this constituency is 5,80,675 and according to Election Commission (2002) the number of voters are 2,53,818. It consists of 107 villages. There are 258 polling booths.

In Sardhana constituency the total literacy rate is 49.6% in which 65.5% are male and 31.0% are female. Asia’s famous historical Church is also situated here. It is situated above 264.6 mtr. From sea level. In industrial holdings the work of power loom is at a large scale in Sardhana and it also has two Sugar factories, namely Sakouti and Daurala. In agriculture, sugar cane, rice, wheat, potato are the main crops. It has three railways stations, namely Sakouti, Khatauli and Pavalikhas. It is also has two police stations named, Sardhana and Daurala and eleven sub-police stations to maintain the law and order.