CHAPTER - II

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

2.00 Introduction:

Knowledge of relevant and up-to-date literature helps an investigator to formulate his research project on scientific foundations. Keeping in view this logical thinking, an effort has been made in the present study to make a critical and careful review of existing literature on opinion leadership, extension education with special reference to rural development and agricultural processes. In addition to the standard latest books and Doctoral Theses on leadership, extension education, rural development and community upliftment, the following journals on extension education and agricultural processes as well as Annual/Annuals of Agricultural/Extension Education Abstracts for last fifteen years were consulted. Some of the Journals worth recording are: Agricultural Research Abstract & Newsletter, Karnal; Agricultural Research Journal of Kerala; Annals of Agricultural Research, New Delhi; Himanchal Journal of Agricultural Research, Palampur; Indian Journal of Agricultural Research, Karnal; Intensive Agriculture, New Delhi; Journal of Extension Education, Coimbatore; Journal of Extension System, Bombay; Journal of Research, Ludhiana; Madras Agricultural Journal, Coimbatore; New Agriculturist, Allahabad; Research Bulletin, Parbhani; The Andhra
Agricultural Journal, Bapatla; The Mysore Journal of Agricultural Sciences, Mysore.

The review of literature conducted for the present study has been presented under the following heads.

1. Rural leadership with special reference to opinion leaders and their impacts, roles and functions in rural development in general and agricultural development in particular.

2. Agents of change in extension education and rural development:
   i. Extension education and change agents
   ii. Opinion leaders and extension education
   iii. Opinion leaders, farmers and other change agents involved in extension education and agricultural development.

3. Community development through rural development and extension education.

The study conducted by previous investigators on various aspects of rural leadership with special reference to opinion leaders and their impact on extension education and rural development and community advancement have been presented under.
2.10 Community and leadership studies:

2.11 Leadership: Functions:

Different authors have suggested innumerable definitions to their own convenience. The great variety of them suggests that there is little agreement as to the meaning of the concept. Various writers either by explicit statement or by implications have developed definitions to serve the following purposes (Stogdill, 1974):

a) to identify the object to be observed,

b) to identify a form of practice,

c) to satisfy a particular value orientation,

d) to avoid a particular value orientation or implication for practice, and lastly,

e) to provide a basis for theory development.

Stogdill (1974) in his handbook has presented an up-to-date comprehensive review of the same. He has grouped leadership definitions by different authors from the following viewpoints.

1) As a focus of group processes.

2) As a personality and its effect.

3) As the art of inducing compliance.

4) As the exercise of influence.
5) As a form of behaviour.
6) As a form of persuasion.
7) As a power relation.
8) As an instrument of goal achievement.
9) As an effect of interaction.
10) As a differentiated role, and
11) As the initiation of structure.

From whatever angle the leadership is viewed, one thing that is common is that leadership is the act of exercising special influence on the members of the group, who are technically called as followers, towards the achievement of the group goal. This concept is applicable to any type of leadership in any country and in time.

Since the present study is concerned with rural leadership, some definitions in the Indian context are given below:

In Ayyangar's opinion, "a leader must be one who has interests in common with his followers and who is head and shoulders above the others in ability, skill and tact" (Vidyarthi, 1987).

Singh (1973) states that "an individual may be considered as leader by virtue of the fact that local residents recognize an acknowledge him to be one. He has defined positional leader as any person holding official position during a specified period
and action leader as any individual whose activities make distinctive contributions to the task accomplishment or to the development or maintenance of structure in a community action process."

Deb and Agrawal (1974) have simply defined the leader as the individual who holds a leader's office.

Dahama and Bhatnagar (1980) in their book have given some definitions.

"The leader is the servant of the group. A leader is one who helps the members of the group, as an individual he accepts the responsibility for thinking through problems and working out solutions that need to be discovered". An individual is a leader in any social situation in which his ideas and actions influences the thoughts and behaviour of others.

Leader is a person who has been spontaneously considered, or chosen, as being influential in a specific situation. It is used to indicate a position in an organization of an individual who has been designated as leader by voluntary action of the group. Thus leadership is the phenomenon of influencing, guiding directing the actions and thoughts of the people in the intended direction.
2.12 Rural leadership in India:

There is always a considerable gulf between the urbanized elites and rural leadership of those countries, where a new type of leadership comes out. There is some need to understand more about the activities of the rural leaders and the rural leadership patterns. The change in the rural society also causes some changes in the structure of leadership on the traditional modernity continuum.

The rural leaders are the important conveyance of new ideas to the ignorant people of the village. In Indian villages, the leadership has three distinct types of roles in micro politics. They are the "arbitrator mediator role, the patron role and the broker role" (Dube, 1965). In the traditional community the leaders are not expected to play the role of communicator of new ideas, but to play the role of interpreters of new ideas. In a rural community, there is a close connection between the leader's influence on the followers and his exposure to different channels of communication. The nature of influence of the leaders on his followers depends upon his interests as well. With reference to the modernization traditional elite, Dube (1965) says that or In between the modernizing elite and the masses, there exists ...... the traditional rural elites, cautions and conservative; this element has a vested interest in the continuance of several aspects of tradition".
The community development programme gives rural leadership a dynamic form. It is performed by providing opportunities for their talents to satisfy the felt needs of the people. The introduction of Panchayat Raj provides a new framework for activities of the rural leadership. The varied scope of the activities of the Panchayati Raj has given an opportunity to the so far neglected people of the society to develop the position of leadership. The talent of the emerging leaders and their devotion to work for the development of the country have given them a place of supremacy in their group.

There are generally three techniques to identify the community leaders as suggested by Bonjean and Osian, viz. (1) the positional approach, (2) the reputational approach, and (3) the decisional approach which have been briefly discussed by Mehta (1972). The most commonly used sociometric technique makes the reputational approach. Several Indian authors have followed this technique. Some of them are: Dhillon (1955), Mathur (1967), Singh and Arya (1968), Mohan and Mohan (1969), Govinarajan (1970), Reddy and Sahay (1971), Dube and Trivedi (1972), Mehta (1972), Reddy and Muley (1972), Gaikwad et al. (1973), Reddy an Sahay (1973), Deb and Agrawal (1974), Gaikwad and Tripati (1974), Roy et al. (1974), Lokhande and Singh (1977).
Stogdill's (1974) review contains many studies on leadership by various authors. But there is no reference to the leadership studies conducted in India, not to speak of Indian rural leadership studies. However, many researchers (Srinivas, 1959, Rahudkar, 1960; Singh, 1964; Roy, 1965; Narang, 1966; Thorat, 1966; Chawdhari, 1967; Roy, 1967; Sen and Roy, 1967; Singh and Arya, 1968; Kaushal, 1970; Kivlin et al., 1971; Muthayya, 1971; Mehta, 1972; Gaikwad et al., 1973; Muthayya and Raju, 1973; Abraham, 1974; Deb and Agrawal, 1974; Bishop, 1976; Muthayya, 1976a; Muthayya, 1976b; Saran, 1978; Muthayya et al., 1979; and Muthayya and Rangacharyulu, 1980) J.B. Sinha (1988) have presented their research findings either in their books or in their papers published in various journals in the field of social psychology, sociology, political science and extension education. Sinha, J.B. (1988) in his book Indian on leadership highlighted the significance and effectiveness of benevolent leaders.

Pareek and Reddy (1966) have made an excellent review of the Indian studies on rural leadership. With the passage of time, the number of such studies has grown. A cursory glance at the reference books reveals the following facts.

A major attempt in the country of rural leadership came with the publication of the edited volume of Park and Tinker (1959)
which included a number of papers on the various aspects of leadership in rural India. Most of the papers on rural leadership provide us with case studies in specific villages. Beals (1959) suggests that the implication of factionalism for village-wide leadership is that there can be no village-wide leadership.

Srinivas (1959) and Dube (1961) have also added to the concepts and methods of study of the patterns of rural leadership. Srinivas regards the concept of dominant caste as crucial for the understanding of power relations in rural social life. But after a careful analysis, Dube finds the practical power is concentrated in a few individuals, rather than diffused in the caste.

Chandra (1959) makes some generalized statements about rural leadership in India, and emphasises the traditional pattern of the group leadership, instead of the emerging, individualistic, semi-official and artificial leadership.

TYPES

The types of rural leader as suggested by different Indian authors from some of the important studies are given below:

A comprehensive study by National Institute of Community Development during 1966, as part of the cross-national project, found the leaders to be polymorphic, though monomorphism played a relatively important role in the modern villages than in the
traditional ones (Sen, 1969). Muthayya (1971) studied covering 353 elected village leaders from 16 states of the Indian Union, and reported that 51.5% of village leaders were autocratic and 43.3% were democratic in their attitude, but they had faith in people. So he inferred that they may be characterised as benevolent autocrats.

Type of rural leaders:

Names of the authors and their classification of the types of leaders are arranged in the chronological order:

Dhillon (1955):

1. Primary leader
2. Secondary leader
3. Tertiary leader depending on the relative importance of the individual in the village affairs.

Beals (1959):

1. Formal leader
2. Traditional leader

Hitchock (1959):

1. Traditional leader, and
2. Non-traditional leader
Orenstein (1959):

1. Formal leader
2. Informal leader
3. Sectioned leader
4. Un-sanctioned leader.

Wood (1959):

1. Aristocrat leader
2. Professional leader
3. Religious leader
4. Oligarch bureaucrat
5. Family or faction autocrat.

Singh et al. (1965):

1. Traditional leader
2. Political leader
3. Opinion-maker leader
4. Decision-maker leader and
5. Caste leader.

Muley et al. (1966):

1. Traditional leader
2. Emerging leader.
Rao (1966):

1. Institutional leader
2. Special interest leader
3. Voluntary leader and
4. Professional leader

Reddy (1966):

1. Traditional leader
2. Caste leader
3. Functional leader
4. Political leader

Mathur (1967):

1. Prestige leader
2. Family friend leader

Sahay (1968):

1. Traditional leader
2. Emergent leader
3. Traditional-emergent leader

Uthusan (1970) and Muthayya (1971):

1. Democratic leader
Reddy and Mulay (1972):

1. Traditional leader
2. Caste leader
3. Political leader

Reddy and Sahay (1973):

1. Pragmatic leader
2. Farm leader.

Singh and Misra (1973):

1. Traditional leader
2. Emerging leader

Yadava et al. (1973):

1. Agricultural leader
2. Traditional leader
3. Political leader
4. Opinion-making leader
5. Decision-making leader
Lal (1980)

1. Political leaders
2. Social leaders
3. Intellectuals

Setty (1982)

1. Traditional hereditary leaders
2. Sectional leaders
3. Functional leaders
4. Professional leaders
5. Modern Institutional leaders

Reddy (1987) states that at the village level, the Gonds have "Patla" or "Patel". The Patel was the head of the village presiding over the village panchayat consisting of a few village elders. The Gond Mokasas, Jagirdars, Rajas and Patlas were their traditional elites and leaders of Gond society.

Lokhande and Singh (1977) also found all the types as mentioned above excepting Agricultural leader.

The multiple topologies suggested by more than one author (as mentioned above) may be summarized under the following heads.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Topologies</th>
<th>Authors</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monomorphic-Polymorphic leader</td>
<td>Singh and Jadava (1972), Singh and Jadava (1973).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political leader</td>
<td>Singh et al. (1965), Reddy (1966), Reddy and Mulay (1972), Yadava et al. (1973), Lokhande et al. (1977).</td>
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Traditional leaders have been suggested by the highest number of authors (8), followed by caste leader and political leader (5), factional leader (4), monomorphic-polymorphic and professional leader (2).

Characteristics:

Various characteristics of the Indian rural leaders have been presented from different studies by social scientists. A brief summary of the same is being presented below in chronological order.
Barnabas (1958), Rahudkar (1960), Singh (1964), Narang (1966), and Thorat (1966), among others have indicated that leaders have comparatively higher social status, and more land; they are more educated.

In a study on institutional leaders, Rahudkar (1960) has reported that they are of 21 to 30 years of age, education, up to matriculation, and have the ability to speak the villager's language. But in his another study, the effective institutional leaders are found to belong to 37 to 40 years of age, have high school education, are married, have rural background and aptitude for social work.

Based on his study, Roy (1965) has concluded that certain socio-economic characteristics like high income, more education, higher level of contact with extension agencies, relatively secular oriented ness are more important in the village leadership pattern than caste, though the latter may be important in villages with traditional social structure.

Chawdhari (1967) has suggested that the leaders are non-authoritarian; they could not be put into black and white compartments as to whether they are conservative or not; they have neither strong values for scienticism, nor are they fatalists.
Roy's (1967) study points out that the new leader in village of India is a person of high economic status, some education, good contacts with extension agencies, a large family and having a somewhat rational perspective on life.

Sen and Roy (1967) have confined there findings and have added that leaders in comparison with others are also more innovative and cosmopolite have more contact with extension agents, have made more use of mass-media and are more secularly oriented.

Singh and Arya (1968) found that the leaders are different in their value system. Authoritarianism still has a part in Leaders' thinking and behaviour, which obstructs the development of thought in village life. They are more task oriented and less interpersonal relation-oriented.

Kaushal (1970) reveals that leadership structure has undergone a great change in the post-independence period. Leaders of backward caste have prominently emerged shaking the strong hold of the caste oriented leadership.

Mishra et al. (1970) while analysing the characteristics of lay leaders reported that socio-economic factors such as caste, age education, farm size and group orientation had definite influence on leadership development.
Kivlin et al. (1971) have found that the average leaders are less literate, of higher caste belonging to the age of 42 years and of educational level of ninth grade and above.

In the different studies of Muthayya (1971), Bishop (1976) and Muthayya and Rangacharyulu (1980), conclusion has been drawn that the leaders have faith in people. Though the leaders are autocratic in their attitude (Muthayya, 1971), they have positive opinion on democracy (Muthayya and Rangacharyulu, 1980).

Mehta's (1972) study reveals that the village leaders, by and large, are from the upper age group (40 years and above), and higher caste group with higher income, have higher land holding and higher educational background.

Dubey and Dwivedi (1972) reported that leadership in the villages was of functional type. He identified four types of leaders in a village of U.P. state as Agricultural Opinion leadership, opinion leadership in the field of animal husbandry and veterinary, Political opinion leadership and Religious opinion leadership. They concluded that the opinion leadership was monomorphic in nature i.e., one leader for one subject matter only as the Merton found that people go to different opinion leaders for different services.
According to Gaikwad et al. (1973) leaders in general belong to the middle and high-age groups and have primary school education; they own large farms.

Muthayya and Gnanakannan (1973) have found that the institutional leaders are less dominant, more emotionally stable, more empathetic, high in need-achievement, average in ego-ideal, extrovert, less-pessimistic, more self-confident, more dogmatic and more socially intelligent.

Another study by Muthayya and Raju (1973) shows that the elected village leaders, to a greater extent, are relatively of younger age group (31 to 40 years), educated, cultivators, belong to higher caste and have higher landholding as well as relatively higher income.

Abraham (1974) has observed that the leaders have more formal education, large farms, more farm and home-innovativeness, higher social status, more mass-media exposure, higher empathy, more political knowledge and low achievement motivation.

Deb and Agrawal (1974) have also suggested some characteristics of the leader; e.g. higher level of farm-mechanisation, higher socio-economic status, higher educational level, farming and agricultural labour as occupation, prestige caste, 45-years of age.
Muthayya (1976a) has found that elected panchayat leaders generally have higher income and land holding, belong to higher caste and also occupy positions of authority in the traditional village organizations. He suggests that such leaders have some ascribed status in the village because of their personal resources.

Again in his another study Muthayya (1976b) shows that leaders of the districts under the Intensive Agricultural District Programme consider themselves to be politically more efficacious than those from the districts under the non-Intensive Agricultural District Programme (with few exceptions). The landless agricultural labour feel to be politically less-efficacious than those who belong to different levels of holding.

Saran (1978) has revealed that the rural leaders are of the age group of 30-39 years; majority of them come from an intermediate caste, have middle school education, are cultivator, belong to the joint family, read newspaper daily and listen to radio regularly.

In another study, Muthayya et al. (1979) have observed that majority of the elected leaders belong to the age group of 30-49 years, to nuclear family; they are married and have more than seven members in the family; most of them are
cultivator, having land holding between 1 and 2.02 hectares. The leaders are low in ego-ideal, less-pessimistic, less in emotional stability, less in need-achievement, less in self-confidence and more dominant.

Atre (1980) reports: "The Mukhia, the Pujari, the Perma, the Bhumia are among the tribal leaders who are highly respected by the tribal villagers. This sort of leadership is mostly non-official and of an informal nature. The leaders are mostly self-made and received training in leadership by way of working in various social religious institutions". He further adds that there was no fixed model of leadership amongst the tribals of Chandrapur district of Maharashtra and pointed out that social and religious activities were the base from which the general leaders switch over to political field.

Mahipal and Rai (1980) illustrated on the basis of their study that the role performance of cooperative society leaders was positively and significantly correlated with their socio-economic status, attitude, interest and cooperation. It implied that higher the socio-economic status of the leaders, more was their favourable attitude towards the villagers, more was the interest of the leaders in the cooperative society activities resulting in more cooperation among the leaders, the better was their role performance. These tally with the findings of Supa (1966).
Gangrade (1985) pointed out that village leadership was largely determined by considerations of caste, kinship and economic status. He enumerated following characteristics of local leadership:

i) Age: In rural India the seniority of age is respected.
ii) Availability of time to consolidate power.
iii) Reputation of family and power.

Randhava et al. (1987) while writing about progressive farmers, expected them to act as legitimisers/opinion leaders. They reported the following characteristics of progressive farmers to act as opinion leaders.

a) Personality characteristics:

He has more favourable attitude towards - (i) change, (ii) risk taking, (iii) education and (iv) science and technology. He has (v) higher level of achievement motivation, (vi) higher aspiration, (vii) greater intelligence, (viii) greater empathy, (ix) greater rationality, (x) less fatalistic and (xi) less dogmatic.

b) Communication behaviour characteristics:

He has (i) more number of contacts with extension personnel, (ii) greater exposure to mass media communication channel, (iii) higher social participation, (iv) higher knowledge of
innovations, (v) higher exposure to interpersonal communication channels. He is (vi) highly integrated with the social system, (vii) more cosmopolite, (viii) likely to belong to well integrated social system with modern norms. (ix) He seeks information about innovations.

c) Socio-economic characteristics:

He has (i) relatively higher education, (ii) higher social status, (iii) greater upward social mobility, (iv) relatively larger operational size of land holding, (v) more specialised farming and (vi) economic orientation.

These studies on characteristics of rural leaders in India deal with many socio-political and psychological variables. It reveals that of late researchers in the field of rural leadership have become interested in those variables. Development-oriented attitudinal variables were included in the studies of Sinha (1966) and Mallick (1967-70). All the three types of variables viz., socio-political, psychological and development-oriented attitudinal, were considered by Mallik (1967-70).

2.13 Opinion leaders

Opinion leaders play an important role in initiating, directing and sustaining developmental social change in
rural modernization. Their beliefs, values, self-commitment etc. directly or indirectly affect their decision-making behaviour. Sofranko A.J. (1984) observed that "prevailing values and beliefs reflect the ways in which people have been taught to behave and view the world. They are either reinforced or modified in relation to the opportunities people have and their contact with individuals holding different values". The opinion leaders in general have comparatively more contact with the outside world and they have more experience which affects their values and beliefs and ultimately their behaviour. Most of the extension workers are aware that in every village there are individuals whose opinions are taken seriously than others, whose cooperation is essential if anything is to be accomplished, and who have a major role in making decisions and mobilizing people. These individuals are powerful and influential, and to ignore this aspect of village life is to increase the likelihood of failure in any effort for change. Knowing how power, influence, and leadership are exerted in a community is part of "understanding a local culture". According to Niehoff (1969), leadership is the most important feature of local culture.

Opinion leader is an agent of change. He is able to influence informally other individuals' attitudes and/or behaviour in a desired way with relative frequency. He/She is a type of informal leader. Opinion leadership is earned and
maintained by the individual's technical competence, sociability and conformity to the norms of social system. When such leaders are compared to their followers, several characteristics emerge; Opinion leaders are more exposed to all forms of external communication; more cosmopolite, of a higher social status; and more innovative. Opinion leaders are widely thought to play a vital role in the spreading of new ideas, values and beliefs.

Specifying the functions of opinion leaders, Damar Prakash (1994) points out that developing leadership helps in developing business of an organisation demanding a lot of effort, planning and tact. Constant training and educational programmes are, considered as the basic tools through which the leadership is generally sought to be developed and made effective.

A study conducted by Pimpirkar, Sangle and Wangikar (1991) in the Parbhni district of Maharashtra on role of village leaders in rural development revealed that the majority of the village leaders (85.83 per cent) helped the farmers in obtaining seeds and fertilizers on loan, while about 81.66 per cent of them also helped farmers from other villages to obtain loans, 17.50 and 6.66 per cent village leaders were active in executing the employment guarantee scheme in their own and in the other villages respectively. The village leaders were
found taking least initiative in the programmes, namely creating transport and drinking water facilities.

Under Training and Visit System, Contact farmers perform the role of communicators in the transfer of modern farm innovations for agricultural development. Pathak S. and Sasmal (1990) while studying the communication fidelity of contact and non-contact farmers in T & V system found that the contact farmers had higher communication, sensitivity, knowledge, attitude score, adoption intensity and communication fidelity than non-contact farmers with respect to the improved practices of jute cultivation. Reddy S.V. and B.N. Sahay (1971) while studying pattern of farm leaders in a progressive and a non-progressive village found that the majority of the key leaders in both the villages belonged to agro-social category and exhibited more interpersonal communication than the ordinary leaders.

Kearl B.E. (1965) visualizes that "Leaders are the catalysts for group action, they voice for group expression" the tools through which the group considers and carries out its decisions. Almost everyone has potential for some leadership". As mentioned by Dasgupta S. (1966), the importance of agricultural leaders in influencing average farmers in adoption of recommended farm practices has been widely emphasised. He found a significant difference between the agricultural
leaders and average farmers in adoption behaviour and in other socio-economic characteristics. Roy N.K., Singh Ratan, R.P. and Singh R.R. (1984) examined the adoption behaviour of leaders and their followers with respect to their innovativeness and extent of adoption of high-yielding varieties of maize and wheat. They found that the leaders were more innovative than their followers.

Mahipal and G.C. Rai (1978) studied the Role Performance of the leaders of efficient and non-efficient multipurpose Cooperative societies in Najafgarh block of Delhi and observed a significant difference between the mean role performance scores of the two groups.

Sinha N.K. and Bimal B.K. (1978) studied farm leadership in relationship to age in selected north Bihar Village and found that though farming was in the hands of older people, farm leadership was not in their hands. Younger were knowing more while older generation were relatively characterized by rigidity. Dubey and Dwivedi (1972) while studying the type of opinion leadership observed that the characteristics of leaders in the field of agriculture is quite different from others. In majority of the cases, leaders having better education, are middle aged, from higher caste, cosmopolite, than non-leaders and are non-secular. At the same time, they had aspirations for education and income.
Research studies conducted by David, John and Herbert (1986) have consistently shown that leadership roles and power structures within a group tend to change as the membership within a group change, as the activities or functions surround the group. These findings tend to dispute the popular notion that certain individuals are inevitable destined to be leaders of men under any circumstances. Hersey and Blanchared (19) suggested that leadership can be explained in the form of the question: \( L = f(L, f, s) \). That is, leadership is a function of the leader, the follower and other situational variables.

According to Supe (1983) the best way to find out the potential new leaders is by asking a number of villagers. A problem may be posed to the villagers. Then they may be asked the names of the persons who would be effective in solving the problem by organizing them and by carrying out the necessary steps in solving that problem. If it is an important job the villagers will concentrate one naming one or two people. It is said that there are one tenth leaders and nine tenths followers.
2.14 Opinion leaders and community advancement:

Leadership within the power structure of every society largely observes integrative operation among individuals with a view to promoting, stimulating, guiding or otherwise influencing members to action. Such activity has been called leadership, and individuals have been referred to as leader, power holders, men of power, power centres and power elite. Chitambar J.B. (1973) identified four basic elements in the leadership relationship: (a) The leader, (b) The followers, (c) The situation, and (d) The task.

Rajni Kothari (1981) in "Caste in Indian Politics" studied how far caste is influencing the rural policy. He finds that caste is becoming more and more strengthened because these castes are forming caste association which work for the caste-fellows.

Sofranko (1984) mentioned regarding three methods of determining as to who is powerful and influential. The first, the reputational method, is based on asking people in a community to identify the influential person or persons. People might be asked who has high prestige or respect, whose opinion or word is highly regarded, or whose approval is essential for a particular activity in the community. The second method, called the positional approach, equates position or title with influence, and assumes that people in hereditary, appointed
or elected positions are influential. It is likely that they have some influence, but it is often limited. Finally, the decision method establishes power and influence by examining who was instrumental in getting water, a branch post office or clinic into a village? They are expected to provide the extension workers with enough information to establish their leadership firmly.

Barry (1971) observed that it is important for extension workers to identify the influential leaders in a particular cultural setting and enlist their support or participation. According to him the enlistment and support of such locally influential persons is extremely in the transfer of technology at the village level.

A study by Niehoff (1969) of planned change efforts in developing nations point out some of the types of leaders and influential people that have to be recognised and acknowledged. He mentioned regarding administrative or formal political leaders, educators, religious leaders, civil leaders, non-institutional leaders etc.

Randhawa et al. (1987) expected the following two broad roles of progressive farmers to act as opinion leaders:
a) Channel of communication:

The progressive farmer is to serve as a channel of communication to disseminate or to diffuse farm information/knowledge in farming community.

b) Opinion makers:

Gabriel Tarde in the "Laws of Imitation" says "every herd of wild cattle has its leaders, its influential heads" (Randhava, et.al., 1987).

2.2 Generalization from the Review of relevant literature

A critical review of relevant literature presented above enables the investigator to generalise the status of current literature on opinion leaders and their roles, so far as dissemination of knowledge, experience and information for the advancement of agricultural processes and rural development in the target villages are concerned. It is evident that huge literature is available on various aspects of rural development and agricultural process in India; however very scanty, insignificant and scattered literature is available on opinion leaders and their roles on the total development of rural India.

India lives in villages which observe enormous cultural diversity which has a deeper reflection on their occupational forces and agricultural practices. The rigid and regimented
belief system that the illiterate rural folk possesses hardly undergo material change so as to cope up and mobilize with the emerging changes in agricultural processes and rural upliftment as a consequence of modernization and technological advancement in agriculture. The change in attitude and perception, motivation and learning abilities require great deal of persuasion. To bring about a desirable change in the attitude and perception, motivation and behaviour of the low motivated and fewer need-oriented farmers with their lower need satisfaction level challenges the existing drive for adoption of modern technology, and new varieties of agricultural practices and process as well as incorporation of norms and values of modern social order into their social system and religious observance. In all these activities which need to be adopted and incorporated for the total upliftment and transformation of rural social system and their occupational dynamics in agricultural process, the role of opinion leaders can not be under-estimated, however, with the emergence of Panchayati Raj in M.P. as a constitutional provision the role of opinion leaders have been delegated to the elected/nominated members i.e. Panch and Sarpanch. Though it appears so that elected members of the Panchayati Raj may be substituted in place of the opinion leaders, but in reality it hardly happens so, as the opinion leaders with their power of domination, expertization, initiation and high order interpersonal attraction may retain and undertake the village
leadership with them in various matters of agricultural advancement, community development and rural upliftment. As such, it is the potentiality that makes an individual to undertake and discharge the leadership responsibilities in any socio-political setting, and in all probability, even in the changed situation of Panchayati Raj being in operation in villages, the roles and significance of opinion leaders can not be minimised.

In view of all these emerging conditions in rural India, the relevance and significance of opinion leaders as a change agent can not be ignored. It is, therefore, essentially needed that serious systematic researches on opinion leaders in various socio-cultural settings be undertaken and their relevance in socio-economic transformation in various socio-cultural settings as change agents be tested. Such researches on O.Ls. need immediate attention of the researches in social sciences and education. As such, the opinion leaders stand as a link between 'the world of knowledge' and 'the farming world'. Farmers need enrichment of their learning experiences so far as modern advancement in agricultural technology and adoption possesses are concerned and opinion leaders stand by their side as immediate Guide to help them. Rural and agricultural advancement in reality, therefore, depend upon the extent to which the opinion leaders participate in the rural development programmes aimed at wellbeing of the rural community. Well formulated systematic researches on various aspects of opinion leaders in relation with
rural development, agricultural technology, community wellbeing and such other relevant topics, therefore, demand greater attention of the researchers, because of their great social significance and national relevance in the advancement of rural India. And, the present study is the consequence of such theoretical framework and conceptual thinking.

The next chapter deals with 'Planning and Purpose'.