The Panchayati Raj System was in existence for centuries in our country. It was Gandhiji, who for the first time in 20th century wished to revived the PRIs with democratic basis of their own and invest them with adequate powers so that the villagers could have a real sense of “Swaraj”. PRIs, which are considered as the roots of democracy, are expected to set certain main objectives like decentralization, development, social change and institutional leadership.\(^1\) Leadership is a universal phenomenon, because man is a social being and participates in groups. He needs constant guidance and direction, and these are provided by the leaders. In a broad perspective, leader may be said to be a person who leads the people from ignorance to awakening and from backwardness to development. Being a psycho-social phenomenon, the problem of leadership is always there, whether they are primitive people living in the caves, or post-industrial societies of west. There is a wild cry for more and better leaders.\(^2\)

\(\checkmark\) Leadership is indeed an important concept in all studies in organization. The idea of power is linked up with the idea of leadership. When we choose a leader we invest him with power. We listen to him and even carry out his orders because we, in our wisdom have made him our leader. So when we listen to our leader we really listen to ourselves since we have created our leader.\(^3\)

Leadership is an interesting social phenomenon, which challenges the students of sociology, political science and psychology at every turn. Due to growing pluralist nature of the society and emergence of complex...
social organizations, leadership phenomenon has acquired greater importance. The concept of leadership is very important in every walk of social life. It is not possible to find any field of human activity where the impact of leader is not present or felt. Whether it is an area of politics, or it is the field of medicine or machine world dominated by workers or engineers or any field of human conduct and activity, leaders are always there. They are the 'eye and ear' of life, a leader is nowhere so much important as in the domain of rural politics. True Leadership exists only when persons follow an individual from free choice and upon rational grounds rather than by blind hysteria.

The importance of leader in the field of politics is so great that for an ordinary person the term leader generally denotes a political entity. The misconception about leadership, always prevailing in the domain of political activity, only shows how important a leader is in the realm of political set-up and what amount of significance he enjoy in the affairs concerning the relation between the state and the people. In the context of rural situation, particularly in backward societies, the problem of leadership has acquired more importance. With the growing complexity of civilization varied groups and social organizations are coming up in rural areas. The traditional leadership is also undergoing a change and new patterns of leadership are emerging on the scene. In this context, the introduction of community projects, land reforms, decentralized local administration and adult franchise which aim at the reconstruction of rural society have brought forth the importance of leadership. Only through the local leader, the people's participation and initiative can be secured. The aim of panchayati raj is not only to secure peoples'
participation in development programmes but also to bring democracy to the villages where people will be entrusted with the administration of village affairs. The idea that leaders are born and are not made is slowly disappearing in Indian politics. For centuries leadership was in the nature of an inheritance, a monopoly of the aristocracy. The multiplication of power positions due to the growing activities of democratic state, panchayati raj and development planning created a new class of leaders everywhere. The wide scope of the activities, the panchayati raj has given an opportunity to the so far neglected people of society to rise to the positions of leadership. The skill of the leaders and their devotion to work have given them a place of supremacy in their group. The complex nature of the functions and responsibilities of panchayati raj has made training and education necessary for the emerging leaders. From time immemorial, leadership has been the monopoly of the male sex in the rural areas of India. The tradition of the Indian rural society is that man is superior to woman. The leadership in the village seemed to be male dominated. After the introduction of new Panchayati Raj, leadership among women is becoming more common in the rural areas of India.

The term 'rural Leadership' is difficult to define. The rural leaders are those who are elected from rural areas to political positions in the panchayati raj system which include village level, block level and district level. These three levels of leadership are considered to be the rural leadership since the leaders are said to have constant interaction, face to face contact with the rural masses. Leaders have a difficult task in the villages. He has to see that villagers are motivated to work for their own betterment and what that of community to attain the material and higher
goals of the individuals and fellowmen. The effective functioning of PRIs depends mainly on the quality of leadership available at the grass roots level. Moreover, it is widely believed that leadership plays a significant role in promoting political development and democratic growth.

In PRIs a dynamic and committed leadership is required to bring socio-economic change. In this context, different researchers have propounded different theories of leadership that there must be one best way to lead the subordinates. M. Francis Abraham gave Trait Theory of leadership in which the attention is focussed upon leaders. A distinction between the leader and the followers is made on the basis of their physical, intellectual and personality composition. Therefore, the leaders are accordingly identified as having different characteristics from those of the general public. The theory focussed on the personal traits of leaders and attempted to identify a set of individual traits.

**Functional** Theory of leadership describes leadership in terms of functions which a leader performs for his group. Leaders emerge as a consequence of the needs of a group and of the conditions under which the group is to function for its existence.

**Situational** Theory of leadership explains leaders as a function of the situations. The situational theory emphasizes that there is no one best style of leadership universally applicable in all situations. Leadership process is a function of the leaders, the followers and the situation. The main situation variables are the types of the organization, the nature of the task and the cultural environment.
The **Positional** theory of leadership explains that leaders are those persons who hold some specific position in an institution. So, the persons who possess institutional position may be considered as leaders.

**Reputational** theory of leadership also considers that leaders who as most popular beings in the society. So reputation is considered as determining factor for leadership.\(^1^\)

According to Fiedler’s **Contingency** model, leadership effectiveness is the result of an interaction between the style of the leader and features of the environment in which the leader is operating. Fiedler developed an instrument, which he called the least preferred coworker (LPC) questionnaire that purports to measure whether a person is task or relationship oriented.\(^1^\) The leadership behaviour is a function of dynamic inter-relationship of the expectations of the subordinates, personality characteristics of the superior and the demands of the situation. N.R. Inamdar describes that the successful working of village panchayats depend upon the availability of resourceful, imaginative and active panchayat leadership.\(^1^\) Commenting on the role of leadership, Iltija Khan states, “Leadership is thus sine qua non of success in all human activities but in a democratic system, particularly at the lower levels, it assumes greater significance and wider proportions.\(^1^\)

**Types of Leadership**

Leadership may be broadly defined as the relation between individual and a group build around some common interest and behaving in a manner directed or determined by him, where a group follows an individual from free choice and not under command or coercion. Leadership admits differentiation into two types, which may be...
appropriately designated as representative or symbolic and dynamic or
creative leadership.20 "The act of Leading" is the simplest unit of analysis
in leadership. It has four basic elements:

a. the leader-who performs act of leading;
b. the follower – leaders and followers are collaborators. There can
be no leading without following, and of course, no following
without leading;
c. the situation – within which the relationship occurs; and
d. the task – with which the interacting individuals are confronted.

Historically, the concept of leadership was derived from a religious
sectarian setting or in groups of primary relationships, where a group is
task oriented, leadership integrates the members so that individuals need
and group performance can be enhanced.21 Leadership is a quality which
in theory signifies the ability of a person or a group of persons to
persuade others to act by inspiring them and making them believe that a
proposed course of action is the correct one.22

Leadership can be understood as a pattern behaviour, as a personal
quality and as a political value. The division of society into leaders and
followers is rooted in a pre-democratic culture of defence and respect in
which leaders 'knew best' and the public needed to be led, mobilized or
guided. Supposed virtues of leadership are the following:

i. It mobilises and inspires people who would otherwise be inert
   and directionless;

ii. It promotes unity and encourages members of a group to pull in
   the same direction;
iii. It strengthens organizations by establishing a hierarchy of responsibilities and roles.

The definition of leaders and leadership has been given by different eminent social scientists. Ordway Tead explains that leadership is the activity of influencing people to cooperate towards some goal and which they come to find desirable. Bernard gives a similar emphasis that any person who is more than ordinarily efficient in carrying psychological attitude to others and is thus effective in coordinating collective responses may be called a leader. E.S. Bogardus explains that a leader is a person who exerts special influence over a number of people.

Gibb lists five different definitions of a leader:

1. an individual in a given office;
2. the central person of a group;
3. the person considered most influential by the members of a group;
4. the person who does most to advance the group towards its goals; and
5. the person who is most effective in creating a "structure" or consistency in the interaction of the group.

Webster defines a leader variously as a guide, a conductor, a chief, a commander, as the head of a party or sect and as one who precedes and is followed by others in conduct, opinion and undertaking. Pigors describes, leadership as a process of mutual stimulation which, by the successful interplay of relevant individual differences, controls human energy in the pursuit of a common cause. According to Titus, "Leadership is the act of getting what one wants and making people like
Lasswell devoted a considerable attention to the study of political elites which are closely associated with the exercise of power. In the Marxist tradition the term political leadership is understood as the ability to work among the masses to cooperate with political allies, to select the best methods to combat and to identify the overriding political problems.

The study of leadership has gained a significant importance and established itself as a part of political science in the late 19th and largely 20th century as result of the contribution of two Italian sociologists pareto and Mosea. Others like Bottomore, C.W. Mills and Lasswell, also made their contribution with slight difference in this regard.

Traditional Leadership is based upon the belief that some people are born leaders. Traditional leaders belong to those families which have displayed leadership for generations. Modern leadership is an emerging type of leadership which was less effective in the part because of the dominance of the traditional leader. It is based on merit and personal achievement. They are largely differentiated and specialized in their work and efficiency, effectiveness in performance. Charismatic leadership is another type of leadership. The leader gains dictatorial power during periods of widespread social distress. It is a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of his being set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman or at least, specifically exceptional power and qualities. Neelam Verma described a brief outline of different styles of leadership:

1. Authoritarian Style,
2. Participative Style,
3. Task Oriented Style,
4. Nurturant Style and
5. Bureaucratic Style

According to S.K. Sharma, there is a change in the leadership structure in India in post-independence era:

1. Rural based political elites have been gaining increased influence.
2. Persons belonging to the middle classes of the society have got greater significance.
3. Greater articulation of regional and interest group oriented goals is being made.
4. Slight breakdown has been witnessed in the exclusiveness of upper-castes to the elite positions.^^

With the introduction of PRIs rural leadership has become an important subject of study. The very success of PRIs depends largely on the quality of leadership available at grass roots level. Political development and democratic growth depend on the local leadership and its functioning in PRIs.40 The present study mainly deals with the leadership of all the three-tier of panchayati raj. A person who is elected to any office in the panchayati raj bodies (ZP, PSs & GPs) is regarded as a rural leader.

**Determinants of Rural Leadership**

The study of rural leadership is of great significance in the present time. Panchayati Raj politics has come to be identified with village politics and consequently with rural power structure. The study of village leadership will be incomplete if the background of elected representatives
is not taken into consideration. In the present chapter an attempt has been made to know the social, economic, cultural and political milieu of the rural leadership and their attitudes towards various problems of PRIs. To determine the socio-economic status of the leadership, age, male-female ratio, caste, religion, income, occupation, educational qualification, party affiliation, etc. have been taken into account to find out whether these factors have any significant bearing in determining the pattern of leadership? Here, separate analysis of leadership in all (three) levels is being attempted.

**Age**

It is one of the most important factors that determine rural leadership. It was believed that the aged people dominate the PRIs, in a traditional society like ours. Respect for age in our society is the projection of behaviour in our patriarchal family system, where youngers are supposed to obey their leaders, who enjoy unquestionable authority of dictation. Now the myth of 'wisdom of the elders' in rural areas have been exploded with the new panchayati raj act. With the passage of 73rd Constitutional Amendment and the lowering of voting age has brought some changes in the leadership pattern. Now the younger strata of population is also taking keen interest in the political process particularly in the grass roots institutions. The age factor gives us an idea of the kind of age groups that find place in the PRIs. This factor is also significant in terms of experience and maturity of judgment. If members are young, it shows that they had no previous experience of the old phase of politics. Young members are expected to be imbued with new values and new ideas and the old members are believed to be more conservative. This may
not be always be true as some time young leaders are more conservative than old leaders. New problems of society demand new young leaders, because young people could be more rational, revolutionary and enthusiastic than the old people. In the present study an effort has been made to analyze the age factor in the PRIs leadership.

Table 4.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>18 to 25 Years</th>
<th>26 to 35 Years</th>
<th>36 to 50 Years</th>
<th>51 to 60 Years</th>
<th>Above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZP</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>41.67</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>44.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSs</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>42.86</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>34.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPs</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.22</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>46.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 Corroborates the age wise trends in the panchayati raj leadership. 314 respondents were interviewed, out of which 28 respondents were from the age group of 18 to 25 years, which constitute 8.92 per cent of the total sample. While 141 respondents were from the age group of 26 to 35 years, which constitute 44.90 per cent of the total sample. There were 108 respondents who were from the age group of 36 to 50 years, which constitute 34.40 per cent of the sample. Similarly from the age group of 51 to 60 years the number of respondents were 23 which constitute 7.32 per cent of the sample. While there were only 14 respondents, which constitute 4.46 per cent of the total sample were above 60 years of age. Out of total 314 respondents, 36 were interviewed from ZP in which no respondent were from the age group of 18 to 25.
years. There were 15 respondents who were from the age group of 26 to 35 years which constitute 41.67 per cent. Similarly there were 16 respondents who were from the age group of 36 to 50 years which constitute 44.44 per cent of the total sample. While there were 2 and 3 respondents who were from the age group of 51 to 60 and above 60 years. The percentage of such respondents were 5.56 and 8.33 respectively. In three panchayat samitis, total 84 elected members were interviewed, out of which 14 respondents were from the age group of 18 to 25 years, which constitute 16.67 per cent. 36 respondents were from the age group of 26 to 35 years. The percentage of such respondents was 42.86. There were 29 respondents from the age group of 36 to 50 years, which constitute 34.52 per cent. While there were 3 and 2 respondents from the age group of 51 to 60 and above 60 years, both constitute 3.57 and 2.38 per cent respectively. At the gram panchayat level total 194 rural leaders were interviewed out of which 14 respondents were from the age group of 18 to 25 years, which constitute 7.22 per cent of the sample, whereas 90 respondents fall in the age group of 26 to 35 years, which constitute 46.39 per cent of the sample. Similarly there were 63 respondents who were between the age group of 36 to 50 years, which constitute 32.47 per cent of the total sample. 18 respondents fall in the age group of 51 to 60 years which constitute 9.28 per cent of the sample, whereas there were only 9 respondents which constitute 4.64 per cent of the total above 60 years of age.

The data available for analysis is the outcome of responses of 314 members of PRIs. From the table 4.1, it is clear that the leadership of PRIs mainly belongs to the relatively younger strata. The earlier stronghold of
elder leaders in the PRIs has been eroded to a greater extent. It appears that the participation and involvement of young leaders have increased to a greater extent due to education and awareness at all the levels. In all the (three) level majority leaders belongs to age group of 26 to 35 years, who are considered to be young. This tendency was noticed in the PRIs election of 2000.

**Sex**

Ever since the advent of women's suffrage, women activists are concerned with increasing their participation in political life. Women all over the world now vote in near equal proportion to men, but nowhere do they serve in equal numbers in political life. Politics still is said to be a domain of male sex. Despite their vast numerical strength, women occupy a marginalized position in Indian society because of several socio-economic constraints. According to the document on women's development (1985), women's role in political process has virtually remained unchanged, despite the rapid growth of their informal political activities. Political participation of women has been limited due to various traditional factors such as caste, religion, feudal attitudes and family set-up. As a result women have been left on the periphery of political life. The patterns of traditional leadership in the grass roots institutions have changed considerably. Earlier the PRIs were the monopoly of male members. Since the very concept of panchayati raj was based upon the panch parmeshwar only the aged male people were at the helms of affairs. Before 73rd constitutional amendment women joined PRIs in many states only as co-opted members. In rural areas when a women enter into politics, she is taken as exception. After the enactment of 73rd
constitutional amendment the provision of 33 per cent reservation for women was made in the three tiers of PRIs. Himachal Pradesh also followed the amendment.

**Table 4.2**

Classification of the Respondents on the Basis of Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZP</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSs</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPs</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear from the table 4.2 that in all 314 respondents were interviewed, out of which the share of male respondents was 190, which constitute 60.51 per cent of the total sample. The share of the women respondents was 124, which constitute 39.49 per cent of the total sample. As far as Zila Parishad was concerned 36 respondents were interviewed, out of which 20 respondents were male whereas 16 respondents were female, and hence constituted 55.56 and 44.44 per cent of the total sample respectively. In panchayat samitis, out of 84 respondents there were 52 male respondents which constitute 61.90 per cent of the total. While the women respondents were 32, forming 38.10 per cent of total elected representatives of PSs. Similarly in eighteen gram panchayats, out of 194 respondents there were 118 male respondents, which constitute 68.82 per cent, while the share of female respondents were 76, which constituted 39.18 per cent of the total.
The analysis reveals that at all three levels representation of women was higher than the constitutional requirement of 33 per cent reservation for women in the PRIs. The share of women of ZP level was more in comparison to GPs and PSs. The facts show that the women have got representation beyond their due share in the elections of PRIs held in December 2000.

Caste

The term ‘caste’ has been widely used to describe ranked groups with in rigid system of social stratification and especially those which constitute the society of Hindu India. The caste system of India is unique in the religious rituals which explains it, in its complexity, and in the degree to which the constituent groups are cohesive and self-regulating. The earliest written mention of division of Indian society reflects the distinction between the autochthonous dasa and the immigrant Aryan population. Later text specify a three fold and then four fold division of society into Brahmana (Priestly), Kshatriya (Warrior), Vaishya (Merchant) and Shudra (Servant). The Varana formed a hierarchy marked by differing material and spiritual privileges.44

Conventionally caste had at least two distinct meanings, Varna and Jati. While it is true that most Indians recognized both meanings, they now think of it more as jati than varna.46 Caste is undoubtedly an all India phenomenon in the sense that there are everywhere hereditary, endogamous groups which form a hierarchy, and each of these groups has a traditional association with one or two occupations.46 The manner in which the British transferred political power to the Indians enabled caste to assume political functions. But in independent India, the
provision of constitutional safeguards to SCs & STs has given a new lease of life to caste.47

Caste came to be used in the electoral process from the first general election and indeed it had entered the political arena even before. By and large, the intelligentsia were troubled by “Casteism” in politics even though they might support some one from their own caste. They were inclined to treat this kind of caste preference more as an aspect of real politic than of political morality.48 The legislation which bans discrimination on any basis, thus challenges the old ethos and the discriminatory practices. Modern education and the expansion of opportunities for secular jobs, which are free from the traditional division of labour, have ensured a good amount of freedom from traditional constraints. Moreover, the political consciousness which has been created and which the various political parties are very keen to promote also means a departure from the traditional caste restrictions. The Indian Constitution promotes a casteless and non-discriminatory society and emphasises achievement, rationality, social justice, equality of opportunity and dignity of individuals.49

The caste is a significant variable in the Indian political system. The caste system has been entrenched in the Indian villages. Casteism in Indian politics is no more and no less than the politicization of caste. Politicians mobilize caste groupings and identities in order to organize their power. It is something in which both the forms of caste and the form of politics are brought nearer to each other.50

The influence of caste is well marked in rural society and it plays a significant role in moulding the emergence of leadership at the village
level. In H.P., caste is still most important variable in voting behaviour in all types of elections including that of the panchayats.

Table 4.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>General</th>
<th>SCs</th>
<th>STs</th>
<th>OBCs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZP</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>58.33</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSs</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>51.19</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPs</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>49.48</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>50.96</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In table 4.3, the information regarding caste division in rural leadership has been presented. Out of 314 respondents, 160 respondents were from general category i.e. Rajputs, Brahmins and Guptas, which constitute 50.96 per cent of the total sample. While 145 respondents belonged to the SC category which constitute 46.18 per cent of the total sample. There were only 4 respondents from the ST category and 5 respondents were from the other backward classes. The percentages of such respondents were 1.27 and 1.59 respectively. As far as the comparative analysis of the three tier system is concerned in Zila Parishad 36 respondents were interviewed out of which 21 respondents were from the general category while 14 respondents belonged the SC category. Just one respondent was from to the OBCs. The percentages of such respondent were 58.33, 38.89 and 2.78 respectively. None of the respondents belonged to ST category. In panchayat samitis 84 respondents were interviewed out of which 43 respondents were from the general category which constitute 51.19 per
cent of the total sample. The SC category constituted 42.86 per cent of the sample. Only 3 respondents were from ST category and 2 respondents were from OBCs. The share of ST category and the OBCs were 3.57 and 2.38 per cent respectively. A total of 194 elected members were interviewed from gram panchayats, out of which 96 respondents hailed from the general category and hence formed 49.48 per cent of the total sample. The share of respondents belonging to SC category was 48.97 per cent, ST respondents was 0.52 per cent, while those belonging to OBCs, it was 1.03 per cent.

The analysis presented in table 4.3 reveals that the share of general category was the highest followed by SC respondents. This trend was followed in all the three tiers of PRIs. It may be due to the reservation of seats to them in the grass roots institutions. It appears that the share of ST and OBC is still very low. It may be due to less population of these groups. It was observed during the field study that there are three dominant castes in the state i.e. Brahmins, Rajput and Gupta in the general category.

**Religion**

Religion has been linked with politics. The history of humanity is full of instances where wars have been fought on the basis of religion. Religion is said to be concerned with man's relationship with the supernatural forces and is primarily interested in understanding the problem of the ultimate meaning. It is also a system of ideas and belief as well as appropriate action. Ideas about culture and way of life are part and parcel of a religion. Friedrich Schleiermacher defined religion as “feeling of absolute dependence” absolute as contrasted to other, relative
feelings of dependence. William James called “the enthusiastic temper of espousal.” Cicero derived the term from the verb ‘religere’, i.e. to execute painstakingly by means of repeated effort, Christian Cicero derived it from ‘religare’, to bind together, and interpreted religion as essentially a “bond of piety”.

There is unity and diversity in India. India is inhabited by various religion, caste, communities and linguistic groups. The secular nature of our political set-up has brought unity in the multi-communal society. In H.P. there is also an integration of different communal and ethnic groups. Majority of population belongs to Hindu community but other communities also exist there. In the present study an attempt has been made to find out the religious orientation and its impact on grass roots institution.

Table 4.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification of the Respondents According to their Religion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident from table 4.4 that out of total 314 respondents 313 hail from the Hindu community, which constitute 99.68 per cent of the total sample. Only one respondent was from the Muslim community which constitute 0.32 per cent. As far as Zila Parishad and Gram Panchayats
are concerned all respondents were from Hindu community. The sole Muslim respondent was found in panchayat samiti level.

The analysis of the table reveals that Himachal Pradesh is largely inhabited by the Hindus and as a result the PRIs are dominated by them. The existence of other religion in the state is negligible.

**Education**

The village school in India used to be located under the shade of oldest and the most massive tree in the village. The village school teacher was selected with care. Apart from being the guru of the growing children, he was the friend, philosopher and guide for the village community as a whole. “Give me a healthy panchayat, a healthy cooperative, a healthy village school. You will have democracy and socialism both guaranteed”. Our Prime Minster Pt. J.L. Nehru has been repeating this time and again. Thus will the child of today grow to be the youth of tomorrow and the adult citizen of day after.54

With the spread of education, more and more people have started realizing the importance of education in life. Because traditionally literacy and leadership were not associated.55 Educated people can better understand the objectives of panchayati raj and appreciate their participation in its functioning. The complex problems of PRIs and rural society demand educated leadership. So education has become an important qualification for acquiring leadership in modern society. Generally, in the rural areas, an educated person is highly regarded.56

“Education is the key that opens the door in life”. An illiterate person would not be able to read and understand the rules and regulations of PRIs.57 The Constitution of India does not prescribe any
educational qualification for contesting the elections of parliament, state legislative assembly and PRIs at any level. At present H.P. Government is imparting free education for women up to post-graduate level and the primary education has been made compulsory for all in the state.

Table 4.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Status of the Respondents</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ZP</strong></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>22.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PS</strong></td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>9.52</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17.86</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>34.53</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20.41</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>5.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OPs</strong></td>
<td>194</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14.95</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12.89</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>21.13</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>38.14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10.31</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>314</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10.51</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>10.83</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>18.15</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>36.62</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>13.69</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Educational background of the people under study is given in the table 4.5 which depicts that out of 314 members only 33 were illiterate which constituted 10.51 per cent of the total sample. 34 respondents were having educational level up to the primary, 57 respondents up to middle, 115 respondents were having qualification up to matriculation and 43 respondents with higher secondary or 10+2. 16 respondents were graduates, 15 were post graduates and one respondent was having a Ph.D. degree. Most of the respondents (36.62 per cent) were matriculate, 18.15 per cent and 13.69 per cent of them were having qualification up to middle standard and higher secondary level. The percentage of having highly qualified respondents were 5.10, 4.78 and 0.32 respectively. A comparative analysis at different levels of PRIs is presented in the following text. Out of 36 respondents of Zila Parishad one respondent was either primary or middle passed and one respondent had Ph.D. degree
which constituted a small proportion of 2.78 per cent each. 12 respondents were having qualification up to matriculation, 6 secondary level, 8 graduation and remaining 6 respondents with the post-graduation. The percentage of each category was 33.33, 16.67, 22.21 and 16.66 respectively. One respondent was illiterate also. In panchayat samitis, 84 members were interviewed, out of which 3 respondents (3.57 per cent) were found illiterate, 8 respondents (9.52 per cent) were having educational qualifications up to the primary. 15 of them (17.86 per cent) were having the middle level qualification and 29 respondents (34.53 per cent) were with the matric standard qualification. 17 respondents were with the PUC/10+2, 5 respondents were graduates and 7 respondents were with the qualification of post-graduate level. The percentage of such respondents were 20.24, 5.95 and 8.33 respectively. Similarly in gram panchayats, 184 representatives of village level were interviewed, out of which 29 respondents were found illiterate, 25 respondents with the primary educational qualifications, 41 respondents were with middle level qualification and 74 respondents were with matriculation qualifications. 20 respondents were with the higher secondary level, whereas 3 respondents were with the graduation level and remaining 2 respondents were with the post-graduation level qualification. The percentage of each category was 14.95, 12.89, 21.13, 38.14, 10.31, 1.55 and 1.03 respectively.

From the analysis of above table it was found that the majority of the rural leadership belongs to the matric level educational qualification. People having primary education and fully illiterate are very small in number. It is the sign of positive development in the emerging rural
leadership. It was observed that small number of respondents who were having graduation, post-graduation and Ph.D. degree are playing active role in the functioning of PRIs. When we compare educational background of the respondents, it becomes clear that at Zila Parishad level, literacy is more as compared to GPs and PSs levels. It has been possible with the spread of education in rural areas.

**Occupation**

Occupation is also an important factor in determining the nature of rural leadership. India is predominantly an agricultural country, because majority of its population live in villages. Agriculture is the main occupation of rural people. About 90 per cent of the population in Himachal Pradesh is rural, agriculture is the main occupation of the people. H.P. has also taken big strides in horticulture development especially in apple cultivation. It is known as apple state of India. Apart from agriculture and horticulture, business, daily wages earner and government jobs are also important in H.P. The backwardness of industrial sector has resulted in less employment opportunities to the people in the private sector.

**Table 4.6**

**Occupational Pattern of the Respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Agricultural &amp; Allied Activities</th>
<th>Business</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZP</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>97.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSs</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>95.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPs</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>99.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>98.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 4.6 shows the occupational distribution of the respondents. It is clear from the above table that out of 314, 308 respondents (98.09 per cent) were engaged in agriculture and allied activities including horticulture, animal husbandry, etc. There were 4 and 2 respondents from business and other profession, which constituted 1.27 and 0.64 per cent of the total sample respectively. 35 respondents out of 36 were engaged in agriculture and allied activities at Zila Parishad level, which constitute 97.22 per cent of the total. One respondent engaged himself with business profession which constitute 2.78 per cent of the total sample. Among panchayat samitis, out of 84 respondents, 80 were engaged in agriculture and allied activities. There were 2 respondents each from business and other activities. The percentage of each category was 95.24, 2.38 and 2.38 respectively. Similarly in gram panchayats majority of the respondents (193) were engaged in agriculture and allied profession, which constitute 99.48 per cent of the total only one respondent engaged with purely business profession which constitute 0.52 per cent of the total.

It is evident from table 4.6 that agriculture is still the main occupation of the respondents at all levels of PRIs in the state including allied activities like horticulture, animal husbandry, etc. It was observed during the field study that the economy of upper areas of district Mandi (Karsog, Pangna, Nihri, Sanor, Janjahali, etc.) is based upon horticulture and other cash crops i.e. potato, peas, beans, etc. It was also observed that the major crops in the district were wheat, maize, paddy, barley. Production of citrus fruits, plum, kiwi, mango, floriculture and vegetables
are also popular in the district. It was also found that among rural elite Gupta's were engaged in the business activities.

**Income**

Economic status is a powerful determinant of rural leadership. Attempting for positions in PRIs is a very expensive affair. People who had good financial position in the rural areas used to wield good influence in the villages. Lack of financial institutions in the past had made the people dependent on the money lenders in the villages. As a result emergence of rural leadership was from financially well-off class. After independence, banking facilities were available to the rural people. Now, the exploitation by the money lenders has been reduced to a greater extent. With the coming up of cooperative credit institutions poor people got their financial needs fulfilled through these institutions. The criterion adopted here for determining the economic status of leaders was to enquire about their annual income from all sources. The information thus collected has been tabulated and presented here.

**Table 4.7**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Up to Rs. 10,000</th>
<th>Rs. 10,001 to 25000</th>
<th>Rs. 25001 to 50000</th>
<th>above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZP</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSs</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27.38</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPs</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>23.00</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>22.61</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7 shows the difference of income in different groups of respondents in the PRIs of district Mandi. Out of 314 respondents, there
were 71 respondents who have their annual income below Rs. 10,000, which constitutes 22.61 per cent of the total sample. About 29 per cent (91) were having annual income between Rs.10001 to 25000. Other about 28 per cent (87) respondents belong to annual income group upto Rs. 25001 to 50000. The proportion of respondents with their annual income higher than Rs. 50000 was 65, which constitutes 20.70 per cent of the total sample. As far as the comparative analysis of the three tiers of PRIs is concerned, half of the respondents (18) belonging to Zila Parishad had annual income of more than Rs. 50,000. One forth (25 per cent) of them were in the income bracket of Rs. 25,001 to 50,000 and very less of them (3) were having annual income up to Rs. 10,000, which constitute 8.33 per cent of the total. In case of the respondents of panchayat samitis 23 respondents belong to the lowest income group of upto Rs. 10,000 per annum, which constitutes 27.38 per cent of the sample. There were 17 respondents whose annual income from all sources were between Rs. 10,001 to 25,000 which constitute 20.24 per cent of the total, while 28 respondents belong to the income group of Rs. 25001 to 50,000. The percentage of such respondents was 33.33. Remaining 16 respondents which constitute 19.05 per cent of the sample were having annual income above Rs. 50,000. At gram panchayat level, 23.20 per cent (45) respondents were having annual income upto Rs. 10,000, 35.05 per cent (68) of them belong to income group between 10,001 to 25,000. Thus about 58 per cent of them were having annual income of less than Rs. 25,000. About one fourth (50) of the respondents were having annual income between Rs. 25,001 to 50,000 while about 16 per cent (31) of them fall in the income group of more than Rs. 50,000 per year.
It is evident from the above analysis that respondents form ZP Mandi were in higher income group in comparison to PSs and GPs. Majority of the respondents were from middle class of the society and the most of the leaders belong to the income groups of 10,000 to 25,000 and 26,000 to 50,000. It appears that the middle income group was dominating the leadership of PRIs in district Mandi of the state.

**Party Affiliation**

In democracy parties are indispensable. Parties are playing key role in the democracies of the world. These are one of the major developments of 20\textsuperscript{th} century. Now, the study of politics is the study of political parties. The development of political parties and their role are determinate of the stability of governmental set-up. Therefore, parties are regarded as the life line of the modern politics. Political parities can be called the backbone of political system. Modern democratic system cannot work effectively in the absence of political parties. Lord Bryce has rightly said the political parties are the life blood of the democracy. Without political parties a democratic system is like a vehicle which has no wheels. They are the primary lubricants and the forces of a political system. They are groups organized for the purpose of achieving and exercising power within a political system. The term party has since come to be applied to all organized group seeking political power, whether democratic or by revolution.\textsuperscript{59}

A party in the most general sense of the world, is a body of persons who are united in opinion, as distinguished from or opposed to the rest of the community or association.\textsuperscript{60} A group that attempts to bring about the election of its candidates to public office, and by this means to control or
influence the action of the government. These are the instruments of democratic or republican regimes in which the chief governmental official are chosen by election. In Indian context development of political parties are extra-constitutional. Due to diversification of Indian society the development of multi-party system is natural. The very beginning of the preamble clearly stresses upon the democratic nature of Indian constitution.

According to HPPR Act, 1994 the state election commission shall not allot to any contesting candidate any symbol of recognized political party. Although political leaders advocate that there should be no party politics in the PRIs, but when elections are held to these institutions political leaders are irresistible and get involved. Moreover, elections to these bodies are held by and large on political considerations. In H.P. only the Shimla municipal elections are held on party lines. Otherwise, elections to 3000 panchayats, municipal committees and nagar panchayats were held on non-party basis in December, 2000 panchayat poll.

Table 4.8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inst.</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>INC</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>BJP</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>HVC</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>CPI(M)</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ZP</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>41.67</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSs</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28.57</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23.81</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20.24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPs</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>31.44</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>29.38</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>21.14</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>30.89</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>29.30</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>21.66</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>16.88</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 4.8 deals with party affiliation of the rural leaders. In order to know about the party affiliation of rural leadership 314 respondents were interviewed, out of which 97 respondents were from congress party while 92 respondents were affiliated to BJP, which constitute 30.89 and 29.30 per cent of the total sample. 68 respondents belonged to HVC and 4 respondents were from CPI(M) which constitute 21.66 and 1.27 per cent respectively, whereas there were 53 respondents who said that they had no affiliation with any political party. They are not active members or supporters of any political party and keep independent or non-party stand, which constitutes 16.88 per cent of the total.

In Zila parishad, out of 36 respondents 12, 15 and 6 respondents were related to congress, BJP and HVC, which constitute 33.33, 41.67 and 16.67 per cent of the sample respectively, whereas 3 respondents kept no relation with any political party which constitute 8.33 per cent. No ZP member affiliated himself with CPI (M). In panchayat samitis, out of 84 respondents 24 (28.57) respondents were having their affiliation with congress party while 20, 21 and 2 respondents were affiliated to BJP, HVC and CPI(M). The percentage of such respondents were 23.81, 25 and 2.38 respectively. 17 respondents showed no relation with any political parties which constitute 20.24 per cent of the total. Out of 194 respondents of gram panchayats, 61, 57, 41 and 2 respondents were having affiliation with congress, BJP, HVC and CPI (M). The percentage of such respondents were 31.44, 29.38, 21.14 and 1.03 respectively. Similarly 33 respondents showed no relation with any political parties which constitute 17.01 per cent respectively.
From the data tabulated above, it is evident that congress and BJP have a dominant position in the district. Moreover the district is the native place of Pt. Sukh Ram former Union Tele-Communication Minister of India who was supremo of HVC, which resulted coalition experiment in H.P. first time in 1998 elections of state legislative assembly. In April 2004 Pt. Sukh Ram rejoined INC, however a few petty leaders are still claiming for HVC. CPI (M) and other parties are not so effective, while independents are also indirectly associated to some political party. They want to take maximum benefits from the ruling party. The affiliation of the leaders with different political parties become significant in the study of emerging rural leadership. Although there is no direct participation of political parties in the PRIs yet different political parties at the time of elections to the PRIs get involved indirectly and claim their inclinations. So the indirect participation of party politics cannot be ruled out in the elections of PRIs. It was also observed during field study that some respondents tried to hide their political affiliation.

**Land Holding**

Land ownership is a crucial factor in establishing dominance in the villages. The pattern of land ownership in rural India is such that the suitable land for growing crops is concentrated in the hands of relatively small number of big owners as against a large number who either owned very little land or are landless at all. In a country where average holding is not more than two acres, persons with more than 50 acres of land could surely be considered rich. H.P. is a hilly state, majority of population is engaged in agricultural based profession. Due to hilly terrain, the level of land holding is very small in the state. Traditionally
there were great impact of land ownership on the voting behaviour of rural masses, particularly during the elections of PRIs.

Table 4.9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Land Holding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inst.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The members of PRIs of district Mandi were interviewed to know their level of land holdings. Table 4.9 gives a clear picture of the land holdings in the state. Out of 314 respondents there were 171 respondents whose size of land holding was below 10 bighas. While there were 66 respondents whose size of land holdings was 11 to 20 bighas. The percentage of such respondents was 54.46 and 21.02 respectively. There were 35 respondents who have below 30 bighas of land, which constitute 11.15 per cent of the total sample. There were 26 and 16 respondents who were having between 31 to 50 and more bighas of land. The percentage of each category was 8.28 and 5.09 of the total sample respectively. At the Zila Parishad level, 36 respondents were interviewed out of which 16, 7 and 5 respondents were from the categories of below 10, 11 to 20 and 31 to 50 bighas of land. The percentage of each categories were 44.44, 19.45 and 13.89 respectively. There were equal number of respondents (4-4) who were having 21 to 30 and above 50 bighas of land ownership, which constitute 11.11 per cent each. At the intermediate level (PSs), out of 84 respondents 46 respondents were
having below 10 bighas of land, which constitute 54.77 per cent, whereas
19 and 3 respondents belong to 11 to 20 and above 50 bighas of land
ownership, each constitute 22.62 and 3.57 per cent respectively. There
were again equal numbers of respondents (8-8), who were having 21 to 30
and 31 to 50 bighas of land ownership and both constitute 9.52 per cent
of the total. At village level (GPs), out of 194 respondents 109 respondents
were found having below 10 bighas of land, which constitute 56.19 per
cent of the sample, whereas 40, 23, 13 and 9 respondents were from the
categories between 11 to 20, 21 to 30, 31 to 50 and more bighas of land,
each category constituted 20.62, 11.85, 6.70 and 4.64 per cent
respectively.

Above table reveals that the size of land holding in the state is very
small. Majority of the respondents at all levels were found from the
category of below 10 bighas of land. It was observed that due to the
growth of population the size of land holding in the state is going down
day by day at village level and poor people are compelled to sell their land
for the requirement of some domestic/social needs. Traditionally, the
leadership was relatively in the higher landed class, but now no
relationship exists between land holdings and emerging leadership in
PRIs.

Type of Family

The Hindu joint family is the grandest symbol of co-operation. A
man and a woman join to make a home. They raise families and work to
pool their earnings. They live under a common roof and they ask for no
registration from the government or from the community. The basic unit
of our democracy will be the individual family. Traditionally there is
joint family culture in India. In the rural areas of H.P. the joint family system is still existing, but with the impact of modernization and social change this system is eroding slowly.

Table 4.10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Joint</th>
<th>Nucleus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZP</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSs</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPs</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.10 depicts that out of 314 respondents, 180 respondents were living in joint family system, which constitute 57.32 per cent of the total, whereas 134 respondents were living in nucleus family, the percentage of such respondents was 42.68 of the total sample. In zila parishad, out of 36 respondents 28 respondents were living in joint family while 8 respondents were living in nucleus family system. The percentage of such respondents was 77.78 and 22.22 of the total respectively. In panchayat samitis, out of 84 respondents, 48 and 36 respondents were leading joint as well as nucleus family life, each constitute 57.14 and 42.86 per cent respectively. Similarly out of 194 respondents of gram panchayat 104 respondents were related to joint family and 90 respondents were related to nucleus family system. The percentage of such respondents were 53.61 and 46.39 respectively.
From the above analysis it is evident that joint family system is still prevailing in the rural areas of Mandi district of H.P. There seems no big difference between both styles of family life in terms of percentage. With the passage of time and the impact of modernization, nucleus family culture is becoming popular even in rural areas.

**Number of Children**

Increasing population is a serious problem of India. It is making all development schemes unfruitful. The concept of "Hum Do Humare Do" and "Hum Do Hamara Ek" is popularly known for limiting the family. Most of the population of H.P. lives in the rural areas. Rural illiterate people have considerable higher fertility than urban educated. Moreover rural people are not fully aware of population problem. Number of children reflects the mental set-up of the rural people. According to HPPR (Amendment) act, 2000, two children norm has been adopted and enacted from June 2001.68

**Table 4.11**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inst.</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Childless</th>
<th>One Child</th>
<th>Two Children</th>
<th>Three Children</th>
<th>Above Three Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZP</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>13.89</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>8.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSs</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13.10</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>9.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPs</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7.64</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>9.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.11 reveals that out of 314 respondents 24 were Childless, which constituted 7.64 per cent of the total sample. 31 respondents (about 10 per cent) were having a single child, whereas 122 and 77
respondents were having two and three children respectively. The percentage of such respondents was 38.86 and 24.52. 60 respondents were having more than three children and they constituted about 19 per cent of the total sample. As far as the comparative analysis of the three levels of PRIs was concerned, total 36 respondents of Zila Parishad were interviewed out of which 5 respondents were found childless which constitute 13.89 per cent of the total. There were 3 and 4 respondents who were having one and above three living children, each category constitute 8.34 and 11.11 per cent respectively. There were equal number of respondents (12-12), who were having two and three living children, both category constitute 33.33 per cent each of the total. In panchayat samitis 84 respondents were interviewed, out of which 11 respondents were found childless, whereas 8 respondents were having single child and 29 respondents were having two children. The percentage of each category was 13.10, 9.52 and 34.52 respectively. There were 23 respondents having three children, while 14 respondents were having more than three children. Both category form 27.38 and 15.48 per cent each respectively. Similarly at panchayat level, out of 194 respondents only 8 respondents were found childless, which constitute 4.12 per cent of the total. There were 20 respondents who were having single child, which constitute 10.31 per cent of the sample. 81 respondents were found having with two living children, 42 respondents were having three children and 43 respondents were found having more than three children. The percentage of each category was 41.75, 21.65 and 22.17 of the total respectively.

Table shows that majority of the respondents were having two living children and the respondents having more than two were also in large
number. Although family planning programmes are popular in these days, yet the illiteracy and unawareness about the consequences of over population still exist among the rural people of H.P. It has been observed that the rural educated people are thinking about the benefits of small families and most young leaders have adopted two children norm strictly.

**Vehicle**

Apart from the land holding and the income from property, another index of the status of a leader could be his possession of conspicuous assets. Having own vehicle could be a status symbol. Since independence, there has been a visible improvement in the living standards of large number of people who eat better, dress better, invest sizeable portions of their income in the education of their children, live in better housing, and spend sizeable sums in buying consumer durables such as refrigerators, T.V. sets, washing machines, food processors, two wheelers, cars, DVDs truck, bus, etc. In these day a person having a car is treated as one having prosperity and high status. Economically sound people could manage their own vehicle. In the present study an attempt has been made to know the opinion of respondents whether they have their own vehicle of any kind or not.

**Table 4.12**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZP</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSs</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100.00</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPs</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.12 reveals that 314 respondents of PRIs were interviewed, out of which 95 respondents replied positively, whereas 219 respondents said no, meaning thereby those respondents don't have their own vehicle at all. The percentage of each was 30.25 and 69.75 of the total sample respectively. At the Zila Parishad level, 36 respondents were interviewed, out of which 21 respondents were having their own vehicle, while 15 respondents were leading their life without vehicle, which constitute 58.33 and 41.67 per cent respectively. At the panchayat samiti level, 84 respondents were interviewed, out of which 29 respondents were found using their own vehicle and 55 respondents were not. The percentage of each respondents was 34.52 and 65.48 respectively. Similarly at the village level 194 respondents were interviewed, out of which 45 respondents have their own vehicle whereas 149 respondents have not. The percentage of each constitute 23.20 and 76.80 per cent respectively.

The analysis of the table 4.12 reveals that majority leaders of PRIs were not having their own vehicle. But at ZP level the percentage of vehicle holders was higher. Moreover the leaders of PSs and GPs were still using public buses.

**Use of Radio for News**

Communication of modern ideas to our villages is intimately linked with the success of our development plans. The sloth and ignorance of our rural society is proverbial. Illiteracy and poverty has been the chief factor contribution to an attitude of utter apathy among village people. Radio today are the medium through which the villagers almost overnight is brought in touch with the vast worldly out side. The importance of the medium of the radio to the cause of communication of modern ideas to
our villages thus acquire special significance. After 1950, therefore, All India Radio has taken as its major objective the placing of community radio sets in village centres and the most important programmes are addressed to them. Now the world has become a family due to the revolution in the field of communication, so present era is called the era of information technology. In rural areas, of H.P., at present, traditional means of information are still popular i.e. discussion but now radio, newspaper, television & telephone has becoming popular.

Attempt has been made to analyze the awareness of the respondents in day-to-day life, and know whether the respondents are habitual of hearing news on radio or not.

**Table 4.13**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZP</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSs</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPs</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.13 depicts that 314 respondents were interviewed regarding their habit of listening news on radio, out of which 255 respondents responded positively whereas 59 respondents replied negatively. The percentage of each was 81.21 and 18.79 respectively. The comparative analysis of the three tiers of PRIs, shows that in zila parishad Mandi out of 36 respondents, 33 responded positively while 3 replied in negative. The
percentage of each category was 91.67 and 8.33 respectively. At the panchayat samiti level out of 84 respondents 76 replied positively and 8 replied negatively, the percentage of such respondents were 90.48 and 9.52 of the sample respectively. Likewise the study of eighteen gram panchayats of district Mandi, reveals that out of 194, 146 respondents said yes and 48 respondents replied in negative. The percentage of each category was 75.26 and 24.74 respectively.

It appears from the above table that majority of the respondents were found having the habit of listening news on radio daily. Some of the illiterate and neutral respondents were not interested to hear and discuss day-to-day happening of the world at all. Listening news on radio everyday were large in number among the members of zila parishad Mandi in comparison to gram panchayats and panchayat samitis members. As far as the habit of reading newspaper is concerned, it has little impact on the rural population.

Role of Television

Reading newspaper and watching television is considered as an indication of higher literacy and great political development. These days television has become an integral part of our life. Television sets has reached in every nook and corner of the state and the people are very fond of television. After 1990, a large proportion of rural people purchased television sets because of some religious serials telecasted by Doordarshan, the national T.V. channel of India. Now rural people are well aware of day-to-day happenings in the state, country as well as all over the world. In the present study, and attempt has been made to know
the opinion of the respondents, with regard to their habit of watching T.V. news.

**Table 4.14**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZP</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSs</td>
<td>84</td>
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<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPs</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>314</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.14 reveals that out of total 314 respondents interviewed, 244 respondents i.e. 77.71 replied positively, whereas 70 respondents (22.29) told that they were not ignorant about T.V. but either they don’t have T.V. sets or they did not have habit of watching T.V. news daily. At zila parishad level, 36 elected members were interviewed out of which 32 respondents (about 89 per cent) responded positively and the remaining 4 (about 11 per cent) were not watching television news regularly. At panchayat samiti level, out of 84 respondents 72 respondents (about 86 per cent) said yes while 12 respondents (about 14 per cent) said no. At the gram panchayat level 194 respondents were interviewed, out of which 140 respondents (about 72 per cent) were found watching T.V. news regularly, whereas 54 respondents (about 28 per cent) were not having habit of watching T.V. news daily.

The comparative analysis of the three tires of PRIs in district Mandi shows that majority of the respondents were watching television news
regularly and as a result were aware of the day-to-day happenings. There was a declining trend in the percentage of T.V. news watching as we move from Zila Parishad to Gram Panchayat level.

**Support Price Policy**

In Himachal Pradesh, cash crops i.e. apple, potato, citrus fruits, peas, mango, beans and vegetables, etc. are grown. The state earn a sizeable portion of revenue from apple, potato and peas. Sometime these cash crops do not fetch remunerative prices to the farmers. In that event government of H.P. generally declare support price to maintain a minimum level of price of such crops to the growers i.e. support price for apple and mango was fixed at Rs. 4 per kg. by the state government for the year 2002 and the work of sale-purchase has been done through Himachal Pradesh Marketing Corporation (HPMC), Himachal Milk Federation (HIMFED) and H.P. Agro Industries corporation. The apple and potato growers have their organizations and they get their demand forwarded by these organizations to get proper support price. Sometime the peasants of such crops were not satisfied with the support price policy announced by the government. In the present study the opinion of the PRIs leaders were taken into consideration to analyse the government support price policy adopted from time to time.

**Table 4.15**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.   %</td>
<td>No. %</td>
<td>No. %</td>
<td>No. %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZP</td>
<td>36 100.00</td>
<td>15 41.67</td>
<td>19 52.78</td>
<td>02 5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSs</td>
<td>84 100.00</td>
<td>22 26.19</td>
<td>53 63.10</td>
<td>09 10.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPs</td>
<td>194 100.00</td>
<td>79 40.72</td>
<td>73 37.63</td>
<td>42 21.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>314 100.00</td>
<td>116 36.74</td>
<td>145 46.18</td>
<td>53 16.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is evident from the above table 4.15 that 314 respondents were interviewed to know the opinion about the support price policy of the government. There were 116 respondents who express their satisfaction over the support price policy such respondents constitute 36.74 per cent of the total sample, whereas 145 respondent which constitute 46.18 per cent of the total sample were not satisfied with the government support price policy. There were 53 respondents who did not express their opinion in either side, which constitute 16.88 per cent of the total sample. At zila parishad level 15 respondents out of 36 members has opined in favour of the policy, which constitute 41.67 per cent of the total, whereas 19 respondents which constitute 52.78 per cent of the sample were not in favour of government support price policy. Only 2 respondents who were holding no opinion with regard to government support price policy. Such respondents constitute 5.55 per cent of the total. Similarly at the panchayat samiti level 84 respondents were interviewed and out of which 22 respondents were in favour and 53 respondents were against government support price policy. The percentage of such respondents were 26.19 and 63.10 respectively. Only 9 respondents were holding no opinion in either side. Such respondents constitute 10.71 per cent of the sample. Likewise at the gram panchayat level 194 respondents were interviewed, out of which 79 respondents were satisfied with the government support price policy. Such respondents constitute 40.72 per cent. 73 respondents which constitute 37.63 per cent were not satisfied with this. There were 42 respondents who were holding no opinion with regard to the government support price policy and the percentage of such respondents were 21.65 of the sample.
The analysis of the table 4.15 reveals that majority of the respondents at all tiers of PRIs were not satisfied with the support price policy of the H.P. Government. Some illiterate respondents were found ignorant about this policy, whereas some of the respondents assign some political reasons in the fixation of this policy.

**Public Distribution System**

The government of India announced on January 13, 2000 to revamp the public distribution system (PDS) by conferring social audit powers on the PRIs to make this system more target oriented and prevent the division of the commodities supplied under it. The expectation is that the PRIs would ensure the consumers right to information regarding stock availability, entitlement price, etc.\(^1\)

In H.P. agriculture depends upon rains as just about 20 per cent of area is irrigated. Agriculture is subsistence and most of the farmers purchase food grains either from open market or public distribution system of the government. H.P. Civil supply corporation a government undertaking is handling the public distribution of essential commodities like wheat, rice, flour, sugar pulses, etc. There is one co-operative society in every village for handling public distribution on control rate.

H.P. Government strategy for poverty alleviation is Targeted Public Distribution (TPDS) which ensures availability of essential commodities like wheat, rice, levy sugar and kerosene through a network of 4131 Fair Price Shops. The total families have been divided in four categories viz. (i) Above poverty Line (APL), (ii) Below Poverty Line (BPL) (iii) Antyodaya (Poorest) and (iv) Annapurna (Indigent). During 2004-05, 44186 M.T. of levy sugar and 44049 Kilo liters of kerosene were made available to the
consumers. The opinion of the respondents with regard to the working of PDS is presented in the Table 4.16 below.

Table 4.16

Opinion of the Respondents About the Working to Public Distribution System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZP</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>91.67</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSs</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>86.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPs</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>94.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>92.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident from the table 4.16 that the opinion of 314 respondents were collected through personal interview method out of which 290 respondents were satisfied with the working of PDS, which constitute 92.36 per cent of the total sample, while 17 respondents were not satisfied with the PDS and only 7 respondents were holding no opinion. The percentage of such respondents were 5.41 and 2.23 respectively. In zila parishad 36 elected representatives were interviewed, out of which 33 respondents which constitute 91.67 per cent of the total were satisfied with the PDS, whereas only 3 respondents, which constitute 8.33 per cent were not satisfied with the existing system of public distribution. In panchayat samitis 84 respondents were interviewed, out of which 73 respondents with 86.90 per cent of the total were satisfied with the PDS while 9 respondents which constitute 10.71 per cent of the sample were not satisfied with the PDS and couple of respondents did not express their opinion in either side. The percentage of such respondents were 2.39 of the total sample. In gram panchayats 194 respondents were interviewed,
out of which 184 respondents were in favour of the existing system of public distribution, which constitute 94.84 per cent of the total whereas 5 respondents were not satisfied with the existing public distribution system. Such respondents constitute 2.58 per cent of the total sample. Another 5 respondents (2.58 per cent) were not holding any opinion regarding the working of PDS.

The comparative analysis of ZP, PSs and GPs of district Mandi reveals that at all levels by and large respondents were satisfied with the public distribution system. It has been observed that in the upper areas of district Mandi where people largely depends upon PDS, the satisfaction level was certainly higher.

**Subsidy Schemes**

In a democratic set-up the welfare of the people receives prime attention. In a welfare state, governments take steps to improve the standard of living of the people. In our constitution special mention has been made in the chapter of Directive Principles for the welfare of the weaker sections of our society. Government has launched various social welfare schemes. Almost in all the states, there is a department of social welfare, which looks after the welfare of poorer sections of the society. H.P. government has taken a number of steps for the welfare of backward people and economically weaker sections of society. Various subsidy schemes have been launched by the state government to help the weaker sections of society to increase their level of income. These are following:

1. **Agricultural Subsides**: For the purchase of seed of high yielding varieties, fertilizers, pesticide, tools, animals like cow, horse, mule, bio-gas plants, agriculture credit, etc.
2. **Horticultural Subsidies:** Plants, tools and equipments, drip irrigation, area expansion, irrigation tanks, grading packing house, green house, power tiller, anti birds and anti hail nets, pesticides, canton, vermin composite, etc.

3. **Individual or Group Subsidies:** Swaran Jayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana, Housing Subsidy, etc.

The opinion of the respondents regarding subsidy is presented in Table 4.17.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ZP</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSs</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPs</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident from the above table 4.17 that out of 314 respondents 220 (70.06 per cent) were satisfied with the various subsidy schemes while about one fourth of them were not satisfied and 15 respondents (4.78 per cent) holding no opinion. At zila parishad level out of 36 respondents 26 were in favour of on going subsidy schemes and 10 respondents were found against. The percentage of each category constitute 72.22 and 27.78 respectively. At panchayati samiti level out of 84 respondents about two third were satisfied, 25 respondents (29.76 per cent) were not satisfied and 3 respondents (3.57 per cent) were holding no opinion. At gram panchayat level out of 194 respondents 138 were in favour and 44 respondents were against and 12 of them did not express their opinion in
either side. The percentage of each category was 71.13, 22.68 and 6.19 respectively.

The analysis of table 4.17 reveals that a majority of respondents (i.e. over about two third) were in favour of subsidy schemes at all the three levels of PRI's

**Victory in the last Election**

The factors that influence the individuals to enter public life are personal influence, caste factor, party region, age, etc. After the passage of 73rd constitutional amendment in H.P., elections to the PRIs were held in December 2000 for the second time under the HPPR Act 1994. In the villages every thing is a packet deal- personality factor, friendships, party affiliation, caste factor, regional factor, age factor, factional attachments, money and wine (liquor), etc. which play major role in determining the victory of a candidate in the elections of PRIs. In the present study efforts are made to know the opinion of the respondents who were elected in December 2000 elections of PRIs. Personal interview method was adopted to work out the factors which were responsible for their victory in the last election i.e. what has been the support base of rural leadership.

**Table 4.18**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inst.</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Personal Rapport</th>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Region &amp; Sub-region</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Money and wine (liquor)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZP</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>88.89</td>
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<td>5.55</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>2.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRs</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>88.10</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>10.71</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPS</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>76.29</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>18.56</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>2.58</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>80.89</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>14.97</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>2.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

257
It is evident from the above table that 314 representatives were interviewed, out of which 254 respondents (about 81 per cent) were of the view that their victory was primarily based upon the personal rapport. 47 respondents claimed that mainly the caste factor helped them to win. Such respondents constituted 14.97 per cent of the total sample. The role of party was reported by 7 respondents while the age (young leaders) was the main basis for success of 4 respondents. Such respondents constituted 2.23 and 1.27 per cent of the total sample. Just 2 respondents considered sub-regional feelings for their victory, which constitute 0.64 per cent of the total sample. At zila parishad level 32 respondents (about 89 per cent) reported personal rapport as main factor for their success, while caste factor was reported by 2 respondents (5.55 per cent). One (2.78 per cent) respondent favoured party and another one (2.78 per cent) consider regional factor of success in 2000 elections. Out of 84 members elected for PSs, 74 (about 88 per cent) ranked personal rapport as the main factor to get elected, 9 or (about 11 per cent said that it was the caste factor which helped them and just one respondent reported strong party base as a sole factor for his success in 2000 PRIs election. At the grass roots or GP level also, majority of the respondents i.e. about 76 per cent favoured personal rapport, about 19 per cent caste, and about 3 per cent party as the dominant reason for their success. About half per cent and about 2 per cent respondents favoured regional and age as dominant factor for their success.

The analysis of the above table reveals that a similar patterns were observed in case of ZP, PSs and GPs level. The percentage of such respondents who consider the personal reputation/influence as an
important factor for their victory at all levels in the 2000 elections of PRI was higher. Caste factor played effective role in the elections at GPs level in comparison to ZP and PSs, whereas political party affiliation, age and sub-regional factors also played an important role in the victory. No single factor was responsible exclusive in the victory of the leaders of PRIs. Role of religion was found negligible because majority of the people are from Hindu community. When the question about the role of money and wine (liquor) was asked most of the respondents tried to hide this important factor and nobody was ready to accept this reality. As far as the observation was concerned this factor was also present by and large. Balwant Garg quoted in his article that it is boom time (Election of PRIs) for all types of narcotics and liquor, licit and illicit, as the euphoria over the panchayat elections scales a new high. Ambitious local worthies are openly tossing liquor and poppy husk, as part of freebies package, to lure the voters. For some a deadly cocktail of drugs and liquor is the only way to kill rivals chances to win.73

It was observed during field study that people do not cast their vote on the basis of caste always but they use their voting in favour of that candidate who is educated, honest, hardworking, amicable in nature whether he belongs to reserved category. Some of the pradhans who belong to SC category got elected on this basis.

It has also been observed during survey that election campaign accompanied with the dinner or lunch parties. Dham (lunch) is the most popular phenomenon, in which goat and sheep are slaughtered (sacrifice) and distribution of liquor is also prevalent. Even the loosing candidate
also organize Dham in order to ensure their victory in future election. Thus voters are influenced by such techniques.

**Summary**

Panchayati Raj, one of the most important political innovation of independent India, is channel for popular participation in the process of development. It was created to achieve the objectives of democratic decentralization. The success of panchayati raj largely depends on the community throwing up a leadership in tune with aspiration of the people at stages of community life. The summary of important findings of this chapter is as follows. In the first phase of the chapter various aspects of leadership such as definition, theories and types have been discussed. Major portion of the chapter is related to determinants or socio-economic factors of the rural leadership. It has been found that there is a tendency to elect young and active leaders at all levels of PRIs. The representation of women was above the constitutional requirement of 33 per cent reservation. The participation of women in the democratic process has been increasing considerably due to reservation and awakening among the females. It was also found that people from SCs, STs and OBCs have larger share in the representation, because caste remained a dominant factor in the state. Majority of the respondents belong to Hindu community in Himachal Pradesh. The leadership in the PRIs was comparatively literate and highly educated leaders were having active participation and involvement in the affairs of PRIs. Majority of the population in the rural areas is engaged in agricultural and allied activities. The leaders mainly belong to middle class whose annual income varied between Rs. 10,000 to 50,000. Very few respondents belong to
higher class whose annual income exceed Rs. 50,000. It means the traditional stronghold of rich class has been eroded. Another important point which can be derived here is that in Himachal Pradesh two political parties INC and BJP are dominating the political scene. It would be relevant to point out here that the emergence of HVC, as third party has given set back to the congress party. Since the district is the native place of Pt. Sukh Ram had the supremo of HVC, which resulted coalition experiment in H.P. Recently Sukh Ram rejoined the INC. The share of other political parties is negligible, CPI (M) has very little share in the leadership of PRIs. Some of the respondents who claims no party affiliation, they are also related to some political party indirectly. In the preceding discussion it has been found that rural leadership has emerged mostly from those having agriculture background and are belonging to either small or marginal categories of land holding. Most of the leaders were having land ownership between 10 to 30 bighas. It has also been found that joint family system is still popular in the district under study. As far as the size of family was concerned most of the leaders want to adopt small family norms. Majority of young leaders had adopted two child norm. If we talk about the possession of assets, especially vehicle, very few leaders were owning a vehicle. Again in rural politics, the middle class leaders have their dominance. As far as awareness of leadership of the PRIs is concerned it was found that radio is the most popular means of communication in rural areas of the state. Majority of the respondents used to hear news in the radio and T.V. and were aware of the day-to-day happenings.
These rural leaders were of the opinion that farmers are not getting remunerative prices of their produce. There is no proper marketing arrangements for apple, potato, peas and citrus fruits in the state. Respondents were satisfied with the public distributions system in the state. In the elections of PRIs personal reputation plays major role and other factors have little impact in the winning of elections. Caste, political party, region and age factors also play some role in the election of PRIs. Role of religion was found negligible because majority of people are from Hindu Community. By and large money and liquor factors was also noticed, but respondents tried to hide such factor. People do not cast their vote on the basis of caste always, some of the pradhans who belong to SC category got elected even from non reserved seats due to their reputation with the masses.
Notes and References

1. Iltija Khan, Government in Rural India, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1969, p. 96.


16. Ibid., p. 256.


25. Quoted *S. Bhargava*, *op. cit.*, p. 4.


27. Quoted in Richard L. Park and Irene Tinker’s, *op. cit.*, p. 3.


47. __________, *Caste in Modern India and Other Essays*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1962, p. 15.


72. *Economic Survey 2004-05* pp. 16-17