CHAPTER - IV

Role of leadership in developing societies: power, leadership and authority nexus in India
In the preceding chapter, the nature and characteristics of the developing societies in general and that of India in particular have been discussed. In this connection, we found that the major problem areas in any developing society invariably include the political system, the organisational structure, the human resource, and the nature of leadership. Among all these factors, the leadership pattern plays a pivotal role in the society. And it needs to be studied in relation to a given society. So, in the current chapter, our main concern is to analyse the concept of leadership in the Indian context.

Leadership is the action of guiding or giving an example. To lead is to direct; to conduct; to induce; and, to initiate.¹ The Oriental philosophical writings attribute the great quality of supra-mundanity to leadership.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan elaborates this idea in "An Idealist View of Life" when he says: "All true greatness has the power to illumine us, to transform us, to emancipate us, from the low and the petty, the temporary and the expedient .... No one can stand in proud isolation

with contempt for the common herd. We can rise in the scale of being, only by drawing all into ourselves". This viewpoint emphasises the essence of leadership as a major personality trait.

As Haldane writes: "Personality is not something confined and completed in itself, separately from an environment in space and time, but extends over that environment". The self-conscious and self-determining individual attains his real self only in the interactions with his fellow-men and his environment. The individual and the world subsist together. Leadership develops out of this co-existence and constant interaction.

Aspects of Leadership

Through all human activities in general and leadership in particular, the individual tries to attain a harmony between himself and his environment including his society, political system and even natural surroundings. Leadership is manifested in the working of the primary as well as the secondary associations such as family and interest groups respectively.


The relationship between the leader and his followers is reciprocal. A remarkable anecdote which was pronounced by a politician during the French Revolution is worth mentioning here. He saw one day that a group of people was making a noise and was crossing the road. He came out of his house and said: "I am their leader; so I must follow them".

Defining Leadership

The German Political Scientist Richard Schmidt defines leadership as the relation between an individual and a group, built around some common interest and behaving in a manner directed or determined by him.

Categories of Leaders

David R. Humpton divides the leaders into two broad types, namely, "people-oriented leaders and task-oriented leaders". The people-oriented leaders are more concerned with the popular aspirations, feelings and requirements. On the other hand, the task-oriented leaders give stress on the task at hand — its origin and performance; its development and accomplishment.


The people-oriented leaders are also known as democratic, permissive, follower-oriented, participative and considerate. Such leaders encourage their followers to be free-mixing and frank in nature. However, the people-oriented leadership also suffers from certain serious short-comings. Primarily, it lacks objectivity. It might be termed as biased and one-sided in relation to specific persons, place and time. In its endeavour to satisfy 'some', this type of leadership causes dissatisfaction to 'many'.

On the other hand, the task-oriented leaders are formal, restrictive, duty-bound, directive and structuring. Such type of leaders has a strong faith in discipline, planning, goal-orientation and time-bound activities. The task-oriented leadership too is not free from criticism. It is very often mechanical in nature. It is accused of lacking in concern for human ethos and values. Bureaucracy is its finest example.

Fred E. Fiedler is of the opinion that both these types of leadership pattern represent two complementary aspects of the same work-situation. As he puts it: "Leadership is essentially a work-relationship involving power and influence. It is, therefore, not unreasonable to classify situations in terms of how much power and
influence the situation gives the leader. We call this "situational favourableness". 7

Leadership Traits

Leadership can also be analysed and measured by computing the traits such as personal qualities of knowledge, intelligence, self-confidence, oratory and courage of conviction. Some common aptitudes, as enumerated by Charles E. Merriam, 8 include a high degree of social sensitivity; facility in personal contact; facility in group contacts and group diplomacy; facility of dramatic expression; capacity for invention of political formulas, ideologies and plans; and, a high degree of competitive courage.

The ability of the leader to provide guidance and direction to his followers remains, by far, the most important proposition. However, as has been appropriately pointed out by Parker et al, 9 there is a great difference between being an authority and being a leader. Somehow, the real leader achieves much higher goals through getting the people to want to follow him. Certain people are able to get others to believe in them and to do what they suggest willingly. This is leadership. The leader arouses in others the desire to accomplish goals or overcome difficulties.

Thus the leader develops a team spirit and a desire to serve the group of people he leads. The leader stimulates, motivates and inspires the group to follow willingly and even eagerly. On the other hand, the authority pushes and drives his men, who yield and obey because they fear the consequences of disobedience.

**Leadership Tasks**

Closely consistent with the development of any social system, every social being is supposed to seek opinion and advice from the leaders regarding various problems and their possible solutions.

People belonging to the developed societies ordinarily obtain such opinion from formal and institutionalized channels like the Government departments, information bureaus, and mass-media including the radio, television and news papers.

But in the developing societies, the people in general look to the leading members of the society for information and opinion - formation. It so happens primarily because of the insufficiency as well as inaccessibility of the communication channels. Secondly, most of the common people are estranged from the new institutions and ideas that emerge in the developing societies. Their low level of education and training, and consequent societal consciousness play an important role here.
Finally, the members of a developing society are largely under the strong grip of their own informal societal relationships, customs, and even pre-conceived notions.

Research findings in a number of cases reveal that, in a developing society like India, the success and failure of programmes related to planned development at the microlevel depend much upon "the cooperation and understanding of the local leaders"\(^{10}\) who act as vital social forces at the grassroots.

**Specialist and Generalist Leaders**

Robert K. Merton\(^{11}\) suggests the existence of monomorphic (specialist) and polymorphic (generalist) leaders in the rural societies.

The monomorphic leaders are the sources of information and advice for some specific areas; whereas the polymorphic leaders provide information and advice on any subject put up by their followers. Monomorphic leadership suits better to the advanced and developed

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societies. But in a tradition-bound developing society like India, the polymorphic or generalist leaders are more useful to the society. This is mainly due to the existence of multifarious demands and aspirations of the people which result from the ongoing process of development.

This is particularly so in relation to the diffusion of information through inter-personal communication in all possible directions. This is demonstrated in the following manner (See Figure - 1 ; Chapter - IV) :
"Inter-personal relationship model in a developing society".


Design: Self
Power, leadership and authority nexus in India

Power is the ability to do or to act. It has physical, mental, legal, moral, spiritual and even super-natural dimensions. It represents the faculties of both body and mind.

Influence refers to the act of affecting somebody's character, beliefs and actions through example, fear or admiration. Power is a special type of influence. The essential features of power include potentiality, intensity and impressiveness. It has the capacity to magnify and produce an effect.

Power is the outcome of the mobilization of support in a social system. It presupposes a definite pattern of relationship between the followers and the leader. As Lipson writes: "It is an ability to achieve results through concerted action". The men of power may be termed as agents, delegates or representatives, if they follow the group; and, as leaders, if the group follows them. But in actual practice, these two roles are complementary to each other. While the former provides coherence, the latter provides sustenance to the group.

In his Seventeenth Century classic 'Leviathan', Thomas Hobbes wrote that the power of a man is his present

means to obtain some future apparent good. Hobbes, the contractualist, was engaged in an analysis of the origin and nature of the state. For him, the state power brings in order and harmony.

George Orwell states through the mouth of one of his characters in the book 'Nineteen Eighty Four' thus: "Power is not a means, it is an end.... The object of persecution is persecution. The object of torture is torture. The object of power is power". He talks about the all-pervasive state-power. His central idea may be termed as the 'Big-Brother Syndrome' or 'spreading of the power of the state' in all possible spheres of human life to the extent of complete interference in the personal life of the citizens. The Orwellian thought holds good and dominates the present day scenario of power politics—both national and international.

Elite Theories and Power

According to Geraint Parry, who analyses various elite theories, political power is concentrated in a few


hands in all the social systems. A powerful small group called political elite or ruling elite remains in charge of the administration. Mosca says that the political elite derives its power due to its organising ability and compactness of the group. Michels attributes dynamic leadership to the power of the elite. Pareto gives stress upon the possession of lion-like or fox-like psychological qualities as the essential pre-requisites of the elite. While Burnham speaks of the control of the means of production; C. Wright Mills points towards the commanding positions in the key social institutions as the bases of power.

The pluralist writers contest the elite theory of power. They are of the view that every social system has a number of centres of power. Robert Dahl distinguishes between potential and actual power, and control mechanism. But in the process he ignores the dominant values and biases as they operate in the political system.

The Marxian notion of Power

The Marxian theory presents an altogether different concept of power. Power, according to the Marxist viewpoint, is a class concept. It is an instrument of class-exploitation in the hands of the Bourgeoisie. The


ownership of the means of production in a society determines the pattern of power-structure. The economically powerful class eventually is the wielder of political Power. The entire system of class-based power would come to an end with the withering away of the state.

However, the Marxist notion of power is currently undergoing serious changes in its very nature and contents. Now, there are talks about more openness and even sharing of power.

Power and Authority

As discussed, power exists and continues to play a dominant role in human life in all societies. Power develops into 'authority'. Authority is power legitimised. Legitimacy refers to regularity and genuineness which conform to an accepted standard. There is a clear line of demarcation between authority or legitimate power and mere power in the sense that authority is recognised as rightful. The exercise of authority is sanctioned by those who approve it and is tolerated by those who don't. Protection of the individual's interest; establishment of order in the society; and, securing social justice depend upon force, power and authority respectively. And all these factors interact in a given social system. Lipson''

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gives a diagrammatical expression to these relationships (see Figure: 2).

IV: Figure - 2.

"Social Interrelationship"

| Protection ——— Order ———— Justice |
| Force ———— Power ———— Authority |


Max Weber has given three main sources of authority or legitimate power in a society, namely, traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal. These are the broad categories that are found in all societies. For example, in India, we find the examples of all these ideal-types of authority pattern. In the traditional Indian society, the village elders exercised authority. So far as the second category is concerned, during the freedom movement of India, leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru represented charismatic authority. And, finally, in the post-independence era, the Prime Minister of India represents the rational - legal authority.

From the above examples, we may assume that the traditional authority depends upon birth and hereditary characteristics. The charismatic authority rests upon personal qualities and genius. And, finally, the rational-legal authority thrives on law, constitution and formal organization. However, these types of authority pattern are not water-tight compartments. More often than not, we find the intermingling of all these types in a specific person, place or time.

Whatever might be the sanction behind it, authority of the state enables it to perform its functions. As McIver\(^\text{21}\) writes, if the distribution of power within the state is conceived in terms of a pyramid, then the government can be linked to the apex and the bulk of the people to the base.

Power and authority are normally established upon a foundation of consent that is broad-based and deep-rooted. However, it may be quite possible that the powers that be may continue to exercise authority with a decaying power-base for a short period in an unstable political system.

John Locke\(^\text{22}\) subscribes to this point of view. He is of the opinion that people at large reserve the


ultimate right to decide the pattern of authority in a society. He writes that people are not so easily got out of their old forms, as some are apt to suggest. They are hardly to be prevailed with to amend the acknowledged faults in the frame they have been accustomed to.

**Change in the Authority Pattern**

Great mistakes on the part of the rulers; many wrong and inconvenient laws; and, all the slips of human weakness are accepted by the people without mutiny or murmur. But, a time comes, when the people become conscious of the worthlessness of the rulers. Then, they try to put the rule into such hands which may secure them the ends for which government was constituted.

Depending upon the socio-economic factors and the level of political consciousness of the people, the process of change in the authority pattern of a political system takes place. New leaders may emerge.

With the passage of time, power may change hands. Traditional authority structure may be eroded in a political system. But any fundamental change in the 'power - leadership- authority' nexus in any political system would take a pretty long time to materialise.

**Dynamics of Change in India**

India, as a major developing society of the Third World, presents the case of a dynamic society in transition. Any possible change in the authority pattern
and leadership structure in India is invariably linked to the very nature of its socio-economic development.

As Norman D. Palmer writes: "Contemporary India is a fascinating laboratory of political, economic and social change. It is clearly a major example of a transitional society". 23

India has a complex political system in an even more complex social order. Rajni Kothari 24 is of the view that "the model on which India is set is one of modernization of an ancient and highly plural society in the context of an open polity". India is an ancient society with a rich cultural tradition. It has embarked upon a path of development along with modernization. At the same time, it has adopted a system of democratic polity. All these factors, forces and processes constantly interact in India to-day.

Myron Weiner 25 describes some of the most striking features of Indian politics which include, among others, the presence of charisma; the gap between ideal and real behaviour; the tendency of power to reside in


men rather than in offices; the extent to which it has been possible for individuals to function in what would appear to outsiders as contradictory roles; the absence of consensus; the small but growing number of interest groups; the rapid growth of the scope of the government; and, the all-pervasive functions of political groups. The patterns have to be analysed in the context of the basic contradictions within the political system between those who are Westernized and those who are not.

In India, there is a steady transformation of the agrarian social structure from the subsistence-based traditional society to a market-based, profit-oriented, and commercialized agrarian society. Second, there are consistent attempts by the Constitution of India and the Governmental machinery to uplift the social status of a large number of hitherto unprivileged classes and thereby making them conscious of their potentiality and power.

Again, due to the impact of the processes like westernization, modernization and industrialization, there has been the emergence of a complex network of numerous cleavages, associations and institutions within the framework of the traditional Indian society. They are having very close ties with and being shaped by these processes and their influences.

The main changes in the status and power structure in India that are noticed include changes in the caste system, the Hindu joint family system and the
village administration through the village-elders which together constitute the age-old social system in India.

The rise of internal markets assisted by the expansion of transport and communication, the advent of modern science and technology, the establishment of key and heavy industries and industrial complexes - all these provide an impetus to vertical and horizontal mobility to the Indian people. They are now being exposed to new opportunities in occupation, trade and services.

Outcome of Change

The consequences of social change were quite striking. The traditional power structure based on agriculture, zamindary and money-lending suffered a setback. Political independence of India brought new hopes and promises for the common people.

The acceleration of economic and social reform measures, resulting in the abolition of large landed-estates and the protection of the rights of the tenants and labourers paved the way for the rise of the new peasantry that is conscious of its rights.

The political right to vote under the system of universal adult suffrage has contributed to readjustment of social groups and forces. Again, the overall electoral politics has given rise to the growth of the urban middle class, the working class and the more conscious backward classes and castes who enjoy governmental patronage.
The status structure of India's vast social system is in a fluid state. While still adhering to the traditional ways of earning one's livelihood, a vast majority of common people, today, is experiencing the growing impact of modernization, competitive economy, and science and technology in its life. As Sheshadri writes, the common Indian faces some peculiar situations. As a direct outcome of industrialization and growth of transport and communication, there is the development of a national consciousness. At the same time, the process of democratic decentralisation demands more and more devolution power at the local level.

Rise of New Leadership

As a result, the working classes, peasantry, middle class employees, professionals, scientists, weaker sections and women - all are developing their own leadership. They would certainly exert their pressure on the political system. Political leadership in the future cannot rest on mere yes-men and unthinking musclemen. Above all, the most important thing that has to determine the nature of political leadership is the changes or developments that are taking place in the economic field.

It is now an admitted fact that the evergrowing social awareness of the people is the medium which fashions

new leadership in a highly democratic pattern of social, economic, and political power-structure. The tradition-based power system in India has slowly given way to a value-based authority pattern backed by popular sanction and participation. The choice of leaders under this system, in principle, has to be on the basis of individual merit and achievement criterion. As Myron Weiner\textsuperscript{27} writes:

"To understand modern India, one must understand the new leadership; the social background from which it derives; the groups with which it is associated and whose interest it articulates, the values and ideologies it propagates; and, the influence it wields."

Paul H. Appleby\textsuperscript{28} has described the extra-ordinary national leadership as one of India's outstanding assets. John Mander\textsuperscript{29} is of the view that there are two co-existent patterns of political leadership in India. There is the basic democratic, party-political pattern, borrowed from the United Kingdom, to which the great majority of educated Indians are attached. Beside it, intersecting at many points, there exists an older, semi-religious pattern.


of personal authority. The second category is tradition-bound and often caste-based.

The nature of the new leadership in India has been explained by Kothari. He says that the electoral and democratic process has shifted the levers of power from the hands of the first generation leadership to those people who are in charge of local-self governments, caste-organizations, rural panchayats and cooperatives.

The new leaders are pragmatic in their approach. Many of them are ignorant of the modernist idiom but are modernizers in their own way. They well understand the subtleties and problems of the people at the local level. They are powerful persons who have taken time in coming up, and who are therefore confident of their own strength.

In a word, the focus of power has shifted. Kalhleen Gough adds that most of these leaders of the new type lack both the aristocratic mode of life of the old-style landlords as well as their traditional authority. They are more down-to-earth and egalitarian in their attitude.

Crisis of Leadership

Palmer points out that on the national level, India today faces a crisis of leadership that raises


serious questions for the future. The generation of outstanding leaders that piloted India to independence is not there. Their successors are men and women of lesser stature, or at least of lesser reputation. There seem to be few truly all-India leaders. These leaders may have to go a long way to raise their popular image.

The leadership crisis in India today has been described from another angle by Seshadri who is of the opinion that in present day India, leadership has not matured among the working classes who are the real forces behind the tasks of nation-building and development. The political crisis today is the leadership crisis. This problem we propose to study in some detail in the context of industrial development in the post-independence era in India with particular emphasis on the growth of the Rourkela Industrial Complex and its trade union situation.

In India, the leaders who have a base at the grassroots level and who perceive the problems of the common people in various walks of life have very little representation in the positions of authority. On the other hand, those in the positions of authority have very little knowledge of the body politic at the grassroots level. The new leadership, in order to be effective, may constitute an authority pattern which derives its

sustenance only by dealing successfully with the trials and tribulations of India today at the lowest echelon of the social strata.

Summary

In this chapter, we have dealt with the role of leadership in the developing societies as well as the power, leadership and authority nexus in India. Leadership is a major personality trait. It develops out of the co-existence of the leader and his followers and their constant interaction. We have gathered from our discussion that leaders can either be people-oriented or task-oriented. Both these types of leadership pattern represent two complementary aspects of the same work-situation. Again, leaders can either be monomorphic (specialist) or polymorphic (generalist) in nature.

We have found that power is the ability to do or act. It is a special type of influence. Authority is power legitimised. Power is used both as a means and as an end. The exercise of authority is sanctioned by those who approve it. It aims at securing social justice. Three main sources of authority are traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal.

From our discussion, we have gathered that India, as a major developing society of the Third World, presents the case of a dynamic society in transition. The changes in the authority pattern and leadership structure in India
are invariably linked to its very nature of the socio-economic development. Again, the processes of westernization, modernization and industrialization have influenced the nature of Indian political system and its internal power equations. In the post-independence era, a new pattern of leadership has emerged in India. It is highly ambitious and egalitarian in its attitude. Still, writers talk about political crisis in India in terms of leadership crisis. This is mainly due to the fact that the leadership structure and authority patterns, don't synchronize properly.