CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Concept of Panchayati Raj:

The scheme of democratic decentralisation which in its institutional form is known as Panchayati Raj, an entirely Indian concept, emerged as the logical development from the programme of Community Development. The Panchayati Raj system was introduced in order to facilitate the work of local development through a body which is locally represented and constituted on democratic lines. The system envisaged that Panchayati Raj must help the Community Development programme by generating the much needed community efforts and the community development programme must aid the Panchayati Raj bodies in developing the grassroots of democracy. Thus Community Development and Panchayati Raj are the twin pillars of rural development and democracy in India. It provides a link between the administrative apparatus and the elected representatives at various levels.
The form and framework of Panchayati Raj provides to the vast majority of the people an opportunity to actively participate and involve in the formulation and implementation of local development programmes. Thus Panchayati Raj prepares the people to play their part as competent and awakened partners in developing the rural community and areas on the basis of socio-economic justice. In short, Panchayati Raj bodies are the only effective and practical instrument to translating at the grass-roots level and the socio-economic and political ideals enshrined in the Indian Constitution into a reality.

The concept of Panchayat, in India owes its origin to the popular rural saying "Panj Punch Parmeshwar" which means that the decision of the five persons of the village may be regarded as the decision of the God. The principle of the Panchayat is 'Panch Parmeshwar,' which means God speaking through the five.

The concept of Panchayati Raj was first clarified at the National Seminar on Fundamental Problems of Panchayati Raj at Udaipur in January 1964. The Seminar recommended that —
"Panchayati Raj institutions should act as units of self-government at the village, Block and District levels. These institutions cannot be described as limbs of the state, although they form part of the decentralised state. In acting as units of self-government they will undertake responsibilities which they can discharge within the framework of their resources and requirements. It would mean that what the Panchayat cannot undertake will be accomplished by the Samiti and what the Samiti cannot do by itself will be transferred to the next larger unit. The Constitution should lay down as clearly as possible their functions as governments in the same way as has been done for states and the centre. It should be stated that in a few years time these institutions should be enabled to flourish and function on their own as governments at their respective levels. For, although the Directive Principles in the Constitution emphasised the development of such a concept, it is necessary to implement these principles at an early date it is obviously the responsibility of all those who accept Panchayati Raj to see that this implementation is carried through."
Panchayati Raj has, thus, found itself subject to a variety of interpretations and pulls. To the state government as well as to the bureaucracy it has an agency role, and its relevance essentially lies in terms of the community development programme, to the politician particularly of the grass-root level, it is first and foremost local self government and thus consciously modelled after the western-type democracy and to the Sarvodaya it is a bulwark of a new social order to replace the present exploitative system.

The Sadiq Ali Team, after a careful consideration of the concept of Panchayati Raj concluded that Panchayati Raj embraces in its scope all the above concepts of Panchayati Raj. It was of the opinion that in a planned society the state has to perform many welfare activities and therefore it is necessary to extend the limbs of the state to the village.

Jayaprakash Narayan held that Village Panchayats should constitute the foundation of the political organization of the country, and should enjoy the widest possible authority to govern all their affairs.
He further expressed that "with the Village Panchayats as the base, the political structure would rise story by story to the national level. The village assembly at the lowest level would under this arrangement be organically linked to the national assembly through a system of indirect elections held by means of consensus among the electors."^3

Importance of Leadership:

The importance of leadership in every work of organised social life, needs no explanation. A broad human approach with respect for human life is the basic requirement of any leadership in a democracy. Leadership presupposes the existence of a way of life, a school of thought, or a code of values which do not necessarily conform to something that already exists. Water would not flow from one place to another, unless there is some difference in level. Leadership would also not emerge, if there were no possibilities of thinking differently on the same matter.

So, leadership is quite necessary to influence people to cooperate towards a common goal and to
create situations for collective response.

The increase in the importance of dynamic leaders and emergence of new patterns of leadership are the unifruitous characteristics of our modern political system. With the increasing and pluralistic functions of political systems the role of good leadership is assuming more and more significance. The problem of leaders is permitting almost every aspect of our everyday life, and there is a wild cry for more and better leaders. The new forces of socio-economic change leased out by implementation of large scale programmes of planned social change in rural society gave a hitting blow to the traditional social structure and institutions and generated new values and visions. This required replacement of old leadership based on ascription by new secular leadership based on merit. Community development programmes, land reforms, democratic decentralization, adult franchise and other schemes of rural reconstruction added further to the significance of leadership. In this context it is now being realized more and more that the success of these efforts and
the achievement of the goals and aspirations envisaged in the basic preamble of the constitution, mainly, depend upon the rural leadership.

We have democratic constitution which ensures peaceful and periodic elections. These elections have so far given us a steady supply of "Leaders" from Gram Panchayat to Lok Sabha. Our experience is that for every seat that has to be filled by an election, there are at least 2 or 3 contestants. Thus, we have not only a large number of elected leaders, but we also have a large "Reserve Force" of persons, who feel confident of their ability to lead. In any emergency, the country can very well draw upon this "reserve force" of political leadership.

In the developmental context the leaders have varied roles. Leadership helps in crisis management. It is only the leader who in crisis situations can organize the isolated and dissenting members into a cooperative group. If community development programmes are treated as a movement for socio-economic change then leadership can be treated as the most effective instrument of interest identification,
interest articulation, interest aggregation of the people. Besides being only the leaders of the followers they are also interpreters of their wishes, opinions, feeling and well-being. Leaders also act as reference individuals in the acceptance of new innovations and techniques of development.

The genesis of the present three-tier system of Panchayat Raj lies in the recommendations of Balwant Rai Mehta Committee. Adopting the principles of democratic decentralization, the main objective of the Panchayat Raj in the rural developmental context is to give institutionalized format to local leadership to fulfil the demands and challenges of development. Besides seeking people's initiative and active participation in community development programmes, to make democracy reach the doors of the people in such a way that they are able to organise and manage their affairs themselves and to replace traditional ascriptive and monopolistic leadership based on the factors of age, caste, family, wealth and status by young, enthusiastic, selfless, meritorious, secular and dynamic leadership.
The success of Panchayati Raj institutions depends largely on the quality of leadership available at the grass-root level. Political developmental and democratic growth depend on the local leadership and its functioning in the Panchayati Raj institutions. Because, the grass-root leadership is the agency through which developmental work is carried out. They are also the innovators, carriers of new ideas, norms and values to the rural people. A rural leader is an agent through which the process of development is initiated. The leader is an essential part of the mechanism of the community. Because man is a social being and participates in groups he needs constant guidance and direction, and, these are provided by the leader. All communities, therefore, have leaders. They are trusted by their community. Every rural community has some interests of goals to be achieved. And the person who the rural community feels best represents that interest and can best explain it to others is generally asked to help the community and to lead it.

The importance of leadership in the context of Panchayati Raj institutions because explicitly one
of the significant objectives in instituting them was to develop proper leadership suited to development needs of the countryside. Commenting on the role of leadership, Itiza Khan states, "Leadership is thus sine due non of success in all human activities but in a democratic system, particularly at the lower levels, it assumes greater significance and wider proportions."^5

Concept of Leadership:

In Indian Constitution the universe system of the adult voters has given the full rights to the Indian citizen that democratically, he may choose his leader expressing their desire. This adult voting right has been brought an important revolution in the political awareness of Indian rural people which is an important occurrence in the history of rural society. Prof. Desai says that increasing political awareness and agenda is influential characteristics of political life in rural society.®

The main purpose of Panchayat Raj is active participation of the local people. Balwantray Mehta rightly said that, "rural development and rural
welfare are possible only with local initiative, and local discretion." The success of Panchayati Raj largely depends on the community throwing up a leadership in tune with aspirations of the people at all stages of community life. The establishment of Panchayat Raj institutions, legislature is to give democratic form of power structure on the basis of about voting right. The basis of election of the rural leaders is not their class and caste but main thing is individuals ability, therefore, in this democratic system every able individual of the rural mass may be received as leader of the village, and he may bring the change in his socio-economic and political atmosphere being of any caste or class.

According to Kumar, "this leadership has to guide the people to new avenues of social development where community welfare is not warped by selfish considerations of personal good, where positions of authority are filled not for the love of prestige, power and personal aggrandisement, but because of the desire of the incumbent to serve the community, and where the higher echelons of administrative
organisations find their fulfilment in transferring more power and responsibility to the lower organisations.  

The concept of Panchayati Raj has reposed great confidence and faith in democratic leadership. The complex problems of society always need tactful handling in order to channelize the aspirations and the resources of the members of the society and influence them into achieving the common good.

Leadership is an interesting social process which summons the learned of sociology and psychology at every turn. Leadership has attracted the attention of sociologists, social psychologists and political scientists in various contexts. This is a conventional and universal process which is found out also at few levels where human societies available.

Leadership is an antique art and, therefore, it is remarkable, because civilization not only attempts on efforts continuously for its extensive but also for its progress. In the words of Edinger,
"as social scientists to probe the manifest aspects of leadership and have become correspondingly more sensitive to the relevance of numerous and complex latent facts, they have found it more difficult to agree on what leadership is and does". This becomes more difficult when one's objective is to construct a view of leadership which will encompass many different types of leaders and varying leader-follower situations. Hence, the concept of leadership has some room to be variedly defined by social scientists. Accordingly, leadership, in the words of Fairchild, has been defined as 'the act of organizing and directing the interests and activities of a group of persons, as associated in some project or enterprise, by a person who develops the co-operation through securing and maintaining their more or less voluntary approval of the ends and methods proposed and adopted in their association.' Accordingly, leadership, in the words of Fairchild, has been defined as 'the act of organizing and directing the interests and activities of a group of persons, as associated in some project or enterprise, by a person who develops the co-operation through securing and maintaining their more or less voluntary approval of the ends and methods proposed and adopted in their association.'10 Bernard Bass preferred to define leadership thus: 'Leadership is a kind of interaction between or among people. Any attempt on the part of a group member to change the behaviour of one or more members of a group is an attempt at
leadership. Katza and Khan maintain that the concept of leadership, as generally understood in social sciences, has three major meanings: the attribute of a position, the characteristics of a person, and a category of behavior. Tannenbaum, Weschler and Massarik explain leadership in terms of interpersonal influence which is exercised in specific situations, directed through the communication process and is definitely goal-oriented.

Leadership means to lead or to guide. Defining the leadership MacIver and Page have written that, "by leadership, our purpose is to excite or to guide the ability of the people which comes from individuals characteristics." On the basis of explanation those individuals who guide the rural life are known as the leader. Leader is an influential person of the village who is respected by the rural people. He is initiated and obeyed by the villagers. Leader is respected due to his property and wealth. He occupies a special rank or status in his group and is accepted as the centre of attraction of all the group members.
members see the qualities of the individual in that respect who will be more helpful in fulfilling their desire. This clears out how a leader is accepted as an individual in group, who controls over the group. Thus, leadership comes into the view, develops and gets its place in the group. 16

To Tead, leadership appears as, "the activity of influencing people to cooperate towards some goal which they come to find desirable." 17 Pigars opines, 'Leadership is a process of mutual stimulation which, by the successful interplay a relevant individual differences, controls human energy in the pursuit of a common cause.' 18 Terry has defined leadership as "the leadership in which one person, or leader, influences other to work together willingly or related tasks to attain that which the leader desires." 19 Stogdill considered it "the process of influencing the activities of an organised group in its efforts toward goal achievements". 20 Halpin describes leadership "as a complex social phenomenon that cannot be treated meaningfully apart from related situational factors". 21 Davis said, "Leadership is the ability to persuade others to seek defined objectives..."
enthusiastically, it is the human factor which binds a
group together and motivates it towards its goals." 22

Luter L. Bernard gave more importance to
efficiency when he said, "any person who is more than
ordinarily efficient in carrying psychological stimu-
late others and is thus effective in conditioning
collective responses may be called leader." 23 Brown
and Cohn gave importance to status, when they said,
"the leader is taken as the person who occupies a
given status in the group, he may occupy this either
through election by the group, but in either case he
is presumed to be the person who performs certain
acts including giving directions to the group and
serving as its spokesman." 24

Chester Bernard defined leadership as the
"quality of behaviour of individuals whereby they
guide people or their activities in organised effort.25
Mooney and Reiley observed, "Leadership is the form
which authority assumes when it enters into process.26
Some have understood it in terms of individual chara-
cteristics, bases of authority and power. Lepiere and
Franswarth define leadership as "the behaviour that
affects the behaviour of other people more than their behaviour affects that of the leader.  

The earlier theories of leadership were of two types. One was based on hereditary traits and the other on acquired traits. Modern theory is the "Situational-cum-personality" theory. It refers to the opportunity given to a person in a particular situation to perform a detailed activity. Leadership seems to be a quality that emerges as the group moves about together and is the result of the social situation. Leadership role depends upon the group goal and upon the capacity of the individual to contribute to the achievement of the goal.

Leadership is not symbolised by a single individual. There is no dominant or outstanding person whom all villagers follow and who can be called their leader in the commonly understood sense of the term. Leadership rests in a fairly large number of leading persons who command respect. Thus acquiring a plural character. The element of pluralism present in every complex group situation leads to multiple leadership. The traditional concept of single unifold leadership is thus
largely replaced by that of plural leadership. There can be no leadership in isolation. It is distinctly the result of a group situation. As these situations change, leadership also changes.

"One can readily see that this group property conception a leadership adds a new and important dimension to our understanding of the phenomenon of leadership. In doing so however let it be noted that it does not deny or discard the view that what individuals bring with them to the group is basic. Individuals constitute the essential elements and set certain limits to the development of the leadership structure. Let it also be noted that the group itself as a group sets limits and particularly so as circumstances and setting change through time."\(^{31}\)

Leadership is known by the personalities it enriches, not by those it dominates or captivates. Leadership is not a process of exploitation of others for extraneous ends. It is a process of helping others to discover themselves in the achieving of aims which have become intrinsic to them.
Occasionally even an ordinary mass may rise to the position of leadership by virtue of a situation. In the life of societies we find that very often leaders emerge in response to the demands of a native genius for leadership, recognized as born leaders but may prove themselves adequate to meet responsibilities in a particular context. Genius may by doubt be born but it can be assiduously cultivated and acquired. It has been rightly pointed out that "the genius by hard work has a great advantage over the born genius namely that he can select a field for superior endeavour while the born genius has to work in the field nature has selected for him, or not at all."\(^{32}\)

There is another type of leadership known as charismatic leadership. The leader gains dictatorial power during periods of widespread social distress. He seeks to inspire as large a mass of people as possible. It is a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with super-natural, super-human, or at least specifically exceptional power and qualities.\(^{33}\)
Max Weber was careful to state that charisma is often mixed with the traditional kind of authority that charismatic leaders for all their contempt of rules and regulations, frequently utilized existing channels of a secret charisma which attract followers by virtue of the leaders miraculous gifts. He also emphasized that charisma depends not only on the leaders qualities but also on the follower's receptivity.

A review of these various definitions will indicate that leadership is a process whereby one individual exerts influence over others so that they will strive toward the achievement of group goals. This concept implies not only willingness to work but also willingness to work with zeal and confidence. Functionally speaking, leadership is to induce or persuade all subordinates or followers to contribute with cheerful readiness to organizational goals as warranted by their capabilities. Leadership in fact the rare ability to inspire. The leaders stand behind a group to push; they place themselves before the group to lead and inspire it to attain organizational
Objectives. Leadership is also concerned with development of a climate within an organization which ultimately influence motivation of the followers.

On the above basis, it may be concluded that a leader has four essential elements:

(a) he is a member of a group;
(b) he influences the members of the group;
(c) he is voluntarily accepted by the members of the group in this role; and
(d) he leads the group towards the shared goals.

Review of literature on leadership in Panchayati Raj:

In India with the introduction of Panchayati Raj people have a feel of power and a sense of participation in community decision making since popular representatives incharge of local administration are enabled to initiate, plan and execute programs of development with the assistance of the administrative machinery placed at their disposal.

To be active participants in political decision making, citizens must keep abreast with current affairs; they must be aware of the major political events and
personalities at the local and national levels. Lerner's study in the Middle East and Deutchman's study (1963) in a Colombian village testified to the effect of respondents' political knowledge on the development of their political modernization. Knowledge of political affairs probably indicates active information seeking and an interest in civic life. It is an index of psychic linkage with the larger world and a measure of resourcefulness or expertise. In any event, in modernizing rural communities, individuals with greater political knowledge ability are likely to be looked upon as leaders. They will be actively involved in the political affairs of the community, serve as resource personnel for the local community and maintain a liaison between the local community and the national social structure. Young's proposition that "direction of community growth is always toward greater participation in the national social structure" is particularly relevant to the context.

With the introduction of Panchayati Raj the local political system has changed considerably. "The politisisation of the rural peasant masses have given
local political system a new significance and dynamism.\(^36\) Jawaharlal Nehru had firm faith in the Panchayati Raj institutions, but leaders like Lal Bahadur Shastri did not have the same faith in the ability of the common people to guide and regulate themselves. Lal Bahadur Shastri expressed that in the Indian situation such leadership might not function well. He formed this opinion after studying the working of Panchayats in Uttar Pradesh.\(^37\)

Leadership in Panchayati Raj cannot be studied in isolation, as it is embedded in the prevailing socio-economic and cultural context. No one can rise to a position of leadership unless he has the support of the majority or a sizeable section of the community. Power structure in Panchayati Raj is characterised by groupism which pervades the local political system. Every group tries to capture the seat of authority by influencing voters by various means at their disposal.

Many field studies have been made to find out the characteristics of the villages leaders, particularly those of Panchayat leaders.
According to Oscar Lewis, possession of wealth, good family background, reputation for being charitable and giving elaborate feasts, advanced age, education, free time to pursue the interest of the group, humility being hospitable and trust-worthy, speaking ability and the supports of a large extended family are, some of the characteristics of an Indian Village in Rampur.

According to Barnabas the simultaneous existence and inter-play of caste and functions, also play an important role to decide formal and informal leaders.

According to H.S. Dhillon, three main factors contributing to leadership are social status of the family, economic status of the family and individual traits. He further says that the new leader should be educated, with non-agricultural interest and outside contacts.

According to B.N. Singh, studies, the impact of community development programmes on rural leadership in Newarikalan village in Uttar Pradesh, he found out that caste rigidities were diluting and they were no more impediment to social, economic and political changes.
After the abolition of zamindari, land has passed on to lower castes from the Brahmins and Thakurs. With the impact of community development programmes, leadership is passing on to younger age groups, small farmers and artisan castes. D.N. Majumdar remarks that wealth, age, intelligence, honesty, kindness and good family have become the basis of leadership.

According to findings of the Evaluation Report on Community Development and Panchayati Raj, the pattern of the leadership in Panchayats affects the socio-economic structure of the village caste, does not determine much the leadership patterns and most of the leaders are land holders.

Bacheheimer finds out that the characteristics of leaders would be economic strength, higher caste and high education. He studied Pandu village in Andhra Pradesh in 1959.

Edward and Harper studied Totagaddi village in Mysore. According to this studies, caste is an important factor in leadership.

M.E. Opier finds out wealth and young age as basis of new leadership.
According to Coldwell R. Dumont and H. Read, "Panchayat Leaders are big and owners and higher educated."

Pradipta Roy finds that people from high income and high level of living, more educated, large families, no importance of caste and age, higher level of contact with extension agencies and secular oriented. He studied in 200 families in the villages in Etawah District of Uttar Pradesh.

According to the Report on the working of Panchayati Raj are more relevant to this study. Most of the Sarpanchas and Panchas belong to the age group 30 to 40 years, the educational standards of the Panchas and Sarpanchas is low and not different from older leaders, the Sarpanch come mostly from the agricultural classes.

According to Brijraj Chauhan, small farmers, businessmen, educated young men, and the economically prosperous are becoming prominent in leadership. He finds out that traditionally leadership was the monopoly of the zamindars.
According to Kamal Krishan, mostly higher caste and higher educated people increasing in every election. Mostly leaders belong to middle classes. Main factor in leadership is caste, kingship and factional politics. He studied about the elected leaders of 40 Panchayats in 20 blocks from 20 Districts in Uttar Pradesh.

Sen and Roy in their study have pointed out that Community Development Programmes have brought a new awakening in the village society. Mostly higher castes and classes are shifting to the younger and educated groups in leadership.

K.D. Ganggrade studied three villages near Delhi and found that leadership is still largely determined by consideration of caste, kingship and economic status. However, it is worth noting that the higher's castes are losing their power and the lower castes are coming up.

S.N. Mishra finds out that mostly leaders are development orientation, young in age group, educated and economically strong in the studies in village of Bihar.
A.Y. Darshankar finds out mostly leaders are educated, landowners belong to higher caste group. They come from young age group and higher income group.

Dr. R. Singh studied villages in Narainpur block, district Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh, in 1985. He observed that Scheduled Caste leaders belong to young group, educated and numerically dominates groups and old traditional leadership is finding and passing on to the new people. The leaders who are replacing old leadership among the Scheduled Castes are socially and politically aware and participation and action oriented.

A study conducted by the Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi during 1988-89 in 58 sample Mandals in Karnataka, reveals that all the 58 Mandal Pradhans belonged to the dominant caste or group.

A survey was carried out under the auspices of the Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi to understand the social background of the newly elected district council members in Kerala. George Mathew finds out that mostly leaders are from younger age group, highly educated, landholders, rural residence, tradition of political and public life of the families, religion and sex.
The above studies provide a most insightful analysis of various aspects of leadership in Panchayati Raj in India but by and large, they concentrated on the village leaders in general. But some studies discussed show the higher caste leaders. Leaving aside very few articles and books, there is not a single study which throw light on backward class leadership in Maharashtra. Again in Scheduled Castes leadership, only few castes are very dominant. Therefore, to fill in some of the missing data, the present study attempts to analyse leadership among the Scheduled Castes in village panchayat.

Scheduled Caste Leadership in Panchayati Raj:

The growth of individual personality is invariably influenced by many external social situations and factors. People who have the advantage of these factors come up in life. Those who do not have access to their situations lag behind. One such important social factor is power. The development of individuals would depend upon the power which the individuals or groups of individuals have.
'Power' may be economic, administrative, spiritual, political and so on. We are concerned here with power in relation to politics and particularly the politics of Panchayati Raj. Power is again different in a traditional society when compared to the modern society as far as its location is concerned. In a traditional society, power is generally linked with economic and religious factors, besides education. Caste was invariably associated with these factors in the past. Brahmins had all the power in their hands for a long time because of the importance given to ritual status and knowledge in the past. Beteille also makes a similar observation. Later on, the Vakkaliga and the Lingayat castes, wrested power from the Brahmins in Karnataka, Mahar and Marathas in Maharashtra. This was possible because of the shift in the importance from ritual status and knowledge to numbers and land holdings. It was also prompted by the spread of education among these castes. This type of shift is also reported by water. "It is now possible for a caste or group of castes to exercise political power without wealth, ritual standing or access to administration."
The Scheduled Castes had absolutely no access to 'power' in the past, not only because of the absence of any of the factors which the caste Hindus had but also due to their low social status and economic dependence on the caste Hindus. Even the limited franchise that was made available to the people possessing educational and property qualifications, till recently was denied to the Scheduled Castes they lacked these qualifications too.

But the position has changed to a very large extent with the advent of independence. Beteille refers to the attempts made by the non-Brahmin leaders to win power from the Brahmins. New organs and social institutions were specially created to safeguard the interest of the rural people in general and the Scheduled Castes in particular. Introduction of adult franchise accelerated the pace of people's participation in democratic institutions. In these new organs, power is not so much based on land holdings, education and ritual status as on the numerical strength of the groups of the people. Water's observations that "..... only since to advent of mass democracy, have numbers alone became important is quite relevant in this context. As Beteille reports "As criptive criteria were of paramount importance in the control of traditional structures of power."
The new system provides greater scope for manipulation and personal initiative."

The various organs that have emerged in rural areas and which have enabled several castes and groups of persons utilize the economic, social and political opportunities to their best advantage are the village panchayats, cooperative societies, political parties and caste associations. The chief instrument for exercising the power structure is the effective leadership.

In the rural areas, all the castes except the low castes have taken advantage of the new situation. Srinivas observes that "with the passing of political power to the people, castes have become pressure groups and are competing for power and for the fruits of power." The Scheduled Castes are reported to have not benefited from these opportunities. Though numerically strong, they are not well organized to effect a striking bargain with the caste Hindus. Because of their economic dependence on the caste Hindus, the Scheduled Castes have not come up in life despite these institutions. Betelle finds a similar situation in Tanjara village. He reports, "as yet, the
Pollas of Sripuram are not sufficiently well organized to be able to exploit on a permanent basis, the strength which they owe to their numbers.\textsuperscript{59}

Leadership is an accepted social phenomenon that the upbringing of the lower castes in a developing country depends largely on the quality of organized leadership made available to the people. Beteille refers to the advantages of aimed by Harijans in Janjare through organized leadership. For reasons such as illiteracy, ignorance, traditional values and customs, lack of hopes and aspirations, the Scheduled Castes have generally accepted and in many castes felt contented with, the 'lowest rank' tagged on the innumerable social disabilities. In a welfare state like ours, several measures economic and social including political, have been undertaken to help these people and give them a face light. Even then, these measures depend on the quality of the leaders, if they have to succeed.

The village panchayats have a tremendous role to play in shaping the social and economic life of the Scheduled Castes and other weaker sections of the
society. Ittija Khan and Mandelbaum have referred to the role of the Panchayati Raj in improving the position on the weaker sections of the population.

Panchayats are one of the most important social institutions which are expected to eradicate social and economic inequalities.

The other important role of the Panchayat is that it has given strength to the neglected Scheduled Castes for the first time to bargain with the caste Hindus at the time of the elections. Srinivas says, "The introduction of adult franchise and panchayat raj (local self government at the village, tahsil and district level) since independence has resulted in giving a new sense of self-respect and power to 'low' castes, particularly Harijans, who enjoy reservation of seats in all elected bodies from the village to Union Parliament."

Research methods adopted:

The present study follow the principles of the historical and descriptive methods of research as they suited more to examine the objective of research work. Various sources like questioneer and interview
methods were used to collect the primary data. In supplement to the primary data books referring to the panchayati raj studies were also consulted.

The study covers 134 village panchayat members of Scheduled Caste community. These leaders were directly elected by the voters in the five panchayat samiti areas in Latur district.

Aims and objects of the study:

In present study an attempt has been made to study the various factors which influence in the leadership of Scheduled Castes in Panchayati Raj institutions. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To study the socio-economic background of the Scheduled Caste leaders in Gram Panchayat.

2. To study the nature of their responsiveness to Scheduled Caste community.

3. To study the inter-caste relations of Scheduled Caste leaders in Gram Panchayat.

4. To study the impact of local leaders on Scheduled Caste leadership in Gram Panchayat.
5. To study the impact of political parties on Scheduled Caste leadership in Gram Panchayat.

6. To study the various welfare programmes for Scheduled Caste community and the role of Scheduled Caste leaders in Gram Panchayat.

7. To study the views of Scheduled Castes leaders about reservations of seats in Gram Panchayat.

8. To study the views of Scheduled Caste leaders on election system in Gram Panchayat.

9. To study the views of the Scheduled Caste leaders about Panchayati Raj functioning.

10. To study what are the expectations of Scheduled Caste leaders from the Gram Panchayat.

11. To study the factors affecting the Scheduled Caste leadership in Gram Panchayat.

12. To study the role of Scheduled Caste leadership in Gram Panchayat.
Following is the chapter scheme of the thesis.

Chapter I deals with the introduction of Panchayat Raj. It also deals with the Research Methods adopted.

Chapter II deals with the theoretical aspects of the leadership. The various definitions of leadership are given in this chapter. Formerly, physiochologists emphasised the personality characteristics of the leader. Some discussed it is a result of behaviour. Some have tried to understand leadership through a process of mutual stimulation of leader followers behaviour as a result of social interaction.

Chapter III gives detail historical account of the development of village panchayat in India. The village panchayats have been the living centres of direct and real democracy in our country from very old times. The issue of Panchayati Raj is an old one. Panchayat has an ancient flavour. Indian lives in her villages and village panchayats in some form or other have been functioning in India from time immemorial.
The concept of Panchayat in India owes its origin to the popular rural saying "Panj Panch Parmeshwar" which means that the decision of the five persons of the village may be regarded as the decision of God. During the Vedic times, the villagers themselves managed their local affairs. The Gramini or Grampal was the headman who was appointed by the villagers. References to the Gram Sabhas on the local village assemblies are found in the Jatakas as well. The Mauryan kings did not interfere with the village administration. During this period, every village had its own village assembly, which usually discussed all matters related to the Muslim rulers. No attention was paid towards the development of the local self-governing institutions.

In chapter IV, I have discussed about the present political and administrative structure of three-tier system in Maharashtra. The development of Panchayati Raj in Maharashtra, therefore, can be said to be the logical outcome of the Mehta Committee report. Immediately after inauguration of the Maharashtra State on the 1st May 1960, the
Maharashtra Government constituted a committee on Democratic Decentralisation under the Chairman of Shri late V.P. Naik. The Government of Maharashtra accepted all the major recommendations of the Naik Committee and promptly enacted the Maharashtra Zilla Parishad and Panchayat Samitis Act 1961. In Maharashtra, Village Panchayats were established under the Bombay Village Panchayat Act, 1958.

Chapter V deals with Scheduled Castes in Maharashtra. India is known as a land of great contrast with the most glaring social inequalities, economic as well as of prestige or status. The caste system provided an institutional basis for tolerance. Living in a caste society means living in a pluralistic cultural universe, each caste has its own occupation, customs, ritual, traditions and ideas. Caste councils, especially the council of the locally dominant caste, are the guardians of such pluralism.

In ancient India the term of castes was not such as it is today. The origin of caste has always been an issue of debate among the sociologists.
arose out of the reorganisation of states on the recommendation of the State Reorganisation Commission Report.

In chapter VII, I have discussed about the political reservations for SC in PRIs. In this chapter, I have gone in detail about the history of reservation policy in India. The Government of India Act of 1919 for the first time in the recorded history of India recognised the claims of depressed classes for political representation. After gaining political independence, considering the backwardness of these communities it was felt that a special and favoured treatment was necessary to compensate for their centuries old exploitation. The Constitution provides them considerable resources and protections in the field of education, employment and politics. In addition to the universal adult suffrage the principle of reserved seats in the Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assembly and PRIs has been adopted to safeguard the political interests to the SC masses.

In chapter VIII I have discussed about the rural power structure and Scheduled Caste Leadership. Rural
life in India is relatively complicated and complex. The richest landowners of the village were generally the recognised leaders and when the economic strength was supported by caste or religious factors as it was to happen in many cases, the position of the leader was unchallenged. The introduction of the PRIs in the country has led to dispersal of power and responsibilities down to the village level and has produced far reaching changes in the pattern of rural leadership.

The chapter IX deals with Panchayat elections and Scheduled Caste leadership. In this chapter we have discussed types of election. The process of election may be termed as corner-stone of any democratic system. Elections carry the most representative voice of the community. Further, I have discussed about the caste in panchayat election, dominant caste and Scheduled Caste leadership, Inter-caste relations and SC leadership and lastly, I have discussed the role of political parties and MLA and MPs in village panchayat election.

Chapter X deals with the socio-economic background of the elected Scheduled Caste leaders of
ample village panchayat. The introduction of the statutory panchayat and the changing social and economic pattern brought a change in the autocratic attitude of the traditional leadership and the structure of the village panchayat. Leadership studies done in India in recent years have used sex, age, caste, income, land-holdings, education, family size, occupation, etc. as the major variables that constitute the index of socio-economic status of the leaders in village panchayat. I have taken the same variables to understand the socio-economic background of the elected members.

Chapter XI deals with welfare programmes and Scheduled Caste leadership; in this chapter, I have included the Panchayat Raj and SC leaders, Panchayat meetings and SC leaders, Gram Sabha and SC leaders. On these sub-topics I have asked various types of questions to the respondents and collected information.

In the last chapter, I have given conclusion of the study.
References:


3. For details see Narayan Jayaprakash, A plea for Reconstruction of Indian Policy in Prasad R.C., Democracy and Development, Rachna Prakashan, New Delhi, p. 6.


34. Ibid., p. 12.

35. Quoted by Abraham M. Francis, Dynamics of Leadership in Village India, India International Publication, Allahabad, 1974, p. 69, Frank W. and Ruth C. Young, Towards a Theory of Community Development, p. 27.


