CHAPTER XII

(F)

DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALISATION (PANCHAYAT RAJ)

AND LEADERSHIP.

Meaning and General Introduction:

Democratic decentralisation or Panchayat Raj is one of the most significant steps initiated in free India for rural development. It embodies an approach to the problems of improving rural life under the condition of democratic planning. Planning from below is the cornerstone of the edifice of decentralised democracy. "The very concept of Panchayat Raj has originated from the realisation of the fact that people's participation in development activities was ineffective and inadequate and that the community development programme did not rouse the wide spread enthusiasm originally expected of it. With the coming of P.R., community development is no longer a government programme, but it is a movement of the people, by the people and for the people. If the concept of true democracy is to be brought home to the people and their co-operation ensured, it is not enough that they are associated with some local bodies but they must also have a voice..."
in the higher legislative institutions of the country."1

The P.R. has taken birth out of a genuine desire to witness a fully blossomed grass roots of democracy, as our late Prime Minister Pt. Nehru called it. Mahatma Gandhi ji also realised the need of village panchayats in the following words. "Indian independence must begin at the bottom. Every village should be a republic or panchayat having full powers; the greater the power of panchayats, the better for the people." Late Shri Balwant Rai Mehta suggested the three tier structure of the Panchayat Raj, village panchayat at the village levels, panchayat samiti at the block level and Zilla Parishad at the district level. In his report Shri Mehta emphasised the need of Panchayat Raj in the following words. "Democracy has to function through certain executive machinery but the democratic government operating over large areas through its executive machinery can not adequately appreciate local needs and circumstances. It is therefore, necessary that there should be devolution of power and a decentralisation of machinery and that such power be exercised and such machinery controlled and directed by popular representatives of the local areas."2

Now the three tier P.R. system has been accepted as the pattern of local development administration. It may be defined as the three tier structure of rural local self government at the village, block and district levels based on democratisation and

1. M.F. Abraham, "Whither Panchayat Raj", Kurukshetra, June 66, p. 11
devolution power and resources for the specific purpose of planning and implementing the community development programme with the active, spirited and spontaneous participation of the rural people with a view to develop their economic, social and cultural life. Indeed P.R. is a new experiment and both community development and P.R. are very familiar now. Coming to the objectives of P.R., "a real division of governmental power is to help realise three basic values of a community, viz. liberty, equality and welfare. P.R. is designed to realise these values for all sections of the rural community. To promote liberty, it provides additional and more readily available points of success and control; to provide equality, it enables effective participation of people's chosen representatives in decision making; to promote welfare it ensures efficient governmental action in the sphere of development by bringing the administration close to the origin of problem." 1

As regards the set up of P.R., it varies from state to State. But generally the set up mostly relied upon the initiative of local people. In fact P.R. is a bulwark against bureaucracy and the government officials in it occupy a subordinate position.

Panchayat Raj in Madhya Pradesh:

The enactment of the Madhya Pradesh Panchayats Act 1962 laid the foundation of P.R. in the State. The State Government have been pragmatic while implementing the provisions of the Act. In the interest of viability, Gram Panchayats were re-organised on the basis of an average population of 2500 each. In the State

the process of delimiting and constituting Nyaya Panchayat was also undertaken. A Nyaya Panchayat covers on an average a population of 10,000 and its members are nominated from amongst those persons who possess the qualification for being a Gram Panch but actually are not holding that office. The idea is to combine merit with detachment. For the purpose of imparting training to the Panchas and Sarpanchas and other officials, P.R. training centres have been established throughout the state.

Before describing the Village Panchayats in the area under study, it must be understood that the three tier structure of P.R. has not been yet introduced in Madhya Pradesh like Gujerat and Andhra Pradesh and others though at the village level Gram and Nyaya Panchayats have been established after the election of Panchas and Sarpanchas.

**Gram Panchayats and Nyaya Panchayats in the Area Under Study**

In the survey the villagers were interviewed regarding the village panchayats, their functions and people’s knowledge about the same and attitude towards the panchayats. From the block offices and Panchayat Extension officers, information was extracted about the number of Gram and Nyaya Panchayats functioning throughout the area and the members therein.

In all the blocks there were 354 Gram Panchayats and total Nyaya Panchayats were 32 in 8 blocks as the information of four blocks could not be available. Their number per block is given in the table on the next page.
Table No. 12:13

Table showing the number of Gram and Nyaya panchayats and members therein.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block</th>
<th>Total number of Gram panchayats</th>
<th>Total number of Nyaya panchayats</th>
<th>Total No. of members in Gram panchayats</th>
<th>Total No. of members in Nyaya panchayats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katni</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sehore</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jabalpur</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khurai</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehli</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banda</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tendukheda</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jabera</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathariya</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>to be nominated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narsimhanpur</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goteaon</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kareli</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>354</strong></td>
<td><strong>32</strong></td>
<td><strong>3666</strong></td>
<td><strong>171</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>152</strong></td>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows that on an average there were 29 Gram Panchayats in every block with a range from 23 to 35. The average number of members was 452 per block for 3 blocks for which
information was available. Taking into consideration the number of members per panchayat for the aforesaid blocks, on an average it was 16 per Gram Panchayat. The average number of Nyaya Panchayat per block was 4 for 8 blocks for which information was available. The number of members of Nyaya Panchayats was available for 4 blocks only for which it was 43 on an average.

On an average each Gram Panchayat had a population of 2253 while a Gram Panchayat was constituted for 6.7 villages on an average in the blocks under study. The whole population of the area was covered by the Gram Panchayats. It was also noticed that after the re-organisation of the village panchayats the number of the same have been reduced in the State means population per Panchayat has increased and consequently more than one village represent the Gram Panchayat.

Out of all the 24 villages surveyed, 13 had Gram Panchayats while 6 villages were attached with other villages where there were Gram Panchayats, of course the members of such villages represented them. Only one village had Nyaya Panchayat out of all the villages.

As regards the Panchayat Bhamans in the area, the number was quite limited though these were situated in every block. Most of the village Panchayats were held either in the village school building or in community centre buildings where they existed. In the survey the villagers were also interviewed relating to their knowledge about P.R. and functions of these units. First they were asked the meaning of P.R. Only 16% of the respondents answered it satisfactorily who possessed some knowledge of
Gram Panchayats. 43% expressed some knowledge of it but did not give a clear-cut answer. They simply replied that P.R. was meant for village improvement but totally ignored the importance of decentralisation of powers and participation of local people in the democracy. It was sad to learn that the remaining 41% knew nothing about P.R., even they had heard nothing of village panchayats in present context though they were aware of the traditional village panchayats in the rural areas. It shows the poor publicity of the concept of P.R. which is a new experiment in our country aiming at economic, social and cultural upliftment of the rural people.

Though the people had the knowledge of the existence of Gram Panchayats in their villages, they did not know when the same were established and what were the main functions of them. Only less than 40% replied that the main functions of Panchayats were to levy the taxes, cleanliness of the village and to decide the ordinary civil cases of the villagers. No body knew of the role of panchayats in increasing agricultural production. The village people are not aware that P.R. bodies are also involved in institutional devices to mobilise the village people for increasing agricultural production.

The villagers were also asked if elections of Gram Panchayats took place peacefully in their area. It was noticed that people seemed reluctant to answer this question. Most of them answered in 'yes' but when cross examined they admitted that the elections resulted in village factions and groupism involving party politics. It was also known that the caste factor played leading role in the election of Panchas and Sarpanchas of
the Panchayats. Consequently the qualities required in them were totally neglected. The villagers also disclosed that some of the members of the Panchayat did not impart their duties impartially.

On being asked about the village problems and to what extent they were being met through Panchayats, the people answered that insanitary conditions of the villages, low yield in agriculture, absence of lighting arrangements in the night, lack of drinking water facility and educational facilities were the main problems. The last two problems were cited by only a few villagers and they admitted that these problems were fully met by the village panchayats and in some panchayats they were not at all solved. It was also reported that there were no regular meetings of the members of the panchayats and village problems were not timely discussed. In a way most of Panchayats were defunct.

The villagers were also asked to extend their suggestions for the successful working of the Panchayats in their areas. Most of the people were silent on this. Only some of them suggested that there must be educated and trained members in the panchayats and caste factors and party politics must be abolished in the villages and the members must work impartially for the all-round development of the villages. Some of them also suggested that there should be adequate financial resources with the Panchayats. The panchayats have also levied house taxes which was opposed by the people. It was strange to learn as one of the suggestions that the Gram Panchayats must be abolished. It shows either the villagers did not understand the importance of grass-root of democracy or they were highly displeased with the working of
village panchayats.

The Panchayat Extension officers were also interviewed regarding the working P.R. and the difficulties realised along with their suggestions. It was reported that lack of education amongst the members of panchayats posed a great problem. The local Secretaries have not effectively worked and Revenue departments have not proved helpful in recovery of taxes. It was also known that the lack of proper village leadership was a handicap in the smooth working of the panchayats. They insisted on the appointment of a well trained and full time Government servant as secretary of panchayats. It was also desired that there must be available technical guidance and other help from all the concerned departments.

The report of the working of the Panchayats in the area under study does not give hopeful indications. The village panchayats have not achieved the aim they were meant for. Though three tier structure has not been introduced in the State, the panchayats have also not worked efficiently in order to bring about social and economic growth. The people in the villages are faction-ridden and it is blamed that these panchayats have carried the party politics to the level of local administration and increased factions and groupings in the villages. To this problem Pt. Nehru had replied in the following words: "Democracy reflects both our strength and our weaknesses. It is quite possible that elections may bring about quarrels, groupism, factions.....The panchayats will also make the mistakes and learn from mistakes. All the inherent failings and defects of our country may come up in panchayati
system but the advantages worth these risks. 1 But even today these panchayats are the victims of many ills prevailing in the rural areas. The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee was not able to suggest any arrangement where by election fever and feuds could be avoided and smooth development ensured.

It has also been reported that persons having qualifications of a pancha, have not been elected due to the caste factor and party feelings. For the successful working of Panchayats, a member shouid be a person who is considered a man of integrity. The test of integrity, apart from the personal knowledge, of a competent person, is public opinion to some extent, the record of a man.

Community Development and P.R. had far reaching implications in the structure of development administration and the pattern of rural development. For the success of these movements a massive effort at training and education is basic. Though the members have been trained in P.R. training camps, it was not to any significant extent and illiteracy with lack of experience still dominate the field. The villagers must be properly educated to appreciate the value of P.R. and to better participate in it. Panchayat Raj really means that both policy and programme planning and its execution should be entrusted to the people's representatives and ample opportunities should be given to the rural people to co-operate in P.R. with effective participation and administration. Rural people should be given opportunity to

1. Panchayat Raj as a factor for national integration, Kurukshetra April, 1961 p. 112.
approve their own plans according to the felt needs and available human and material resources. "P.R. institutions should be entrusted with real power, authority and responsibility with regard to planning and implementation of the community development programme thereby trusting and entrusting the rural people."1

Then there is problem of small resources and autonomy. Viewing the importance of rural democracy, these institutions must be equipped with adequate finance and power. It is not enough merely to provide an organisational structure for achieving the objectives of P.R. There are certain other pre-requisites such as adequate finance, delegation and devolution of power, authority and responsibility, minimum control and maximum autonomy etc. without which the objectives of P.R. can not be achieved.

The survey also indicates that Panchayats have not interested themselves consciously in increasing agricultural production. The villagers reported that panchayats had not introduced any measures to accelerate agricultural production.

"Agricultural production is by far the most important aspect of economic development as it influences in a major way the economy of the rural areas. The progress achieved in agricultural production should, therefore, prove a good yard stick for assessing the role of the P.R. institutions in bringing about social and economic growth in the country side. It is perhaps for this reason that our late Prime Minister Shri ShastriJI once mentioned that success achieved in agricultural production would determine the success of Panchayat Raj. "With this view the Annual Conference of C.D. & P.R."

1. H.R.S. Iyer, P.R., Concept and Significance" Kurukshetra, April, 66
also emphasised that P.R. institutions should play a very active and vital role in the agricultural production drive. "With regard to agricultural production it is P.R. alone that can deliver the goods. If it fails, no other agency is likely to succeed in this field." But it is sorrowful state of affairs that no reponsibility has been fixed on the panchayats for production of food grains.

The conclusion is drawn that the villagers are not conscious to a great extent towards P.R. and it is why their co-operation is not forth-coming. Panchayats in the area have not rendered any useful services to the village community. Only few of them have undertaken activities relating to rural development and some have also undertaken the distribution of food grains and other rationed commodities. The noticeable feature has been that panchayat elections have developed permanent factions and groupism in villages which prove a most powerful handicap in seeking co-operation for activities of rural development. Introduction of democratic decentralisation and transfer of important functions to village panchayats in the faction ridden villages of India has thus made it imperative that arrangements should be made for proper education and training of villagers. They must be made conscious of the responsibilities as democratic citizens. "In order to work in the context of Panchayati Raj, extension workers need to be fully aware of the group processes that are necessary to develop these activities. Modern educators have come to learn that, with subject matter alone, they can not help either children or adults grow in their ability to solve problems. A pre-requisite to the effective

1. Shri H.K. Mehtab, "Food Prices and Panchayat Raj", Kurkshetra, 14th Anniversary Number, Oct. 66, p. 28
use of subject matter is proficiency in the democratic problem solving process itself, and this is best taught and learnt in the group context."

**General Suggestions:**

Panchayats need revitalisation and re-organisation along with proper guidance and help from government authorities. If panchayat is to be the strong base for building up democracy from the grass roots, the role—the relationship of all the functionaries have to be clearly defined and the rural community is to be prepared for the democratic way of life and whole democratic process is to be revitalised, providing our new born democracy a broader and firmer base. "Community development approach and P.R. have come to stay. They are our vehicles for rural development. They should grow in strength and dimensions, fulfilling tasks related both to the current needs and the long term goals of development."2

If P.R. institutions have to be developed as democratic institutions, it is necessary that they are helped to develop the sound traditions of democracy. Hence the urgent need of P.R. is to help these institutions to develop the healthy democratic traditions and to function effectively. It must be well recognised that P.R. is a very complex problem and to introduce it successfully needs some fundamental changes in the out-look of the people. The people have to understand that P.R. is meant for the development of their villages hence their co-operation is first

---

2. A.P. Shinde, "Community development and P.R.", Kurukshetra, op. cit. p. 8
condition for its success. Local competency and local initiative have to be exploited for the proper functioning of the P.R. and the representatives have to work for the common good. They should be encouraged to value the development of P.R. as offering new avenues of service to the people rather than opportunities for the exercise of authority. Simultaneously the introduction of P.R. also enhances greatly "the responsibility of the technical departments at the State level. They should transmit the best guidance and experience available in each field of development, provide for adequate training programmes for the elected representatives and assist them generally in fulfilling the onerous responsibilities which P.R. has placed on them."

In view of the charges levelled against the P.R. that as a result of it village politics are an endless series of feuds among castes and factions, it would be worthwhile here to examine some of the points given in its favour. It has been argued that most of the criticisms are based on impressions gathered by critics in limited areas and very often generalisations are drawn from a few examples. The fact that factions exist in our villages is widely recognised and confirmed but it is maintained that factions are a part of social living and hold true in any community anywhere in the world, forming a part of community life. It is further advocated that if one looks at the positive aspect of factions, one is struck by the potential of these groups as possible vehicles for development programmes. The results are not always inspiring but no one can deny that in spite of past conflicts, village leaders are

1. Third Five Year Plan, "Planning Commission, Govt. of India," p. 340
now at least sitting around the table to discuss things that concern the whole village. It is also told that after the introduction of P.R. caste affiliations have been carried over into panchayat politics as a logical necessity. With more education, more out-side contacts, more caste mobility and hopefully more income the individuals will inter-act with each other more as individuals than as caste members.

In case of village politics, it is argued that in a modernizing society, the stage of politicizing that obtains at the national level will, sooner or later, be reflected at the village level and the suggestion that the local bodies should be entirely insulated from political warfare is unrealistic.

In view of the above arguments given in favour of factions, caste and politics at village level, it may be said that at least in the region under study there is no sign of village factions giving positive results and on the other hand they have created troubles at the village level resulting in the disharmony of the village community. Caste feeling has created some different caste-wise groups in the villages watching their self interest only and prepared to quarrel with other caste group on every minor thing. No doubt, party politics may be necessary in the democracy but it must be utilised for some constructive and useful purposes leading to common good and welfare. But at present this type of mentality has not developed in the village panchayats. It may hold true in the long run but in the short run it is proving detrimental to development efforts in the villages.

It may be concluded that at present in the country
Panchayat Raj is not a simple problem of education of ignorant rural masses and doing away with caste and factions. To introduce P.R. successfully needs some fundamental changes of outlook to be worked out by psychologists, sociologists and othersocial engineers in the present context.

Greater responsibility also lies on the extension workers in this direction. "With a sound knowledge of the social factors concerning the groups and by adopting the group processes, an extension worker can help the groups become more homogenous, competent and self-reliant."1

LEADERSHIP IN THE VILLAGES

General Introduction:

With the emergence of P.R. in our country, the question of leadership has gained importance though from the very beginning community development programme has taken upon itself the onerous duty of mobilising people's participation and helping emerge the right type of leadership in the villages. If democracy is to be successful in India, it is but imperative that good leadership should emerge in our villages. "Successful operation of the democratic principles depends solely upon the purposeful participation by the individual citizen in the affairs of his country in his personal capacity as well as a member of his community."1 Leadership in a democratic society offered by those who set worth on the individual should have as its goal helping people to be a better people and society to be a better society and should use methods that are consistent solely with that goal. No one can deny that rural development without people's participation is a misnomer. It is why the C.D. programme in India from the very outset has laid stress on this aspect and has sought to ensure people's help and co-operation through their leaders. All along it has endeavoured to discover new leaders of the village who with some guidance can help mould people's rethinking and action for the common good. "Community development and decentralised democracy

1. B.M. Pandey, "Training of Village Leaders", Kurukshetra, May 1966 p. 65
call for a purposeful and necessary dynamic leadership for the exercise of leadership functions is necessary at every stage of the programme."

Meaning and Functions of Leadership:

Leadership has been defined as the activity of influencing people to co-operate towards some goal which they come to find desirable. As the term denotes a leader has essentially the quality of leading others for the common good. A leader is one who is able to see ahead of the rest; who is able to plan and enlist others participation in the programme. Leadership of rural group is a product of group life and it does not exist independently of a group. Viewing the role, the leaders are expected to play and the specific jobs they are required to perform, generally it has been misunderstood. The term leader has come to mean only those who ask others to do the job and keep their hands away from it. But this is the wrong definition of a leader. For the purposeful re-construction of the rural area, a leader must be a worker leader, one who works while he leads and leads while he works. Leaders are not born. Neither can they be made in a school for leadership. It is the society which has to throw up right persons from amongst them as leaders. Leadership is not abstract in essence. It is a function, an influence, a relationship. Good and democratic leadership is essentially educative.

As regards the kinds of leadership it is not possible here to attempt an elaborate sociological typology not it

1. Dr. Leela Dube, "Leadership in C.D. and Decentralised Democracy" Kurukshetra, June 1966, p. 5
is essential. But a brief description would be sufficient. Leadership may be classified into professional leaders, functional leaders, sectional leaders and village leaders. Professional leaders are often from outside the village community itself. These are the formal types having come through constitutional procedures. There is already such a set of leaders in the villages in the form of elected representatives and office bearers of P.R. institutions. Naturally these type of leaders introduce ideas and initiate the action. It is not necessary that these leaders may always get active support. The functional leaders are those who are interested in learning new techniques and improved methods of productions. Many of them are such as would take to new ways without much resistance. Such persons could ultimately act as a demonstration unit and serve as a good communication media for the spread of new ideas. Their influence is largely focussed on their individual specialities. Sectional leaders are the leaders of caste and occupational groups. The influence of such leaders extends only to particular section of the community. Village leaders may be traditional type of leaders or newly emerging type. Generally traditional leaders are simple and unsophisticated matured persons not interested in personal publicity but deeply concerned about the welfare of the community. Community acceptance and a high degree of diffusiveness in their capacity to initiate action are two important characteristics of such leaders. These leaders have a reputation for honesty and justice. The next type of it is the dominating type who has the capacity to see things through. They acquire the position by special qualification or by distinguished service.
As regards the functions of leadership, the Third Five Year Plan makes it quite clear that, "the task before the leadership is to change the out-lack of the people, win their confidence and stimulate them to new endeavours. Further the Plan states that functions non-official leaders should be "(i) to mobilise public participation and promote the acceptance of programmes by the people; (ii) to assist village panchayats and co-operatives in their work (iii) to assist in training programmes for village leaders and others (iv) to organise programmes for the benefit of the community and (v) to promote the welfare of the weaker sections." The view of the village development should be all the time before the leadership as the firm objective. The introduction of P.R. has assigned new role to leaders of developing the village communities and to harness the people's participation for the common good. It is people's participation which determines the success of rural democracy. The leaders have to train the villagers to develop the spirit of self-help, sense of self-respect, initiative and a capacity for co-operative and joint working with their fellowmen for the common welfare.

Leadership in the Villages Under Study:

During the survey the information was collected from the block offices regarding the leadership camps and programmes relating to it. The villagers were also interviewed regarding their attitudes towards leadership. In all the blocks the programme

1. Third Five Year Plan, op. cit. p. 341
of arranging leader camps have been conducted with the objective of training people in the particular field of their interest. Agriculture being the mainstay, it has been the subject matter of these camps to train every farmer in the improved techniques of agriculture. Along with this scheme emphasis was also laid on training of functional leaders in other fields such as the programme for youth, women and artisans.

The survey reveals that during the period of five years from 1961-62 to 1965-66, on an average seven village leader camps were arranged per block in 10 blocks for which information was available and for the same period on an average 248 persons per block participated in them. It is not possible to comment here to what extent the camps were successful in enlisting the participation of the people and imparting the knowledge of improved methods of agriculture to the farmers. Some of the villagers who had attended the camps admitted that they could learn nothing of improved methods of agriculture in such camps. It shows that training programmes of village leaders have not given increased importance and attention to agricultural production. In the context of national emergency now obtaining in the country, our training programme for village leaders has to add to itself the new dimension of equipping the village communities with the where-withals of meeting the needs of increased production for the country.

As the workers in a community development block are deeply concerned with the local leaders to introduce the programme in the villages, training programmes for agricultural production
and mass education become all the more important. It also becomes necessary that during the course of training a practical scheme of working indicating the items of work and methods of implementing should be clearly drawn. The leading role of the leaders in initiating the farmers to take to the improved methods of agriculture can be justified as in adopting agricultural practices people are more likely to follow the example of a good farmer than that of a politician hence the need of constructive programme of training village leaders.

Official leadership has often been too obvious and direct and the inclination of administration to work with established village leaders and influential men has not been conducive to the emergence of a new and effective leadership.

The opinion of the villagers was also sought about leadership. All type of leaders existed in the villages. The villagers were asked what type of leaders influenced them. It was known that more than 50% people were influenced by the traditional leaders, specially the older ones. But except a few, these leaders were so obsessed with caste, class and religious considerations and so antiquated in their approach to men and matters that they did not fit into the scheme of things represented by community development programme. It has been observed that leadership continues in the hands of an elite which might at one time have been representative of the community. Caste and creed play a greater role than is warranted by the requirements of the total community.

After the introduction of Panchayat Raj, sectional
leadership has also come to the picture. People attach more importance to the leader of a particular section which has been created after the panchayat election. Thus different sections of people existed in the villages with their respective leaders. This emergence of sectional leaders showed that in general the villages had no such leader who was considered a true leader in the real sense of the term by all the people, of all castes and creeds of that particular village. It has also been noticed that villagers in many cases look upon their caste or group leaders for guidance. Though there have been social and economic changes in the villages, this sort of leadership still prevails there.

In case of leadership, the village 'rich' or dominant land owning group also play a vital role as leaders. These type of leaders are not so much respected as feared. But it is a fact that because of the internal complexity of village organisations resulting from caste and class divisions and from the existence of party factions, none of the different groups of leaders claimed following in all the sphere of village life.

A new type of leadership of educated persons has also emerged in the villages which is more conscious towards the general development of the village rather than to watch the interest of a particular group. Such leaders have successfully gained the favour of the villagers in some aspects of development activities. But these leaders have also not gained the complete following in the villages as some villagers see some vested interests of such leaders behind the activities of development and act as handicaps.
The enquiry into leadership reveals that most of the villagers are not satisfied with their present leaders. It was also noticed that some persons did not express their ideas regarding leadership in their villages.

Conclusion and Suggestions:

The general conclusion is that right type of leadership has not yet emerged in the villages though it is not today static and stagnant. On the other hand the changes have been introduced in the rural communities which denote the democratic nature of the leadership though not perfect. It is a fact that under the programme of community development the villages have lacked the leadership, helpful in their economic and social development. In the absence of such leadership, the villagers are not able to utilise the local and external resources and their belief in the Panchayat Raj and co-operative institutions dwindles. The villagers have to rise above group factions and vested interest of a particular group. The interests of a class, caste and section are to be over-looked and common good of the whole village society is to be recognised by the leadership. The leaders have to serve the masses in the real sense of the term, forcing the society to change or to march ahead in the direction of achieving the set goals.

The present trend of leadership which is with the money lender or the big landlord in the villages has to be changed which is possible only by training the youth on the right lines. Today persons having no land or wealth are rarely recognised
as leaders. Property or wealth is still counted as a factor for selecting a leader. The leadership and economic strength of the village people are interdependent which is quite undesirable.

If the leadership, in the true sense of the term, is established in the villages and if the dormant traditional leaders can be associated with panchayat raj administration, it will be quite easy for the development workers to mobilise the villagers and motivate them for group activities. No doubt, the success of many programmes of rural development such as introduction of improved methods and implements in agriculture, participation in the activities of village development and adopting the family planning methods depend on the village leaders. "With the good leadership and discipline in all walks of life we can successfully meet challenge to our freedom, political or economic." 1 As a result of Panchayat Raj, a new leadership has emerged but the pace of emergence is rather slow and it has not yet been able to fill the vacuum created by the old leadership that is withering away. In this context it is quite imperative to make a quick emergence of a dynamic and responsible leadership.

Now the crux of the problem is how to make the emergence of a dynamic and responsible leadership in the villages. In this regard, it is quite essential that persons whole-heartedly and willingly interested in the development of the villages, must be given encouragement. It is not necessary that a new dynamic leader must give up all the old social values and beliefs.

Traditional social and religious values contributing towards the

1. B.M. Pandey, "Training of village leaders", op. cit. p. 7
unity of the village must be accepted by the new leaders. It has been noticed that some persons working only for a certain class and section with selfish motives sacrificing the common good of the whole village are also recognised as leaders. Such leaders can not fit in the present set up where leaders are required to play a vital role in the economic and social development of the village.

It must not be taken as granted by the officials that only certain person can act as leaders. Others may also have genuine qualities of a dynamic leader, only the necessity is to recognise them and give them due importance; creating an urge in them to take initiative for developing the village. The notion that a Sarpanch of a village panchayat is really a true leader elected by the people of the village, must be abandoned because it may be on the basis of caste and group etc. The elected person may not be a self-less worker. Many studies into leadership have revealed this fact. What is required is that social welfare must not be sacrificed for individual selfish motives.

It must not be recognised that the role of the leaders is confined only to the social activities and welfare of the villages including Gram Panchayat functions. It goes beyond it. In the present context the leaders are expected to induce and persuade the farmers to take to the improved methods of cultivation in order to increase the agricultural production and to popularise the family planning programme among the rural folks making them understand the importance of the same. This is the greatest need of the time.
It may also be suggested that the leaders must demonstrate through results the achievements they want to teach. In this way the village leaders may prove more effective than the official leaders in creating an atmosphere of rural development.