CHAPTER IV

THE EMERGING LEADERSHIP
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CHAPTER - IV

THE EMERGING LEADERSHIP

I. The Crucial Role of Leadership

Leadership is pivotal to organization's growth and development. The crucially important and equally perplexing problem faced by all organization, private and public, all over the world, is that of leadership. Studies on leadership have amply shown that, the success and failure of an organization has depended mainly, on the type of leadership of that organization. Leadership seems as if, to be a commodity which is not readily available in the market, be it from a developed or developing countries. It has therefore been a subject of unending debate and enquiry in social sciences, especially during the last few decades. All agree that, the effective implementation of varied socio-economic programmes launched in developing countries depends to a great extent, on the type of leadership that is available to them. The role of leadership, therefore is critically important and this importance, in any organized society needs no explanation.
A leader is a 'person who is able to unite people in the pursuit of a goal'. On the other hand, Ordway Tead views leadership as an activity of influencing people to cooperate towards some common goal which they come to find desirable. The basic ingredient in leadership would be one performing the role i.e. an individual or a group performing activities fulfilling the role-organizing others to realise a pre-determined goal. It may be a group or a number of groups or the community at large. A leader is expected to deal with common problem of the group/groups community and to attempt solution according to the priorities of the community, at a given movement. He is also expected to lead the community and influence its pattern of behaviour, binding the community together and securing the ends of justice and equality. Further, he would also try to inculcate in them, a sense of duty, as members of that community.

Leadership in a 'Third World Country' has a crucial task to perform viz. to achieve development in all walks of life. Save miracle, development could be realized only over a period. To make it enduring, people need to cultivate a development consciousness. This inturn is a part of the larger process of economic transformation and social change. This can only be achieved through the
instrumentality of development oriented leadership. A genuine leadership therefore is vital for any developing nation to help it to come out of its old ways of living and organizing life and guide its planned efforts towards modernization. India, as a 'Third World Country' aims at modernization and social transformation. It needs for this a committed and development oriented leadership. And the change has to settle firmly at the lower level of the society, it should emerge from these very grass-roots.

II. History of Village Leadership in India in the Context of Development

During the ancient days, Kings of small independent territories enjoyed the monopoly of leadership. They possessed unquestionable authority over all their subjects and would be autocratic or benevolent, in their functioning. Their main interest was to protect the territory from the neighbouring foreign invasions, keep its entity intact and spread their influence across the geographical boundaries of their territory. Even during this period, villages were the basic units of administration. The importance given to village organizations in ancient days, is evident from the vedic and post-vedic literature. References to village
administration are found in the famous classics like the 'Ramayana' and the 'Mahabharatha'. Ramayana refers to 'Janapath' and Mahabharatha to 'Gramsabha'. Most of the rulers during this period, recognised the importance of these bodies and its leadership; for instance King Bimbisara of Magadha [BC 542 - 490] used to convene a meeting of village headmen to discuss important questions of administrative policy, regarding village administration.  

Village administration was carried under the supervision and direction of the village headmen designated as a 'Grameyaka' and 'Gramadhyaksha'. The headmen was assisted in his work by a Council of non-officials, senior members of different classes, who have acquired pre-eminent status by their character, experience and age were elevated by a general consensus to the status of village councillors. One can say that, the socio-economic and cultural prosperity of that period was due to well organized village administration supervised over, by a natural and socially representative village Council of the Elders.

During the Mugal rule, also local administration was given premium consideration. Town administration, then was vested in an officer called 'Kotwal' who
performed many developmental functions besides exercising the supreme authority in judicial, police and fiscal matters.°

Village leadership in India, during this period was stratified into caste, religion and family status. These factors played an important role in selecting the village leadership. A dominant caste would control the socio-economic and political power-structure of the village. Leadership during this period was mainly based on family status. In those days, franchise in a way a western concept of industrial revolution (i.e. to have and express opinion on public matters) was limited to the socio-economic status of an individual. This shut the door on the dormant classes and weaker sections of the village to participate in the day-to-day administration of their area and by convention, these classes did not feel aggrieved of the situation.

During the early period of the British rule in India, the village community slowly lost its unity. The control exercised by castes, customs and traditions gradually lost its hold on the village social organization. The centralised British administration was mainly interested in extracting as much revenue as possible and it found an authoritarian type of leadership, more
convenient to realise this goal. It prevented independent functioning of local leadership for local community welfare and minimised its significance. This neglect of local native people and their interests, coupled with authoritarian leadership joining hands with the colonial masters in exploiting the 'ryot' led to the struggle for freedom and national self-determination. It finally ended in the declaration of Independence in the year 1947.

A new leadership to suit the new independent government emerged. It had to depend more on service than on command. This leadership was faced with new challenges - varied in nature and intensity and covering the community at large. The aim was to secure internal justice, equality of opportunity and to ensure a better standard for the entire community. This needed a committed and community-oriented leadership, to plan out and implement community development programmes. Considerable fillip was given to the growth of such leadership in rural areas, with the introduction of various schemes under the Five Year Plans and also through the Community Development Programme and National Extension Service Blocks.

Implementation of land reforms, introduction of Community Development Projects, decentralisation of
administration and extension of franchise collectively aimed at the reconstruction of rural society. Leadership role became crucial in this reconstruction. It was increasingly believed that, the success or failure of the process of rural reconstruction and indeed, the realization of the more general ideology and aspirations as embodied in the Constitution might well depend up on the type of leadership available at village, town and the district level.  

The forces of reconstruction operating through the length and breadth of rural society develop strains as the change is not effectively and extensively administered. The present day crisis is the crisis of finding suitable administrative leadership to give new dimensions to administrative structure and processes to translate its reigning ideology and constitutional aspirations. Effective, equipped and well-oriented administrative leadership is thus a sine-qua-non for the implementation of welfare measures and thereby realize social reconstruction. Panchayati Raj institutions, operating at the grass roots level have opened the channels, through which such leadership can grow. Developmental leadership which emerges from the grass roots can help the people to come out from their pitiable plight, and therefore can lead them effectively to achieve development goals.
III. Functions of Leadership for Village Development

The need of leadership arises at the time of collective group action, directed towards common interests. While discussing the role of leadership P.E. Weeraman states that, "we no longer think of a leader as one, who has unusual talents, as one who would excel in any situation and who stands out from the rest as markedly superior. The role of leadership is to realize the needs of the community and to plan for meeting those needs with the assistance of the persons who have such needs. The role of leadership is to stimulate the people into seeking solutions for their problems."\(^8\)

The essence of leadership is thus, a clear perception of the community goal and mobilization of the people to realize the same. J.W. Airan, accordingly expects a leader "to organize the activities of the members of the group towards the accomplishment of some end through controlling means for the satisfaction of the relevant needs of the members of the group."\(^9\) Looking at leadership within a democratic frame-work, the leader particularly at the grass roots level, is essentially a part of group mechanism. He influences other members of the group towards the achievement of group goals and purposes. His function is more of 'convencing' than
What does a leader do in a group.

(a) He serves as a group executive.
(b) He assists the group in making plans.
(c) He speaks for the group.
(d) He co-ordinates the activities of the group.
(e) He represents the group ideals.
(f) He elevates the progress of the group.

'Real India lives in her seven hundred thousand villages' where the impact of development process need to be felt. It is the local leadership which only can bring this and make the process dynamic. Alert and keen, honest and public spirited, experienced and informed, it is this leadership which provides link between the government and the governed as they meet face-to-face and assures close watch and continuous vigilence in the everyday encounter. It was in this context that the Third Five Year Plan enumerated the following functions for the non-official leadership. It is through the realization of these functions, that the leadership would come up to the expectations and extend fullest contribution to planning and development.
(a) to bring about public participation and promote the acceptance of programmes by the people;

(b) to assist village Panchayats and Co-operatives in their work;

(c) to assist in training programmes for village leaders and others;

(d) to organize programmes for the benefit of the community using local manpower and resources;

(e) to promote the rehabilitation of the weaker sections of the population.

A leader has a difficult task to perform in villages. He has to see that villagers are motivated to work for their own betterment and that of the community and in the process, attain material and higher goals for individuals and their fellow men. Another important task assigned to village leadership is essentially one of bridging the gulf between the rural folk and the government. He has to infuse in them, a sense of partnership while implementing development programmes and seek their cooperation and support in the implementation.

The main function of grass roots leadership is to "guide the people, to new avenues of social development where community welfare is not wrapped 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 organizations find their fulfilment in transferring more power and responsibility to the lower organizations." Here comes the significance of commitment of the leadership to the larger process of social change. It is he, who, through his selfless identification to the purpose, elevates 'interest' in an activity to 'faith' in the achievement.

Leadership in the context of social transformation can play a crucial role in spreading the message to different parts of the society. This makes the leader, an agent of modernization. It is a process which aims at a unified national state, large scale economic development and is concerned with making substantial modifications in the social situations. Modernization is a complex process which involves many forces - social, economic and political. The concept has assumed great significance in developing countries like ours. "Many new values and themes have appeared in India as a result of its encounter with the West in the 19th and 20th centuries. Some of these values started the modernization process which can be seen in the form of such institutions as universal franchise, civil rights, an egalitarian legal system, a
parliamentary form of government, party system, rational bureaucracy, a modern army and a well-developed educational system'. Leadership which emerges from the lower levels of democracy can strengthen this process of modernization, as it is essentially a restructuring of tradition along democratic lines'.

Leadership in the new set up should be technically competent to fulfil a host of developmental functions. A leader must be able to plan for change within the resources available with the community. He should be able to diagnose village needs, interpret them to the outside world and reciprocally reinterpret their ideas, visions and messages of the latter to his small community. The new leader should not however, be only a technical functionary. He should also be an initiator and an agent of change. He should not only work out innovations but also work so as to enable the change to take place. 'Not only a doer but also an enabler, organizer and a go-getter'. He is expected therefore, to act as a catalyst and a pace setter and more so an actor in the otherwise stagnant life of rural society.

This gives new perspective to the process of rural development, that 'development should come from within', outside aids and stimuli need get assimilated with the
internal digestive capabilities of the village where the change takes place and for whose residents, it is introduced. The effectiveness of grass-root leadership lies therefore in acting, strengthening and developing, the overall growth potential of the area by identifying hidden human and material resources and harnessing these to the social production process. To attain this he should locate industries and help to generate employment and self-employment within the local areas. Socially, he should enthuse people to participate in developmental activities. He should also make them aware of the change that is taking place around and their expected positive role in materializing it.

If the grass-roots leadership is properly oriented and the developmental process is supported with adequate and timely financial assistance from the central and state governments or by external funding agencies, rural development activities would be realized as a time-bound programme covering short range projects and also long range targets. Leadership would thus engage itself into a wide spectrum of activities and contribute to the comprehensive development leading to modernization - identification of community needs, its organized and vocal presentation, mobilization of resources - human and material, securing technical and financial support and
implementing short-range projects say like constituting village co-operatives or consumers beneficiary committees, undertaking levelling and bunding, organizing literacy campaign or immunization camps, or revamping public distribution system and a host of similar activities all leading to the long range target of developing and developing it from below, an egalitarian and modern society.

IV. The Emerging Leadership Profile of the Ten Select Village Panchayats

Leadership is a complex phenomenon built up of multi-variant frame and it is difficult to determine one single factor as 'the' factor responsible for its emergence. Age, sex, socio-economic and political factors like nature of family, caste, education, occupation, income all shape the profile of a leader. Participation in community organizations and political affiliation also influence his functioning and thinking and contribute to the style and image of leadership. This ensemble of the profile of leadership at the grass-roots level has theoretical relevance and it validates the major theories of leadership in the Indian rural setting such as.

(a) Leadership is based on physical traits like age, sex etc.
(b) Socio-cultural factors like caste, education, wealth or income of leadership [may] contribute towards the accomplishment of some of the group goals and thereby make leadership functional for the group.

(c) The emergence of leadership is because of certain favourable social situations in which individuals or groups are placed in the community.

The socio-economic profile of the emerging leadership at grass-roots in the ten select village panchayat (study unit) of Alleppey District, indicates the differential role played by these factors in building up the leadership.

(a) It provides a background information on leadership of Alleppey district in particular and of Kerala village panchayats, in general.

(b) It would help to ascertain whether the emerging leadership is traditional or modern or a combination of both.

(c) It also would try to affirm how far the emerging leadership is capable in shouldering the responsibilities of modernization at the village.

The information refers to the third panchayat
elections in the state [1988] after the introduction of the K.P.A. 1960. It covers the ten select village panchayats (the study unit) viz. Aroor, Perumpalam, Neelamperoor, Pannapara, Purakkad, Karthigappally, Thrikkunnnapuzha, Chettikulangara, Venmony and Ala and a total of 96 non-officials [respondents] from these.

i. Age

In the olden days, the elders in the community used to occupy important positions in a village and they used to enjoy unquestionable authority. But with the introduction of representative democracy and universal adult franchise, in the institutions of local government, the myth of 'wisdom of the elders' in rural areas, was questioned and a new set of younger age group began to enter into these bodies.21

It was a wide spread belief that, aged people would dominate in acquiring leadership roles in a traditional society like ours. However, major studies after 1960's (Iqbal Narayan, M.V. Mathur, K. Ranga Rao etc.) have found that, younger people were also emerging as leaders and thereby changing the old pattern of leadership at the local level.22
Due to influence of modern values, rural masses, it seems, began to think in a new direction that, "higher the age of leaders in such bodies, lesser will be the chances of their accepting new challenges to be brought about in rural society. On the other hand relatively younger leadership will be more open to new ideas and thus serving better as agents of change than the older".  

What does the age profile of the non-official leadership from the ten select panchayats indicate in the light of the above observations?

Table - 4.1. Distribution of panchayat Leaders by Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>No.of respondents (the year when the age was recorded is 1989)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 25</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 35</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 - 45</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 - 55</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56 - 65</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 65</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(For arriving at an average age group, the above six strata can be reduced into three broad brackets. Bracket A includes respondents below 36 years, bracket B cover respondents between 36 and 55 years and bracket C consists of respondents with age 56 years and above.)
The age distribution of leadership in the ten select village panchayats shows that, the middle age group i.e. bracket B (between 36 and 55 years) is enjoying a larger share in the leadership position. The middle age group with 50 respondents constitutes 52.1 per cent of leadership in the village panchayats. At the sametime the younger age group is also having a sizeable number with 29 respondents which constitute 30.2 per cent of the leadership positions of these villages. The older generation i.e. bracket C (56 years and above) consists of 17 leaders and constitute 17.7 per cent of the leadership.

The detailed data reveals the fact that, the higher positions such as Presidentship and Vice-Presidentship of the village panchayats are going in favour of the middle-aged group i.e. bracket B, (between 36 to 55). Out of the ten village panchayats six were having Presidents who belong to bracket B. The remaining four Presidents belong to the older age group i.e. bracket C. The change in the 'favoured age group' is slow but definite. While taking the Vice-President's post, except one, all the nine posts belonged to both younger age group and the middle age group. Out of the ten Vice-Presidents two were from the younger age group i.e. bracket A (below 36 years). This points out that even the higher leadership positions of village panchayats are going the way towards younger and
middle age group of leadership. (A and B). The data thus reveals the shift in leadership age profile. It is no longer based on seniority alone, but is also related to one's capacity to render services. It also reveals that, there exists a tendency among the village electorates, to elect the representatives belonging to the young and middle aged group.

The analysis shows that, the village level leadership is concentrated in the hands of both - the enthusiastic younger age and the experienced middle age group. The younger age group leaders indicate enthusiasm (but they lack experience), the higher age group leaders indicate experience (but may turn out to be conservative because of their very harsh experiences). A combination of younger age group and middle age group of leaders therefore can deck enthusiasm with caution and strengthen development administration in rural areas.

ii. Sex

Looking at the village leadership, we can rightly say that, leadership at lower levels is generally a male's affair. This is mainly due to the conservative outlook of the society. At the village level, males are generally preferred for determining leadership positions. This may be accounted by the traditional setting of village life, in which women are confined to home and are
denied opportunities to participate in public activity. Rangnath rightly observes that, "there must be some examples of women contesting the panchayat elections and some of them even going to the State Legislatures or Union Parliament. But by and large, leadership in village is a male affair". Female leadership have yet to break the steel frame of the caste and social orthodoxy and bring about their political emancipation, envisaged in the new set up.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Panchayat Leaders by Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex group</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>80.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures say that, males are dominating village leadership with 80.2 per cent as against 19.8 per cent of female leadership. This shows that even today, women in India, particularly in rural areas, occupy traditional positions and roles and in only few cases, they have taken up the role of leadership. Also, all the female representatives have been elected from wards reserved for
women. No single female member could attain success from a general ward. Female representation, it looks has to go a long way to 'break the steel frame'. Rural India is still predominantly traditional and Kerala need not be an exception, (even with high literacy level).

iii. Composition of Family

Unlike the other states in the Indian Union, majority of the people in Kerala follow the 'nuclear family system' rather than the 'joint family system'. The studies at the national level have found that, 25 to 40 per cent of the population belong to the joint families. One study on rural leadership in Bihar state observed that, village level leaders, overwhelmingly belonged to the joint families. It seems that, the joint family acts as a support for the leadership role in these villages. In that study out of 608 respondents 515 belonged to the joint families. However, these findings are not fully applicable to Kerala. The following table gives the family profile of village level leadership in Kerala.

In Kerala, the traditional joint family system is disappearing due to the forces of modernization and rapid spread of education. This has helped the people, to think and interact independently. Thus, in Kerala, today, the
idea of 'nuclear family' finding firm roots in the minds of the people even at the grass-roots. The data shows that out of 96 respondents, 74 belong to the nuclear family. Further, all the elected women members were from the 'nuclear family'. 55 leaders from the nuclear family were heading their respective families. This is because of the patriarchal system (a form of social organization in which the father is the head of the family or tribe, descent being traced through the male line), which is strongly prevailing at the state level. The following table gives the marital status of the 96 respondents.

Table 4.3.2 Marital Status of the Panchayat Leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>No.of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Looking at the above mentioned tables (4.3.1 and 4.3.2), we can see the relationship between the type of family and the marital status of the non-official leadership. Out of the 96 respondents 84 were married. And out of the 84 married leaders 74 were having a nuclear family system and 55 leaders were heading their own families. It is clear that 'nuclear family' and the 'patriarchal system' is more prevalent even at the lower levels in the state.

Kerala with a limited landscape and at the same time, a high density of population is as if forced to implement family planning measures and to control its birth rate. The family planning programme gets a full support even from the rural areas. This is also due to the high level or rural literacy. People become conscious of the problems of overgrown population and appreciate positive contributions of the programme. Nationwide study conducted by the Government of India, on the implementation of the family planning programme observed that, in the state of Kerala, the programme received a massive popular response, with grass-roots no exception. This was reflected in the numerical strength of the respondents' family size.
Table 4.3.3: Number of Members in the Non-official Leaders Family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of family</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 member</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 member</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 member</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 member</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 member</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 member</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 member</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 member</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 11 members</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>96</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of the 96 non-official respondents 74 (all from nuclear family) were having less than 8 members in their families (and within it more than half had less than 4 members). The leaders who came from the joint family, i.e. 22 respondents, came from family size with members 8 plus. Out of this only 3 respondents were having a family size of 14 members. Seventy seven per cent of the total respondents were having less than 7 members in their families. From this, one can see that, persons coming from limited family size pattern have been able to take
active part in panchayat bodies. The nuclear family system along with a small family size (lesser number of dependents) has helped the non-official leaders to spare their extra time and resources for these local bodies.

iv. Caste

Caste system in India is a water tight compartmentalization of society into four different groups hierarchically from top to bottom as Brahmin, Khatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. Birth decides the caste, caste allocates social status and occupation. Code of conduct and rules of interaction are rigid and revered with custom and controlled by the caste council.

Village community structure in India is caste ridden and rural leadership has been determined on the basis of caste. Dominant castes in rural area therefore could get an easy access to power in the traditional village administration. M.N.Srinivas rightly observed that, "usually the leaders of the locally dominant castes are elected to panchayats". 27

Several anthropological and sociological studies have shown the relevance of caste linkages in the voting behaviour in rural areas. M.N.Srinivas refers to three
basic attributes of caste viz. numerical strength, control of land and ritual status and a caste which is endowed with all the three attributes of dominance is said to enjoy 'decisive dominance' in the village.28

The introduction of democratic institutions at the grass-roots level and the needs of electoral politics on the basis of adult franchise, however paved the way for an increased interaction and caste as a social institution was exposed to non-caste political institutions and processes. This resulted in the politicization of the caste system. Though grouping is a common type of social phenomenon and leaders are elected formally on party tickets, 'traditional factors such as kinship and caste are in evidence and the party structure itself is threatened with the influence by these traditional elements'29. Jayaprakash Narayan also observed that, caste has been the most important political party in India.

By the 8th century, caste system entered Kerala, which was till then, a predominantly egalitarian Buddhist society with its various territorial groups operating their own local democracies. Caste system of Kerala assumed a ferocious and barbarous form which perhaps had no parallel anywhere else in the country. As caste system
advanced in Kerala, the entire society was infinitely fragmented and a virulent form of untouchability and unapproachability was practiced. To escape from the tyranny and persecution of caste system, more than five lakh Buddhist, migrated to Ceylon (Sri Lanka) between 14th and 16th centuries. By the beginning of the 17th century, caste hegemony and Brahminic supremacy were securedly established in Kerala.30

The Malayalee Brahmins known as Namboodiri who formed a microscopic minority and the ruling elites Kshatriya, established their supremacy over the land and temple administration and exercised social control over the entire unorganized masses. Due to rigid and oppressive nature of caste system, massive conversion took place in the course of history, in different parts of Kerala from the lower Hindu castes to the caste free religion - Islam and Christianity.

Islam proved to be a saviour and unifying force for the lower castes. The Christian community of Kerala, received a preferential treatment and protection during the Portuguese and British rule. These developments minimised the hegemony of the high caste Hindus. Finally, extension of democracy and adult franchise resulted in an increased participation of the lower castes in the day-to-day political life of Kerala. Their numerical
strength, later on, helped them to capture seats of power.

Table 4.4: Distribution of Panchayat Leaders by Caste

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brahmin A</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nair</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian B</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezhawa</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Araya</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim C</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin Catholic</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled castes D</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled Tribes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(For the purpose of this study, respondent's caste are divided into four broad categories such as A. Upper cast - Brahmins, B. Forward caste (which include Nairs and Christians) C. Economically Backward caste (which include Ezhawas, Arayas, Muslims and Latin Catholics), D. Backward caste (which include Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes).
It is evident from the table 4.4 that, the upper caste Brahmins are not having a single representation in these ten select village panchayat. This is because of the fact that, the Brahmin community is numerically weak at the village level and in the select district Alleppey.

The category B Forward Caste (which include Nairs and Christians) is enjoying 36.5 per cent seats in these bodies. Out of the 96 respondents, 24 non-official leaders were Nairs and 11 belonged to Christian Community.

According to government classification, the Ezhawas, Arayas, Mulsims and Latin Catholics are classified as Economically Backward communities. Traditionally, these communities have been involved in toddy tapping, inland and marine fishing and in the unorganized coir sector. The district Alleppey with its geographical proximity to sea and with abundance of coconut plantation helps them to follow their traditional occupation. Hence, we find their concentration in the district. While looking at the table 4.4 we can see that category C, Economically backward Caste (which include Ezhawas, Arayas, Muslims and Latin Catholics) is having 53.1 per cent of the leadership positions in the ten select village panchayat.

The findings from the present study indicate that the Economically Backward Caste using their numerical
strength in the elections are holding leadership position and their representation is sizeable.

From the Category D (Backward Caste), the Scheduled Castes are having 10 representatives. The Scheduled Tribes are not represented on these bodies. Even, the representation of the ten Backward caste members is due to reservation of seats. One interesting feature worth-noting is that, all the ten Scheduled Caste seats have gone in favour of Pulaya Community, which enjoys dominance among the Scheduled Castes of Kerala. Thus, the present findings, also support M.N.Srinivasa's observations on 'Dominant Caste'.

v. Education

Research studies on developing societies invariably show that, education as an independent variable, plays a crucial role in the emergence of resourceful leadership. Education facilities exposure to mass media and helps positive interaction with the change-agents of the community and thereby finally helps to realize modernization and social transformation. The general assumption, which is found valid from numerous studies is that, educated persons are more innovative cosmopolite and receptive to new ideas.31
Education is an investment in terms of human capital. A good educational upbringing helps one's capacity to give thoughtful judgement on social and political issues. A better educational background of the members of an institution say a village panchayat, would help to develop a progressive attitude towards social and economic problems.32

Educational status is regarded as an essential equipment for acquiring leadership positions in a modern society. Educated persons are generally, respected in villages. During old days, education was a privilege of the high caste Brahmins and they enjoyed high social status and there through, an easy access to the power structure. Since independence, progressive steps have been taken by the government, to extend educational facilities to the masses. With the spread of education, more and more people have started, realizing its significance, as a means for socio-economic and political emancipation.

The introduction of democracy at the lower levels, made the villagers prefer educated people as their representatives. The complex problems of development, also demanded educated leadership, capable enough to take rational decisions whenever situations called for. With adequate educational background, the leadership at the
grass roots would be able to understand the problems of change, frame policies and effectively execute the same.

Kerala always has had a high level of education. In the Sangam age (i.e. during the early centuries of Christian era), no community was denied educational facilities. However with increasing Aryan Brahminism and attendant Caste system, 'lower castes' access to these facilities became restricted. Again, during the British rule and mainly due to the Christian missionary zeal, educational opportunities were opened and extended to rural areas of Kerala. Christian missionaries took education as an instrument to spread the gospel of Christianity. This is evident from the presence of churches at the premises of old Christian Schools.

All these made Kerala, the most literate of Indian States with, a particularly high female literacy rate. A Keralite spends twice the amount on education as compared with an average Indian. Educational facilities are available, even in the remotest areas of the state. At the end of an year long literacy drive named as 'Akshra Keralam' Kerala was declared on 18th April 1991 as a fully literate state. This project was implemented by the Kerala Shashra Samiti constituted by the government, in which roughly 2.5 lakhs persons took part to help 12.5 lakh illiterate to cross the threshold literacy. This
took the state literacy level to 93.6 per cent, which is more than the 90.0 per cent literacy norm, adopted by the National Literacy Mission for achieving the full literacy status.

Literacy, possibly is the most dependable means in a developing country, to break the vicious cycle of poverty and underdevelopment and to accelerate thereby the rate of progress and take strides on the road of modernization. Literacy gives the deprived and oppressed sections of a society, a new voice of courage and a renewed hope of betterment.

Table 4.5 : Distribution of Panchayat Leaders by Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upto 7th Standard</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upto S.S.L.C.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between S.S.L.C. and degree</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-graduation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table shows that even in the rural areas of Kerala, more and more people are going to schools and
colleges and education has become an important asset with the leadership functioning at the village level. Nearly 22.9 per cent of leaders are University degree holders and 10 out of the 96 respondents are holding a post-graduate degree. Among the 96 respondents, one is an engineering graduate and has scored IIInd rank at the University examination. In sum, the leadership, which is now emerging in the village panchayats, looks highly educated and capable enough to carryout the responsibilities for development. There is a positive trend that people, having higher educational qualifications are not feeling shy of entering into the Panchayati Raj bodies.

vi Occupation

Occupation is still another important factor, influencing the emergence and style of rural leadership. Occupation decides the leisure-time and one's stake and stay in the village. Better off people economically and socially, think that leadership would help them to safeguard their multiple interests. Panchayat leadership to them would help elevate their social status too.

Rural economy is predominantly agriculture. So, the main occupation of the majority of its people is agriculture and its allied sectors. Various studies
conducted by S.R. Mehta, K. Neeladri Raj, M.P. Singh and R.P. Mishra conclude that, a majority of panchayat leaders are owner cultivators. Rich farmers with big land holdings, enjoyed a command over the villagers and village life, who mainly depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Rich farmers can afford adequate leisure time, to spare for leadership activities.

As democracy spread its roots and over a time positive effect of education become evident, with social awareness more and more people from different walks of life would feel the importance of Panchayati Raj bodies and feel taking active role in its functioning. This is evident from the present study. Now village leadership is no more the monopoly of agriculturists. People from secondary and tertiary sectors, are also taking keen interest, in the affairs of their villages and are willing to spare their time and energy for its betterment.

The table 4.6 shows that village level leadership of Kerala, is not concentrated in the hands of agriculturist class, but people from other sectors such as service, business are also coming up. A category of 'full time political workers' is a special feature of this leadership profile. Their respective share is 21.9 per cent, 16.7 per cent and of 20.8 per cent
respectively. The agriculturist class, the traditional source of leadership recruits sends only 14.6 per cent representation in the panchayat bodies. This is mainly because of the absence of feudal landlordism in the state. Kerala is one of the few states of the Indian Union, which has taken effective steps to implement a progressive ceiling on land holdings. However, they are not an exhausted force in the fray. A look at the

Table 4.6: Occupational Break-up of Panchayat Leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired hands</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual labourers</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political workers</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>96</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

positions such as Presidentship of village panchayat, one sees that 4 out of 10 Presidents were agriculturist.

In the service sector, out of the twentyone respondents, thirteen were school teachers. Villagers
view the teaching community with respect and their profession helped the respondents to successfully contest the panchayat elections. Educational level of the panchayat leadership was adequately high and this has been reflected in various developmental activities undertaken by these panchayats (Reference Chapter V Leadership at work). Out of the four retired hands, two were from the teaching profession and the other two from the military service. Their long experience, helped them to render valuable service to the village community.

Business men are also taking active interest in local affairs. 16.7 per cent of the seats are held by the business community. Economic activities bring them into closer contact with the rural community and this helps them to win their support. Out of the total 19 women members of the ten select village panchayats, 13 were housewives involved mainly in household affairs. This must be giving them free time for participating in public affairs of their villages.

One interesting feature to note in the occupation break-up of village leadership is that, casual labourers mainly involved in agriculture, inland and marine fishing and coir sector have equally taken active part in panchayat affairs and hold 8.3 per cent of the membership
of these bodies. President of the most populous panchayat (Punnapra 40,422 as per 1981 census) under the present study, is a casual labourer in a coir factory. The district Alleppey as stated earlier, is having a large concentration of agricultural labourers, fisherman folk and coir workers and they are organized over a period. History records that this organized working class had successful agitations against the feudal landlordism at Punnapra and Vayalar during 1940's.

Kerala is the most politically conscious state of the Indian Union. This is mainly because of the high literacy level and a long history of working class movement. It has forced all the major political parties to seek help of committed volunteers at the grass-roots, to spread party ideology, extend recruitment-net and thereby build a strong support base for the party. Thus, one can see full time political activists belonging to different parties at the village level, contesting elections and performing representative functions. Politics has entered the Panchayati Raj bodies. It is as inevitable as it is natural. Political parties have to recognize this and have to take active interest, in controlling and influencing these power structures at the village level. The findings from the present study reveal that, 20.8 per cent leadership positions have gone in favour of active political workers and out of the ten
Panchayat Presidents, five were from this group. This clearly indicates, the involvement of political parties in the functioning of these institutions of development at local levels.

vii. Income

Economic status has invariably been one of the important determinants of rural leadership. General impression is that, at the village level, leaders always come from the rich strata of the society. Those, who are economically in a better position, can serve as patrons of poor majority, preside over community functions, supervise the conduct of village festivals and emerge as spokesmen for the community.\(^{35}\) Thus, in villages the well-to-do persons of high income groups are respected and traditionally, they occupy leadership positions. The rich have always enjoyed greater authority over the rural poor and even such persons who had no inherited claims to leadership attained high status through their acquired wealth. H.P. Dhillon rightly observed that, "the leader is the influential person of the village who is respected, followed and obeyed by villagers due to the wealth, family, caste or other reasons."\(^{36}\)

Thus, influence of wealth on the electorate has been a generally accepted fact. Power and wealth go
At rural level, the resources of wealth (produce and means of production), have been monopolized by a small group of people and this group, utilizes these resources to attain and retain themselves in power. Commenting on the Indian rural leadership, Oscar Lewis said that, "wealth is a basic criterion for leadership. Although leaders are found among all the three socio-economic classes, they clearly come from the upper levels of each and the correlation between wealth and leadership is highest as we move up the scale."

But, a trend is discernable that democratization of panchayat institution has shifted leadership stronghold, towards high/middle level income groups. The low income group also, has improved its position in Panchayati Raj institutions. The findings of S.R. Mehta (1972), V.M. Srisikar (1970), M.P. Singh and R.P. Mishra (1973), have revealed that "a majority of the ruling elite in rural India, belong to middle and upper middle class with relatively better standard of life. This clearly indicates that the leaders as a class, have far better economic standard of life than the average person of the village.

People who have a sound economic background, usually come forward to contest elections. This is because of the fact that now-a-days election campaigns, even to the local
government bodies are becoming an expensive affair. The employment of various techniques of mass publicity during elections required lavish expenditure. Thus, a leader who can spend more money on electioneering has an edge over others. This was made clear by the findings of G. Ram Reddy and Seshadri that, every leader and candidate frankly admitted that without adequate money they could not think of winning elections.41

It was an extremely difficult task to obtain reliable data on family income. Most of the leaders have not maintained their annual income. Also there is a general tendency among the leaders, not to disclose their real annual income. However, the respondents were asked to furnish the details of income from all sources. It is possible that they have recorded conservative and on lower side of income limits. But this tendency would be common to all and therefore would not affect their bracketing.

Table 4.7 : Annual Income of Panchayat Leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income group (Rs. - Yly)</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upto 5,000</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5001 - 10000</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10001 - 15000</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15001 - 20000</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20001 - 25000</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 25000</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above six groups are regrouped into three broad brackets. Bracket A includes respondents having an annual income below 10,001, bracket B includes respondents with an annual income between Rs.10,001 to Rs.20,000 and bracket C consists of the respondents who are having an annual income of Rs.20,001 and above. These 3 broad brackets are respectively considered as lower income group, middle income group and higher income group.

Table 4.7 shows that 28.1 per cent of the leaders belong to lower income group. The middle income group with a representation of 42.8 per cent dominate leadership position in the ten select village panchayats. The higher income group is also having a sizeable number of representation in these bodies. It occupies 29.1 per cent seats of the leadership positions.

The present study, thus reveals that, leadership is not concentrated in the higher income groups only. Leaders from all the three income groups are elected. At the same time, the middle class is out-numbering the higher income group in these bodies. Voters at the village level, it looks, are not much influenced by the economic status of their representatives but also weigh other factors, like age, education and participation in community organization. What they look for is a
leadership that would translate their community desires into administrative programmes and activities, add their maturity and resourcefulness to the process of development and convince and carry them together on the path of modernization.

viii. Political Affiliation

Regarding the role of political parties in Panchayati Raj institutions, there are two schools of thought. The Sarvodaya School says that, political parties should not enter local authorities, particularly panchayats. It opposes the party system and advocates a partyless democracy at all the levels. They consider the party system as alien to the real democracy. Jayaprakash Narayan, one of the exponents of this school, said that, "the success of Panchayati Raj would depend up on the extent to which organized political parties refrain from interfering with it and trying to convert it into their hand-maid, and use it as a jumping ground to climb to power. For the sake of the health and vitality of these institutions and intelligent participation of the people in the working of democracy, it would be best to leave these institutions, in the direct contact of people without party interference." Association of political parties with Panchayati Raj institutions would create new problems, in the working of these institutions. And the
philosophy of Panchayati Raj viz., to take swaraj to the people and make them active participants in the building of a new life would not be achieved. 44

The supporters of the parliamentary democracy, strongly reject the above mentioned arguments of the Sarvodaya school. They feel that, parliamentary democracy based in organized political parties and direct elections is the only and certain means of effective government. M.N.Lakshminarasaya observed that, "When, once power is decentralized and authority for local government is vested in a statutorily constituted institution, it is impossible to conceive of a political vacuum there. In spite of all our efforts, like air, politics will rush in" 45. Myron Weiner opined that, the power of village panchayat is considerable under the new legislation. And where there is power, there must be politics - as law as fundamental in political science as supply and demand is in economics. 46

In one of the leadership studies it was found that, village leaders find it advantageous to be associated with political parties, during election days. It increases their importance, in the eyes of their supports and caste fellows. It also gives them opportunity, to establish contact with the leaders at the district and
the state level. A.Y. Darshankar in his study of Panchayati Raj leadership, also highlights the importance of party loyalty as an important factor in creating leadership. It was argued that, "a leader should be loyal to his party and committed to its ideology. If one did not possess faith in the party, he would not become a leader. It was the party's image, which helped the leader in the elections. Long association and continuous work in the party, qualify the leaders to receive party tickets in the elections."

A leader's membership to a political party is an indication of the ideological commitment (howsoever weak it would be at local level) or the preference on one hand and on the other, it makes clear that, political parties do exist and play a significant role in Panchayati Raj institutions. The following table highlights the political background of the non-official leaders from the ten select village panchayats. To find out the political affiliation of the respondents (nonofficial leaders) the questions which were asked in the schedule were (Appendix A.2:5.i. and A.2:5:ii) "Did you contest the last election on a party ticket?. If 'yes', name the political party". The information so collected is tabulated in the following table.
Table 4.8: Political Affiliation of Non-official Leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Political Party</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congress (Indira)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerala Congress U.D.F</td>
<td>5 47</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim League</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congress (Socialist)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.P.I (Marxist)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.P.I LDF</td>
<td>10 49</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.S.P</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janata Dal</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.J.P.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>96</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One salient feature of panchayat leadership in Kerala, seems to be that, leadership even at the lower levels of democracy is having strong political affiliations. All the respondents categorically answered that, the support of their respective political parties, helped them to win the elections.

People of Kerala have witnessed many political experiments in coalition ministries at the state level.
This was because of the existence of large number of political parties. The above mentioned table makes it clear that, the same scenario prevails at the local levels too. Political alignment in Kerala had undergone a sea change, involving a drastic regrouping of the major political parties. This led to the emergence of two political combines the Left Democratic Front (L.D.F.) and the United Democratic Front (U.D.F.), from the 1980's general elections. In the village panchayat elections too, the organized political parties fought the election under these two fronts and only the official candidates, from among these two fronts got electoral success.

The above table 4.8 shows that, out of 96 respondents, 51.00 per cent and 49.00 per cent non-official leaders belong to L.D.F and U.D.F respectively. The leading partners of these fronts the C.P.I (M) and Congress (I) enjoy 37.5 per cent and 40.7 per cent leadership positions in these village panchayats. Out of the ten select village panchayats, five each have gone in favour of L.D.F and U.D.F. i.e., five Presidents each of L.D.F. and U.D.F. Except the C.P.I (with 10.4 per cent leadership positions), other parties like Kerala Congress, R.S.P., Congress (S), Muslim League etc., do not have prominent share in panchayat leadership. From the table it also becomes
clear that, B.J.P and Janata Dal have yet to open their account in the panchayat leadership of these ten select village panchayats.

Leaders and prospective leaders have always associated themselves with party activities and participated in their programmes. Their association and work has been acknowledged by the respective political parties. All the 96 respondents have admitted that they were associated with one or the other political party. Out of the 96 respondents, 49 enjoyed official party positions. Their active participation in party programmes has helped them to seek tickets for panchayat polls and the party support in the elections helped them to secure electoral victory.

ix. Participation in Community Organizations

Leadership is regarded as a social function. One who aspires to become a leader, involves oneself generally in social services in the beginning and then enters the political field. It is his social standing which would help him in the political field. Several social scientists therefore have used social participation as an index of public leadership, the underlying assumption
being that, the extent to which an individual involves himself in community's public affairs, will determine his social influence too. Such a participation, not only adds to his experience of working with people but there through adds to his maturity which in a course helps to make his leadership stable - dependable.

 Majority of the non-official leaders were associated with one or more community organizations such as village cooperative societies, Mandalam /Constituency level trade unions, school boards, Religious organizations, Youth associations, Womens associations, Merchants associations etc. Some of them were also office bearers in these organizations. Association with these bodies, helped the non-official leaders to have prior experience in the process of decision making. This also indicates that, the non-officials are involved in the activities/programmes in their areas. The following table shows the varied association of non-official leaders with community organizations.
Table 4.9 : Non-official Leaders Association with Community Organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Organizations</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Village Co-operative Societies</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandalam/Constituency level Trade Unions</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Governing Boards</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Organizations</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Associations</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Womens Organizations</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchants Associations</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of the 96 respondents 74 i.e. 77.08 per cent of the leaders have been actively involved in various community organizations. These include village co-operatives, Mandalam level trade unions, youth and womens association, merchants association etc.. 22 out of the total 96 respondents (22.92 per cent) did not respond to this particular question, probably because of the defeat they suffered in the last elections to these bodies.

Out of 74 non-official leaders, who have been associated with community organizations, 22 respondents
were office bearers of these, in the capacity of Presidents, Secretaries or members of Executive Boards. Among them, 8 were Presidents of their village co-operatives and 4 Presidents of the mandalam level trade unions. Village co-operatives (31) and Mandalam level trade unions (43) seem to provide larger contact-base for the prospective leadership.

V. Kerala Village Panchayat Elections 1988

The profile of developmental leadership is primarily conditioned by the socio-economic and political indicators. It is equally conditioned by the election process, which makes these bodies responsive and political. The nature and conduct of electioneering, priorities of developmental activities as conceived by him, the terms enjoyed by the member together with his socio-economic and educational background find expression in the leadership function at the panchayat level.

Replying to the question, "How did you decide on contesting the 1988 elections of the Panchayat?" (appendix A.Q.2.3), 77 non-officials out of 96 respondents stated that, their political parties asked them to file the nomination for the panchayat elections.
14 respondents replied that, they decided to file the nomination because of constant persuasion by their friend circles. Only for 5 leaders, it was their personal decision that brought them into the election-fray. Later, they too got the support from their respective political parties.

The election spirit was equally reflected, perhaps, with more involvement in the Panchayat elections than in the State Assembly or Parliamentary elections. Even at the local levels, elections were conducted on strong party lines. Communist Party of India (Marxist) and Indian National Congress (Indira) were in two different camps. Except the B.J.P., all other political parties aligned with either of these two camps L.D.F. and U.D.F respectively. All the candidates had taken election campaign with great enthusiasm and spirit. Modern methods of election campaigning such as the use of Microphones, distribution of bit notices, display of banners, conducting ward meetings and house to house campaigning were used in the electioneering.
Table 4.10 Mode of Election Campaigning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of campaigning</th>
<th>First preference</th>
<th>Second preference</th>
<th>Third preference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal contact or door to door visits</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward meetings</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution of pamphlets</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procession/Morchas</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canvassing by co-workers</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table 4.10 it is clear that, at the lower levels of democracy, personal and face-to-face contact are more effective for a candidate to get himself elected to these bodies. Respondents were also of the opinion that, canvassing by co-workers and ward meetings were important factors which affect the election-fate of a candidate. Committed party volunteers and close friends worked as squads for the electoral success of their candidate. Taluk and district level party leaders were invited to address corner meetings. Pamphlets, containing election promises were distributed throughout the village panchayat. Procession/morchas were also conducted by the two fronts to show their strength before the polls.
The village panchayats of Kerala, the only democratic bodies at the grassroots, have a host of developmental activities to perform. This was reflected in the election manifesto of the non-official leaders. It stated that, if the voters give them the responsibility to run the panchayat administration, for the coming five years, they would carry out varied developmental activities which could change the face of their villages. Following are some of the promises, which were highlighted through the election manifesto.

(a) Programmes for improving agriculture and allied occupations.
(b) Augmentation of water supply schemes and construction of minor irrigation projects.
(c) Rural electrification and electricity connections to Harijan colonies.
(d) Programmes for improving the conditions of small industries like cashew, coconut, coir etc.
(e) Loans for housing and marriages for weaker sections.
(f) Construction and maintenance of village roads.
(g) Programmes for removal of poverty.
(h) Emphasised value based politics - commitment to democracy, socialism, national integration and secularism.

The leaders accounted their electoral victory mainly to the support which they received from their political
parties at the time of elections. All of them were of the opinion that, political party's support was an indispensable factor in their electoral success. 43 respondents replied that, their past work in the constituency also helped them to register the victory. The remaining 53 non-officials opined that, the help which they got from their friends-circle was also equally important like the party's support.

It is generally realized that, money plays an important role in the election process. This is because, now-a-days, election campaigns even to these local government bodies, are an expensive affairs. It was rightly observed that, a rich man may have difficulty in entering the kingdom of Heaven but he would find it relatively easy to get into the higher councils of a political party. Out of the 96 respondents, 71 said that, money was having a big say in the electioneering. 4 non-official leaders admitted that, they personally spent more than Rs.30,000 to win the elections. Another 5 said that, they were forced to raise election funds to meet the expenses. Majority of the respondents opined that, they have spent more than Rs.8,000 from their personal account for these panchayat elections. The study conducted by G.Ram Reddy and Seshadri confirmed that, money was distributed particularly among the people of a low economic status. It was further added that,
"candidates spent nights in 'Laman Tanda' and spent money lavishly, supplied food and drinks abundantly to the voters."53

Caste and religious considerations, also played an important role in the panchayat elections. 75 out of 96 respondents clearly stated that, people in rural areas have a general tendency to identify with their caste and religion. Even the organized so called secular, democratic parties, would examine the caste composition of the panchayat ward and try to match caste with caste in the choice of the candidate.

VI. The Panchayat Body

The present panchayat body is the third elected body after the introduction of the Kerala Panchayat Act, 1960. The first elected body came into power, in 1963 and it continued for long 16 years period - partly due to political apathy and was dissolved only in 1979. The second body came into existence in the year 1979 and continued till the expiry of its term of 5 years. The present body was constituted in the year 1988 after a gap of 4 years. During this gap there was no democratically elected body to discharge the panchayat functions. Panchayat administration had gone into the hands of the bureaucrats. In the 1987
State Assembly elections, the L.D.F. stormed the polls with an election promise to revive the panchayat bodies. Keeping the promise the L.D.F. conducted fresh elections in the year 1988 to re-establish democracy at the grass-roots.

The following table shows the experience of the non-official leadership in the panchayat committees under the present study.

Table 4.11 Membership Term of the Non-Officials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period of the elected body</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1963 - 79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979 - 84 Three terms</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988 - 93</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979 - 84 Two terms</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988 - 93 Two terms</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>81.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the majority of the respondents (non-official leaders), it was their first experience of working in these bodies. Out of the 96 respondents, 78 i.e., 81.25 per cent leaders were new comers. For twelve it was their second term in the panchayat bodies. 6 respondents i.e., 6.25 per cent leaders held their leadership position in these bodies since their inception in 1963. The above figures show that, panchayat leadership of the ten select village panchayats
has been dominated numerically, by the enthusiastic new comers. The elected body of 1988 is comprised of experienced members and development oriented new comers. The experienced persons guide and enrich deliberations while the new commers make it live and responsive.

Leadership vitalizes processes and through interaction adds dynamism to the otherwise routine administrative activities. It is these qualities which lend relevance and direction to the institutions at work. The nature and impact of Panchayati Raj bodies is therefore very much tied with the developmental leadership it throws up. It is this leadership which unfolds itself through panchayat institutions at work, making these more responsive to the wishes of its people, more responsible to their organized expression.
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