Chapter I: Introduction

Introduction:

India has been described as a land of villages. The statement makes sense not only because the bulk of the country's population live in villages but more importantly because of the influence of the rural socio-cultural institutions like caste system, joint family system and the agrarian economy that has shaped and has given India a unique identity in the global social landscape. The bonds of joint family, the kinship ties, the network of loyalty to castes and the attachment to the agricultural land have superseded all the differences of religion, language and region in India. It is this strong bearing of the rural socio-cultural and economic institutions on the overall Indian scene that has meaningful implications in understanding, describing India as a land of villages.

The adage that India lives in its villages is as close to reality now as it was in the pre-independence period. Even with five decades of economic planning after independence, the bulk of the country's population continues to live in rural areas. True, over the years the contribution of agriculture and allied activities to the national income have been steadily falling and concurrently the shares of secondary and tertiary sectors have been on the rise. However, with the inability of the organised sector to absorb the surplus labour into its fold, a majority of the working population has had no choice but to seek employment in the overcrowded and underpaid informal sectors in urban and rural areas. In the latter, it is agriculture and allied activities, which still provide employment and income to a substantial segment of the rural work force. Thus, Indian villages, apart
from being administrative units, sociological laboratories, are also the very source of livelihood to millions. It is rightly said that real India is rural India.

Rural India:

Human response to environment finds expression in settlements. A settlement is a group of human dwellings. In some places, like India, the term 'settlement' may imply a unit area identifiable for revenue collection (in which case it may be an uninhabited settlement, too). Settlement may be classified in several ways. The most common division over the world is into towns and villages. Accordingly the human society is divided into rural and urban communities. The village is the unit of the rural society whereas the city or the town is the centre of urban world. But, the notion of rural urban dichotomy is not absolute one as there is always a possibility of coexistence of urban and rural elements in a given space. But, nevertheless the influence of these spaces on their inhabitants is important. Not only the different, ecological, economic and social-cultural organizational patterns result into these two distinct socio-spatial entities but they are also having strong bearing on the social relations, behaviour patterns within the given spaces. Thus these two special entities produce two different kinds of community organizations.

The following are the most important criteria for distinguishing the rural social world from the urban social world (Desai. A.R. 1969);

1 Occupational difference.

2. Environmental differences.
3. Differences in the size of the community.
4. Differences in the density of the population.
5. Differences in the homogeneity and heterogeneity of the population.
6. Differences in the social mobility.
7. Differences in the direction of migration.
8. Differences in the social differentiation and stratification.
9. Differences in the system of social interaction.

Three types of settlements are distinguished by the census authorities in India based on the size, density of population, and occupation, viz. city, town and village. A settlement with population of 100000 or more is called a city. A town should have a population of 5000 or more, while the villages are settlements with less than 5000 population. Apart from the size factor, other criteria have also been employed for the inclusion or exclusion of a community in a given category. The town being the 'intermediate case' creates definitional problems. The following eligibility tests are applied to them in India: (i) A Population of 5000 or more; (ii) A density of not less than 400 per sq. Km; (iii) At least 75 percent of the male working population engaged in non-agricultural occupations. Moreover, all the places with a municipality, corporation, and cantonment board or town area committee have been given urban area status even if they do not satisfy one or more of the other conditions. Thus, the size factor is not always insisted upon for the inclusion of a settlement in the category of town.

Villages in India, where the concept of planned rural settlement does not seem to exist, are a sort of natural growth in their physical and cultural setting. Thus, although they do not possess well-defined shapes and a distinct internal plan, there is considerable
organization, both in the internal structure and the external profile of village, which is very closely related to the attributes of the site and its cultural setting. A typical Indian rural settlement consists of houses, street and the surrounding farmland, along with areas of commercial and religious activities. Rural settlements can be of three sizes.

(i) Isolated settlement: - These consist of single or two-three dwellings in a remote farmland.

(ii) Hamlet: - This comprises two-three to ten dwellings and

(iii) Village: - It consists of a number of dwellings, farmland around them, a street network, a religious centre, and area for commercial and cultural activities.

**Table 1.1: Number of villages according to their size of population in 2001**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of the Population</th>
<th>Number of Villages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1000</td>
<td>364,482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000 to 1999</td>
<td>129,979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 to 4999</td>
<td>80,414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5000 to 9999</td>
<td>14,806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10000 and above</td>
<td>3,962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total no. of inhabited villages</td>
<td>593,642</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India 2001.

It is noteworthy that India is not only a country of villages but also a land of small villages. Out of the total 593,643 villages 364,482 villages have the population of less than 1000 i.e., more than half of the total Indian villages have less than 1000 population.
Table 1.2: Rural and Urban Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Year</th>
<th>Population (million)</th>
<th>Percentage of total population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>629</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>743</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Census of India (1901 to 2001).

The table (1.2) shows that the population of India is still predominantly rural. The rate of urbanisation is growing but at a very slow rate. And it also may be because of the increase in the population of existing urban centre, that the percentage of urban population is increasing and most of the villages have remained villages only.

The Characteristics of Indian Villages:

✓ Predominance of agriculture:

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood in the rural areas. About 90 per cent of the rural people depend on agriculture for their livelihood. The predominance of agriculture has also led to the following features of Indian villages.
1. Agrarian social structure: It is characterised by the hierarchy of big landlords, followed by medium and small farmers and the landless agricultural labourers at the bottom.

2. Land as status symbol: In rural India agricultural land is treated not only as an economic asset but also as a status symbol. The interpersonal relations in the villages are influenced to a large extent by the criteria whether a person owns land or not.

3. Scope to animal husbandry and cottage industries: It is very obvious that agriculture also sustains livestock. The regular supply of fodder ensures the rural people to pursue animal husbandry as a subsidiary occupation. The agriculture supplies raw materials to cottage industries and also provides effective demand to them. Thus, along with agriculture, cottage industries also flourish in rural India.

4. Seasonal unemployment: The agriculture in rural India is basically rain fed. Therefore, it fails to provide employment to rural people throughout the year.

5. Rural-urban migration. The seasonal nature of agriculture and also the failure of monsoon force a large chunk of the rural masses to migrate to urban centres in search of better living. In fact, most of the Indian villages are marked by seasonal out migration.

Thus, agriculture is considered as the hub of the wheel of the village society in India.

- **Dominance of patriarchal joint family:**

The rural family is more integrated and disciplined unit; the head of the rural family exercises almost absolute power over its members. All initiative and final authority are vested in the hands of male head of the family. The family, through its head subordinates
its individual members to itself. The individual members are completely submerged in the family; hence they hardly develop any individuality or personality.

✓ **Prevalence of caste system and its related practices:**

Caste is a very powerful social institution in rural India. Though caste is nevertheless active all over India, its practice is more pronouncedly felt in Indian villages. In rural India a person is identified not as an individual but as a member of a particular caste and a family. The castes loyalty and adherence to caste rules are strictly observed in rural India.

It has been rightly said that India can be properly understood by studying her villages. It is equally true also that village can be understood by studying the agricultural economy, joint family and caste system. The examination of the relation between joint family, caste and village community is very essential to understand socio-political dynamics in India.

**Statement of the Problem:**

Soon after Independence, villages in India have acquired a new significance. The government of India has initiated a vigorous effort to transform the Indian villages into the vehicle of India’s rapid progress. Moreover, the adoption of Republican Constitution necessitated a thorough change in socio-political outlook of the rural masses. The Government has started giving thrust in the development of villages in order to strengthen the economy and the democracy in the country. It has rightly been argued that the notion of ‘rural development’ has far more egalitarian value than just the economic well-being of the villagers. It has been believed that India can emerge stronger by
modernising and strengthening her villages. Thus, the government interventions in the rural sectors are viewed not merely as development measures but very importantly as initiatives of change and transformation.

From the inception of the First Five year plan, a huge endeavour is being made to overhaul the very productive base of the rural society as also its institutional and ideological superstructure. Serious efforts have been initiated to transform its ecological framework, the mode and motif of its economic production, the pattern of class relationship in it, the type of social institutions and associations composing it, the configurations of political power, and the very value systems underlying the cultural life (Desai A.R. 1978).

The mammoth task of transforming Indian villages started with the launch of Five-year plans in the country. The First five-year plan visualized local self-government as part of the organic constitutional and administrative framework linked with state and central levels in the process of developing the villages in India. It was, however, introduced seven years after the launching of the community development programme. The community development programme which was launched in 1952 sought to quicken the pace of socio-economic development in rural areas through the involvement and participation of the people, with the apparatus of development administration providing active guidance and support. The concept, methods and techniques of the programme had a wider democratic content. Exponents of community development frequently spoke of ‘community initiative’, ‘community action’, and ‘community organisation’. All this implied a stronger stress on local leadership and eventually, local self-government.
However, the community development programme failed to evoke the local initiative and participation as its organization set up lacked space to the rural leadership.

The Balvantray Mehta Committee which undertook the evaluation of community development programme made observation that the lack of people's participation has resulted into the failure of the programme. The committee in its report, in 1957 advocated the introduction of local self-government to tap the local initiative and participation. This recommendation was incorporated in the panchayat legislation of various states. From then onwards democratic decentralization has gained momentum and has reached the peak in the year 1993 when the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act. 1992 came into force. The introduction of panchayati raj institutions has widened the base of Indian democracy and has resulted into massive political socialization in the rural India. A new generation of leadership has started emerging with new outlook and ideas in the Indian villages.

The concept of democratic decentralization along with universal adult suffrage and land reforms and the spread of education have engineered tremendous social transformation in the Indian villages. The most visible of these changes is the change in the political outlook and politics in the rural India. It is argued that a more democratic, secular leadership has emerged in the villages replacing the traditional leadership. This study is an attempt to understand the emerging rural leadership in the backdrop of drastic social change taking place in our rural society.
Objectives of the Study:

The study of changes in the rural leadership can be focused broadly on three important aspects of leadership: the formation, values/attitudes or outlook and functioning/style. Since these three aspects are interrelated, the understanding of all these will help to get a comprehensive picture of the changing dimensions of rural leadership. At the outset, it is necessary to bear in mind the distinction between emerging leaders and emerging leadership. While there is no doubt that individual leaders and their socio-economic characteristics have to be studied, it is equally important to study the pattern of leadership that is emerging. In this study an effort has been made to investigate individual leaders on the one hand, and the network of relationships in which they are placed on the other. The following are the specific objectives of the study:

1) To understand the socio-economic profile of the emerging rural leaders.

2) To analyze the pattern and structure of the emerging rural leadership.

3) To examine the factors in the formation of rural leadership.

4) To describe the attitudes, perceptions and values of the rural leaders.

5) To ascertain the relation between education and variations in the attitudes, perceptions and values of the rural leaders.

6) To describe the working style or the functioning of rural leadership.

7) To analyze the relation between education and the variation in the working style or the functioning of rural leadership.
Hypotheses of the Study:

There are several casual factors which give rise to leadership patterns and networks. These factors may be essentially individual, group and situational or the combination of two or more of these factors. A change in them accompanies a change in leadership patterns. This study has made an attempt to understand the dynamics between these factors and the emerging leadership patterns by testing the following hypotheses:

1) The higher numbers of emerging rural leaders are likely from the higher socio-economic status.

2) The higher numbers of emerging rural leaders are from higher-level educational background.

3) The age of the rural leaders and their level of education are likely positively related.

4) The age of the rural leaders and their socio-economic status are likely negatively related.

5) The age of the rural leaders and their level of mass media exposure are likely positively related.

6) The higher level of mass media exposure of the rural leadership is more likely lead to modern outlook of the rural leadership.

7) The higher the level of education of the rural leadership is more likely lead to modern outlook of the rural leadership.

8) The emerging rural leadership is more likely influenced and controlled by the leadership at the higher level than the informal leadership in the villages.
9) The higher level of education of rural leadership is more likely to lead to more democratic functioning of rural leadership.

10) The modern attitude or outlook of the rural leadership is more likely to lead to efficient functioning of the rural leadership.

11) The higher numbers of emerging rural leaders are more likely to have a higher level of socio-political activism in the past.

Conceptual Framework:

Leader and Leadership:

The concepts leader and leadership are often used interchangeably. However, these two concepts—leader and leadership—are not synonymous. Of course, the knowledge about one to understand the other concept is very essential. However, they are not one and the same.

In general, leader denotes an individual with a status that permits him to exercise influence over certain other individuals. Specifically, our concern is directed toward leaders driving status from followers who may accord or withdraw it, in an essentially free interchange within a group context (Hollander F.P. 1964).

A. Bavelas (1960) makes a useful distinction between the idea of leadership as a personal quality and the idea of leadership as an organisational function. The first refers to a special combination of personal characteristics; the second refers to the distribution throughout an organisation of decision-making powers. The first leads us to look at qualities and abilities of individuals; the second leads us to look at the patterns of power and authority in organisation. Based on the understanding of Bavelas' definition of
leadership, it is quite evident that the idea of leadership as personal quality stands for the
notion of ‘leader’ and the idea of leadership as an organisational function talks about the
notion of “leadership”. Thus, the term leadership can be interpreted in such a way that it
has the inbuilt mechanism of a role i.e., leading and the occupant of that role i.e., one
who is leading.

The process where in a person or a group of persons leading other persons and/or
groups in the fulfilment of the common goals or objectives of the group can be
understood as “leadership”. Where as the incumbents of the position of leadership can be
termed as leaders. It emerges out of the foregoing discussion that the term ‘leadership’ is
a broad and comprehensive one that contains even the term and meaning of leader in
itself. The term leader cannot explain the process of leadership where as the term
leadership certainly touches the core of the term leader.

Much of the literature on leadership represents an attempt to study the leader as an
entity possessed of characteristic traits and occupying rather inertly a status position
relative to other individuals who are not too clearly related to him. Actually, the leader
emerges as consequences of the needs of group of people and of the nature of the
situation within which that group is attempting to operate. Stogdill (1948), after an
exhaustive survey of literature, concludes that;

“Leadership is not a matter of passive status, or of the mere
possession of some combination of traits. It appears rather to be a
working relationship among members of a group, in which leader
acquires status through active participation and demonstration of his
capacity for carrying cooperative tasks through to completion.”

The leader is not a disembodied entity endowed with unique characteristics. He is the
leader of a group and is the leader only in terms of his functional relationship to the
group. Therefore, the part he plays in the total dynamic pattern of the behaviour of the group defines him as leader. He is a leader not because he is intelligent, skilful, or original, but because his intelligence, skill, originality is seen as a means by the group members. He is a leader not because he is relatively imposing of stature, well dressed, fluent of speech or from a higher socio-economic background, but because these factors tend to predispose group members to expect better means from their possessor.

When conceived in terms of the dynamics of human social behaviour, leadership is function of needs existing in a given situation and consist of a relationship between an individual and a group. The leader may ‘emerge’ as a means to the achievement of objectives desired by a group. He may be selected, elected, or spontaneously accepted by the group because he possesses or controls means (skill, knowledge, money, associations, property, etc.), which the group desires to utilise to attain their objectives to obtain increased need satisfaction.

Further expanding his views on leader and leadership, Stogdill (1950) suggests the following definition of leadership; Leadership may be considered as the process (act) of influencing the activities of an organised group in its efforts toward goal setting and goal achievement. The following three conditions emerge as prerequisite of leadership:

1. A group (of two or more persons)
2. A common task (or goal oriented activities).
3. Differentiation of responsibility (some of the members have different duties).

There can be a number of other group and situational factors, which may influence leadership in varying degrees, but these appear to be minimal conditions, which will permit the emergence of leadership. There must be a group with a common task or
objective, and at least one member must have responsibilities, which differ from those of the other members. If all members perform exactly the same duties in exactly the same way there is no scope for leadership. A leader then is a person who becomes differentiated from other members in terms of the influence he exerts upon the goal setting and goal achievement activities of the organisation.

The interest of sociology and social psychology in leadership is closely associated to their interest in social organisation. As discussed above, many social organisations incorporate distribution of influence and power. Influence and power positions within a social organisation are conveniently referred to as positions of leadership, and individuals who occupy these positions we call leaders.

**Social change:**

Human society is not static but dynamic. It is always undergoing a change. Nothing social ever remains constant. Individuals and groups, institutions and associations are subject to change. Social change is broader concept than social process, evolution, progress and development. Social change is a process, but all process does not bring about social change. Evolution brings about changes in the structure of organism and leads to the emergence of new species. Social evolution similarly introduces changes in the structure of the social systems and contributes to the growth of new stages social organization. All changes, however, are not evolutionary in nature. There can be social changes, which are revivalist and reversible. Development is a desirable direction of change in a society, which is consciously planned, but all social change cannot be planned change.
Social change, therefore, is a distinct concept. It cannot be substituted by social process, social evolution or development. Basically, social change implies first, internal differentiation or multiplication of forms of roles and relationships within a social structure and secondly, replacement of older structures by new structures. Social change has been defined in different ways by the sociologists. Kingsly Davis (1948) opines that “By social change is meant only such alternations as occur in social organization, that is, structure and functions of society”. Davis stresses on the changes that take place within the structure of the society. McIver and Page (1952) state “It is the change in human relationships which alone we shall regard as social change”. Thus, social change is an alteration in society’s organization, its social institutions or its social structure.

Social change refers to change in the social structure or institutions that provide the framework of social life or the normative patterns of social behaviour and interaction between individuals and groups. Social change, therefore, will manifest itself in the alteration of social life or behaviour of individuals and groups in the society.

Social change is ubiquitous phenomenon. All human societies undergo social change. The degree and rate of change may differ from society to society but change is always inevitable. There are various factors, which influence the nature, the rate and direction of social change. They can be classified as under: (i) Physical factors, (ii) Biological factors, (iii) Technological, and (iv) Cultural factors. Along with these factors education and social legislation also plays important role in bringing about social change in human societies especially in the third world and developing countries.

(i) Physical factors: Physical factors or geographical environment influences the social life of human beings to a great extent and they include surface of the
earth, natural resources, land, water, mountains, forests etc. Changes the magnitude or quality of these physical factors may lead to social change in the societies. The discovery of petroleum in Middle East Deserts has brought about a thorough social change in the countries of that region.

(ii) Biological factors: Biological factors that lead to social change include the factors that determine the number, composition, the selection and the hereditary quality of the successive generations. The changes in the population both in numbers and composition will have a far reaching effects on the human societies, for instance the rapid growth of population has given birth to a great variety of social problems like unemployment, poverty, food scarcity etc.

(iii) Technological factors: The modern science and technology has contributed to tremendous socio-cultural changes in the human societies. The technological factors like introduction of machines, development of means of transport and communication and development of new agricultural techniques have brought about drastic changes in the social life.

(iv) Cultural factors: Cultural factors refer to values, ideals, morals, customs etc. These factors give speed and direction to the social change.

(v) Education: Education is considered as an important instrument of social change. Modern education has changed the outlook of the human beings and has considerably influenced their social organizations and institutions.

(vi) Legislation: The institution of law or legislation has been a powerful instrument of social change. Legislation prepares the ground for changes in
the society. It has played crucial role in the abolition of outmoded practices and thus has facilitated social transformation and change.

**Education and social change:**

The term ‘education’ is derived from the Latin word ‘educare’ that means ‘to bring up’. The term ‘education’ has been used in two different senses; in broader sense and in narrow or strict sense. In broader sense, the term education is used to include all the influences and learnings of an individual as a member of society. That is why Durkheim (1956) defines, “Education is the socialization of the younger generation”. In narrower sense, the term education denotes the teachings given to the pupils in formally organised manner through schools and colleges.

Education plays an important role in bringing about social change. Its role in transforming society is very complex. Education is a conservative force in the sense that it transmits old culture including knowledge, tradition and values to the next generation. But at the same time, it is a liberating force also, as one of its primary objectives is to develop critical understanding of the objective reality.

Education is a powerful instrument to bring about social change. Social Change can take place only when the attitudes and beliefs of the individuals are modified. Unless the individuals are educated and enlightened modification of attitudes and beliefs cannot take place. Hence, education is an important factor to bring about social change. Education develops reasoning and analytical capacity of the individual. By this the individual can modify his behaviour. Social change cannot take place without the change in the behavioural pattern of the individuals. Education plays an important role in this
direction. It is only through education that scientific thinking and attitudes develop in the individual. By the development of these qualities, advancement of science and technology takes place. The growth of science and technology results into social change.

Modern education has a fundamentally different orientation and organisation as compared to traditional education. Freedom, equality, humanism and denial of faith in dogmas are the themes which a modern education should contain. It has professional structure, which is not ascribed to any specific group or class, but can be achieved by merit by any one in society. Some branches of education such as science, engineering, medicine directly focus on world view, and embody the core values of modernization of society. Modern education was generally thrown open to all the castes, religious groups and to women. Education becomes the basis of exploiting new economic opportunities, which were to great extent caste-free.

**Education and democratization:**

Education and democracy are alien concepts in India. India’s social system, being caste centered, is not democratic. In a caste based social order, people are graded in accordance with the caste to which they belong. People of the upper castes are considered superior while those at the lowest level in the hierarchy are termed inferior and impure. They are not treated as human beings. Only those at the top of the caste hierarchy were permitted the right to education for centuries. The belief was that it would be defying a divine mandate if some groups acquired education. Since large section of the population was kept away from participation and education was restricted to the Brahmins, there was
no democracy. Both mass education and democracy therefore were foreign concepts in India (Ambrose, Pinto. 2003).

It is also noticed that not only education was denied to certain communities but it was also highly brahmanical in content. There was no scope for the spirit of human dignity and egalitarian values in the curriculum taught in the brahmanical education. All that was taught before the colonial rule was Brahmanic knowledge. There was no recognition of the knowledge, culture and thought of the majority. That was considered inferior and deficient. Those educated in the Brahmanic schools can neither be called enlightened or knowledgeable. In contrast to this one could easily argue that colonial education was not so foreign to the majority in terms of awakening consciousness in the masses. Colonial education inculcated the values of freedom, oneness and liberalism. It did not serve the exclusive interests of the Brahmins, and in that precisely was its strength.

While the objective of colonial education was to produce a class of 'local collaborators' to carry on the colonial project of exploiting the country, colonial education was still more egalitarian than the Brahmanic. Because of their historical advantage, the Brahmins were the first to gain from the colonial education. Yet, colonial education in principle was open to all. Its values were liberal, democratic and centered on rationality and science. Describing impact of colonial education, Krishna Kumar (1991), states that the English education had triggered a competition among all caste groups, including the lowest castes. The spread of the colonial education had replaced the Brahmins authority of assigning status to other groups on the basis of ritual purity.
Thus colonial education was responsible for the process of democratization in the society. Those with western liberal ideas were no longer subservient to the Brahmanic ideology. The social hierarchies were disturbed. However, it is wrong to state that the British wanted to reform Indian caste based society through the educational project. Their purpose was to colonize the country and to economically benefit from it. They had no intention to make interventions in the oppressive caste heritage. Nevertheless, colonial education was such that it did disturb the caste system. For the first time at least a minuscule minority from different social groups could attend schools and colleges and benefit from education by internalizing colonial values.

The education in post independence, which is borrowed very heavily from the British legacy, has intensified the pace of social change in the country. The modern education, which is inspired by the democratic ideals of our constitution, has created a conducive environment for the survival and success of the democracy in the country. The Government of India has given much thrust on the spread of education as a mechanism of emancipation of the rural masses. The increasing spread of education among the rural masses through the establishment of school and other educational institutions has been one of the very effective means to bring about changes in the rural life and the rural structure. The village people, when they are initiated in scientific knowledge of the life and the world, would find it easy to break with superstitions, which affect their consciousness and keeps them conservative.

The role of modern education in India is conceived not as just as imparting skills and knowledge among the pupils but very much as an agent of changing their attitudes and perceptions about themselves and about their surroundings. Modern education also
emerged as the biggest leverage of social mobility among the hither to neglected sections of the society including women. It has minimized the social distance and also social inequalities among the different social groups in the country. The modern education has replaced the traditional ascriptive criteria of role assignments and has initiated drastic change in the social structure.

The conceptual scheme of interplay between education and democratization in rural India:
Education in rural society in India:

After independence education was conceived as an effective means of rural transformation and development. Accordingly, the government of India has initiated the expansion of educational infrastructure and facilities in the rural areas. This has resulted into massive spread of education in the villages. Though the rural areas lag behind their urban counterpart in the growth and expansion of education, it is noteworthy that at present about more than half the population of rural India is literate.

Table 1.3: The literacy rates in rural and urban India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Literacy rates (per cent)</th>
<th>Total literacy rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>12.10</td>
<td>34.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>22.50</td>
<td>54.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>27.90</td>
<td>60.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>36.00</td>
<td>67.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>44.70</td>
<td>73.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>59.00</td>
<td>80.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India (1951 to 2001).

It can be noticed that though the rate of literacy is very low in rural areas, it has been growing at a high rate. The literacy rate in the rural areas in India was just 12.10 per cent in the 1951 but according to 2001 census the literacy rate in rural areas has gone up
to 59.00 per cent. In fact the rate of growth of literacy in the decade ending 2001 has been higher in rural areas at 14.75 per cent as compared to 7.2 per cent increase in rural areas. This tremendous growth in the rate of literacy in rural areas is also the reflection of the overall increase and expansion of education in the rural areas. The spread of literacy in the rural societies has strong bearing on the attitudes and value system of the rural masses. This in turn has facilitated not only the introduction of democratic institutions in rural areas but also initiated the process of democratization of the traditional social institutions in the villages. Thus, education has emerged as catalyst of spread of liberal, democratic and secular ideas in the Indian villages. The education has changed the outlook of the rural people and the nature of socio-cultural organizations in the Indian villages.

**Decentralization:**

The shortcomings in the experiments of the development programmes led to the realization that poverty alleviation programmes cannot be effective unless the poor have a voice in the planning and implementation of schemes meant to help them. This, in turn, necessitates decentralization of key government functions. Decentralization is the transfer of power and authority from the central/state government to the local level government and to non-government and private organizations. Decentralization enables rural poor people to:

- share in decision-making that affects their daily lives;
- evaluate the outcome of their own decisions;
- minimize chances of misunderstanding;
understand the difficulties and complexities of administration, planning and management;

accept responsibility for failure; and

develop a sense of belonging and commitment to civil society.

Basics of decentralization

• Political and administrative autonomy to local bodies.
• Devolution of revenues to local bodies and empowering them to levy taxes to fund part of their expenditure.
• Periodic local body elections.
• Reservation of seats on local bodies for weaker social sections.
• Local database on administration.
• Local voluntary and private sector organizations collaborate with local governments in addressing development issues.
• Build local human capacities through improved access to health care, education and productive assets to ensure that decentralization empowers the poor.

Types of decentralization:

• Political – provides citizens or their elected representatives at the local level with more power in decision making and supports democratization by giving them more influence in the formulation and implementation of policies. The process is known as 'devolution' and is inherently tied with local autonomy.

• Administrative – redistribution of authority, responsibility and financial resources among different levels of government. This includes:
✓ Deconcentration – transfer of power, authority, responsibility or the discretion to plan, decide and manage.
✓ Delegation – creation of autonomous units with a great deal of discretion in decision making.

- Fiscal – delegation of fiscal and financial powers, including taxation powers to the local self government bodies.

Leading forces behind decentralization:
- Democratization process.
- Structural adjustments and disengagement of the state.
- Emergence of civil society organizations and new stakeholders.
- Growth of local and regional forces in search of their own socio-political identities.

Decentralization policies and legislation in India:

The Constitution of India has set up a republican parliamentary democracy at the national level with the Council of Ministers chosen from and collectively responsible to the elected House of People. This structure of governance is replicated at the level of states, which form the Union of India. The Constitution provided for decentralization in the form of a general directive to the state to establish panchayati raj institutions (PRIs) at the village level as the lowest rung of governance. According to Article 40 of the Constitution:

"The State shall take steps to organize village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self government."
The true potential of Article 40 lies not merely in its directive to set up village panchayats as part of a constitutionally formulated principle of state policy, but in the significant concomitant mandate that panchayats be endowed with "such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government". This means that the task would remain incomplete unless village panchayats begin to function as units of self-government as a part of a democratic polity. The vision of village-based self-government came to be appreciated a few years after the Constitution's adoption in January 1950 when it became increasingly self-evident that socio-economic transformation could not be achieved without democratic participation.

The Community Development Programme, launched in 1952, had a 'top-down' approach. Although this was soon strengthened by a National Extension Service to tackle the problems of growth and development at different local and functional levels, there was, relatively speaking, only token public participation through nominated representatives of the public. The growing awareness that lack of public involvement and participation was a major impediment to the implementation of the Community Development and National Extension Service Programmes was reflected in the government's Second Five-Year Plan. "Unless there is a comprehensive village planning which takes into account the needs of the entire community, weaker sections like tenant-cultivators, landless workers and artisans may not benefit sufficiently from assistance provided by the Government," the Plan document noted. "Indeed, rural progress depends entirely on the existence of an active organization in the village which can bring all the people including the weaker sections into common programmes to be carried out with the assistance of the administration," it added. The document emphasized the need for "an
agency in the village which represents the community as a whole and can assume responsibility and initiative for developing the resources of the village and providing the necessary leadership".

The Balwantrai Mehta Study Team, appointed in January 1957 to assess the Community Development and National Extension Service programmes, observed: "Development cannot progress without responsibility and power. Community Development can be real only when the community understands its problems; realizes its responsibilities; exercises the necessary powers through its chosen representatives and maintains a constant and intelligent vigilance on local administration." The Team's recommendation for early establishment of statutory elective local bodies with the necessary resources, powers and authority led to the enactment of a three tier Panchayati Raj system in different states in 1959 with two basic objectives viz., democratic decentralization and local participation in planned programmes. The three tiers of the system consisted of the Zilla Parishad (district council) at the apex district level, the Block Samiti (council) at the intermediate level and village panchayat (council) at the grassroots level. The States of Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh were the first to adopt the system. By 1959, most states had Panchayat Acts and by the year 1960 Panchayati Raj institutions had been set up in all parts of the country.

The introduction of Panchayati Raj signified the beginning of a new era of participatory development and laid the foundation of 'democratic decentralization' to:

- promote people's participation in rural development programmes;
- provide an institutional framework for popular administration;
- act as a medium of social and political change;
facilitate local mobilization; and

✓ prepare and assist in the implementation of development plans.

The Constitutional 73rd Amendment Act and Panchayati Raj:

The year 1992 marks a watershed in the evolution of Panchayati Raj with the modification of the country's basic law by the Constitution's 73rd Amendment Act to confer constitutional sanctity and power on panchayats. The 73rd Amendment aims at deepening democracy at the grassroots by making them mandatory establishment of local governance structures at different levels in rural India. It specifically identifies panchayats as 'institutions of local self-governance'. Not only does it provide a constitutional status for PRIs but also attempts to make them more representative. This is sought to be done by creating spaces for the marginalized groups, politically or otherwise through positive discrimination. It gives them an important role in shaping rural progress with the goal of integrating the poorest and most marginalized into the mainstream of development. The 73rd Amendment calls for a uniform three-tier panchayat system throughout the country. It reserves a quota of panchayat membership and chairperson positions for Scheduled Castes/Tribes and women; enables the weaker social sections to voice their problems and encourages the emergence of leadership among them.

The panchayats were given the power and responsibility to plan and implement programmes to promote economic growth and social justice as set out in a comprehensive list of activities appended to the Act. However, the implementation of the Constitution 73rd Amendment at the field level has been gradual. Although the Amendment has visualized panchayats as institutions of self-government, these bodies have generally
been viewed only as agents carrying out federal and state government programmes. Even for these, timely funds have not been made available to the panchayats. Transparency - an essential condition for effective monitoring and evaluation - envisaged by the Amendment to be achieved through the Gram Sabha (village council) has not been effectively implemented at the field level. Studies have found that Gram Sabhas have not been convened even once in many panchayats across the country. The difficulty in convening the Gram Sabha is attributed to the quorum fixed by the respective State Act.

Rural leadership:

The informal or traditional leadership dominated the village power structure in the pre-independence period. Each village was dominated by the presence of village panchayat which was consisted mostly of men from dominant upper castes in the village. These village panchayats were the centre of power in the villages. The informal leadership commanded submission from the members of the village with help of the power of customs and traditions. Another important source of the sanctity of the authority of informal leadership was the strong sense of belonging to the place that the villagers had. This sense of belonging was in turn reinforced by a complex of attitudes concerning land which underlies the entire social structure of the village. The loyalty to ones caste by the villagers also added the power of the village leadership. Thus the emotional attachments of villagers to their villages as special entities and to caste groups have strengthened the informal leadership in the rural societies. Despite the changes taking place in rural societies as result of both internal and external forces, it is believed that informal leadership is still very active in the villages.
The rural social structure is a patch-work quilt of sub-caste, religion, and class, and the informal leadership reflects this social structure exactly. Every person in village is, therefore, in reality a member of a relatively small minority, and dearly needs the strength which informal leaders can give him, if he is to expect their help in backing him up and protecting him against other groups, he must in turn back them by seeking out and listening to their advice, and accepting whatever directives or punishments they see fit to mete out. Informal leadership is also assured by the ways in which it is acquired and transmitted. Although it is possible to acquire leadership, the normal way is through inheritance. But this is not to say that the qualities necessary for leadership in rural culture are ascriptive. In fact they must all be achieved. But the socialization process makes pretty sure that the hereditarily chosen elite come to acquire the attitudes and behaviour patterns demanded of a leader. Should the process fail, a leadership vacuum is created, and hence, non- hereditary leaders emerge.

A number of changes have taken place in the leadership structure in the Indian villages over the last five decades. The introduction of democratic decentralization has led to the setting up of formal centers of power in the Indian villages. The basis of power in these formal panchayats is the legal elections and not hereditary rules and authority of traditions and customs. The institutes of formal panchayats have brought drastic social changes in the rural societies, especially in the power structure. The locus of power which was earlier vested in the hands of few people from the land holding upper castes has become to all communities in the villages. It can rightly be argued that it is the formal panchayats initiated by the statute of the state machinery that has given the village panchayats to villagers for the first time. The so called informal village panchayats were
not more than the congregation of the few people from the dominant castes. These panchayats never qualify to be called as village panchayats which have excluded certain communities from their folds. These panchayats acted as the guardians of caste rules and village boundaries and never acted as vehicles of change and development of rural societies. It is only after the introduction of democratic decentralization backed up by state legislations where in a certain number of seats in all the tiers of panchayati raj institutions are reserved for the SCs, STs, OBCs and women, the power equation has started tilting towards the more egalitarian social order. It has been said that the biggest achievement of the democratic decentralization in the country is the widening of the social base of Indian democracy. The formal panchayats have provided space to all the groups and communities in the villages and responded to the aspirations all villagers irrespective of caste, gender and landholding.

The introduction of land reforms and spread of education have further accelerated the pace of the democratization of the rural society. Consequently, a new modern, secular, development oriented formal leadership has emerged if not replacing but definitely sidelining the informal, traditional leadership in the villages. K. Ishwam (1968) has made an attempt to differentiate the informal leadership from the formal leadership in the following ways: (i) the informal leadership of the village is the old leadership, the formal leadership is something new, (ii) with respect to their titles the formal leader is called 'chairman', 'secretary', or by such other terms. The informal leader is called 'elderly' or 'big man', (iii) the informal leader wishes to preserve the old, the formal leader to introduce the new, (iv) the informal leader sees his activity as a duty, the formal leader desires to make a living out of politics, (v) the informal leader see politics the
servant of kinship and caste, the formal leader wants to unify politics with interests extending beyond village lines, (vi) the informal leadership wishes to preserve social distance and division, the formal leadership wishes the rank and file to join together in support of its programmes and (vii) the informal leadership is interested in conservation, the formal leadership is interested in competition. One can argue that the informal rural leadership is the antithesis of the principles enshrined in our constitution whereas the formal rural leadership which is the result of diverse social forces working on the rural society is democratic in spirit and deed.

The formal rural leadership is acting not only as the initiator and motivator of the development process in the Indian villages but also as the redistributive agencies of social and economic assets. The emerging rural leadership is perceived as the partner in the reconstruction of the socio-economic and political organization in the Indian villages. However, the traditional forces always pose a threat to the democratic leadership. In fact it has been noticed that the Indian agrarian social structure is still much skewed one and is not easily allowing the democratic institutions to penetrate deep into the rural social structure. Therefore, the measures like land reforms spread of education and modern means of communication acquire greater significance in the successful working of the democratic institutions including the new rural leadership. It has been argued the egalitarian values have been implanted on a very tough terrain of unequal social order of the Indian villages where the question of their sustenance is very pertinent. However, it is also said that the rural leadership which has emerged as a result of the democratic decentralization is equally posing challenges to the existing inequalities in the rural
societies. It is widely believed that the introduction of democratic institutions in rural society has created stress and tension in the traditional power structure.

**Theoretical Frame work:**

**Education:**

**A Functionalist perspective:**

Two related questions have guided functionalist research into education. The first asks, 'What are the functions of education for society as a whole?' Given the functionalist view of the needs of the social system, this question leads, for example, to an assessment of the contribution made by education to the maintenance of value consensus and social solidarity. The second question asks, 'What are the functional relationships between education and other parts of the social system?' This leads, for example, to an examination of the relationship between education and the economic system, and a consideration of how this relationship helps to integrate the society as a whole. As with functionalist analysis in general, the functionalist view of education tends to focus on the positive contributions made by education to the maintenance of the social system.

Writing at the turn of the century, the French sociologist Emile Durkheim saw the major function of education at the transmission of society's norms and values. He maintained that, 'Society can survive only if there exists among its members a sufficient degree of homogeneity; education perpetuates and reinforces this homogeneity by fixing
in the child from the beginning the essential similarities which collective life demands'. Without these 'essential similarities', cooperation, social solidarity and therefore social life itself would be impossible. Durkheim's views are open to a number of criticisms. He assumes that the norms and values transmitted by the educational system are those of society as a whole rather than those of a ruling elite or a ruling class. A consideration of this possibility may well result in a very different view of the role of education in society.

Drawings on Durkheim's ideas, the American sociologist Talcott Parsons outlined what has become the accepted functionalist view of education. Writing in the late 1950s, Parsons argues that after primary socialization within the family, the school takes over as the 'focal socializing agency'. School acts as a bridge between the family and society as a whole, preparing the child for his adult role.

As a part of this process, schools socialize young people into the basic values of society. Parsons, like many functionalists, maintains that value consensus is essential for society to operate effectively. In American society, schools instil two major values, the value of achievement and the value of equality of opportunity. By encouraging students to strive for high levels of academic attainment and by rewarding those who do, school foster the value of achievement itself. By placing individuals in the same situation in the classroom and so allowing them to compete on equal terms in examination, schools foster the value of equality of opportunity. These values have important functions in society as a whole. Advanced industrial society requires a highly motivated, achievement oriented workforce. This necessitates differential reward for differential achievement, a principle which has been established in schools. Both the winners, the high achievers, and the losers, the low achievers, will see the system as just and fair since status is achieved in a
situation where all have an equal chance. Again the principles which operate in the wider society are mirrored by those of the school. Finally, Parsons sees the educational system as an important mechanism for the selection of individuals for their future role in society. In his words, it ‘functions to allocate these human resources within the role structure of adult society’. Thus schools, by testing and evaluating students, match their talents, skills and capacities to the jobs for which they are best suited. The school are therefore seen as the major mechanism for role allocation.

Like Durkheim, Parsons fail to give adequate consideration to the possibility that the values transmitted by the educational system may be those of ruling minority rather than of society as a whole.

**A Liberal Perspective:**

The liberal view is not a sociological perspective as such, though it has influenced the thinking of many sociologists. Rather it is the view taken by progressive liberal thinkers and educationalists of the role education does and should play in modern democratic society. It may be summarized as follows. Education fosters personal development and self-fulfilment. It encourages the individual to develop his mental, physical, emotional and spiritual talents to the full. By providing free schooling for all, education gives everyone an equal opportunity for developing these capacities and talents. Increasingly both the educational system and industrial democracies operate on meritocratic principles. Academic credentials are awarded on merit in a system of fair competition. In the same way, jobs are awarded on merit, and there is a strong relationship between educational qualifications and occupational status. Since schools
provide equality of opportunity for all members of society, regardless of their position in the stratification system, a more 'open' society and therefore a higher rate of social mobility will result. The expansion of education will also reduce inequality in society. In particular, as the educational attainment of members of the working class rises, their bargaining position in the market will improve and as a result their income will rise. Though liberals admit that schools have yet to fully realize these ideals, they believe that things are moving in the right direction, that the promise of education is steadily being fulfilled.

**A Marxian Perspective:**

As with the functionalist perspective, the Marxian view of the role of education in Western industrial society is guided by several related questions. Given the Marxian view of the nature of society the major questions asks: 'How is the educational system shaped by the economic infrastructure?' Questions, which derive from this such as 'How does the educational system produce the kind of workforce required by capitalism?' involve an investigation of the links between power, ideology, education and the relations of production in capitalist society. The answers provide a radical alternative to functionalist and liberal views of the role of education in society.

Althusser, a French philosopher, presents a general framework for the analysis of education from a Marxian perspective. As a part of the superstructure, the educational system is ultimately shaped by the infrastructure. It will therefore reflect the relations of production and serve the interests of the capitalist ruling class. For the ruling class to survive and prosper, the 'reproduction of labour power is essential'. Generations of
workers must be reproduced to create the profits on which capitalism depends. Althusser argues that the reproduction of labour power involves two processes. First, the reproduction of the skills necessary for an efficient labour force. Second, the reproduction of ruling class ideology and the socialisation of workers in terms of it. These processes combine to reproduce a technically efficient and submissive and obedient workforce. The role of education in capitalist society is the reproduction of such a workforce.

Education not only transmits a general ruling class ideology which justifies and legitimates the capitalist system; it also reproduces the attitudes and behaviour required by the major groups in the division of labour. It teaches workers to accept and submit to their exploitation, it teaches the 'agents of exploitation and repression', the managers, administrators and politicians, how to practise their crafts and rule the workforce as agents of the ruling class. Althusser argues that exploitation works via the educational system, 'Each mass ejected en route is practically provided with the ideology which suits the role it has to fulfil in class society.

Althusser has produced only a very general Marxian perspective for the analysis of education in capitalist society. His ideas are not supported by evidence, and, as he himself admits, only a preliminary framework has been outlined.
Leadership:

The Trait Approach:

The search for the personality characteristics of a leader which differentiate him from rest of his group members led to the trait approach to leadership. Initially, physical characteristics were listed: a leader is taller, heavier, and impressive in physical appearance. Later personal attributes and interpersonal skills were considered. Stogdill (1974) reviewed all studies on the traits of leadership, first for the period 1904 to 1947, and again for the years between 1948 and 1970.

The first review exposed the following categories of factors which were associated with leadership:

1. Capacity (intelligence, alertness, verbal facility, originality judgement).
2. Achievement (scholarship, knowledge, athletic accomplishment).
3. Responsibility (dependability, initiative, persistence, aggressiveness, self-confidence, desire to excel).
4. Participation (activity, sociability, cooperation, adaptability, humour).
6. Situation (mental level, status, skills, needs and interests of followers, objectives to be achieved, etc.).

The findings led Stogdill (1974) to conclude that there are no situationally independent traits which could distinguish a leader from non-leaders:

It is primarily by virtue of participating in group activities and demonstrating his capacity for expediting the work of the group that a person becomes endowed with leadership status.... Leadership implies activity, movement, getting work done. The leader is a person who occupies a position of responsibility in coordinating the
activities of the members of the group in their task of gaining a common goal.

**The Situational Approach:**

Thus was born the situational approach to leadership. It postulated that individuals join a group because there are common goals which they cannot realise without coordinated and cooperative efforts of the group member. Further, individual members have needs which they cannot satisfy without relating to each other. By the same token, it is also true that they are accepted in a group because they have something to contribute to the group's goals and to the satisfaction of individual needs. If a leader is the person who helps the group to achieve its goals, each member by virtue of his relative contribution to the goals, is a leader albeit in varying degree. A group may have several goals. Some may be professed and formalised while some, though not articulated, may yet be highly pertinent and espoused. There might be still other goals which relate to the maintenance of group harmony, coordination and cooperation. So a group may have a task leader whose concern is to meet the target and to get tasks accomplished. There may be a social-emotional leader who helps the group absorb stresses and strains and keeps the members together. Sometimes these two roles are rolled into one; at other times two different persons may assume these roles.

If the situation changes, the capacity of individual members to contribute to the changed goals may also change. Imagine a task force whose goal is to handle a breakdown and bring the machine on stream. The technically most competent person may be given the leadership role. Once the task is accomplished and the team decides to celebrate its achievement, someone else may start playing the leading role—someone who
can arrange a party, crack jokes and sing songs. Similarly, the most studious person may be the natural leader of a study team, but the jolliest one assumes charge when the group goes on a picnic.

The Interactional Approach:

After listing the characteristics of an effective leader, Stogdill (1974) concluded:

"The Characteristics, considered singly, hold little diagnostic or predictive significance. In combination it would appear that they interact to generate personality dynamics advantageous to the persons seeking the responsibilities of leadership".

Thus, the review of all studies till 1970 led to the interactional approach which modified the trait as well as the situational approach. The trait approach looked for a situationally independent set of traits which make a person a leader. In contrast, the situational approach left it to the dynamics of a situation to throw a person into the leadership position—almost as if it is the chair which makes a person the leader. The interactional approach posited that different persons in a group react differentially to the group's dynamics. As a result, the nature of a group's requirement is perceived to favour certain personal characteristics as being more critical for goal realisation and interpersonal relationship. The person who has these characteristics more than others comes forward to assume the leadership role. Because all group members possess the characteristics in different degrees and combinations, Cattell (1951) stated that 'every group member is ... in some degree a leader', and that 'persons who are leaders in one situation may not necessarily be leaders in other situations' (Stogdill 1948).

The interactional approach redirected leadership studies

1. To shift focus from a high to a low pedestal, i.e. form studies of only top boss to studies to whoever has subordinates;
2. To search for leadership styles of leaders rather than the traits (i.e. what leaders do, not what their personality is);

3. To develop a taxonomy of leadership situations and the way in which they make different demands on leadership:

4. To investigate leadership styles as they differ from organisation to organisation and from level to level within organisation.

**Democratic Decentralization or Gram Swaraj:**

Panchayati Raj, literally 'Panchayat rule' may be paraphrased as rural local self-government in India. The linguistic aspect of this Indian expression is evident; but there is much besides. While local self - government in the modern sense is essentially a British creation, the Indian component, as it were, relates to some institutional legacies, the historical image of 'panchayts', perceived broadly in a nationalist idiom, and the relatively recent ideologies of decentralization and communitarian democracy conditioned by such an image of 'panchayts'. In the policy approach of the Government of India after Independence, it was recognized right from the 1950s onwards that the strategy of rural development should be pursued with local rural communities as the subject and object. This formed the rationale behind the Community Development Programme of the 1950s, which was sought to promote local self-government and participatory development through a reactivation of the village panchayats.

However, there are two divergent opinions about the rejuvenation of the village panchayats. One school of thought inspired by ideas of M.K.Gandhi is the strong advocate of village panchayats to restore the past glory of Indian culture and heritage
where as another school of thought which is inspired by the thinking of B.R.Ambedkar opposes the idea of village panchayats in the larger interest of the Indian democracy and modernization of the country.

**Gandhian perspective on Democratic decentralization:**

Village Panchayat was a vital element in the strategy for the struggle for national independence and Gandhian political philosophy. Gandhi had categorically stated that ultimate goal of national movement was the attainment of Gram of Swaraj. In the Hind Swaraj (written in 1908) Gandhiji asserted for him Swaraj meant much more than the end of foreign rule; as he put it tersely in 1924: “I am not interested in freeing India merely from the English yoke. I am bent upon freeing India from any yoke whatsoever”. In the Hind Swaraj, Gandhi instituted a sharp comparison between the Indian civilization and the western civilization. For him the tendency of the Indian civilization is elevate the moral being, that of the western civilization is to propagate immorality. The former is based on the belief in God, simplicity, and the quest for moral and spiritual perfection; the latter encourages irreligion, makes ‘bodily welfare the object of life’, is based on machinery, multiplication of wants, urbanization and exploitation.

This is precisely on the basis of such assumptions Gandhi strongly advocated the Gram Swaraj for the restoration of the rich heritage of Indian culture and village life. The Indian national movement which was led by Gandhi also had drawn the similar inspiration. Even the western nationalist exegesis had been inspiring and conditioning the Indian mind in this regard for several decades. In a vibrant defence of institutions Indian,
the panchayt became a superior mode of judicial and civil organizations. Metcalfe's opt-
quoted passage:

"The village communities are little republics, having nearly everything they can want within themselves, and almost independent of any foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down; revolution succeeds to revolution; but the village communities, each one forming a separate little state in itself, has I conceive, contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the peoples of India through all the revolutions and changes which they have suffered, and is in a high degree conducive to their happiness, and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence. I wish, therefore, that the village constitutions may never be disturbed and I dread everything that has a tendency to break them up". (quoted in Maddick 1970)

Gandhi derived considerable inspiration from this picture. There was an air of nostalgia about the contrast between villages 'then' and 'now'. After Independence, the voices within the Indian National Congress (INC) calling for a re-alignment of India with historical roots were responsible for the introduction of the idea of panchayti raj. Ideologically they were operating in the shadow of M.K.Gandhi the by then assassinated leader of the nationalist movement. The ideological assumptions of the protagonists to strive for a partyless democracy aimed at self-sufficiency and self-government. They succeeded in inserting Article 40 in the Constitution of the new republic of India. The article envisaged the panchayti raj institutions to function as units of self-government.

It was believed that the panchayat raj would lead to deepening of the democratic roots in the rural India along with developmental activities. The Asoka Mehta committee noted that the panchayats had failed for various reasons, but expected that the democratization process as a component of modernization would tend to destabilize traditional leadership in the long run. The committee stated that panchayati raj had engendered 'a process of democratic seed-drilling in the Indian soil', and that 'it helped
rural people cultivate a development psyche' (Asoka Mehta 1978). Drawing spirit from
the Gandhian ideals and the experiences of development programmes several states have
introduced panchayati raj institutions which have culminated in the historical 73rd
Constitution Amendment Act that has finally given constitutional sanctity to the
panchayati raj institutions.

**Ambedkar’s perspective on Democratic decentralization:**

Panchayati raj came to be regarded, in rather bombastic words, as a ‘process of
democratic seed – drilling in the Indian soil, making an average citizen more conscious of
his rights than before’ (Bhargava 1979). These high expectations were not shared by all
politicians in the Constituent Assembly. The messages, born from a Gandhian tradition,
were confronted head – on by B.R.Ambedkar, the chairman of the drafting committee
and the then leader of the untouchables. Ambedkar’s experiences of Indian village life as
a person at bottom level of the society were strikingly different than those of Gandhi, a
caste Hindu leader of nationalist movement. He thought the hard earned independence of
the country should be used for the national reconstruction rather than restoring the
nostalgic feelings of rural life. He had hope in the British democratic institutions and the
forces of urbanization and industrialization as catalysts of transforming India as true
democratic society. As one of the main architects of the constitution, he was initially
unwilling to insert a clause on village panchayats. While introducing the Draft
Constitution in 1948, he remarked sarcastically that villages may have survived, as
Orientalists had argued, but that within those so-called village republics suppression and archaism were the rule:

"That they have survived through all the viscitudes may be a fact. But mere survival has no value. The question is on what plane they have survived. Surely on low, on a selfish level. I hold that those who condemn provincialism and communalism should come forward as champions of the village. What is village but a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow-mindedness and communalism?" (Constituent Assembly, Vol.VII).

Ambedkar’s statement roused the ire and anger of many members, but was also supported by many who argued that the influential classes in the village would appropriate all the powers and finances would misuse the process of democratic decentralization. Since the village zamindars and talukdars had unrestricted political, economic, and social power, they could not be expected to allow democracy of the many against the few to function. Since India had embarked on the path of modernization and state building, it was better, the argument continued, to have enlightened intervention by the centralizing state. The state has an enlightened vision and a developmental mission, and has to intervene at local levels against the prevailing power structures. If the intervention in the local hegemonies of high caste landlords, with their bent for archaic cultures and suppressive economies, is permissible, decentralization has to remain guided from above.

Ambedkar was more concerned about the issues of equality, liberty and fraternity in the caste ridden Indian social system. He was hopeful of breaking the unequal hierarchical social order with the help of democratic institutions and education. But he was very cautious about the threat of democratic institutions being enslaved by the caste ridden rural social system. What Ambedkar had foresighted about the democratic decentralization has been confirmed by the various studies conducted on the working of panchayati raj in the villages. Lieten.G.K (2003) opined that personal relations in the
villages were not face to face, but back to back. Small peasant and landless families were kept powerless under the dominance of the landed elite, led by the Brahmins and other high castes. These same households had their family members in the civil service, and thus had direct access to those officials who were in charge of decentralization. It was foregone conclusion that decentralization would not work. Barrington Moore (1973) concludes that the real source of change lies outside the village boundaries, and that structural changes in land ownership structure were a necessary precondition for the village democracy:

"Fundamentally, the notion of village democracy is a piece of romantic Gandhian nostalgia that has no relevance to modern conditions. The pre-modern Indian village was probably as much of a petty tyranny as a petty republic; certainly the modern one is such. To democratize the village without altering property relationships is simply absurd".

It has been argued that socio-economic structure in the villages, i.e., the polarized landownership, the hierarchical caste system, and the traditional panchayts acts as an insurmountable impediment in the democratic process. Decentralization within such a system would amount to putting the horse behind the cart.

**Importance of the Study:**

Studies on patterns and process of rural leadership represent a comparatively new interest in social science research in India. The growing interest in the study of social change (or culture change) naturally calls for a detailed examination of the agents of change. In other words, analysis of leadership in change necessitates general studies in the field of leadership. The adoption of a national programme of sponsored change (covering economic development as well as social growth) lends a critical significance to
studies on rural leadership, for it is rightly felt that the progress of developmental plans can be considerably accelerated by associating community leaders with them. Further, with the increasing politicization of our society, no sociological analysis of contemporary Indian society can be complete without an examination of the emerging political processes. And the political process can not be understood without adequate studies of leadership.

This study has been done in the backdrop of tremendous socio-political changes taking place in the Indian villages. Most of the studies conducted on social change in rural India have seldom touched the issues of emerging rural leadership in a comprehensive manner. They focused on some aspects rural leadership as a part of their studies on the overall village power structure and community organization. This study has made an attempt to focus its attention exclusively on the emerging rural leadership. This study is unlike the studies of rural leadership which have focused on single villages, add to the sociological literature by focusing on rural leadership in several villages or group of villages. It is this aspect of the study that may help to draw some valid generalizations on the emerging rural leadership all over India. Apart from focusing thoroughly on emerging rural leadership in a group of villages, this study has also tried to understand the interplay between education and rural leadership in the rural India. In this sense this study has tried to fill up the gap in multi-disciplinary approaches to the study of rural leadership.

This study will help us to understand the pattern and structure of emerging rural leadership in rural India. The findings of this study, especially about the functioning and value orientations of the rural leadership will help immensely in the preparation of plans
and strategies for participatory development and deepening the roots of Indian democracy into the rural society.

**Limitations of the Study:**

This study has made an attempt to understand the emerging rural leadership in India. However, the study is not free from certain limitations. The major limitation of the study is that it has focused mainly on formal leadership and leaders in the rural India. It has been done on the presumption that the emerging leadership in rural India to a large extent sidelined the informal leadership if not completely replaced it. And also among the formal leadership, it is the elected representatives of the panchayati raj institutions who have been considered in the study and the other formal leaders in the fields such as co-operative credit societies, office bearers of political parties and activists of NGOs have not been covered under the study. The study tries to make generalizations on the pattern and structure of emerging rural leadership in the country by studying the rural leadership in one district of Karnataka state. This will also have implications on the validity of the generalizations of the study.
Review of literature

The introduction of democracy in India after independence was viewed not just as a political event but as a broader and comprehensive event having implications on socio-economic development of the country. The parliamentary democracy with universal adult suffrage has brought drastic changes in socio-political institutions of the country. It has been rightly argued that parliamentary democratic institutions have posed challenges to the traditional institutions and succeeded in modernizing them. Further, the introduction of democracy at grassroots through the panchayat raj institutions has widened considerably the social base of democracy in India. The changes that have taken place as a result of democratization of our country have added new dimensions to studies on Indian society including studies on rural India.

As the majority of India’s population lived in rural areas, it became particularly meaningful for sociologists and political scientists to divert their interest to rural studies. Not only did the studies on electoral behaviour become popular, but more importance was given to the manner in which the various parties found a base within the rural areas. T.K. Oommen (1984) has noticed different trends in the rural studies as far as political changes are concerned. One stream of studies addressed the questions like, to what extent did the political institutions like panchayati raj play an important role in mobilizing the rural populace around it? And what was the role of other social institutions in the mobilization? How important was the role of caste and class? (Chaturvedi and Shah 1970; Ishwar 1970; Patnaik and Lakshminarayan 1969; Atal 1971). Some social
scientists have seen the role of ‘commuters’ as important in analyzing the political processes. Those individuals, who commute everyday from the rural to the urban world, bring the outside world to the rural folk. They thus become a bridge linking the two worlds (Rao 1970 and 1972; Panin 1972; Somjee 1971). The role of leaders who are the part of rural milieu and yet connected with the outside world is also analyzed. Most of these studies emphasize their social base as well as the manner in which they use various ideological mechanisms to link themselves with masses (Sirsikar 1970; Mehta 1972; Carrass 1972; Carter 1974).

Panchayati Raj has become the main mechanism through which all political and economic decisions are taken and hence this aspect has emerged as an important field of study (Inamdar 1970; Somjee 1971; Ram Reddy 1970). Some studies have tried to understand in what way the acceptance of secularism at an ideological level in independent India has given a boost for some marginal groups to change their religion and thus use it to climb the political ladder (Agarwal 1969). Finally the introduction of planned development and decentralized decision making process have not only influenced peoples' perception regarding the nature of rural leadership but actually affected the character of village community power structure to a certain extent. This aspect is also analyzed (Oommen 1970, 1969).

Rajendra Singh (1988) traces the trends in the studies of rural leadership and has brought out the distinction between single village studies and multiple village studies and their different perspectives of looking at rural leadership. Empirical studies on rural elite and leadership are initially found to be embedded in the general tradition of village studies in India. The village studies of the 1950s and 1960s are rich in their ethnographic
details of various aspects of the social structure of a single village. These studies (by Marriott 1952; Srinivas 1955; Dube 1956, 1958a and b; Bailey 1957; Lewis 1958; Mayer 1960; Mathur 1964; Orenstein 1965; Beteille 1966 and Chauhan 1967a and b) highlighted the role of leaders and elites in the countryside. Treating the village as a microscopic unit of society, village studies, among other things, brought us face to face with the facts of the differential distribution of power, economic resources and social statues in the social structure of village society. The organic details of village life in all its totality started giving way to the tradition of studying specific aspects of rural society with not one but multiple villages as the unit of study (For example, Y.Singh 1958 and 1961; Epstein 1962; Oommen 1972; Breman 1974 and K.L Sharma 1974.)

The transition from single village to multiple village studies was indeed a great leap in theoretical perspective, method and approach. Power, rural social stratification, caste and economic aspects of rural social structure and similar themes became the main focus of village studies. In terms of method, participant observation often gave way to such quantifying techniques of social research as schedules, application of statistical tests and correlations. Singh (1988) feels that it was in the midst of these changes in the tradition of village studies that studies of rural elites, leadership and power structure have emerged in India. As it happens the development of village studies was not a neat process. Often we note an overlap and repetitions among them. Single village studies continued up to 1975 (A.Chakravarty 1975) while multiple village studies existed even in the 1950s (Mukherjee 1957, 1958). Despite this overlap, however, the general change has been a movement from single to multiple village studies.
Leadership and power structure studies, which were initially submerged in the tradition of single village studies, started becoming distinct as an independent field of rural study. The study of the various aspects of leadership behaviour and its relation to the structure of power in the countryside required as a unit of study a field larger than the confines of a village. The expansive nature of panchayat, zilla parishad, region and state politics, thus gained currency in leadership studies. The change from single village to multiple village or regional studies was a change that substantially affected the theoretic and methodological perspective of research and investigation on this subject. While monographic field studies used intensive ethnographic qualitative data to reconstruct the basic features of village social life as 'whole', regional studies, in their concern for the specific aspect of rural reality, i.e., leadership and power structure analysis, with some exceptions (such as Gangrade 1974), concentrated more on extensive quantitative data. Such data, however, could not construct an authentic and empirical leader, as he existed in the village monographs.

Thus, the single village studies as well as the multi village studies never focused thoroughly on the issues of rural leadership in the context of rapid changes taking place in the countryside. It can be said that studies on patterns and processes of rural leadership represent a comparatively new interest in social science research in India. No major study dealing with the subject in a comprehensive manner has yet been published either for single village or for a net – work of villages. All we have are some relatively short analysis of particular aspect or aspects of leadership for individual villages or regions. Naturally we do not as yet have a body of acceptable generalizations even with limited regional validity (Dube, L, 1965). However, the studies on rural leadership have gained
momentum as result of decentralized planning and decentralization of decision-making process. The following factors have led to the new interest in the rural leadership studies.

First, the growing interest in the study of social change naturally calls for a detailed examination of the agents of change. In other words, analysis of leadership in change necessitates general interest in the field of leadership. Secondly, the adoption of a national programme of sponsored change (covering economic development as well as social growth) lends a critical significance to such studies, for it rightly felt that the progress of developmental plans can be considerably accelerated by associating community leaders with them. From an operational point of view, therefore, these studies deserve priority. Thirdly, with the increasing politicalization of the individual, no sociological analysis of contemporary Indian society can be complete without an examination of the emerging political processes. And the political processes cannot be understood without adequate studies of leadership. Today, Social Anthropology, Sociology and Social Psychology have begun taking interest on the studies of rural leadership. Even Political Science and Public Administration appear to be breaking away from their tradition and getting interested in empirical studies in the field of rural leadership. In the light of the above discussions, the following review of the studies will help to understand the emerging trends in the rural leadership studies and the gaps that exist in these studies.

S.C.Dube (1955) in his work ‘Indian Village’ discusses some aspects of rural leadership like rural power structure, status and decision-making. Though, the study does not deal with rural leadership in a comprehensive manner, it makes an attempt to show the way in which the ascriptive social order is allowing status assignment including
leadership based on achievement within its framework. This study has brought to our notice that along with ascriptive criteria, the criteria based on achievement have started determining the nature of rural power structure and the decision making process resulting into change in the rural leadership. However, the study shows that the leadership that existed in rural India was predominately conservative and traditional in nature.

Oscar Lewis (1954) in his study 'Group Dynamics in a North Indian Village' has made an attempt to understand the role of 'factions' in the power structure of village community. He noticed that factions based on kinship marked the power structure of Jat community in a north Indian village. He also made observation that the factions are often to cut across ties of kinship and caste. However, these factions are formed mostly among the upper castes and they controlled both the formal and informal helms of village affairs. The influence of these factions was even spread across several villages through the kinship and caste network. The enquiry of this study has gone beyond the general impression that rural power structure is determined by the influence single powerful caste or community. In the coming years the study of factions in rural communities has emerged as an important tradition in rural studies in the country.

Daniel Thorner (1956) in his work 'The Agrarian Prospect in India' has made an attempt to analyze the power structure in rural India. He shows that the centers of power in rural India have been occupied by few people from the landed communities. These people have even managed to see that land reforms laws meant for the landless lower castes remain ineffective because of their strategic position in the rural power structure. He observes that possessing and not possessing of land plays decisive role in village power structure and leadership. The upper caste people are at the helm of decision
making precisely because they own land and they even block opportunities to the underprivileged people to have say in decision making. An interesting observation of the study is that the privileged castes never give up their control over the village land and the village politics despite state intervention in this direction. Thus, the study shows that the rural power structure is dominated and controlled by the people from the privileged landed castes.

Yogendra Singh (1961) in his study 'The Changing Power Structure of Village Community – A Case Study of six Villages in Eastern U.P' makes an analysis of the changes in the rural power structure. He tries to comprehend the traditional and emerging power structures in the Indian villages. He observes that the upper castes and classes still dominate the power structure in the villages, although the challenge from the lower caste and class group has increased. The rural power structure is organized more caste lines than on class lines. He further adds that at the caste level, the rural power structure takes the form of the alliances of caste factions leading to increased tension and unrest in the village. The rural value system has not assimilated the secular democratic value system and the meaningful unit of social, cultural and political participation is still the family or the group of families and not the individual. Thus, the village power structure has remained more or less conservative. However, he notices several changes taking place in the rural power structure. He concludes that the rural power system tends to favour those who can control the economic expectations of the people; it looks obvious that the introduction of economic changes and the emerging pattern of rural economic growth would be mainly responsible for the changes in the rural power structure.
D. Mackenzie Brown (1959) in his work 'Traditional Concepts of Indian Leadership' gives a theoretical analysis of leadership in the context of India. He opines that the Indian tradition of leadership is more akin to the concepts of authority and status than to the western tradition of individual freedom and party competition. Thus the communist ideology, which emphasizes 'duty and leadership of the whole people', has greater appeal for the authoritarian traditions of China, Southeast Asia and India. He feels, however, that in India, the communist approach will most probably be rejected because religious and democratic values are against violent and ruthless authority.

Myron Weiner (1959) in his paper 'Some Hypotheses on the Politics of Modernization in India' focuses on the study of changing political culture in the country. Though his study does not specifically deal with the understanding of the rural leadership, the study, which focuses on politics of modernization, is bound to have implications on the leadership patterns and political processes of village India. It is in this context that the hypotheses derived by Weiner deserve special consideration in the understanding of the rural leadership. According to Weiner the following are the salient features of political system in India: (i) the presence of charisma (ii) the gap between ideal and real behaviour (iii) the tendency of power to reside in men than in office (iv) the absence of a consensus in politics (v) the small but the growing number of interest groups and (vi) the rapid growth of the scope of government. These features noticed by Weiner clearly show that the politics in India is undergoing modernization, however still the traditional characteristics mark the political system in India.

Morris E. Opler (1959) in his work 'Factors of Tradition and Change in a Local Election in Rural India' has done the case study of a local election in Senapur and
Dandpur villages in eastern Uttar Pradesh. This study has helped the Olper to comprehend the grass root realities in the elections in Indian villages. He noticed that there was the rivalry between two dominant individuals who happened to be respected members of an important lineage. Caste was crucial factor and successful manipulation of caste votes was a major task of effective leadership. He also noticed that the head of the family was invariably the one who decided the pattern of voting by the family members. He found that though women were also voters the show was entirely male – dominated. This study shows that although the lower castes were intimidated or humoured into voting for one of two dominant individuals of the dominant caste, the experience definitely made conscious of the power of their vote. This study shows that even the democratic process like election has been influenced and maneuvered by the traditional institutions like lineage, caste and family.

Baij Nath Singh (1959) in his study ‘The Impact of the Community Development Programme on Rural Leadership’ narrates the changes taking place in rural leadership as a result of the introduction of community development programmes. He comes out with certain features of rural leadership that is emerging in the wake of developmental initiatives by the government. He found that the emerging leaders belonged to middle or younger age – group and came from the upper – middle or middle-income group. He observed that even the small cultivators, herdsman and artisans were accepted as leaders provided they showed initiative for productive activity, willingness to serve the community and capacity to lead. He noticed that rich families, who had been influential in the past, lost their influence because of their lack of interest in community welfare programmes and because of various legislative and political changes He feels that from autocratic or
authoritarian, leadership became democratic. The introduction of Panchayati Raj provided a new framework for the activities of the rural leaders, but in the study it was found that it was the Community Development Programme which gave rural leadership a dynamic form by providing opportunities for latent talents to express themselves and for the new leaders to fulfill the felt needs of the people.

Evelyn Wood in his paper 'Patterns of Influence within Rural India' has reviewed some of the published studies on leadership in rural India and has discussed changes in the patterns of leadership. He discusses several different types of leaders, such as the aristocrat, the religious – professional, the oligarch, and the family autocrat. He observed that in most of the villages, leadership is diffused. Traditional institutions continue to be powerful but, in most villages, new forces are rising to challenge their supremacy. Factionalism characterizes group dynamics in most of the villages.

Henry Orenstein (1959) in his work 'Leadership and Caste in a Bombay Village' analyses leadership in relation to caste system. He first examines both formal and informal leadership, and then proceeds to analyse 'sanctioned' and 'unsanctioned' leadership. He feels that formal leadership is of little importance in the village. The village council has no impact on caste structure. Informal leadership is more potent force in village life. Informal leaders with their old methods of exercising power, dominate the council. The village headman, a formal leader, acts as a link between Government and the active informal leaders.

Alan Beals (1959) in his study 'Leadership in Mysore Village' discusses on the political leadership in a small Mysore village with a population of 615. In this village, the traditional pattern of leadership has not survived under the impact of urbanization. The
emergence of three fairly well - differentiated economic groups in the village has also affected its leadership pattern. Formal leadership has not entirely lost its power, but factions and cliques are coming to play increasingly important roles. Beals thinks that if there was political unity in the village, certain innovations, such as improved wells and improved techniques of agriculture could easily be introduced.

William McCormack (1959) in his study 'Factionalism in a Mysore Village' deals with the role of factional strife in the rural politics. He observes that the power of the traditional leadership has declined in his study village for three reasons. They are : (1) Secularization of the villager' outlook; (2) The questioning of the 'neutrality' and 'good character' of the some of the elders; and (3) The waning interest on the part of important village leaders in their traditional role of arbitrators of village disputes. McCormack concludes that in the twentieth century the village life has undergone two significant changes which seem to be responsible for the growing importance of factional leadership. The first is the change in the pattern of village economy. From an economy based on subsistence farming, characterized by free and voluntary exchange of labour among farming families, the village has shifted to an economy-characterized cash farming, hired labour and outside employment. There is no more dependence on the free, co-operative labour of the village and the factional leaders no longer finding boycott sanctions so effective do not feel bound to accept decisions of the traditional leaders in the settlement of disputes. The second change has been the increase in the extent of direct governmental interference in village affairs. In the power contests between village factions, real or alleged official support can be used to strengthen the position of the one side.
R. Bachenheimer (1959) in his work ‘Elements of Leadership in an Andhra Village’ analyses the determinants of leadership. His conclusions reveal that wealth and high caste status determines the nature of leadership in village and within each caste the most important single attribute of leadership is economic strength. Piety, though appreciated, is hardly important for characterizing the leaders. Thus real power is wielded by a few outward looking families with economic and party interests beyond the village. He observes that in spite of wider orientation, the pattern of leadership is fairly traditional. The lower caste leaders who serve as a channel of communication between the village leaders and the lower castes are allowed to exist provided they understand their limitations. Patterns of leadership are beginning to be affected by the changes resulting from the impact of a river valley project nearby. Bachenheimer feels that with an increase in literacy and improvement in general level of education and in media of communication, there would be an increase in political awareness and the villager would become prone to participate in political activity.

Edward B. and Louise G. Harper (1959) in their study ‘Political Organization and Leadership in a Karnataka Village’ examine the position and role of powerful caste, viz, the Havik Brahmans in the village. The study describes the political dimensions of the village and analyses the methods of social control. They have tried to summarize the various aspects of village leadership and the dynamics of feud, faction and party through the working of the two decision – making organizations in the village, viz, the Village Panchayat – a government sponsored organization, and the Gram Samiti established by the villagers. Who will fill up the leadership roles to large extent is determined by the political dynamics of feud, friendship, faction and party. The Haviks can create,
strengthen or weaken the position of the non-Brahman leader. They conclude that the village has still preserved the traditional political organization.

M.N. Srinivas (1959) in his paper ‘The Dominant Caste in Rampura’ has come out with the concept of dominant caste to explain the political dynamics in rural India. Srinivas regards this concept crucial for the understanding of power relations in the villages in most parts of the country. He feels that the understanding of a village requires the study of the locally dominant caste and the kind of dominance it enjoys. He has identified four important elements of dominance: (i) Numerical strength; (ii) Economic and political power; (iii) Ritual status; and (iv) Western education and occupations. Srinivas observes that these elements are usually distributed among different castes in a village and that only the caste enjoying all or most of them can have decisive dominance. Srinivas provides empirical data in support of this concept from his fieldwork in a Mysore village.

S.C. Dube (1955) in his work ‘Indian Village’ has come out with altogether different picture about the concept of the dominant caste. He observes that a caste having all the elements of dominance listed by Srinivas may still operate on the village scene as only a group having certain dominant individuals rather than a dominant caste if does not possess a strong feeling of group unity, an articulate leadership and an integrated sense of direction. It will be meaningful to speak of a ‘dominant caste’ only when power is diffused in the group and exercised in the interest of a sizable part of it. When there are pronounced inequalities of wealth, prestige and power between different individuals in a so called dominant caste and where dominant individuals exploit the weaker elements in their own caste as well as non-dominant castes, it will perhaps be inappropriate to think
of it as a dominant caste. Unity and concerted action in terms of caste interest must, therefore, be assumed before we attempt to locate dominance in a caste on the basis of the criteria specified by Srinivas.

K. Ishwarn (1968) in his study 'Shivapur: A South Indian Village' discusses the different dimensions of village leadership. He observes that the panchayats appear at the four levels in the village; the street panchayat, the caste panchayat and the informal village panchayat, which consisted of elders from the dominant castes in the village, and the elected village panchayat. The first three panchayats are the centers of informal leadership in the village and the elected village panchayat is the center of formal leadership. He opines that the formal panchayat is the rubber stamp of the informal one. The formal panchayat acts under the shadow of informal panchayat as all the decisions by the former are taken after receiving approval from the latter. The informal panchayat is thus invisible power behind the throne. He gives an interesting account of Informal and Formal leadership in the village. The informal leadership of the village is the old leadership; the formal leadership is something new. These two types of leadership differ even in their titles. The formal leader is called 'chairman', 'secretary' or by such other terms. The informal leader is called 'elderly' or 'bigman'. The informal leader wishes to preserve the old, the formal leader to introduce the new. The informal leader sees his activity as a duty; the formal leader desires to make a living out of politics. The informal leader wishes to see politics the servant of kinship and caste, the formal leader wants to unify politics with interests extending beyond village lines. The informal leadership wishes to preserve social distance and division, the formal leadership wishes the rank and
file to join together in support of its programmes. The informal leadership is interested in conservation; the formal leadership is interested in competition.

Ishwam also discusses the factors that led to the transformation of leadership in the village. He attributes this transformation mainly to land reform legislation and legislation reserving certain number of seats in panchayati raj institutions to people belonging to deprived sections of the society including women. He also observes that the availability of employment opportunities outside the village has also brought changes in the traditional power structure of the village as the outside job opportunities freed the landless agriculture labourers from undue influence of the upper caste land owning leaders and substantially improved the standard of living of poor people which in turn has given blow to the traditional patron – client relationships. Ishwam feels that it is the Land Tenancy Act, a state law that was passed in 1961, that has brought tremendous changes in village leadership than the elections. Added to Land reforms Act, the increasing job opportunities outside the village, has changed the socio – political equation in the village. Both the Land Reform Act and increased sources of money income to villagers has made village leadership more competitive. The formally landless and moneyless have tasted the delights of upward mobility, and want more of it. The landed and wealthy have tasted the bitterness of relative downward mobility and are exerting themselves to reverse it.

A.E.Punit (1969) in his work ‘The Structural Determinants in Rural Leadership’ discusses the nature and pattern of power distribution in the village. He has shown that the village leadership to a large extent is influenced by the structural elements like family, caste and economic organization. He observes that the collective entities like family, kinship and caste facilitates the individual members to occupy the positions of
power. The individual attributes are secondary in importance in the allocation of leadership roles in the village society. Punit's analysis of the role of caste in the village power politics highlights the importance of the caste in determining the rural leadership. He classifies castes in the village into three groups taking into account their relative position in the power hierarchy as (i) privileged castes (ii) non-privileged castes and (iii) unprivileged castes. He concludes that the privileged castes have managed to capture the power positions in the village and the non-privileged castes are making an effort to gain the power positions and thereby the privileges whereas the unprivileged castes have been denied access to the positions of power in the village. Whether a particular caste enjoys certain privileges or not has powerful bearing on its ascendancy in the power hierarchy in the village. Similarly the status of family decides to large extent who will be the new incumbent to the leadership positions. The landed big joint families have better say in the decision making process of the village society. Thus, the study has brought out the significance of structural forces in determining the rural leadership. Any institution or organization in India, especially in rural society is strongly rooted in the social structure. The new changes such as elections and reservation to weaker sections in the panchayati raj institutions will have interface and negotiation with existing structural forces. It is true that these changes lead to tensions in the given social structure and make it change. At the same time the intervention for change has to face a stiff resistance from the existing structural forces.

Rajni Kothari (1970) in his work 'Politics in India' argues that the new political leaders and their style of leadership is adapted to securing control of modern political institutions by the manipulation of the institutions of traditional society. He reveals the
fact that the electoral and democratic process has shifted the levers of power from the
hands of first generation leadership to those in charge of state and district organizations,
caste federations and rural panchayats and co – operatives. Further, he observes that the
locus of the new political power lies in their interpretation of religious and caste symbols
and their cross cutting between secular and sacred establish them as the natural
interpreters of the political culture.

S.R.Mehta (1972) in his work 'Emerging Patterns of Rural Leadership' discusses
the consequences of democratic panchayat elections on rural power structure and tries to
understand the emerging patterns of rural leadership. His study reports that important
changes have taken place in the political leadership of the village. He observes that there
is a cleavage between social and political leadership. The older leaders who have
withdrawn from political arena tended to retain the social leadership of their caste groups
where as younger men have emerged as political leaders. Mehta notes that the democratic
panchayat elections have brought changes in the political leadership of the village where
as the traditional leadership still dominate the social leadership with the help of
institutions like family, kinship and caste.

Harjinder Singh(1976) in his study 'Authority and Influence in Two Sikh
Villages' has come out with some what different kind of finding regarding the nature of
emerging leadership in the villages. He observes that age as variable is not leading to
major variation among leaders and non – leaders. There are leaders from across the age
groups and no particular age group is dominant age group of the rural leaders. He
concludes that the new leaders are not necessarily young or old.
K.D. Gangrade (1974) in his work 'The Emerging Patterns of Leadership' highlights the importance of village panchayats in India. He observes that the village panchayat in India, a statutory body for local self-government, has become in fact a state controlled instrument for local socio-economic development and functions as an agent of political socialization in the traditional village communities. He opines that the statutory village panchayats have opened new avenues to the leadership that focuses on the development of the village. The socio-economic development aims at bringing in change in the institutions and organizations of the village communities. This change has resulted into the change in the leadership patterns.

A.H. Somjee (1971) in his work 'Democracy and Political Change in Village India' discusses the impact of democratic measures like elections on the village social life. His study of panchayat elections in Gujarat has brought out that the important changes have taken place in the social relations between traditional caste groups as well as in the village leadership and the political attitude of the villagers. The power positions are now looked as open to all the members of the villages. Though, the powerful castes have managed to keep the panchayat positions under their control, they have realized the significance of other castes which have gained importance as a result of universal adult suffrage.

P.C. Deb and B.K. Agarwal (1974) in their study 'Rural Leadership in Green Revolution' have carried out an analysis of the leadership structure and pattern in the background of the technological breakthrough in the Indian agriculture. This study has highlighted some of the changes in the leadership pattern in the context of rapid socio-economic growth in selected villages of the Punjab. By choosing two distinct villages;
one more advanced and another less advanced, they try to establish is there any relationship between economic development and leadership pattern. They observe that improvement in economic life shows a tendency towards reduction in the number of leaders, higher proportion of social activities leaders to total leaders in a village, more leaders in development and welfare functions as compared to those in traditional and non-traditional village activities, and more leaders holding high socio-economic status. Thus, they feel that technological advances in agriculture and the consequent rapid growth of the rural economy is the focal force in bringing about changes in rural leadership pattern.

Alfred de Souza (1978) in his work ‘Some Social and Economic Determinants of Leadership in India’ discusses the changes taking place in the power equation in rural societies. He opines that before independence, the panchayat was an appointed body, the members being nominated on the basis of traditional, social and economic criteria. The dominant caste used its higher social status and economic advantages to function as the politically powerful group. However, when the democratically elected panchayat is instituted, political participation has broadened and the leaders who play significant roles belong to several social groups that were formerly politically under-privileged and unrepresented. The democratic panchayat elections have disturbed the traditional social relations between various caste groups because political representation is now dependent on numerical strength rather than ascribed social status. As result, the caste leaders have to mobilize the political support not only of their own caste but also of other social groups in the struggle for power. The base of political relations broadened to include caste, kinship and patronage, and pragmatic coalitions were formed that cut across the
lines of caste and kinship. Thus, the study concludes that in the place of dominant castes, the alliance of different castes have gained momentum as result of the introduction of the democratic measures through legislations. However, one should bear in mind that these measures have not replaced the significance of traditional institutions like caste and kinship. These measures have transformed the traditional institutions to negotiate with changed reality.

Gerald D. Berreman (1979) in his work 'Caste and other Inequalities, Essays on Inequality' comments on the future of democratic governance in the Indian villages. He feels that the inegalitarian social stratification, particularly the political, social and economic ramifications of the caste system, made democratic play on a level field a near impossibility. He concludes that the contemporary rural community in India is simply not structured for democratic, egalitarian self-administration. Thus, in the very beginning of the introduction of the Panchayat Raj, it was realized the difficulties involved in the successful implementation of the democratic measures in the caste based hierarchical rural social order. It was felt that along with democratic measures, there was a need of reforms in land relations and equitable distribution of economic assets among the rural masses.

D.S. Choudhary (1981) in his work 'Study of Emerging Rural Leadership in Rajasthan' observes that there is an appreciable change in the traditional pattern of rural leadership after the introduction of Panchayat Raj. He opines that the new leaders are younger compared to traditional leaders. He feels that qualitatively younger leaders are not much different than the traditional leaders. However, it is found that the socio-economic outlooks and attitudes of the leaders show great sign of an appreciation for
modernization. He concludes that the introduction of statutory panchayats have brought drastic change in the traditional power structure of the village. This has made rural leadership more oriented towards developmental tasks than social and customary activities. The rural leaders are much more concerned about the development of their villages. This dimension has again made rural leadership more competitive and dynamic compared to the traditional leadership.

Hargian Singh (1985) in his study 'Panchayat Raj Leadership in Haryana' discusses the composition and pattern of emerging leadership. He observes that the new leaders are from the smaller families. They belong to higher and dominant castes and are drawn from the educated segment of the society. Further, he opines that most of the leaders are from higher economic status groups and are mainly agriculturists having large land holding. This study concludes that caste and land holding still decides who should wield power in the villages. Thus, this study concludes that the emerging leadership is having some attributes like higher education, smaller family background which are modern or progressive and also some attributes like dominant caste status and large land holdings which are considered traditional. Thus, the emerging leadership is having the blend of modernity and tradition.

Mario D. Zamora (1990) in his study 'The Panchayat Traditions; A North Indian Village Council in Transition, 1947 – 1962' discusses the hurdles in the successful working of the democratically established panchayats in the villages. The significant finding of the study was that the panchayats hardly ever met and gradually went into oblivion 'owing to a number of reasons, such as illiteracy, caste discrimination, factionalism, ineffective communication, poverty, etc. He also observes that village
panchayats are captured by the autocratic and corrupt male village elites. Thus, the development dimension of the panchayats has also led to the large scale corruption at the village level and adversely affected the communitarian values in the village. Despite legislative provision of seats for women, most of the village panchayats are under the control of the male members. Thus, the representation of the women in the panchayats has not stopped the dominance of male members in the decision making body.

Prem Prashant et al (1996) in their work ‘Popular Participation in Rural development’ has made an attempt to understand the pattern and nature of emerging leadership. They observe that the traditional leadership is being replaced as a result of the 73rd Amendment Act. This study notices that a large number of Panchayat Raj leaders are younger and hails from the weaker sections of the society. It further found that these leaders are having low level of education and are from agricultural families and generally having small land holding and low annual income. Thus, the authors argue that the new legislation is path breaking one as far as the participation of weaker sections in the village decision making process is concerned. The deprived sections of the society have started enjoining fair deal in the developmental matters as a sizeable number of people from these communities are represented in the Panchayat Raj institutions. The study concludes that the Panchayat Raj legislation that has provided for the reservation of weaker sections like SCs, STs and women has widened the social base of the popular participation in the village decision making process.

Dilip K.Ghosh (1997) in his study ‘Grassroot women leaders: Who are they? A Study in a West Bengal District’ makes an attempt to understand the socio-economic background of the women leaders of panchayats. The study tries to understand the profile
of the panchayat women members by analyzing the caste pattern, age group distribution, marital status, educational attainment, family income and landholding of the families. The study reveals that a fair representation is ensured to the women from weaker sections like SCs and STs and Muslims. It is found that most of the women members (61.76%) are of the age group up to 30 years. But only 4.42 per cent members are above 45 years age group. This implies that though new generation women (younger age women) prefer to grab the scope provided by Seventy Third Amendment, elderly women are not so much interested to break the traditionality, in other words few of them feel the urge to evolve a new society where the existing gaps and discriminations are fought to be alleviated. Some of these elderly women expressed that the burden of family was so rigorous that they even had no time to think of change. For obvious reason, the political parties prefer younger women to become the agents of change. The analysis of the caste composition of the age groups shows that of 118 members of up to 25 years of the age about 40 per cent are from the SC group, 16 per cent from ST, 24 per cent from Muslim community and the remaining 20 per cent from other castes. Similarly, the percentage of SC/ST members is very high in the age groups above 25 – 30 years, and 30 – 45 years in comparison to other caste members. The reverse trend is visible in the case of age group above 45 – 50 years where more than 61 per cent members belong to the upper castes. Ghosh observes that as all the members are new to the system, inclusion of more younger people from SC/ST may lead to the biased interaction when the members of other caste influence the thought process of the weaker section community. He opines that the younger women members of SC/ST community do not participate effectively in the deliberations of the gram
This study observes that of the total women members 37.25 per cent have education up to primary level and 32.11 per cent have attained the education level of secondary stage. The members of the SC/ST communities have very low education profile. Of the total illiterate, neo-literate and literate without schooling, slightly above 77 per cent belong to SC/ST community while in case of members achieving the primary standard, 38.81 per cent and in respect of secondary education 22.90 per cent are women. On the other hand, of primary educated members 55.26 per cent and of secondary level, 67.17 per cent are from the ‘other’ category. Even of 11 graduates under the study 10 are from the ‘others’ category. This shows a clear bias in education – ‘others’ group is in educationally better situation. The information on marital status of the women members shows that of 408 members, majority of the members (92.89 per cent) are married. Of the married women, 370 have children of which 308 have more than one child. It is also found in the study that in case of 40.44 per cent members, agriculture is the main activity where as only 2.94 per cent members depend on village industries for their major earnings, 39.46 per cent of members do not undertake any economic activities and are mainly engaged in their household work. According to the Census of India definition, they are termed as non-workers. Thus, a huge proportion of women members remained as non-workers.

Abdul Aziz (1998) in his work ‘An outline of the contours of panchayat raj’ discusses the working of panchayats and nature leadership in panchayats before the introduction of 73rd Constitution Amendment Act 1992 and after its introduction. He
observes that panchayat bodies had come to be dominated by the rural elites, especially the landed gentry, who happened to be members of the dominant communities. Members of the weaker sections – SCs, STs, and Backward Classes – hardly had access to panchayat membership or authority positions like ‘President’ and ‘Vice President’. Consequently, power and authority in panchayats was skewed in favour of the strongest. This was not consistent with the participatory governance envisaged. He feels that the Constitution Amendment Act, 1992, sought to right these wrongs. It laid down guidelines for panchayat structure, composition, power and functions; made the establishment of panchayat and the holding of panchayat elections within six months of their dissolution mandatory; stipulated the appointment of State Finance Commission to recommend devolution of finances as also how funds are to be assigned to panchayats; and provided for reservation of seats and authority positions in favour of weaker sections like Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Classes and women. These provisions have been landmarks in the history of local governance in our country.

Aziz opines that reservations, of course, have brought in a large proportion of elected representatives from the weaker sections into the panchayati raj system. This augurs well, as it gives them opportunities to articulate and fulfill their needs and aspirations. However, disturbing signals from the field indicate that while some are knowledgeable and articulate, a large number, illiterate and inexperienced, are controlled either by relatives or by vested interests, so that the very purpose for which reservation was reduced is defeated.

Sukhdev Singh (1998) in his work ‘Three Tier Panchayati Raj in Punjab after the Seventy – Third Amendment’ presents findings from interviews with villagers and
panchayat representatives in four districts of Punjab – Hoshiarpur, Ludhiana, Fatehgarh Sahib and Patiala. This was part of a bigger study undertaken by the Centre for Studies in Rural Development, Punjab Agricultural University. When asked what they felt mattered most in elections, the villagers interviewed cited caste, community, faction, political affiliation, and, "above all, 'inducements', in cash and kind..." Villagers reported further that their panchayat representatives try to misappropriate resources from village commons, which have been under the control of panchayats, and that this is a root cause of factionalism. Of the two categories of panchayat leaders interviewed – village panchayat leaders and representatives of the higher tiers (panchayati samithis and zilla parishads), the former were found to be abysmally ignorant of their powers and functions. Their counterparts at the higher tiers, while 'more aware of their powers'.

Sather Krishna (1997) in his paper 'Women and Panchayat Raj: The Law, Programme and the Practices' observes that the 73rd Amendment Act has ensured enough representation of women in the PRIs. However, he feels that the quality of participation of women members in these PRIs is not satisfactory. In the beginning of the PRI experiment with reservation of seats for women in Karnataka, it was a common sight to find women occupying back seats during the panchayat meetings. Even in training programmes where members of the both sexes were present, women were seen sitting away from the front benches. Some panchayats were; however, bold enough to 'reserve' the front seats for the women. Over the years, the situation has gradually changed, though equality of treatment in such basic matters is still far from fully achieved. Another observation has been that the women members depend considerably on their men folk for decision-making. It is a common sight to find their male relatives not only hanging...
around the panchayat offices, but also taking active part in official activities. He attributes the following factors responsible for this dismal situation. One reason is the social tradition, where all such matters had been assigned to men. Second is the legal tradition of inheritance of property by male progeny, to the exclusion of married (sometimes even unmarried) daughters. Third is the lower literacy level of women as compared to men.

Snehlata Panda (1997) in her work ‘Political Empowerment of women: A case of Orissa’ explores the rural socio-political situation and performance of women representatives in PRIs, in Orissa with mandatory provision of 33 per cent reservation for women, provided by the New Panchayati Raj Act. The study focuses on the socio-economic background of the participants and the breaking barrier of traditional patriarchal society to enter into the political arena which gives true meaning to the grassroots democracy. Panda observes that women entered into the politics due to the mandatory provision of 33 per cent. Most of the women are having non-political background and entered politics due to persuasion of by their family members or pressure from the village community or pressure from political party and some members entered due to personal interest. The important aspect of the study is that the women who reluctantly entered into politics showed great maturity in outlook, enthusiasm, increasing political consciousness, and the increasing perception of their role and responsibilities in the later stage. The study found that mean age of women representatives was 48, which indicates that the ideal age for women to take up political offices is after their relative freedom from familial responsibilities like reproduction and nursing children. The absence of younger women shows the hold of the traditional thinking about women’s role
in rural areas. Even women representing PRIs had strong reservation on entry of younger women which may be due to their social conditioning.

The study also observes that caste is an important factor in determining the recruitment of women into political offices. There is a strong dichotomy between the upper and lower castes and functional rigidities are perceptible in the village social structure. The high caste women are restricted to domestic activities despite their poor economic condition. Rarely do they move out to take up work in the various government schemes operated in the village. Their families are highly patriarchal and therefore women are not allowed to participate in public affairs. This is the reason for the overwhelming representation of lower caste women in the PRIs of the state. It is also found that majority of the participants were not earning and were financially dependent on their husbands. Those having independent earning had very low income compared to men which supplemented the family income. It was obvious that they enjoyed a low status because of their smaller size of earning. Since majority of them were housewives, they had taken to politics as an extension of their domestic work.

Mukta Banerjee (1998) in her work 'Women in Local Governance: Macro Myths, Micro Realities' presents case studies of four women representatives of Karnataka's panchayats, studied as part of project sponsored by the Ford Foundation and undertaken by the Institute of social Studies Trust shortly after the seventy – Third Amendment's seat reservation for women in panchayats came into effect. One of the four case studies is about an upper caste woman who became vice president of a gram panchayat and was content to be a 'dummy' while her husband managed her official responsibilities from behind the scenes. The remaining three profiles are somewhat encouraging and optimistic
note. The study talks about the story of Basamma, who became the president of Karnataka's only all woman panchayat in Mydolalu, Bhadravathi taluk, Shimoga district. Basamma learnt the ropes from her male mentors and went on to be an active panchayat president. One of her projects was a ban on the sale or consumption of country liquor in the three villages of the panchayat. The Village Sanitation Programme geared to providing a toilet in every home was another of Basamma's projects. Another case study of a woman municipal counselor reveals that women leaders are work oriented and are unlike male counterparts never involve much in politics. In this case Gangavva, a woman municipal counselor was committed to tackling the problem of water scarcity which affects the women more adversely and her other priorities were that of clearing garbage and collection of taxes. The one remaining study is that of Zubadabi, where in the analysis of the case reveals that the bureaucracy at the higher level is having cynical approach to meet and listen to the women panchayat leaders from the villages. It is also found that women leaders lack the right based approach to their problems and always feels that the development work depends upon the mercy of the bureaucratic people operating at the higher level. The analysis of these case reveals that the women panchayat leadership is very sensitive to the issues affecting the life of village women as in case of Basamma where as there is also the possibility of women panchayat leaders treated second rated members wherein their male family members exercises power on their behalf.

George Mathew (1998) in his work 'Restructuring the polity with panchayati raj as a cutting edge: The background, the issues and the ground realities' discusses some aspects of panchayats and the democratic issues involved in the village politics like
elections and pattern of leadership. He opines that elections to panchayats in India have been an excellent barometer of functioning democracy. He quotes the studies done on the panchayat election process in Karnataka in 1995 and Tamil Nadu in 1996 and observes that caste and religion, which had been playing a prominent role in deciding the outcome of the elections in the last fifty years, have shown signs of decline in panchayat elections in some states. In Tamil Nadu, for example, during the 1996 panchayat elections, a growing democratic consciousness among the people was clearly evident. Nearly 81 per cent of the respondents of the survey said that religious or caste leaders did not direct the people to exercise their voting right one way or the other. To a direct question of whether caste affinity was important in voting a candidate to power, an overwhelming majority of 73.6 per cent said that the caste of the candidate was not an issue at all. In Karnataka, for 63.2 per cent of the respondents, the caste of the candidate did not matter. 44.9 per cent said they voted for a particular candidate because he or she was good person. He concludes that voters in local elections give priority to welfare and development activities, and transcend caste or party politics; for the village voter, the track of the record of the candidate vis a vis issues of corruption or ability to do development work was more important. However, he raises concerns about the panchayats themselves are being used as oppressive instruments. Absence of land reforms, low level of literacy, especially among women, patriarchal system, etc., are working against the interest of the weaker sections. A majority of those mired in oppressive traditional power structures are unable to utilize effectively the new opportunities provided by the panchayats.

S.P. Singh (2000) in his study ‘Gram Panchayats: Assessing Developmental Goals, Motivational Factors and Orientation’ tries to examine the hierarchy of
development goals of gram panchayat leaders, their motivation and the extent of their orientation towards people. This study was based on the responses of Gram Panchayat Pradhans and Upa – Pradhans of 60 gram panchayats of two development blocks of Hardwar District of Uttar Pradesh. Creation of public awareness is considered as the most important development goal of the gram panchayats. In most of the cases, this goal is preferred to others. When a respondent was questioned why he had preferred mass awareness to income generation, he told, ‘If the people are educated and have awareness, they can themselves generate income.’ The second important development goal of panchayat is the employment generation. Development of durable community assets such as rural roads, bridges, drainage, etc., is ranked as the third development goal of gram panchayats. As far as the motivations of the gram panchayats leaders is concerned it is found that most of the leaders have high affiliation motivation for joining gram panchayat organization because they want to make good relation with the people, want to serve the people, and want to be popular so that they may win the election again. Along with these, it is also found that the achievement motivation is fairly high among the panchayat leaders. The study concludes that all the three motivational needs: need for affiliation, need for achievement and need for power are found among the panchayat leaders. There is no significant difference among them. However, in hierarchical order, need for affiliation stands first followed by the need for achievement and need for power.

G.K.Lieten (2003) in his work ‘Power, Politics and Rural Development – Essays on India’ discusses the hierarchical structure and the issues of rural politics and leadership. He observes that the personal relations in the villages have not face to face, but back to back. Small peasant and landless families were kept powerless under the
dominance of the landed elite, led by Brahmins and other high castes. These very same households had their family members in the civil services, and thus had direct access to those officials who were in charge of decentralization. It was foregone conclusion that decentralization would not work. He further notices that village councils are located at the interface between the state and the society. They are also located at the interface between traditional autocratic decision making (the *panch* male elders of the dominant castes) in connivance with the bureaucratic and economic elite on the one hand and the democratic procedures that ideally are guaranteed by the state institutions on the other hand. The dire conditions that Ambedkar had painted have not disappeared and access to public space remains highly unequal and undemocratic.

S.N. Chaudhary (2004) in his work ‘Dalit and Tribal Leadership in Panchayats’ make an attempt to understand the nature and pattern of leadership among dalits and tribals in Madhya Pradesh. The study reveals that both dalit and tribal panchayat leaders in Sehore and Betul districts are in the age group of 25 – 44 years and are mostly illiterate, engaged in agriculture activities. It is also found that most of them are wage workers and belonged to BPL group. A majority of them are affiliated to Congress party. The study concludes that lack of basic amenities is serious problem among these communities. Thus, the dalit and tribal leaders lack social capital to manage the panchayat affairs meaningfully. Chaudhary feels that continuous training with regular interval should be conducted exclusively for dalits and tribal panchayat representatives.

Suresh Misra and Rajvir S. Dhaka (2004) in their work ‘Grassroots Democracy in Action – A Study of Working of PRIs in Haryana’ discuss the performance of democratic institutions at the village level and the emerging leadership based on the data obtained
from panchayat elections held in 2000 in Haryana. The study observes that the panchayat elections have brought about a change in the composition and character of the panchayats. Reservation of seats in favour of women has enabled them to come forward and play a role, in decision-making. It is found that 66.73 per cent of the panchayats members are males and 33.27 per cent are females. Unlike the earlier panchayats which were dominated by the members of high castes, this election has ensured fair representation to the deprived sections of the society. It is observed that 71.63 per cent of the members from the general castes and 19.11 per cent are from the Scheduled Castes and 9.26 per cent are from the Backward Castes. Thus, about 30 per cent of the members belonged to the deprived sections of the society. It is also observed that relatively younger generation has taken over the helm of leadership. About 21.06 per cent of the members are from the age group of 21 – 30 years, while 33.88 per cent are in the age group of 31 – 40 years. Almost 55 per cent of the elected representatives are in the age group of 21 – 40 years. Further, it is found that more than 75 per cent of them are between the age group of 18 – 50 years. The elders group of above 61 years constitutes only 11.52 per cent the elected representatives. In terms of education, the finding is not encouraging. It is observed that 40.94 per cent of the elected representatives have had no formal schooling at all. Most of them can not even read and write. As far as the occupational background of the panchayat members is concerned 61.24 per cent of them have agriculture as their main occupation and 11.13 per cent have no occupation. Quite a large section of the elected members (23.95 per cent) are labourers or wage workers. Most of them constitute agricultural labourers. Only 1.68 per cent of them are self-employed and 1.76 per cent of the members are petty businessmen.
Kripa AnanthPur (2004) in his work 'Interface in Local Governance – A Study in Karnataka' makes an attempt to analyze the interface between Customary Panchayats and Gram Panchayats in the context of Karnataka. The study observes that there are three channels through which Customary Panchayats intervene in and impact upon elections to Gram Panchayats and decides the nature and pattern of panchayat leadership. Customary Panchayats decide on who should contest elections or influence the type of members that are represented in the Gram Panchayat. Customary Panchayat also exercise influence to the extent of ensuring that the candidates of their choice are elected unopposed. And often Customary Panchayat leaders themselves contest GP elections. This leads to an overlap of leadership between the customary and statutory institutions.

The foregoing review of literature has been done in order to understand how the studies which have already done in the field of rural leadership have tried to understand the dynamics of rural politics and nature of rural power structure and the emerging patterns of rural leadership. The survey of literature has carried out even to reconstruct the profile of rural leadership in the initial period of Independence of the country. This is very crucial for the present study as it ensures the base line for the study and also enables to find out in what way the changes have taken place at present with reference to portrayal earlier studies done.

The studies done on the rural leadership have focused on different dimensions of leadership in the village India. In the initial period (1950 – 1970) most of the studies have attempted to understand rural leadership as part of their overall scheme of ethnographic study of the village communities in India. Obviously, no detailed and comprehensive picture of rural leadership emerges from these studies. However, these studies carry a
rich ethnographic account of the leadership which enables to understand the rural leadership from the holistic perspective. These studies observe that rural leadership in the Indian villages is mostly a social issue than political one as the social structure and other social institutions have strong bearing on the pattern and composition of power structure in the villages. Thus, rural leadership in the initial period of Independence was to large extent conditioned by the internal social realities of the villages. The leadership was traditional and conservative in nature. The traditional social institutions like caste, family and kinship and landholdings influenced the composition and nature of the rural leadership. However, these studies also notices that several measures like the launch of the Community Development Programme and the introduction of the statutory panchayats by the State have initiated changes in the village power structure and leadership pattern. The village leadership started responding to the developmental needs of the villages and has started balancing both the traditional and developmental functions.

The measures like land reforms and the statutory elections to the panchayats and the reservations of seats in panchayats for the deprived sections of the society have given blow to the traditional leadership and created tensions in the village power structure. The power equation in the village started tilting towards the numerically dominant castes. This has made the privileged castes to react more severely to the changes and they have started adopting different strategies to maintain their hold on the village decision making process. This has led to new developments in village politics like the factional politics. Accordingly, in the coming years most of the studies on rural leadership focused on the role of factional politics in the village power structure and its resultant impact on the composition and nature of rural leadership. These studies have shown that it is not a
single dominant caste that enjoys the leadership positions but the coalitions of different castes determines the nature and composition of leadership in the villages. Thus, the factional politics has made village politics more competitive and all the castes have gained significance in the village decision making process. But the concern was also expressed that the intense competition to leadership positions has sidelined the developmental priorities of the panchayats and it has also resulted into rivalry and violence in the villages.

The thrust on rural development and acceptance of panchayats as the agencies of development have added new dimension to the rural politics. It was believed that the attitudes and perceptions of panchayat leaders play crucial role in the successful implementation of rural development programmes. Thus, studies on leadership have started focusing on the socio-economic profile and attitudes of rural leaders. These studies have filled up the gap that was unnoticed by the ethnographic studies which basically viewed rural leadership as part of larger social system. The studies on socio-economic profile and the attitudes of the leaders mostly followed quantitative methodology and tried to make some meaningful generalizations about the leadership pattern in the Indian villages. The 73rd Constitution Amendment Act, 1992 has initiated a new era in the field of grassroot democracy. The Act is aimed at widening the base of democracy by making provision of reservation of seats in Panchayati Raj Institutions for deprived sections like SCs, STs and women and bringing permanency to the panchayats by making holding of elections within specified period as mandatory. The constitutional sanctity to these institutions elevated them as grassroot democratic institutions on par with the states and centre. Accordingly, the panchayat leadership has gained momentum.
and attracted the national attention. Most of the studies which came out after the introduction of the 73rd Amendment Act have focused on the analyses of the consequences of the Act on the nature and composition of rural leadership. The main theme of these studies was to know what changes have taken place in the pattern of rural leadership. These studies have shown that new leadership has emerged in the panchayats and also attempted to explore the changing dimensions of the rural leadership.

It is quite evident from the foregoing review of literature that most of the studies have come out with contradicting findings about the nature and composition of the rural leadership. Some studies portray that the emerging rural leadership as democratic, secular and development oriented whereas some other studies reveal that the emerging rural leadership is the replication of the hierarchal social order in the villages. This aspect is duly examined in the present study. Another striking finding of these studies is about the co-existence of traditional, informal leadership and modern, formal leadership. Some studies have found that emerging leadership has sidelined the traditional leadership whereas some other studies observed that traditional leadership is still powerful and even dictates the formal leadership and formal leadership is controlled by the former. This aspect also needs reexamination which the present study is attempted. Most of studies have attempted to understand the changes in the ascriptive and achieved criteria of recruitment to the leadership. Again, the studies have no uniform findings; some have shown that ascriptive criteria like caste, family background, kinship and ownership of land play dominant role in deciding the nature and composition of the rural leadership whereas some other studies have revealed that achieved criteria like education, developmental work done have been gaining importance in the rural decision making.
process. The interplay between the ascriptive and achieved criteria of leadership is also considered in the present study. The studies on rural leadership have also made attempt to analyze the socio-economic profile of the rural leaders. These studies observe that socio-economic profile of the emerging new leaders is significantly different than that of the traditional leaders. It is found that new leadership is relatively younger and more representative as a fair number of leaders from the deprived sections of the society including women have gained access to the panchayat offices. It is also found that emerging leaders are having better educational background and higher exposure to mass media. Some studies have also noticed that the panchayat leaders from SCs and STs including women are younger compared to members from other castes. However, very few studies have attempted to analyze the impact of these changes on the attitudes and orientation of the panchayat leaders. The present study is made an attempt to explain the variations in the attitudes of the leaders by analyzing their socio-economic profile. Some studies have expressed concern that despite the changes in the socio-economic profile of the leaders, still most of the leaders are controlled by the traditional or informal leaders from the dominant castes who try to keep their hegemony on the village affairs. Thus, it is felt that there is need to understand the bearing of the socio-economic profile of the panchayat leaders on their performance and working style. There are some studies that have made an attempt to understand the socio-economic profile of the panchayat leaders and their attitudes and their working style or performance. However, these studies have not analyzed the variations in these dimensions of panchayat leadership and are more descriptive than explanatory in nature. The present study has made an effort to fill up this gap.
References:


