

SCHEDULED CASTES LEADERSHIP IN PANCHAYATS: A STUDY OF SUB-DIVISION MOONAK, PUNJAB

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ABSTRACT:

Leadership makes things to happen in reality. A leader is a person who bring together everyone by keeping in mind their thoughts, expectations and demands. In this paper, efforts have been made to analyse the leadership qualities in Scheduled Castes representatives in Panchayats in villages falling under Andana at Moonak Block in Sub-Division Moonak, Punjab. The research work includes overall performance of the persons belonging to these castes in Panchayats as a representative of their community. In present research, it has been found that Scheduled Castes leaders are able to present themselves as a good representative in Panchayats and during the matters of atrocities on their community, mostly of them are able to resolve these matters whenever the situation prevailed at the village level. Besides of this, it can be said that the educational programs should be initiated by the government to eradicate illiteracy among these castes because only an educated leader can lead society in a good way.

Keywords: Scheduled Castes, Leadership, Panchayats, Leadership Styles etc.

INTRODUCTION

A good leader plays a vital role in directing society. Every group or society needs a leader who can direct them and the society or group of people follow his directions. Every society has its demands and expectations and the person who fulfills their expectations, the society or a group of people follows him and accepts that person as their leader.

There are many definitions of leadership but two or three of them are enough to understand the concept of leadership and we will discuss here them.

Lapierre, R.T. and Fransworth, P.R. defines leadership as the 'Behavior that affects the behaviour of other people more than their behaviour affects that of the leader'¹.

According to Tead, 'Leadership is the activity of influencing people to cooperate toward some goal which they come to find desirable'².

According to Bernard, 'Any person who is more than ordinarily efficient in carrying psychological stimulate to others and is thus effective in conditioning collective responses may be called a leader'³.

We can find two kinds of leaders, one who is interested in the association and the second who is interested in himself. The former type of leader pay his excellence in his work and do his best to strengthen the organization, he dedicates himself to his job and brings good persons to the organization. The latter, a leader who does not want to lose his position and does not care about the

organization and love his position than the organization and he sacrifices the association for keeping himself safe.

Three major components of leadership are;

1. The Leader
2. The Follower
3. The Situation

If we add these components together, leadership may be defined as the interaction between leaders and followers in a particular situation.⁴Leadership starts with family. A leader plays an important role in the family. Thus the need for a leader occurs everywhere. Similarly, in institutions a leader leads a group of people in their daily activities, he plays a very important role in achieving the purposes or objectives of the institution.

Leadership could be divided into two different perspectives. The first, leadership-related with the personality trait and the second type concern with group and situation. The first type of leadership concern the qualities of an individual that makes him different from the other members of the group and the others members of the group follow him and accept his leadership whether the second type of leadership depends on the functional aspect of the group of situation. However, leadership can be defined in different contexts but our main focus here is to discuss the leadership of Scheduled Castes in the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in context to their development, social, economic, and political. It becomes even more important to lead a section of society which has been deprived of authority for a long time and which is identified as a weaker section. The scheduled castes have been excluded from the social structure for a long time, which has led to this class becoming socially, mentally weak. The Constitution provided an opportunity for these castes to take the opportunity of leadership so that this section of society does not lag in development. Over time, the Government of India has provided and continues to provide these castes leadership opportunities, which in turn has greatly improved the condition of such castes in today's time.

Our topic is related to the leadership of the scheduled castes in the Panchayats, whether the membership of this section of society has been fixed or not. If it is fixed, to what extent it is, and what kind of problems the SC leaders face while working in Panchayats.

Types of leadership style

Depending on the situation the people can adopt different styles of leadership. Out of these styles of leadership, some styles are interchangeable but every style of leadership cannot be used at anytime. Some leadership styles are –

Autocratic leadership style

This leadership style grasps the leader in the middle. This type of leadership gives supreme authority over difficulties and decisions, and responsibilities for everything that the leaders choose to do. This leadership style is not suitable for the subordinates. In this style, the leader, without consulting with the employees take all decisions individually. In this leadership style, there is no involvement of subordinates in the decision making process and they simply do whatever they are told to do.⁵This approach of leadership might work for a small period because any organization cannot run with only a boss and it needs subordinates/employees to function.

Democratic style of leadership

This type of leadership is opposite to the autocratic style and employees of any organization remain focus or centre in this approach. If he wants to do anything, he consults with the employees and after knowing their opinions, the boss/leader takes the decision. Relating to any function, the leader according to this style can also give his subordinates some authority do to that function. This approach of leadership is employees centred.

The Environment Leadership by Carmazzi (2005)

This leadership style promotes the group or organizational environment to influence the emotional and psychological insights of an individual's place in that group or organization. To make this style effective, an understanding and application of group psychology and intensity are essential. The leader in this style makes the use of organizational culture to motivate individuals and develop leaders at all levels. This leadership style is based on the creation of an educational matrix in which groups interactively learn the basic psychology of group dynamics and culture from one another.

The Laissez – faire Style

In this leadership style, the leader does not provide continuous feedback or supervision because the employees are very experienced and need little supervision to obtain the expected results. On the other hand, this leadership style is also associated with leaders who do not lead at all, failing to supervise team members, resulting in a lack of control and higher costs, poor service, or failure to meet deadlines.

Transactional style of leadership(Burns, 1978)

This style maintains the current status or contains an exchange between the boss and his subordinates. Leaders give signs to the employees and then expect them to fulfil those signs and then, the employees are willing to offer instant rewards. The leaders motivate the employees with these rewards

The People-Oriented Leadership Style (Fielder, 1967)

The people-oriented leader is the one who, to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of supports and develop his staff, increase satisfaction and real interest in good work. The task-oriented leader focuses on the work and concentrates on the specific goals assigned to each employee to achieve the goal. This leadership style suffers from the same motivational problems as autocratic leadership and role and shows no involvement in the demands of the team. It requires close monitoring and control to achieve the expected results.

Charismatic style of Leadership

This style of leadership depends on the personality as well as on the charisma of the leader. People follow any person because of his personality and accept him as their leader. In this type of leadership, the people accept any person as their leader because of his personality. This type of leadership has to be committed to the institution for the long run. It consumes the company time and hard work to obtain employees' trust back with other type of leadership after they have engaged themselves to the attraction of a charismatic leader.

The Servant Leadership (Greenleaf, 1977)

This type of leadership makes goals achievement easier by giving team members what they need to be productive. This leader is a tool that employees use to achieve their goals, not a commanding voice

that changes. This leadership style is similar to democratic leadership in getting results in a slower time frame than other styles, even though employee engagement is higher in this style.⁶

Transformational Leadership

The transformational approach is one among the current approaches of leadership. The Transformational leadership has a moral factor that is important to the all other facets of leadership. It understands and includes others so that they can obtain a critical sense of belonging and feel the mutual sense of respect that follows.⁷This type of leadership refers to the process whereby an individual engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower.

Group Leadership

Either way, a single person leads a mass likewise a group of leaders lead society and they stand halfway between the community which it acts for and the representative association. Demands and assumptions of the community and the objectives of the organization comprise the two participative, at times dispute, forces which they have to balance efficiently. This critical position of leadership makes it Imperious to explain purposefully the behavior of the leaders and its major determinants. Coordination between the leaders of a group is necessary for significant leadership so that the followers could understand effectively the decisions of their leaders.

Institutional Leadership

Institutional leadership means formal leadership or appointed leaders who by their positions are expected to assume leadership roles. The leadership roles associated with the positions continues even though the people in the position may change.⁸

Some theories concerning Leadership

In the beginning, the thinkers believed that leadership is the ability to influence people so that they can be motivated voluntarily. It was recognized that leadership is the coordination of certain qualities or traits that are inherent in a person and are not taught. Of the recent discoveries in the field of leadership, this traditionalist ideology has received little support. Today it is acknowledged that the qualities of leadership can be acquired through experience, education and training and in today's time, leadership is not considered to be the property of a particular person. So if a person has the right circle, he or she can develop leadership qualities.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Meenakshi (2013)⁹ in her research work tried to know the social, economic and political background of the SC women leaders and also examined their Pol.awareness in context with the PRIs. The Researcher has selected three blocks of the Sangrur district as a sample. The study reveals that mostly SC women leaders are illiterate and they get information regarding Pol.matters through the sarpanch of their village. They do not know the problems of panchayat raj institutions. The researcher also discussed thoughts of Non-Sc women representatives towards the SC women panchayat representatives.

Nicolas Martin's¹⁰ (2015) in his paper *Rural Elites and the Limits of SC Assertiveness in Rural Malwa, Punjab* found that jatt leaders have free time so that they keep in touch with the bureaucrats, businessmen and politicians and also stay with the people during social ceremonies which help during Panchayat elections. SCs, on the other hand, have neither the money nor the spare time to engage with the people and establishing social and emotional ties with them which affect their political carries and leadership. It is also found that the persons belonging to SCs become the members of Panchayats only because of reserved seats provided to them.

Dominic Savio.M. (2016)¹¹ in his research work, tried to know about the involvement of the SCs leaders in the PRIs in Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam districts of Tamil Nadu. The researcher concluded that the majority of the respondents have been elected through the seats reserved for SCs in the PRIs. One-third of the respondents are aware of the laws, rules and procedures of the PRIs. More than one-third of the SC leaders attend mostly the meetings held by the PRIs.

Sanjeeva, Reddy B's (2016)¹² in his thesis studied the SC and ST women empowerment through Panchayat Raj in Ananthapuramu district of Andhra Pradesh. The researcher took 203 SCs and 54 Scheduled Tribe women representatives as a sample and revealed that most of the SC and ST women representatives are consulted before taking any final decision in PRIs while a low number of respondents stated that they are not consulted throughout taking important decisions in PRIs meetings. A large number of women respondents have been elected from the seats reserved for them in PRIs.

Harvinder Singh's (2017)¹³ research work deals with the legislative leadership of SCs in Punjab. The researcher studied the political participation of SC leaders as legislators. The researcher found that reservation for the SCs at the grassroots level in Pol. institutions has provided an opportunity to a large number of SCs to represent in local bodies and the main purpose of most of the SCs representatives is to serve their Pol. party while working for their community is less important to them.

KaramjeetKaur (2017)¹⁴ in here research work that deals with the participation of Dalit women in PRIs in the Patiala district, focuses to identify the barriers in the involvement of Dalit women leaders in the PRIs. The researcher found that the majority of the Dalit women leaders are unaware for being illiterate, lack interest and are unaware of the role and functioning of Panchayats. The researcher explained one big cause for this which is for being remained in the home and the Dalit women did not get chance to debate on workings of the PRIs, as compared to the male representatives of PRIs, they mostly remain unaware about the role and functioning of Panchayats.

Deepti's (2019)¹⁵ research work deals with the Dalit political representation in Punjab and tried to understand the consciousness of Dalit political leaders about the various issues related to their community and found that the SC leaders work not only for their community but also for the welfare of the whole society. Most of the respondents admitted that they cannot work especially for their community and also agreed that they do not have the power and resources to assist the community and without the pol. power they cannot improve the situation of SC.

¹⁴KaramjeetKaur, 'Participation of Dalit Women in Panchayati Raj Institutions: A Case Study of Patiala District', *Unpublished M.Phil. Dissertation*, Department of Political Science, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2017.

¹⁵Deepti, 'Dalit Political Leadership in Punjab: A Study of Hoshiarpur District', *Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis*, Department of Political Science, Punjab University, Chandigarh, 2019.

Table 1. Do you attend meetings held by the Panchayats?

Sr No.	Attributes/Responses	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	22	70.9
2	Yes, but, attended by husband/family members	8	25.8
3	No	1	3.2
Total		31	100.0

According to Table 1, the majority of respondents (70.9%) admit that they attend meetings held by the panchayats. But it is notable here that besides these 70.9 per cent respondents, 25.8 per cent are those women who are only called upon for their sign whenever is required and are often replaced by their husband or other family members in the meetings of a panchayat which proves that women in panchayats work under the influence of her husband or other family members. There is only one respondent who, for some reason is unable to attend the meetings of the panchayat.

Table 2. If yes, then how many times you attend the meetings of panchayats?

Sr No.	Attributes/Responses	Frequency	Percentage
1	Regularly	18	58.0
2	Not regularly but sometimes	9	29.0
3	Rarely	4	12.9
Total		31	100.0

It is evident from table 2, that most of the respondents (58.0%) attend the meetings of panchayats on regular basis and they don't go to a meeting only when they have very important work, otherwise they attend every meeting. 29.0 per cent respondents said that do not attend meetings of panchayats regularly but sometimes. In addition to these 12.9 per cent of respondents rarely attend the panchayat meetings. But the majority of the respondents attend the panchayat meetings on regular basis.

Table 3. What kind of issues do you raise in the meetings of panchayat?

Sr No.	Attributes/Responses	Frequency	Percentage
1	Overall development of the village	26	83.8
2	SC empowerment/welfare issues	3	9.6

3	Social issues	2	6.4
Total		31	100.0

Table no. 3 indicates that a vast majority of the respondents (83.8%) said that they raise issues related to the overall development of their village in panchayat meetings. While 9.6 per cent of respondents raise issues related to the SCs empowerment/welfare in panchayats meetings.

Besides these two categories of respondents, 6.4 per cent of respondents raise their voice in the panchayat meetings on the elimination of social evils mostly. But most of the respondents agree that the development of the entire village is more important to them and they raise the issues related to the overall development of their village.

Table 4. How do other members react when you raise issues in the meetings of Panchayats?

Sr No.	Attributes/Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	They pay attention	26	83.8
2	Don't react anything	4	12.9
3	They oppose you	1	3.2
Total		31	100.0

From table no. 4, we find that most of the SC leaders (83.8%) said that other members of panchayat pay attention and listen carefully when they speak in the panchayat meetings. While 12.9 per cent of respondents said that people of the general category don't react to anything when they raise their issues in panchayat meetings.

There is only one respondent, who said that the members of panchayat mostly oppose him when he speaks in panchayat meetings and raises any issue. But we can say that there is mutual understanding among the panchayat members because most of the respondents admit that the other members pay attention and listen to them carefully when they speak in panchayat meetings.

Table 5. Have you ever felt that other members tried to suppress your voice in panchayat meetings?

Sr No.	Attributes/Responses	Frequency	Percentage
1	Never	26	83.8
2	Sometimes	4	12.9
3	Always	1	3.2
Total		31	100.0

As per the figures given in table no. 5, most of the respondents (83.8%) said that they never felt that any member tried to suppress their voice while speaking in panchayat meetings and raising their issues. Whether 12.9 per cent of respondents admit that the other members of the general category tried sometimes to suppress their voice while they speak in panchayat meetings.

3.2 per cent of the respondent accepted that the other members of panchayats always try to suppress their voice when they speak in panchayat meetings. However, the majority of the respondents never felt that the attempts have been made by the other panchayat members to their voice in panchayat meetings and the lowest number of respondents felt that the other members always try to suppress their voice in panchayat meetings.

Table 6. What do you often have to do to persuade other members when they do not agree with you?

Sr No.	Attributes/Responses	Frequency	Percentage
1	Clearly define your agenda	29	93.5
2	Agree with them in turn	2	6.4
Total		31	100.0

When respondents were asked that what they do when the other panchayat members disagree with you or try to suppress your voice then, most of the respondents (93.5%) said that they clearly define their agenda in those conditions. In given table 6, 6.4 per cent of respondents said that they agree within turn with them when the other members of panchayats disagree with them while they speak in panchayat meetings and raise any issue.

But most of the respondents clearly define their agendas when the other member of the panchayat disagree with them or tries to suppress their voice in panchayat meetings. However, very few respondents agree with them in that condition when the other panchayat members could not understand them well.

Do you feel dominated by the Non -SC members when raising your issues in the panchayat meetings?

Sr No	Attributes/ Responses	Frequency	Percentage
1	Never	30	96.7
2	Rarely	1	3.2
Total		31	100.0

According to table 7, a large number of respondents (96.7%) claimed that they never feel any dominance of the other Non-SC members while speaking and raising their issues in panchayat

meetings. While 3.2 per cent of the respondents rarely feel dominated by the other Non-SC member while speaking and raising their issues in panchayat meetings.

Here it is proved that the majority of the respondents do not feel any dominance of other Non-Sc members while raising their issues in panchayat meetings. While the lowest percentage of respondents rarely feel the dominance of other Non-SC members while speaking and raising their issues in panchayat meetings.

Table 8. Do you succeed in resolving the incidents of SCs atrocities at the village level?

Sr No.	Attributes/ Responses	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes, mostly	18	58.0
2	Rarely	10	32.2
3	Some times	3	9.6
Total		31	100.0

According to the figures given in table 8, most of the respondents have succeeded to solve the incidents of atrocities against the SCs at the village level. While 32.2 per cent of respondents gave rarely succeeded to resolve the incidents of atrocities against SCs at the village level.9.6 per cent of respondents stated that sometimes they have succeeded to solve the matters of atrocities against the SCs.

On this basis, it can be said that most of the respondents have succeeded to solve the incidents of atrocities against the SCs. While fewer respondents have succeeded rarely in solving the incidents of atrocities against SCs.

CONCLUSIONS

Leadership and Performance in Panchayats

Generally, in Panchayat meetings, most of the SC members raise issues related to the overall development of their village and besides them, other 16.0 per cent of members raise issues related to welfare or empowerment of SC and other social issues. But most of the SC leaders agree that the development of their entire village is more important to them so they raise the issues related to the overall development of their village in Panchayat meetings. From table 4.18, we find that most of the SC leaders (83.8%) said that other members of panchayat pay attention and listen carefully when they speak in the panchayat meetings while 12.9 per cent respondents said that people of the general category don't react anything when they raise their issues in panchayat meetings. There is only one respondent, who said that the members of panchayat mostly oppose him when he speaks in panchayat meetings and raises any issue.

But we can say that there is mutual understanding among the panchayat members because most of the respondents admitted that the other members pay attention and listen to them carefully when they speak in panchayat meetings. Whenever other members of Panchayat is unable to understand the agenda of SC leaders or do not agree with them while Panchayat meeting, in that situation the majority of the leaders of SC tries to clearly define their agenda in detail to them and this is the sign of effective leadership of SC leaders.

According to the data given in table 4.24, most of the Sc representatives said that the grants provided by the state government for the panchayats are reaching considerably. 45.1 per cent said that the very few grants by the state government have reached their VP. Whether 6.4 per cent leaders claimed that no any grant by the state government reached their village, in that situation, so as shown in table 4.25, most of the SC leaders (64.5%) admits that they have reached every time to the government officials in the case when the grant is delayed, or the grant has not distributed at all. 19.3 per cent said that they have occasionally contacted government officials regarding grants. But overall, most of the SC representatives claimed that they have reached the government officials regarding the distribution of grants.

Initiative during Atrocities Incidents

There is only one respondent who claimed that in his village the rate of atrocities against the SC is quite large and he is the only one who stated this. But the majority of the respondents stated there is a very little rate of atrocities against the SC in their village. However, the lowest number of respondents accepted that there is quite a large rate of atrocities against the SC in their village. From this, it can be concluded that the SC atrocities incidents exist in villages but these incidents differ from village to village but one thing is notable that according to 19.3 per cent of SC leaders, there is zero rate of SC atrocities in their village. According to table 4.37, most of the respondents have succeeded to solve the incidents of atrocities against the SC at the village level. While 32.2 per cent of respondents gave rarely succeeded to resolve the incidents of atrocities against SC at the village level. 9.6 per cent of respondents stated that sometimes they have succeeded to solve the matters of atrocities against the SC. On this basis, it can be said that most of the respondents have succeeded to solve the incidents of atrocities against the SC. While fewer respondents have succeeded rarely in solving the incidents of atrocities against SC.

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