

CHANGING POWER STRUCTURE OF RURAL ELITE IN RAJASTHAN

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DECLARATION

This is to certify that the dissertation titled "Changing Power Structure of Rural Elite in Rajasthan", submitted by Anil Kumar Paliwal in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Philosophy has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other University.

We recommend that this dissertation should be placed before the examiners for their consideration for the award of the above mentioned degree.


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DEDICATED

TO

MY BLIND GRANDFATHER

(BOHARE MUKANDILAL RALIWAL)

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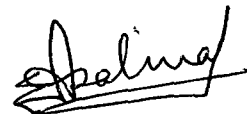
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[ANIL KUMAR PALIWAL]

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INTRODUCTION

The present study is related to the power structure of rural elites in the specific context of Rajasthan. An attempt has been made to understand the elites and the concomitant power structure in historical dimension. The changes in value structure, belief system and normative pattern are manifested not only at the micro-processual level, in day-to-day interactions but also at macro level. The forces operating are, both heterogenetic and orthogenetic in nature. These forces of social change are responsible for bringing changes in the structures and functioning of the society. However, 'structural changes' require long gestation period to occur and are not easily discernible while the 'changes in the structure' generally take a very short span of time and are easily discernible in a generation or so.

Review of literature pertaining to the traditional socio-economic system reveal that by and large elite

structure was static in the sense that there was little room for mobility, innovation or improvisation and change. The traditional value system prevented one caste or the group from changing over to another profession/occupation.

It is significant to mention that since independence certain forces and factors have been at work and influenced to a considerable degree, the rural society. Some of these can be mentioned as (1) the introduction of means of transportation and communication to remote areas exposed the hitherto insulated villages to the outer world; (2) the secular and scientific education system has influenced the traditional structure and normative pattern; (3) the growing emphasis on rural development through various programmes like IRDP, RLEGP, (and also the recently introduced Jawahar Rojgar Yojana) would have its consequences; (4) Industrialisation & urbanisation through push and pull factor had the potentialities of causing changes not only in the

traditional economic structure but also in the value system; (5) role of mass media particularly television radio, newspaper (especially in vernacular languages), cinema etc. have brought the knowledge of the world at the gate of rural folk and finally (6) the adoption of universal adult franchise, the emphasis on the revival of the panchayati Raj system (specifically the 64th amendment to the constitution) by giving more powers to it, is an attempt which would make villagers to develop new aspirations and new ways of thinking.

The above mentioned multi-dimensional forces have been changing the structure and functioning of rural elites in a considerable manner. It is therefore essential to enquire who are the elites in changing social environment?; How do they acquire power?; What are the new sources and bases of power?; How far the introduction of panchayati raj system has been influential

in breaking the traditional power structure?; to what extent the traditional wielders of powers in Rajasthan has adapted themselves to the changing political situation?; what is the role of caste and class in power structure?; how far the introduction of reservation of seats for SC/ST in panchayati raj have made a paradigmatic break through in their position for exercising power? and finally what kind of changes (i.e. 'changes in the structure' or 'structural changes') are discernible in the rural community in Rajasthan.

REVIEW OF MAJOR VILLAGE STUDIES;

(1) RURAL LEADERSHIP

Rural studies conducted in 50s and 60s have tended to be holistic and general. They have treated rural life as an organic whole and different aspects of Indian social system such as caste, religion, beliefs, kinship have been seen as functionally inter-

dependent. Thereby projecting only the structural-functional dimension of rural life. However, these studies do not deal with the patterns of conflicts and social mobility in rural India. Inevitably leadership studies were part and parcel of these holistic studies. Moreover, they were confined to leadership patterns and attributes and did not delineate the dominant elite structure and its pattern of relationship with the masses.

The pioneering studies of leadership includes those by Oscar Lewis¹ and Dhillon.² They have dealt

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1. Oscar Lewis. Village life in Northern India, University of Illinois Press; Urbana 1958 and "Peasant Culture in India and Mexico: A Comparative Analysis" in Mckim Marriott (ed.) Village India, University of Chicago Press; Chicago. 1959 pp.145-70.
 2. H.S.Dhillon, Leadership and Groups in a South Indian Village, Planning Commission; New Delhi, 1955.

with the varied roles of caste and kinship factions in the decisionmaking process in rural India. Nevertheless, it is significant to note that these studies do not throw light adequately on the dynamism and mobility pattern among leaders. Yogendra Singh³ provides useful indepth analysis in this regard. Besides focussing on the nature of the power structure in six villages of UP, he has also discussed the pattern of traditional and emerging leadership. B.N.Singh in his study of Etawah district of Uttar Pradesh has identified the emergence of a new and young leadership by the late forties. According to him the transformation came in the wake of land reforms, education and democratisation. He found that this new leadership was adequately interested in community development projects and was keen to ensure that these be developed as a people's programme with government participation.

3. Yogendra Singh, "Changing Power Structure of Village Community : A Case Study of six villages in Eastern UP" in A.R.Desai(ed.) Rural Sociology in India, popular prakashan Bombay 1964 pp.711-23.

The sources of recruitment of the new leadership were also wider and not confined to traditionally entrenched land lord, village chief and a few caste Hindu families.⁴ Evelyn Wood⁵ opines that aristocratic leadership has been supplied by Brahmins and Rajputs. However, the paternalistic and lineage based leadership has been vanishing. John Hitchcock⁶ in his study of leadership in a north Indian village found that caste as a basis of leadership has been continuing, though among lower castes there is growing consciousness of the need for economic reforms. Furthermore he opines that caste leaders are more educated and development-oriented.

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4. BN. Singh, "The Impact of the Community Development Programme on Rural Leadership", in R.L. Park and Irene Tinker (ed.) Leadership and Political Institutions in India, Oxford University Press: Princeton, 1960, pp. 358-71.
 5. Evelyn Wood, "Patterns of Influence within Rural India", in R.L. Park and Irene Tinker (ed.), Ibid, pp, 372-90.
 6. John T. Hitchcock", Leadership in a North Indian Village" in Park and Tinker (ed.), Ibid, pp, 395-414.

R.Bachenheimer⁷ in the study of Andhra Pradesh village and Edward B.Harper and Louise G.Harper⁸ in their study of Karnataka village have arrived at the conclusion that traditional bases (such as caste and money) still continue to be of consequence. Alan Beals⁹ in his study of a Mysore village has also found that while traditional leadership is losing its ground, no clear trends about the new leadership are discernible. Henry Orenstein¹⁰ in his study of a village in Poona district deals with the leadership behaviour. He has observed that though persons of high^erepute and status are elected to formal positions in the newly established panchayats, they tend to incorporate the functional roles more in their personal capacity than make efforts to institutionalise it.

A study by W.H.Wiser and C.V.Wiser¹¹ can also be included in this tradition. They have observed that if

7. R.Bachenheimer, "Elements of Leadership in an Andhra Village", in Park and Tinker (ed.) Ibid. pp.445-52.

8. Edward B.Harper & Louise G.Harper, "Political Organisation and Leadership in a Karnatak Village", in (Ibid) pp.453-

9. Alan Beals, " Leadership in a Mysore Village". Ibid, pp.426.

10. Henry Orestein, "A Bombay Village in Park Tinker (ed.) Ibid, pp.414-26

11. W.H.Wiser & C.V.Wiser, Behind the Mud Walls:1930-60 University of California Press, Berkeley 1964, pp.18-19.

caste precedence and economic power rest in the same men their leadership is assured. If the two qualities are separate, villagers follow the man who can grant or withhold their daily bread. Ordinarily we find that these qualities are resting with the twice born.

On the basis of observations of aforementioned studies, it can be epitomised that still the traditional bases, such as caste, kinship, wealth and like continue to be dominantly effective, though a variance in the degree of their influence is a function of area/region under investigation.

Conceptually and methodologically the contributions made by M.N.Srinivas¹² and S.C.Dube¹³ to the study of leadership are specific and relevant. Srinivas regards the concept of dominant caste as crucial for the study of leadership. He observes that the dominant caste is functional for the maintenance of village community and

12. M.N.Srinivas, "The Dominant Caste in Rampuras" in American Anthropologist, 61 (1) 1959. pp.1-16

13. S.C.Dube, "Caste Dominance and Factionalism", Contribut to Indian Sociology, New Series. No.II. December, 1968 pp.58-81.

and also acts as a reference group for the lower castes to improve their position, both social and economic. Contrary to it, Dube visualizes that the concept of dominant caste is not of much help, since only a handful of individuals or families in a caste hold the prestige of status symbols, financial resources and position of influence within and outside the caste group which gets further weakened in the wake of village factionalism.

A seminar held at Ranchi University in 1962 resulted into a significant study of emerging leadership in rural India.¹⁴ It is revealed from the papers read in this seminar that the role of traditional factors in leadership is declining. Nevertheless, money still plays a dominant role and acts as a crucial base of leadership. It has also been found that education is contributing as an important factor in village leadership.

14. L.P. Vidhyarthi (ed.) Leadership in India. Asia Publishing House: Bombay, 1967. The papers related to the leadership pattern in UP, Bihar, Rajasthan and Punjab are important in this regard.

Similarly, the organisation of an International Round Table conference on 'Emerging Patterns of Rural Leadership in South Asia'.¹⁵ has proved a break through in clarifying concepts and methods in rural leadership studies.

Aforementioned studies were mainly conducted by sociologists and anthropologists who over emphasised ascription and achievement criteria in rural leadership. Moreover, their discussion of the nature of rural leadership is mainly confined to formal and informal and faction oriented aspects of leadership patterns.¹⁶ These are not studies of rural elite in all its aspects. These studies have not thrown light on, how the leaders stand as reference group elite in relation to the villagers? what patterns of horizontal and vertical nexus are developing among them? and how do they communicate and play their roles ?

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15. S.C.Dube(ed.) Emerging Pattern of Rural Leadership in Southern Asia. National Institute of Community Development: Hyderabad, 1965. The papers in this work focuses on structural/functional and behaviour aspects of emerging rural leadership in the region. The significance of these papers lies in their 'wholistic view'.
16. Iqbal Narain, K.C.Pande & Mohan Lal Sharma. The Rural Elite in an Indian State: a case study of Rajasthan, Manohar Book Service; New Delhi. 1976, p.17

VILLAGE STUDIES OF RAJASTHAN

Preceding to B.R.Chaudhari's study, "A Rajasthan Village", the only available material from Rajasthan was provided by Morris G.Cartstairs¹⁷ whose psychoanalytical orientation brought a wealth of detail account on the growth of personalities in his study of Bhil Villages of Western Udaipur.

Chauhan¹⁸ in his study of a village-Ranawatón-ki-Sadari, in Chittorgarh district of Rajasthan, provides holistic account of a village community. This study is an insight into the working of the 'JAGIR' system at the grass roots level. It also provides a case of a village developing from the hamlet through the personal guidance and planning (in a loose sense) on the part of Jagirdar. Like all other holistic studies of different regions of India, it refrains itself from specific context-rural

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17. Morris G. Carstairs. Bhil Villages of Western Udaipur: A Study in Resistance to Social Change in MN. Srinivas (ed.) India's Villages. Asia Publishing House, New Delhi 1969 pp. 68-76 Also see his Twice Born. Hongarth Press: London 1957.
18. B.R. Chauhan: A Rajasthan Village. Vir Publishing House New Delhi 1967.

leadership of social reality and does not provide a detailed account of it.

K. L. Sharma¹⁹ analyses and compares the structure and process of stratification system of six villages of Rajasthan. He focusses his attention on the emerging changes in the status system, class and caste structure and power structure of the villages as a result of various forces of change, both heterogenetic and orthogenetic, to the rural social system. Sharma's major emphasis in his study is on the 'stratification system in Rajasthan. Obviously his study lacks deep rooted analysis of leadership in Rajasthan. Nevertheless, he incorporates the analysis of major elements on which the edifice of leadership rests. But the 'Panchayati Raj' studies discussed below provides a specific account of leadership and elite studies in Rajasthan.

19. K. L. Sharma, The Changing Rural Stratification system. Orient Longman Ltd. New Delhi, 1974.

STUDIES ON PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTION

After the recommendation of three tier system by Balwantrai Mehta Committee Report and its introduction in many states resulted into the investigation of the changes brought about by the democratic decentralisation. Some surveys and studies incorporated the overall functioning of panchayati raj, besides including, their constitution, finances and the extent of people's active participation in them.²⁰ These studies also focussed upon the role and bases of leadership of those who handled these institutions. The National Institute of Community Development, Hyderabad sponsored five studies for the review of panchayati raj as functioning the Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Madras (now Tamilnadu)²¹

The Maharashtra study tries to show that the democratic functioning of panchayati raj is a function of the calibre of rural leadership and that potential and

20. Henry Maddick Provides a detailed comprehensive theoretical analysis of panchayati raj institution in his 'Panchayati Raj : A study of Rural Local Govt. in India'. Longman Group Ltd. London 1970.

21. For summaries of these studies see George Jacob (ed.) 'Readings on Panchayati Raj'. NICD:Hyderabad, 1971
The book also includes a study on Mysore by K.S.Bhat.

capable leadership is emerging. This leadership is populist in nature. It shows its concern with the expectations of community welfare and feels the need of desired social change. The Gujarat Study supports the findings of Maharashtra study. On the other hand leadership in Andhra is not progressive. However, it has shown deep interest in developmental activities.

The study related to Rajasthan reveal, new facet. It reveals that comparatively young and better educated leadership is emerging but caste in terms of rank and strength, family status and capability to lend money continue to be its effective base. As far as orientation of panchayati raj representatives is concerned, it reflects that they are not conscious of their responsibility for cultivating enlightened public opinion and consequently promoting effective socio-economic awareness and conscious efforts for change in traditional order. Similarly, the study observes that a hang over from the feudal order is discernible in the bases of leadership and its function in one of the two panchayat samitis selected for the study.

All these studies reflect two common trends; first comparatively, the new leadership emerging in the wake of panchayati raj is less tradition-oriented than the vast majority of their fellow-citizens in rural India; and second, political linkages and party affiliations are not well established at the village level, though some traces can be seen at Samiti and Zila Parishad levels, in Rajasthan.²²

Andre Beteille²³ in his study of a village in Tanjore district of Tamilnadu has observed the bases and behavioural pattern of the rural elite. His findings reveal that although the traditional leadership was provided by the high caste Brahmins, who simultaneously happened to be landlords as well as power wielders but there is a process of differentiation at work in the bases of present day leadership. With the technological revolution in agriculture and land reforms, the middle castes are also assuming leadership positions on the basis of their numerical

22. Iqbal Narain (1976). op.cit.,p.19

23. Andre Beteille. Caste, Class and Power: Changing Patterns of stratification in a Tanjore Village. Oxford University Press: Bombay, 1966 Also see his, caste Old and New; Essays in Social Structure and Social Stratification, Asia Publishing House; Bombay, 1969.

strength and their newly acquired wealth. Further, Beteille holds that lower castes will not acquire a position in the elite group until the agrarian structure is thoroughly transformed. Contrary to this view, Paul Karipurath²⁴ and K.S.Bhat²⁵ in their separate studies on the emerging pattern of rural leadership in Mysore State point out the emergence of a younger, better educated leadership, as well as to the increasing involvement of scheduled castes in successive elections. Bhat has also mentioned that progressive sections of the rural community are acquiring leadership positions in panchayati raj bodies.²⁶ MV.Mathur, Iqbal Narain and others in their study of Jaipur district found that in 'a new type of local rural leadership which belongs to the relatively young age group, is drawn from a wide occupational base,²⁷ V.M.Sirsikar²⁸ in his study based on field work in Satara, Aurangabad and Akola district

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24. Paul Karipurth, The Emerging Pattern of Leadership in Mysore State (mimeographed) Administrative Training Institute Mysore; n.d...
 25. K.S.Bhat, "Emerging Pattern of Leadership in Panchayati Raj set up in Mysore State", in George Jacob (ed.) op.cit. pp.121-44.
 26. K.S.Bhat. Ibid., pp.144
 27. MV.Mathur, Iqbal Narain, VM Sinha & others, Panchayati Raj in Rajasthan: A Case Study in Jaipur District, Impex India New Delhi 1966, pp.33 They have also dealt in detail the structural administrative components and working of Panchayati Raj Institution in detail.
 28. VM.Sirsikar, The Rural Elite in a Developing Society. Orient Longmans Ltd. Delhi. 1970.

of Maharashtra has exclusively devoted to the structural bases, functioning and psychological make up (in relation to value orientations and political perspectives) of the rural elite. He finds the phenomenon of coincidence of "triple monopoly" of a class- the rich peasantry, a caste Maratha and party - the congress"²⁹ He analyses the role of caste and concludes, "social plurality of 40% (that is the strength of Maratha caste) has a multiple effect when it gets translated into a political majority of over 75%."³⁰ Iqbal Narain's empirical study of five districts of Rajasthan reveals that 'the middle castes are assuming the leadership positions, they have not pushed the upper castes in the background.'³¹

The gist of the aforementioned overview of the major studies is as follows:

- (1) Traditionally high caste status was instrumental in acquiring elite and leadership position in rural India.
- (2) The emerging elites are giving precedence to Western and/or modern ways of life as compared to traditional.

29. V.M. Sirsikar op.cit.,pp.185

30. VM. Sirsikar op.cit., pp,185

31. Iqbal Narain, K.C. Pande & Mohan Lal Sharma (1976). op.cit., p.27. Their findings corroborate the trend which has been identified by André Betaille (1966) op.cit.,pp.185-225. Also see VM. Sirsikar. op.cit. (Chapter I)

- (3) The changes in the land tenure system has broken the hegemony of the hitherto dominant castes in rural India. The middle strata castes are coming up to acquire the leadership position.
- (4) The better educated and comparatively young leadership is emerging on rural arena.
- (5) The benefit of panchayati raj and community development schemes has not percolated down to the bottom rung of the rural society; instead entrenched casted have reinforced their prestige, power and status.
- (6) The rural elite is more power oriented than development oriented.
- (7) The rural elite is oriented towards the status quoist ideology and resist the change of any kind which it perceives to be harmful to its interests.
- (8) The elite whose base is only land and agriculture are being replaced by those who besides land, stand on non-agricultural capital, business, trade and industry, and on professional skills.

In the light of aforementioned analysis, an attempt has been made to discover the changing dimensions of power

structure in rural Rajasthan. The present study has been compartmentalized into five chapters.

First chapter highlights the approaches methods and techniques which a social scientist employs to reveal the latent or manifest dimensions of power in a community. Critical analysis of the approaches and methods applied by, both the Western social scientists and Indian researchers engaged in the studies related to the community power structure, in specific context at micro level and in general context at macro level, has been presented in brief.

Second chapter focusses on the conceptual aspect of power structure and theoretical dimension of elites. An attempt has also been made to understand the existence of elites in Indian social setting.

The demographic outline of Rajasthan, the existence of feudalism in erstwhile Rajputana and the working of Panchayati Raj system in Rajasthan are discussed in chapter third.

Fourth chapter is devoted to the understanding of social structure in Rajasthan. Traditional bases of power, viz., Jati Panchayat, Village Panchayat and Jagirdars are discussed separately. It also incorporates the social profile of rural elite in Rajasthan.

Apart from these major four chapters, it includes 'introduction' and 'epilogue'. At the end a select bibliography has been enlisted.



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CHAPTER 1

METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATIONS FOR THE

ANALYSIS OF COMMUNITY POWER STRUCTURE

The method adopted for any research depends upon the nature, type and various other correlated aspects of social reality. It also depends upon the accreted knowledge of the researcher. Researcher's rational choices of selecting a method or a technique, for exploring the particular dimension of social reality, will determine the degree of validity and authenticity of the research findings. However, any single approach method, perspective, theoretical framework or a paradigm in general, is not sufficient enough to unravel all the facets of multifaceted social reality.

Any method or approach is designed in such a way so as to explain and discern a particular aspect of social reality and not the other because of some inherent

weaknesses in it. Therefore, generally social scientists do not rely exclusively on any single method but make use of diverse, but correlated methods and techniques to discern the complete picture of social reality.

The study dealing with the community power structure is concerned with the two major aspects of the problems, viz; methodological and substantive. The methodological dimension deals with the formulation of adequate techniques to locate community influentials or those who wield and exercise power in the community. They are the elite and leaders of the community who can be identified by making use of different approaches. These are: (1) Reputational Approach; (2) Positional Approach; (3) Category Approach; (4) Holistic Approach (5) Issue Participation or Social Activity Approach; (6) Ecological Approach and (7) Ethnographic Approach. A brief exposition of these approaches may provide a proper insight to the problem.

(1) REPUTATIONAL APPROACH:

Weber and Lasswell provided the theoretical formulation for this approach. Hellingshead, Warner and many other

social scientists operationalised this approach in their studies. However, Hunter's 'Community Power Structure' (1953) and T.N. Clark's 'Community Power Structure' (1969) presented a systematic and scientific analysis of the reputational approach. Angell¹ also highlighted this approach in the context of community power structure.

The theoretical assumptions on which the edifice of this approach rests are:

- (1) that the elite as a referent of power has composite aspects;
- (2) that if knowledgeable persons are asked to identify and nominate these elites, the former can do so as they perceive the meaning of power and have a fair knowledge about its holders. The researcher asks respondents

1. R.C. Angell, "The Moral Integration of American cities", American Journal of Sociology, LXI, July. 1951. Part 2.

either to rank names on a list or to name individuals who would be most influential in securing the adoption of a project or both. He assigns power to the leader nominees according to the number of times they are named by respondents; the highest ranking nominees are described as the community's "power structure". This technique for describing local political system, according to Wolfinger, is referred as "Power attribution method."

The assumption that a "power structure" consists of those persons most often given high ranking by a panel of judges and a tendency to limit descriptions of decision making to the activities of all point to a belief that 'this method is a sufficient tool to study the distribution of power in a community;'²

(3) that the nomination of nominees by knowledgeable³ persons free from any prior suggestion or limitations gives them the liberty to nominate any one irrespective of whether or not he/she holds any visible position

2. R.E.Wolfinger, "Reputation and Reality in the study of community power" American Sociological Review, vol. 25, 1960, p. 836.

3. Fosket has suggested a panel of knowledgeable. It consists of six knowledgeable drawn from different walks of life. For detail see, Lal.S.K. The Urban Elite. Thomson Press; Delhi. 1974, p.16.

of power. These theoretical assumptions reveal that the emphasis of this approach is on the subjective aspect of nominator to perceive the power and the power holder; and finally

(4) since power assumes different forms by virtue of the different sources from which such power is drawn, the nominator is in a position to lead the researcher to the understanding of the actual structure of power and its concentration as it exists in the community from the point of view of researcher. The theoretical framework has been used by, both, Western and Indian Social scientist. Agger⁴, Agger and Ostram⁵, Barth and Abu Laban⁶, Miller⁷, Schulze and Blumberg⁸ in

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4. Robert.E.Agger, 1956 "Power Attribution in the Local Community" Social Forces, vol.34, pp.322-31.
 5. Robert.E.Agger and V.Ostram, 1956 "Political Structure of a small community", Public Opinion Quarterly, vo.20 p.81
 6. T.A.E.Barth and Abu-Laban 1958 "Power Structure and Negro Sub-Community", Sociological Review, Vol.24, p.69-76.
 7. D.C.Miller, 1958a "Industry and Community Power Structure" American Sociological Review, vol.23, pp.9-15
-- 1958, "Decision Making Clique in a Community Power Structure", American Journal of Sociology, vol.64 p.299-31
 8. Robert O.Schulz and L.U.Blumberg "Determination of local power Elites" American Journal of Sociology, vol.63, 1957, pp.290-96.

West and S.K.Lal⁹, T.K.Oommen¹⁰ and Rajendra Singh¹¹ in India make use of this approach in their studies. Lal analyses urban elite while the focus of Oomen and Singh is on rural community.

Simultaneously, during the same phase we find numerous researches revealing the limitations and skepticism over the relevance and authenticity of this approach by eminent scholars like Kaufman and Johnes¹² Dahl¹³ Polsby¹⁴ and others. Wolfinger¹⁵ points out that there are two major causes of ambiguity inherent in asking respondents, to name in rank order, the most powerful members of their

9. S.K.Lal op.cit.

10. T.K.Oommen, "Rural Community Power Structure in India. Social Forces, vol.49 no.2 pp.226-39 This article was reprinted in his Social Structure and Politics: Studies in independent India. Hindustan Publishing Corporation; Delhi 1984. pp.92-110

11. Rajendra Singh, Land Power and People: Rural elite in transition (1801-1970). Sage Publication; New Delhi. 1988

12. H.Kaufman and V.Johnes, "The Mistry of Power" Public Administration Review, vol.14, pp.205-12

13. Robert A.Dahl. "A Critique of Ruling Elite Model" American Politican Sciences Review, vol.52, 1958, pp.463-69

14. Nelson W.Polsby, "The Sociology of Community Power" Social Forces. vol.37, 1954, pp.232-36. Also see his article "The Three Problems in the Analysis of Community Power". American Sociological Review, vol.24, 1959, pp.796-803.

15. Wolfinger (1960). op.cit., p.638. Also, see his article "A Plea for a Decent Burial" American Sociological Review, vol.25, 1962, pp.841-47.

community: the variability of power from one type of issue to another; and the difficulty of making sure that researcher and respondent share the same definition of power. Furthermore, he writes that reputational method as a technique for the study of local political system assumes a static distribution of power.

There are both conceptual and methodological weaknesses in reputational approach. Conceptually, the reputational approach does not distinguish between the ability to exercise power (power potential) and the actual exercise of power. It unquestioningly accepts the Weberian concept of power without considering its implications for the study of social processes. Ability may or may not be used depending upon the predispositions and opportunities. Moreover, it assumes that power is an object much like money, is possessed and recognised by all. But it may be recognised only by the actual performance of non-self-regarding actions.

Methodologically, the approach suffers from a number of inadequacies carrying approximation to unacceptable extremes. No attempt ^{been} has _{made} to define power for the interview respondents. Respondents may interpret power in a number of randomly varying ways, which may or may not correspond to their own interests. The form of the question presupposes its answer by asking for a specific, in practice small number of community leaders, the question assumes that there is such a group even where there may not be. Few respondents have temerity to say that the interviewer has asked wrong questions.

Finally, the inter-correlation between attributions is not always high and there is rarely any external validation of the responses given, for example; by comparing the reputation for the possession of power with actual influence on a specific decision making process. It has been pointed out that it measures reputation for power and not the possession of actual power. It locates the existence of a

monolithic power structure accurately that there is no correspondence between the researcher and the respondent about the use of them.

It is of great interest to note that Wolfinger took an extreme position by altogether rejecting this approach for the study of community power structure. He writes that "this currently popular research design is found to be seriously deficient as a technique for the study of local political systems."¹⁶ Despite severe criticisms of this approach, political and social scientists can not avoid using this technique because the criticisms put forth have not yet demonstrated the inadequacies of this technique. These critics have studied community power by making use of 'issues' or the positional technique. They examine in detail the way in which issues arise and are resolved and employ extensive lists of formal positions or offices to help define leadership.¹⁷

16. Wolfinger, (1960), op.cit., pp.636

17. Polsby, op.cit. , "Three Problems"--pp.798

In fact these social scientists have not tested the reputational technique but have criticized it on the basis of the use of other techniques. However, Dahl does not deny the existence of influentials in the community. His findings from New Haven corroborate the aforementioned views. He aptly observes, "On any single issue there are only a few influentials; one usually finds that for any particular sector of policy only a small number of persons ever initiate alternatives or veto the proposals of others"¹⁸

Furthermore, Polsby argues that the reputational techniques may be measuring such variables as a status elite leaders with respect to some issue which has been of recent interest in the community or an issue which has been particularly salient to the respondents.¹⁹

In their research findings related to the political and business influentials of six south-western and Mexican

18. Robert A. Dahl, "Equality and Power in American Society" in William V. C. Antonio and H. J. Ehelich (ed) Power and Democracy in America Notre Dame, Ind. University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame 1967 pp.7

19. Polsby, The Sociology ---op.cit.p.232.

communities, D.Antonio and Erickson concluded that "the reputational technique provides a measure of perceived general influence--- that it is reliable over time and that at least sociometric leader among the reputed general influentials are deeply involved in general community decision making . This technique seems to be highly reliable".²⁰

The reputational approach has survived and influenced methodological orientations of scholars like Gamson,²¹ Ehrlich²² and Preston²³. The emerging trends reflect that the reputational approach is adapting irself to mathematical manipv ation as pointed out in the researches

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20. M.V.D'Aritonio and Eugene Erlickson, "The Reputational Techniques as a Measure of Community Power" American Sociological Reviews, vol.27 pp.362-76
 21. Willeom A.Gemson, 1966 "Reputation and Resources in Community Politics", American Journal of Sociology vol.72 pp.121-131
 22. H.J.Ehrlich, "The Social Psychology Reputation for Community Leadership", Sociological Quarterly vol.8 pp.514-30
 23. James D.Preston, "The Search for a Community Leader A Re-examination of the Reputational Technique". Sociological Inquiry vol.39 pp.37-47.

of Bonacich²⁴ and Nelson²⁵.

(2) POSITIONAL APPROACH

Bonjean and Olson²⁶ points out that positional approach was very popular upto 1953. The basic assumptions of this approach are that those holding positions of authority actually make key decisions and those who do not occupy such positions do not make key decisions. The identification of the elite and leader involves the identification of power positions in the community. With regard to positions of authority different strands has been adopted by different social scientists. For instance the criteria for selecting important positions for Marx and following him, C.R. Lynds and C.W. Mills was economy. For them economic factor is predominant element

24. P. Bonacich "Factoring and Weighing Approach to status score and Clique Identification". Journal of Mathematical sociology vol. 2, 1972, pp. 113-120

25. Michael D. Nelson, "The Validity of secondary Analysis of Community Power Studies", Social Forces. vol. 52. 1974, pp. 531-37.

26. Charles M. Banjean and David M. Olson, Community Leadership Directions of Research "Administrative science Quarterly" vol. 9, No. 3, Dec. 1964, pp. 281-83.

determining the decisions related to community life. On the other hand Samuel A. Stouffer²⁷ considered positions in terms of civil and political statuses and rejected the economic aspect.

The positional elites according to Jennings are government officials, civil staff personnel and economic dominants²⁸ Schulze and Blumberg²⁹ adopted a combination of economic dominance and certain other elements to determine the positional elite. Thus considering the socio-economic dimensions of the community selected for the research purpose the for positions acquired by the respondents are weighted, For instance, ministers, MPs, MLAs, MDCs, presidents of Civic bodies presidents of trade unions

27. Samuel A. Stouffer, Communism, Conformity and Civil Liberties, Doubleday: Garden City 1955.

28. Kent M. Jentury, Community Influentials London: Free Press Glencoe, 1964 pp. 24-25

29. Robert D. Schulze and Blumberg Leonard U, "The Determination of Local Power (Elites The American Journal of Sociology Vol. LX III No. 3 1957 pp. 290-96

(like AITUC, INTUC etc.) sports council, political parties, service clubs, professional organisations, women's clubs etc.

Pointing out the major limitation of this approach that formal position does not necessarily symbolises the power, Dahl writes, "The method would not necessarily uncover the eminence guise of the kingmaker, the political boss, the confidante, nor would it record the power of a class or stratum that rules indirectly by allotting formal offices to others."³⁰

Moreover, the positional approach fails to highlight the empirical relations of power with 'visible' symbolic and hidden leaders and elites.³¹ Nevertheless, the positional approach for the identification of elites and leaders in Indian setting has been used by Broomfield,³²

30. Robert A. Dahl, Modern Political Analysis, Prentice Hall of India: New Delhi 1965 pp.53.

31. Rajendra Singh, op.cit. p.54, Rajendra Singh's Study disowns the positional approach.

32. J.H. Broomfield: Elite Conflict in a Plural Society: Twentieth Century Bengal, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1963.

33 34 35 36 37
Rosenthal, Sirsikar, S.Jha, Carter, Narain, etc.

(3) CATEGORY APPROACH

Category approach for the study of rural elites is based on a mechanistic model of constructing social reality which is abstract and often a-prioristic. The concepts and categories like leaders, elite, class, etc are defined in terms of certain principles, thereby neglecting the processual dimension of social reality. The social reality is 'disentangled and fragmented into different parts, aspects and dimensions. 'Attributes' rather than interactions³⁸ are the subject of study.

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33. Donald B. Rosenthal, The Limited Elite: Politics and Government in Two Indian Cities, University of Chicago Press: Chicago. Also see her "The Expensive Elite" District Politics and State Policy Making in India University of California Press; London: 1977.
34. V.M. Sirsikar, The Rural Elite in a Developing Society Orient Longman, New Delhi 1970.
35. S. Jha, Political Elite in Bihar Popular Prakashan Bombay, 1972.
36. Anthony Cartel, Elite Politics in Rural India: Political Stratification and Alliances in Western Maharashtra, Cambridge University Press, London 1974.
37. Iqbal Narain, K.C. Pande; M.L. Sharma, The Rural Elite in an Indian State: A case study of Rajasthan, Manohar Book Service, New Delhi 1976.
38. Rajendra Singh op.cit. p. 45

In the sphere of economics, the category approach assumes the form of the 'indicator approach' while in sociology it adopts the form of the 'dimensional' approach. Yogendra Singh in 'The Image of Man' (1984) has examined this aspect of reality.³⁹

The major shortcomings of the category approach is that it overlooks the 'historical dimension' of social reality. It depends heavily upon 'ideal normative principles' or the characteristics of an individual. These attributes are imposed upon the social structure of power, thereby ignoring the substantial and historical dimension of elite formation. This is nothing more than the 'abstracted empiricism' in Mills's sense. However, these shortcomings have been treated by holistic approach.

(4) HOLISTIC APPROACH

Holistic approach makes an attempt to formulate the major concepts related to power structures, like

39. For detail see Yogendra Singh, Indian Sociology: Social Conditioning and Emerging Concerns, Vistaar Publications, N. Delhi 1986, pp. 45-51.

land, power, rural elite people etc. by observing the specific processes in the social structure pertaining to their relationships as these evolve in the course of time in a concrete socio-economic setting. A prior observation of the relationships connected with power structure is not considered. The method is holistic, necessarily historical and interactional in nature.

The holistic approach is necessarily an effort to integrate sociology with history to comprehend the specific sociological feature by incorporating the historical dynamics of the social reality over a period of time. Thus holistic approach tries to understand both the dimensions, 'bottom view' as well as 'top view' of the social reality.

The major criticism which can be labelled against this approach is related to its over emphasis on historical aspect of social reality, thereby giving less weightage to the processual and the on going nature of social reality.

(5) THE ISSUE PARTICIPATION/SOCIAL ACTIVITY APPROACH

The issue participation approach is also known as the 'Decision-Making' or 'Event Analysis' or the 'Case Study' approach. Scholars like Freeman Bloomberg, Stephen and others have used issue participation and social activity approach in their famous Syracuse Study.⁴¹ of local community leadership. The major assumption of issue participation approach are :

(1) those who participate in the process of decision making on community issues and problems hold power and (ii) those who hold such power and influence the process of community decision making, are elites. Thus according to this approach, 'elites are those who actually shape the decisions'.⁴²

41. Linton C. Freeman, Warner Bloomberg, Jr. Stephen P. Koff Morris H. Sunshins Thomas J. Fararo, Local Community Leadership. University College & Syracuse University: New York. 1960 pp. 2-3.

42. Robert A. Dahl, Who Governs? Yale University Press; New Haven 1961.

This approach suffers from a tautological fallacy. While the positional approach assumes that the holders of positions exercise power on community decisions by virtue of their office in the decision making approach, the statement is reversed, i.e., those who participate in decision making are men who hold power. The most relevant point of this approach is that those who really or visibly participate in the process of decision making generally do so as the spokesmen of others. This approach fails to expose the real holders of power in the countryside as most of the decisions are taken by the elites who do not come on the forefront of the concerned issue. In addition this approach does not help us to distinguish the actual power holders from the symbolic power holders.⁴³

(6) ECOLOGICAL APPROACH

The issue participation and the ecological approach have emerged in the American context of community power structure studies. Hawley⁴⁴ has tried to construct

43. R.Singh, op.cit.p.55

44. Amos.H.Hawley, "Community Power and Urban Renewal Success", 'American Journal of Sociology, 1963., vol.68, pp.422-31.

the ecological meaning of power and generated a method known as 'the ecological approach to power'. According to him the distribution of power and its concentration in pockets of the population could be demonstrated more clearly. This approach has not gained wide currency owing to the study of power dynamics on a community and is yet to be applied and tested for its 'validity' and 'relevance' in the Indian setting.

(7) ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH

Besides the aforementioned conventional approaches, used for the understanding of community power structure, Rajendra Singh⁴⁵ employs the 'ethnographic observational methods and techniques' in his study related to the analysis of land, power and people of Basti District. This approach involves two phases: (i) data collection from the hotels, lodges and dharamshalas (public boarding house) of the concerned area. (ii) visiting the tehsils community development block, Panchayat Samiti, Thanas (police station) of the district and the village around them.

45. Rajendra Singh, op.cit. pp.56-64.

This is again supplemented by the unstructured observation and interviews of the people. Rajendra Singh tries to explore the connections of elites of the community with certain indicators and symbols which he has classified in eight categories, viz,

- (1) concrete brick or metalled road
- (2) ownership of gardens and digging of pond;
- (3) temple building and maintenance of Dharamshalas
- (4) ownership of firearms
- (5) possession of cultural items like copper brass and silver vessels; carpets etc.
- (6) keeping elephants horses and modern machines like tractor thrasher etc.
- (7) ownership of large size of land plots and
- (8) Size and design of house.

All these symbols are the manifestation of the power prestige and prosperity of 'a person' rather than that of a community as a whole. That person is elite of that area or a villace. The aforementioned symbolic features overlap and their combination identifies the rural elites in contrast to those who do not possess them.

Like all other approaches, ethnographic approach has its own limitations. It generally leads the researcher 'to only one type of rural elite, namely those with a feudal background... it highlights the socio-economic and cultural bases of influence, but it fails to help trace the historical positions of power of those feudals who continued to exercise influences over the peasants to a great extent.⁴⁶ Moreover, it fails to identify the new elites who emerged during the post independence period- as they do not have a traditional heritage of economic and cultural symbol.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that any single approach is not sufficient enough to explain all facets of multifaceted social reality. Therefore the use of the available alternative approaches simultaneously, is of immense help and prove to be supplementary and complementary in the analysis of community power structure studies.

46. Rajendra Singh, Ibid. p.64.

The difference between the findings of different social scientists is a matter of methodology and structural variables used by them and the theoretical assumptions and hypothesis underlying their research area. Now the question which concerns us utmost is not whether or not to avoid any approach in order to support alternatives or to abandon the alternatives, but we should be concerned with findings out under what conditions each techniques provides the most fruitful approach to the study of community decision-making and eventually how to assimilate these techniques into a broader methodological scheme.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPT OF POWER AND THEORIES OF ELITE

(1) POWER: A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Societies and their lesser parts are held together not so much through contractual relations or moral consensus as through the exercise of power. In sociological theory power has had a key role. For conflict theorists, it is the foundation upon which their whole theory building rests. They see power as restraining men from destroying society in their competition to satisfy individual needs and wants; it is the 'functional equivalent' of functions in integration theory.¹ Despite the fact that power is widely used there is little agreement on the conceptual definition.

The concept of power is not definite but relative and relational, due to the idiosyncratic conceptual formulations by individual theorists. As a sociological concept 'power' occupies a basic and central place in the studies of dynamics of

1. P.S.Cohen, Modern Social Theory. Heinemann Education: London 1968, Chapter 2

social systems. Social scientists have widely recognised the importance of power in their studies related to micro and macro, processual and structural, theoretical and operational levels. A wide range of literature related to power on both theoretical and empirical levels in small group² as well as large community³ is available. However, the attempts made so far to provide a definite and objective definition of power have degenerated into ideological debates. The attempts made to conceptualize power has often resulted into confusion and perplexity. March⁴ has very aptly concluded that, "on the whole power is a disappointing concept".

A very comprehensive definition of power is given by Bertrand Russell in his book, "Power: A

2. Ronald Lippitt, Norman Polansky, Frits Redl and Sidney Rosen, "The Dynamics of Power" Human Relations, Vol. 5 (February 1952) pp. 37-64
3. Floyd Hunter, Community Power Structure, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1953.
4. J.G. March "The Power of Power" in D. Easton (ed.) Varieties of Political Theory. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall 1966 p. 70.

New Social Analysis" where he defines power as "a capacity to produce results". Power in most general sense can also be referred to any kind of influence exercised by objects, individuals or groups upon each other.

R.Dahl defines power as "sub sets of relations among social units such that the behaviour of one or more units depend in some circumstances on the behaviour of other units"⁵. Almost most of the sociologists have given a very restricted definition of power specifying the relationship between persons, groups and objects. Nonetheless, the definition of Max Weber is more convincing and ever lasting. Weber says, "Power is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance regardless of the basis on which this probability rests."⁶ He defines 'domination' in a similar manner as the probability that a command would be obeyed by a given group of people. Max Weber's

5. R.Dahl, 'power International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Collier-Macmillan, New York 1968 vol.12.p.407

6. Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation, (trans) by A.H.Henderson and T.Parsons: The Free Press, Glencol New York, 1947 p.152.

definition has following characteristics:

- (1) power is exercised by individuals and therefore involves choice, agency and intention;
- (2) it is exercised over other individuals and may involve resistance and conflict;
- (3) power involves the notion of agency, that is an individual achieving or bringing about goals which are desirable;
- (4) it implies that there are differences in interests between the powerful and powerless;
- (5) power is negative involving restriction and deprivations for those subjected to domination.

Weber argued that when the exercise of power was regarded by people as legitimate, it became 'authority'. There is one important criticism of Weberian approach by its emphasis on agency and decision-making, it fails to recognize that non-decision making may also be an exercise of power. For example failure or refusal to act may be evidence of inequalities of power. Power holders may also shape the wants or interests of

of subordinates. For example advertising campaigns may involve an exercise of power through the artificial creation of needs.

According to Weber power finds its ultimate expression in domination, and all political dominations connote a fundamental relationship of command and obedience. Since Weberian concept of power is that of 'Constant Sum' which implies that the amount of power to be constant the power is held by an individual or group to the extent that it is not held by others. It is the majority which is commanded by the minority by being forced to adhere to the views of the latter.

State as a political structure is the most suitable instance to this effect which with a view to maintain its order monopolizes the legitimate use of physical force.⁷ Conspicuously, if only the 'Constant Sum' concept of power holds true then the existence of an elite in the domination-obedience relationship with the non-elite in the total societal necessity. In case if this concept is questioned than the logically conditions, is logically derived propositions related

7. Max Weber, cited by M. Heralambos & R.M. Herald, op.cit.p 99

t o the existence of an elite is simultaneously doubted.

Talcott Parsons rejected the constant-sum concept of power and develops a 'variable sum' concept that regards power as something possessed by society as a whole. Power as such is a generalised facility or resource in the society. In particular, it is the capacity to mobilize the resources of the society for the attainment of goals for which a general public commitment has been made. In this sense the amount of power in society is measured by the degree to which collective goals are realized. Thus the greater the efficiencies of a social system for achieving the goals defined by its members, the more power exists in society.

Andre Beteille's criticism of Weber is most significant in this context. He observes that Weber believes that class, status and power are closely interdependent but none of these could be fully explained by the others.⁸

8. Andre Beteille, Inequality and Social Change, Oxford University Press: New Delhi 1972 pp.6

The definition of power from Weber initiates most of the modern discussions on the polemic concept of power. Dahl⁹ states that "my intuitive idea of power then, is something like this: A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do. On the same line French and Raven (social psychologists) use the notion of power in their Kurt Lewinian field theory of power: "power is the potential ability of one group or person to influence another within a given system."¹⁰

Most influential and refinements of the Weberian concept can be traced in the works of Ralf Dahrendorf and Peter M. Blau. Dahrendorf, after an explicit endorsement of the Weberian definition argues that power is a contingent property, a property of individuals rather than a property of social structure. The important difference between power and authority consists in the fact that whereas power is essentially tied to the personality of individuals, authority is always

9. R.A. Dahl, 'The Concept of Power' Behavioural science, vol. 2 (1957), pp. 202-3

10. J.R.P. French and B. Raven, 'The Bases of social power' in D. Cartwright and A. Zander (eds) Group Dynamics: Research and Theory (2nd ed) Tavistock Publications, London, 1960, pp. 609.

associated with social positions or roles. To quote him, "power is merely a factual relation, authority is a legitimate relation... we are concerned exclusively with relations of authority, for these alone are part of social structure and therefore, permit the systematic derivation of group conflicts from the organisation of total societies from the associations within them."¹¹

Furthermore, Dahrendorf writes that the distinction between power and authority in these terms is a false one, for definitions of legitimacy are themselves contingent upon power relations.¹²

Blau defines power as 'the ability of persons or groups to impose their will on others despite resistance through deterrance either in the form of withholding regularly supplied rewards or in the form of punishment, inasmuch as the former as well as the latter constitute in effect a negative sanction.'¹³ This definition of

11. R.Dahrendorf, Class and Class conflict in Industrial Society, Stanford University Press; Stamford, 1959, p.161

12. R.Dahrendorf, Ibid., pp.176.

13. Peter M.Blau, Exchange and Power in Social Life. John Wiley: New York, 1967, p.117

power closely resembles with that given by Lasswell and A.Kaplan: 'A power is the process of affecting policies of others with the help of (actual or threatened) severe deprivations for nonconformity with the policies intended',¹⁴

Despite the widespread use the Weberian definition and its derivatives suffer from a number of weaknesses in addition to the operational difficulties. Parsons has argued that the assumption of conflict and antagonism is built into the definition and that 'A' overcomes the resistance of 'B' implying that the interests of 'B' are being sacrificed to the interest of 'A',¹⁵

Martin points out that Weber's definition ignores the possibility that power relations may be relations of mutual convenience. Power may be a ^{re-}source facilitating the achievements of the goals of both borrower and lender in a credit relation. Transposed onto a societal

14. H. Lasswell and A. Kaplan, Power and Society, Yale University Press, New York, 1959, pp. 76

1 T. Parsons . 'On the concept of Political Power' in T. Parsons (ed), Sociological Theory and Modern Society New York: The Free Press, 1967.

level power may be seen as a generalised means for the achievement of collective goals, instead of a specific means for the satisfaction of limited sectional interests.¹⁶

This attribute of power is missing in Weberian approach. Weberian definition of power transposes a property of interactions, of inter-relations into a property of actors.¹⁷ Thus power is the property of a "relation" and it is a 'generalized capacity' instead of an attribute of a specific relationship.

Criticising Parsons, Anthony Giddens forcefully points out that Parsons' analysis is one sided, and he defines the problems which have been the interest area of sociologists of power. To quote A.Giddens, 'what slips away out of sight almost completely in the Parsonian analysis is the very fact that power.. is always exercised over someone. By treating power as necessarily (by definition) legitimate and thus starting from the assumption of consensus of some kind between power holders and those subordinate

16. Roderick Martin "The Concept of Power: A Critical Defense" British Journal of Sociology vol.22, 1971 p.246

17. Roderick Martin, Ibid.p.243

to them, Parsons virtually ignore, quite consciously and deliberately, the necessary hierarchical character of power and the divisions of interest which are frequently consequent upon it.¹⁸

(2) EXCHANGE THEORY AND POWER

Exchange theorists¹⁹ see power as derived from imbalances in social exchanges. Individuals take part in social action in order to satisfy needs and achieve goals by the use of resources. In case their own resources are inadequate to achieve the goal they are obliged to obtain resources from others. This dependency²⁰ of ego on alter results into 'power of alter on ego'.

Martin²¹ observes that this unreciprocated exchange leads to the differentiation of power. Negatively, it

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18. A.Giddens, 'Power in the Recent Writings of Talcott Parsons', Sociology, vol.2.(1968),p.264.
19. R.Emerson, 'Power Dependence Relations', American Sociological Review, vol.27(1962) pp.31-41; Also see Peter Blan, 'Exchange and Power in Social life' John Wiley, New York 1967, Chapter 5
20. J.R.P.French and B.Raven, op.cit.pp.613-621, have classified five type of dependencies, vis., (1) reward (2) obligations (3) referent (4) expert (5) Coercion.
21. R.Martin, op.cit.,p.251

connotes that if productive and socially valued resources cannot be monopolised and controlled, or if the means for trapping these resources can not be controlled, then, there is little bases for the exercise of power. An individual who is not able to control a valued community, so as to create dependence in others and can not threaten to withhold that commodity is in no position to give orders and to be obeyed.

Labour on the farm may depend upon the land owner for income (reward), as in the wage contract. He may perceive dependence out of a consciousness of past favours (obligation) i.e. land owner might have preferred him in place of other workers for a particular period of time for a specified type of work. An individual may identify himself associated with a particular faction or group in the village so as to gain access to a high prestige group (referent). A son may require advice of his father in solving marriage problems of his daughter

(expert) or a shopkeeper may be too weak to resist the demands of a hoodlum (coercion).

(3) MEASUREMENT OF POWER

The problems of the measurement of power is both simpler and more complex than its definition. It is simple in that, it is relatively easy to devise a formal statement of the information required to assess the amount of power in a given relation. It is more complex in that, the methods of collecting and analysing the data are relatively underdeveloped particularly when attention is focussed on the macro processes of the social system rather than the micro processes of the small group.

There is a disquieting gap between conceptual rigour and operational primitiveness. Disquiet increases when the attempts made to construct a complex index of power relations, or to compare the amount of power involved in different relations are considered.²²

22. Roderick Martin, op.cit.,p.24

According to Martin the amount of power involved in a relationship can be measured by focussing... 'upon the attitudes and behaviour of the recipients (R) of power signals from a given alter... by the difference the receipt of a power signal makes to (R's) attitudes and behaviour. This involves obtaining information both about the attitude (R) would act in terms of his own need satisfaction and opportunity cost calculations if he had not received the signals and about the attitude and behaviour of alter.²³

It is very easy to formulate new devices, methods and approaches to measure power at theoretical methodologic and at the conceptual level but when it comes to operationalisation of the theoretical and methodological construct, it becomes extremely difficult, if not impossible. Nevertheless, at micro level where controlled observations 'can' be made in social psychology, especially, dealing with the inter personal

23. R.Martin.Ibid.,p.246

and small group relations some hopes of operationalisation do remain alive.

However, their exposition of power, existing among the interacting individuals, is not reliable as such. But in sociology which is bound to observe and analyse the complex social relationship, it is rather impossible to materialize the theoretical and methodological framework.

Furthermore, the dynamic nature of industrial society restricts and restrains our attempts to measure the power yet one can have a panoramic view relationship in any society.

CONTD....

(4) ELITE: A CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL DIMENSION

Who are the elite? Are they the best of the best, the choice persons, persons of special excellence, superior individuals, individuals who occupy post of command or persons who occupy high status or positions of superiority in a group? Diversified denotations and connotations are attached to the word elite. In the political sphere the image of leadership has been comprehended by social scientists as 'elite', 'governing elite', 'political elite', 'power elite', 'ruling class', 'governing class' and so on.

Whether to preserve old patterns of life or to exemplify new ones, elites are those who set the styles. Most of the social scientists conceive elites as those 'who see things' that is, certain key actors playing structured and functionally understandable roles, not only in a nation's governing processes but also in other institutional settings- religious, military, academic, industrial, communications and so on. Thus 'elite' represents the standards of value excellence

in different domains of life through their roles which are either ascribed to them in the traditional society, or have been achieved by them by meritorious performance which is the norm of a relatively modernized society.²⁴

The term elite is a part of a tradition which makes modern social scientists uneasy. The analysis of elite can be most illuminating approach to the study of politics and power in India since the 'elite structure of a society represents not only its basic values but also the extent to which these values find concrete expression in the power structure and decision making process of the society.²⁵ Moreover, by learning the nature of the elite, we learn the nature of societies. Therefore, the changes in the elite structure also reveals the essential nature of social changes taking place in that society. Simultaneously, its use facilitates historical and

24. Yogendra Singh, 'Modernisation of Indian Tradition: Thomson Press, Faridabad 1977, p.130.

25. Y. Singh (1977) op.cit. p.129

contemporary analysis by providing an idiom of comparison that sets aside institutional details and culture specific practices and calls attention instead to intuitively understood equivalencies.²⁶

Typically, an adjective precedes the word elite, clarifying its aim (oligarchic elite, financial elite), or its institutional domain (legislative elite, bureaucratic elite), or the decisional stage it dominates (planning elite, implementing elite), or its eligibility grounds (birth elite, credential elite).

If we make an attempt to understand and analyse the meaning of elite in historical dimension, it will be revealed to us that during the 16th century the term elite was used simply to mean 'a choice' whereas a century later, in the 17th century the word elite was used to signify the excellence of a particular commodity.²⁷ Later on it designated the 'superior groups'. According to Cole²⁸ the term elite was

26. Dwaine Marvick, 'Elites' in Adam Kuper & Jessica Kuper, The Social Science Encyclopedia (ed.) Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1985, p.243.

27. T.B. Bottomore, Elites and Society, Harmondsworth: Middlesex, 1973, p.256

28. G.D.H. Cole, Studies on Class Structure, Routledge and Kegan Paul: London, 1955, p.102-103

brought into use to indicate the superiority and exclusiveness of relationships. It was only in the second half of the nineteenth century that the two Italian intellectuals Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca could make a systematic analysis of the term elite.

In recent years the study of elites has come to occupy a prominent position in the research agenda of scholars in the social and behavioural fields.²⁹

(5) CLASSICAL ELITE THEORISTS

It is a matter of coincidence that the development of elite theories fostered by Pareto and Mosca follows the emergence of Marxist ideology. The elite theories were initially constructed notably by Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca in conscious opposition to Marxism as it contradicted the Marxist view in two respects. First, they asserted that the division of society into 'dominant' and 'subordinate' groups is universal and irreversible fact and, secondly, they defined the ruling group in a quite different way.

29. Dwaine Mavrick, Political Decision Makers (ed), free Press of Glencoe; New York, 1961.

Pareto defined elite in terms of the superior qualities of some individuals which gave rise to elites in every sphere of life, while Mosca in terms of the inevitable domination of an organised minority or 'political class' over the unorganised majority. Simultaneously, he also referred to the 'highly esteemed and very influential personal attributes of the minority'.

Pareto employed the term elite to designate a class which held high status and commanded influence in the community. To convince that Pareto has employed the term 'elite', barely etymologically, is substantiated by the fact that he uses the term as a 'Consummate Counterpart' of the Italian word 'Aristocrazia' meaning 'the strongest', 'the most energetic' and the 'most capable' for good as well as evil.

30

According to Pareto, the most important attribute to become elite is, to score highest on scales measuring any social value or commodity such as power, riches

30. L.N.Sharma, 'The Theories of Elites: Import and Relevance', in Sacchidanand and A.K.Lal (ed.), Elites and Development, concept publishing, New Delhi, 1979, pp.9-28.

and knowledge. Pre-eminence in the fields of religion politics, economy etc. carries an individual to the position of elite. In other words, the acquisition of the outstanding merits such as charisma, riches, knowledge etc. by a group or an individual makes him elite.

"The outstanding idea in the term 'Elite' according to Pareto is superiorities."³¹

It connotes that all those who constitute the higher stratum in society are inevitably elite. Pareto says that the class of the people who have the high indices in their branches of activity is called elite. Pareto divides this class into two classes, viz, (i) a governing elite, and (ii) a non-governing elite.³² The former pertains to those individuals who are directly

31. Ram Ahuja, Political Elites & Modernisation: The Bihar Politics, Meenakshi Prakashan: Meerut, 1975, p.10

32. Vilfredo Pareto, The Mind and Society, Harcourt Breace & Com: 1935; New York, vol.III, pp.1422-24

or otherwise responsible for political governance while the later, 'the non governing elite', is related to the people who excel themselves in the fields of economy, culture, education etc. but are not concerned with the political governance.

Pareto divides the 'governing elite' into 'Lions and Foxes', one replacing the other as a historical inevitability in a continued process of circulation of elites. Thus, his theory refers to a process of movement in which individuals circulate between the elite and the non-elite. According to Pareto, this circulation (of elites) fosters a myriad change in the broader social setting.³³

However, the basis of categorization of elite into two types i.e. 'Lions' and 'Foxes', is personal attributes of an individual which conspicuously supports Pareto's leanings for the psychological basis of elite rule. The lions by virtue of their personal

33. V.Pareto, *Ibid.*, p.1427

attributes of taking firm and direct action, rule by force for instance, military dictatorship. Unlike with the lions the attributes of cunningness and tactics of manipulation bring the foxes into power, for instance, the democracies in Europe. Thus, Pareto assumes, writes Mosca that there are two strata in a population: (1) a lower stratum—the non-elite and (2) a higher stratum the elite.³⁴ In Indian context, Ahuja's findings of Bihar politics does not support this theory. He writes... 'almost all governing elites at state level were recruited not from the non-governing elites but from the governing elites, functioning at village, block or district level... Once these elites rise from village or forum level to the state level they never go back to old level but continue function at the state level till they remain active in politics. This means there is no 'circulation' (of elites) but an 'upward movement' of elites.'³⁵

34. G. Mosca, The Ruling Class, McGraw Hill - Book Company, New York, 1939, pp. 50-53.

35. Ram Ahuja. op.cit. 1975, p. 41

Unlike Pareto, Gaetano Mosca restricted the conception of elite into a concise and definite meaning referring to 'the ruling class' which is an organised minority dominating over the unorganised majority. He writes that in all societies two classes of people appear, as a class that rules and a class that is ruled. The first class is always the less numerous performs all political functions, monopolizes power and enjoys the advantages that power brings whereas the second, the more numerous class is directed and controlled by the first in a manner that is now more or less legal, arbitrary and violent.³⁶

Mosca like Pareto differentiated the masses and the elite asserting that it is the latter's distinguish intellectual material and moral superiority that empowers them to govern the former which is devoid of these qualities. Mosca is concerned

36. G.Mosca op.cit.1939 p.50-53

about the sources which are responsible for the 'Superiority' of elites. According to him this superiority is a 'product of social background'.³⁷ On the other hand, Pareto was concerned with the 'circulation of individuals' between the elite and the non-elites and does not incorporate the importance and significance of the middle class which is the ultimate means of recruitment of elites. This significant features of middle class was perceived by Mosca.

The serious limitation of Pareto and Mosca's approach to the theory of elites, is, 'its capacity or lack of attention to analyse the extent of mobility and circulation from the non-elite to elite.'³⁸ Furthermore, the thoughts of classical elitists reflect their anti-democratic and anti-socialist attitude. They rejected the notion of popular sovereignty and underestimated capability of people running a self-governments.

37. M. Heralambos and R.M. Herald. Sociology: Themes and Perspectives, Oxford University Press: New Delhi. 1980. p.109.

38. Yogendra Singh, Social Stratification and change in India, Manohar Publications: New Delhi. 1980, pp. 47-48.

Pareto and Mosca believed that only minority has the quality to rule and lead a society.³⁹ However, Michels slightly differed and maintained that it is in the nature of the organisation that a minority could be in the position of command. He adopted the dominant view of Mosca that 'Organisational abilities grant power' and asserted that the very structure of any organised society gives rise to an elite.⁴⁰ For Michels organisation was nothing more than an oligarchy. This postulate gave him to propound 'the law of oligarchy'.⁴¹

From his study of the German Social Democratic Party he formulated this law to prove that organisations are prone to develop oligarchies that alone are competent to take all decisions concerning their operation.

39. Ali Ashraf and L.N.Sharma, Political Sociology: A New Grammar of Politics:Universities Press: New Delhi.1983,p.18

40. Robert Michels, Political Parties, Free Press:New York,1966,pp.201-202.

41. R.Michels, Ibid, pp.343-350

The main components of Michels' oligarchy are:

- (1) Large organisations tend to concentrate power in a 'handful' of individuals;
- (2) such concentration of power is the function of increasing division of labour and specialisation within the organisation;
- (3) once this takes place, the handful of leaders succeed in establishing control over communications media and finances of the organisation;
- (4) in course of time leaders come to develop their over interests into a 'closed caste' with similar outlook and perspective;
- (5) whenever leadership develops opposition groups in the organisation, the leadership coopts members on its terms provided they show sufficient confirmity to the leadership; and
- (6) the emergence of oligarchy is facilitated by the fact that the rank and file is 'incompetent' to participate in the decision making process and that once a leadership is installed the rank and file grows apathetic because it has neither the leisure nor the resources to be active.

Michels' oligarchy consists of a political class united in 'consciousness and ideology' and having common characteristics. It has a tendency to perpetuate itself in power. For Michels, however, a single homogeneous self-perpetuating and united authority structure at the top was the sole custodian of all the policy and decision-making process in a party organisation and that other levels in the party hierarchy had no role except to follow the directives of the top leadership.

This 'iron law of oligarchy' drawing upon the ideas of Pareto and Mosca, and to some extent from Max Weber formulates the conditions under which this divorce occurs and the leaders come to constitute a dominant elite in the party. It is partly because of the contrast between the ability and determination of the leaders, further nurtured by education and experience and 'incompetence of the masses' and partly because as a minority they are better organised and also control a bureaucratic apparatus.

Bukharin criticised Michels' by saying that 'the incompetence of the masses is a product of present day economic and technical conditions and would disappear in a socialist society. Hence, there is no universal law of oligarchy.'⁴²

(6) MODERN ELITE THEORIES:

C.W. Mills can be considered as one of the most influential sociologist for his analysis of elite structure in American Society. However, his analysis of the elite theory is parochial in nature, circumscribing only American society of 1950s.⁴³ Mills rejects Pareto's doctrine of inevitability of elite rule and analyses elite in purely institutional terms, ignoring the psychological aspects emphasised by Pareto. He rules

out the hitherto familiar conception of the qualitative
42. T.B. Bottomore, A Dictionary of Marxist Thought, Basil Blackwell Ltd; Oxford, 1987. pp. 145.

43. Mills present three pivotal institutions, corresponding to them are three kinds of elite in the American Society viz; major corporations, the military, and the federal government. Broadly speaking these institutions proliferate three categories of elite-economic, military and political. These elites in unison form practically a single ruling minority, 'the power elite' as compatible of interests and inter connected activities can easily be observed among them.

superiority of elite vis-a-vis the majority of masses and argues that the 'structure of institutions' is such that those at the top of the institutional hierarchy more or less monopolize power.

Mills was strongly influenced by Weber's concept of power. He used the term 'power elite' rather than 'ruling class' because in his view the latter is value loaded phrase which presupposes that an economic class rules politically and does not allow enough autonomy to the political order and its agents. Thus maintaining that elite is composed of men who have the most of what there is to have—money, power and prestige, who are able to realise their will even if others resist it. They are in the positions to make decisions having major consequences.⁴⁴

Lasswell unlike his predecessor makes an attempt to give a new and convincing interpretation of elite. Though he assigns narrow meaning to the elite as, the

44. C. Wright Mills, The Power Elite, Oxford University Press: New York, 1956, pp. 4-9

governing elite. To quote him, 'The political elite comprises of the power holders of the body politic. The power holders and the social formations from which leaders typically come and to which accountability is maintained during a given generation. In other words, the political elite is the power class.⁴⁵ For him, the elite is primarily interested in appropriating whatever there is, to appropriate. Lasswell introduces the concept of 'influentials' to denote the 'appropriators' and all that is worth of appropriation. He ascribes them as 'values'. The influentials are those who get the most of what there is to get.

In Lasswellian phraseology 'all that is worth appropriation or basic values are three: defence, income and safety. Those who get the most of these values are the elite, the rest are the masses.⁴⁶ Obviously

45. H.Lasswell (et.al) The Elite Concept, Introduction Readings in Political Behaviour. Read M Maity & Com. Chicago.1961,p.429

46. L.N.Sharma.op.cit,pp.19.

the appropriations of these values provide influentials an access to power. However, variations are found in influentials in appropriating these values. Thus, there would be a struggle to appropriate these values among the influentials. Consequently, a degree of appropriation exists among the influentials. Lasswell discusses a trichotomised power structure in which the top elites are those with most power in the group, the middle elite are those with less power, the masses with least power⁴⁷ He also observes that the distribution of power is never likely to be egalitarian in any absolute sense in any society.

Bottomore uses Mosca's term the 'political class'...to refer to all those groups which exercise political power or influence and are directly engaged in struggle for political leadership...He distinguishes

47. H.Lasswell and A.Kaplan, Power and Societies, Yale University:New Haven, 1950, pp.201-2

'within the political class a smaller group, the political elite which comprises those individuals who actually exercise political power in a society at any given time. The extent of the political elite, therefore... include members of the government and of the high administration military leaders and in some cases politically influential families of an aristocracy or royal house and leaders of powerful economic enterprises... The political class therefore is composed of a number of groups which may be engaged in varying degree of cooperation, competition or conflict with each other.⁴⁸

Likewise Milton Singer opines that the political elites are composed on individual who exercise an inordinate amount of political power in societies.⁴⁹ By elite, Raymond Aron means the minority which in each of the enumerated professions has succeeded best and occupied the highest positions.⁵⁰

48. T.B. Bottomore, op.cit. 1973, p.14-15.

49. Milton Singer: The Emerging Elites: A Study of Political Leadership, Cambridge University Press, Ceylon, 1964, p.6.

50. Raymond Aron, 'Power and Status Relation'. European Journal of Sociology, vol.1 NO.2 1960, pp.260-81.

Cohen visualises elites as those with most power in the group.⁵¹ Parry⁵² explains 'elites as small minorities who appear to play an exceptionally influential part in political and social affairs'. Similarly, Kornhauser⁵³ explains that 'the term elite is used in respect of top positions in a social structure which are super-ordinate such that the incumbent's claims are granted social superiority'. The term elite is also used to refer to 'the functions attached to such positions, especially, the special responsibility to form and defend value-standards in a certain social sphere'. To Mercier,⁵⁴ 'the elite represent a social category more or less enjoying prestige, status and exerting influence over the whole or large sections of the population, while Nadel⁵⁵ has defined the elite as a 'body of persons enjoying a position of pre^eminence over all others'.

51. A.L.Cohen, The Irish Political Elite, Mc.Gill & Macmillan: London, 1972.

52. Parry Geriant, 'Political Elites', George Allen and Unwin Ltd: London, 1969, p.13.

53. William Kornhauser, The Politics of Mass Society, Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, 1965 p.51.

54. P.Mercier 'Evolution of Senegalese Elites' International Social Science Bulletin, 1956, vol.VIII, p.441.

55. S.F.Nadel, "The Concept of Social Elites", International Social Science Bulletin, 1956, vol.VIII, no.3, p.415.

Burnham⁵⁶ assumes that politics is always a matter of struggle between groups of power and status, and a small group controls the decision making process of society. He says that social changes take place in the shift of composition of the elites. His main argument is that the capitalist system will decline and will be replaced by a society, controlled economically and politically, by managerial elite. Thus, the old elite is replaced by the new one. He believes that classless society is a myth and Soviet Union is a proof, pointing out that, a new class of rulers arises necessarily.

(7) MARXIAN PERSPECTIVE VIS-A-VIS ELITE CLASS

Afromentioned analysis of elite theories reverberate an opposing tendency to the Marxian interpretation of elite. In contrast to the Paretian conception, the Marxist approach focusses more closely on 'analysing the relationship between the elites and non elites in the system of social stratification.'⁵⁷

56. James Burnham, Managerial Revolution. The John Day Company, London, 1942.

57. Yogendra Singh (1980). op.cit., p.48

According to Marx, the basic structure determining other aspects of society, like religion, culture, politics, ideas, values, law etc. (superstructure) is economic infrastructure. The forces of production in all stratified societies are owned and controlled by a few 'minority'. The majority is deprived of the forces of production. The former comprises of the feudal lords, capitalists and rulers, and later are the workers and peasants. Thus, in Marxian sense, elite category refers to the privileged classes of 'haves'. According to Tawney this disparity in the ownership of wealth is one of the main reason of inequality in politics.⁵⁸

Politics deals with the power and the roots of power lies in the economic infrastructure. Since the hegemony of minority exists over this economic infrastructure, therefore, this propertied minority has access to power, thereby becoming the ruling class to use power as a coercive weapon to further its interests by forcing the subject class to submit to a situation which is against its (subject class) interests.

58. R.H.Tawney. Euality. Allen and Unwin: London. 1938. pp.56-62.

Marx argues that the form in which the individuals of a ruling class assert their common interests is the state.⁵⁹ Furthermore, extending the arguments Laski writes that 'the main index to the nature of any actual state is the system of economic class relations which characterizes it and the role of the state is to put coercive power at the disposal of the class, which in any given society, owns the instruments of production.'⁶⁰

The elitist ideology is contrary to Marxian ideology as the former holds that the power structure of any society is conditioned by the potential skills and abilities of its political leadership. It determines who will rule and the change of power in different hands, especially, in the hands of those who supercede in skills, abilities and the power of manipulation to the existing elites. However, Marx holds that the political leader represents the dominant

59. M. Haralanbos & R.M. Herald, op.cit, p.101

60 H.J. Laski, Marx and Today, Fabian Society, Allen and Unwin: London, 1943, pp.16-17.

economic class which controls the forces of production. Thus relations between leadership to the property ownership are, thereby, negating the personal activities and qualities of individuals. Moreover, Marxian perspective vehemently attacks the basic premises of elitists that the oligarchic elites enjoy unquestionable superiority, high autonomy of status and uninterfered independence of action.

Although, the ruling elites in a capitalist society like that of America or 'Capitalist-cum-Socialist' or 'semi-capitalist' or semi-socialist' society like that of India come from the non capitalist class yet they submit themselves to a situation that solely nurtures the interests of bourgeoisie, since the bourgeoisie tends to subdue the infrastructure which alone determines besides other superstructural components, the form, composition and roles of the state.

It is indubitably the 'role' of the capitalist state which is of fundamental significance to the class interests as compared to its 'form' and

'Composition'. It is, therefore, insignificant whether the state is democratic, dictatorial or monarchical in form, and is composed of ruling elites from among the masses. What is of utmost significant is that under all circumstances its role is primarily to safeguard the interests of those who controls the means of production.

All the socio-political opportunities, in a capitalist state or non-socialist or non-communist state, like adult franchise, openness of recruitment to elite, equalities-oriented legal system, etc. serve as apparatus to shadow the exploitative character of the State.

Marxian sociology, thus visualizes elites as a contingent phenomenon related to the nature of infrastructure of a society as opposed to elitism which seeks to define elite as a socio-psychologically-superior but a very small segment of population entrusted with the task of taking major decisions of society.

This radical perspective has been vehemently repudiated by elitist as a contentious theorem on the grounds that first, 'Economics rather than politics is the determining force in history and the bond that holds societies together',⁶¹ and secondly, the Marxian postulation of single and uniform destiny for all societies irrespective of their divergent histories, classlessness, rational anarchy and equality and freedom in all spheres of life⁶², is unjustifiable.

(8) ELITES AND PLURALISM

The unbridgeable gap between elitism and Marxism is only on the issue of nature, character and recruitment of political elite while both seems placating on the question of political elites, being a minority pocketing power. The pluralist approach, instead of seeing power solely invested in a defined and composite group

61. T.B. Bottomore, Elites and Society, Penguin, Middle sex. 1964, pp.24-31 and P. Geriant, op.cit., 1969, p.27

62. Yogendra Singh: Essays on Modernisation in India. Manohar Prakashan: New Delhi. 1978, p.41.

of elites, maintains that it is divided among various groups in society. The pluralists seek to vindicate their stand by explaining the mounting specialisation of the division of labour resulting from the growth of innumerable and diversified occupational groups, each with its particular interest.

Since majority of the population can not afford to participate directly in politics, their interests are represented by a relatively small number of people. Political elites are leaders representing these interests and participating in the political struggle. Power is seen to be dispersed amongst a plurality of elites which actively compete with one another to further particular interests. Robert Dahl writes that 'power is dispersed among various "interest groups" and that this plurality of elites does not form a unified group with common interests⁶³, lend support to the pluralists' view. Dahl's conclusion resulting from New Haven Study conducted at Micro-structural

63. Robert Dahl: Who Governs?, University Press, New Haven, 1961, p.61. This epilogue is derived from his empirical study of ruling elites of New Haven USA.

level is permeated in Arnold Rose' assertion prompted by his study carried on at the macro structural level that the USA is not ruled by a unified power elite, but among the elite there are several who owe their power to economy, several others to politics and still others, who owe their power to military etc. Thus in a nutshell we can say that, pluralists contend that 'political elite is not a unified phenomenon but a body of interconnecting segregated groups.'

Thus the classical theorists seek to conceptualise elite as a group of people explicitly distinguishable from the masses by their socio-psychological superiority over them. Pluralist view power as being shared by multitudinous organisations existing within a society, hence the heterogeneous and open character of elite. The Marxists interpret elite as mere agents of the bourgeoisie who by dint of owning the means of social production, are the monopolizer of power.

64. Arnold M. Ross: The Power Structure: Political Process in American Society. Oxford University Press: New York 1967.

(9) ELITES IN INDIAN SOCIETY: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The social structure of traditional societies is authoritarian. Elites in such societies constitute a closed group. Their status is ascribed on the basis of birth, kinship and age. 'The Social structure of elites in traditional India was based on the principles of hierarchy, holism and continuity.. the cardinal values of the Hindu tradition.'⁶⁵

The king and the priest were the two important elite roles in this tradition which were derived from the caste system. Both Hindu priest and King derived their authority from the qualities inherited by birth which had behind it, traditional as well as charismatic sanction. Weber writes that elite status was partially rooted in the caste system which is itself, an example of hereditary Charisma.⁶⁶

The Western historians and ethnographers identified elites with the Brahmins, the landed

65. Y.Singh (1977)op.cit.p.131.

66. Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation trans, A.M.Henderson and Talcott Parsons, Oxford University Press; New York, 1947, p.372.

aristocracy and the educated middle class which was a product of western education. Park and Tinker⁶⁷ point out that the category 'traditional' or 'charismatic' is used for the elites in the old Indian society well upto the beginning of the British rule in India. Many studies related with the caste structure and the 'theory of varnas' emphasised the charismatic role of the Brahmins.

'Elite status traditionally rested in the Brahman as the Centre and head of the Caste system and the monopoliser of ritual influence and power... elite status also rested in the aristocracy, defined as the descendents of pre-British royal houses and the substantial landholders.'⁶⁸

Noted historian James Mill also conceived the role of Brahman as elite. He writes in 1820 that 'the Brahmans among the Hindus have acquired and maintained an authority more exalted, more commanding

67. R.L.Park and I.Tinker (eds.)op.cit.

68. Y.Singh, Social Stratification and Social Change in India, Manohar ... New Delhi 1980.p.51

and extensive, than the priests have been able to engross among any other portion of mankind. As great a distance is there between the Brahmans and the rest of his species... The Brahman is declared as to be the Lord of all the classes. He alone, to a great degree engrossed the regard and favour of the Deity... Their influence over the government is only bounded by their desires, since they have impressed and belief that all laws which a Hindu is bound to respect are contained in the sacred books.⁶⁹

For a long time the elite structure of Indian society remained authoritarian, monarchical, feudal and charismatic. The feudal pattern of elite structure was further stabilized and consolidated after the emergence of stable Muslim rule in India. Mughal emperors introduced the system of Jagirdari and Mansabdari through which they granted land to a 'vassal'

69. James Mill quoted by Y. Singh, op.cit. p.50 for a discussion of Brahmin elite, see Daniel, Ingalls, "The Brahmins Tradition", in M. Singer (ed) Traditional India: Structure and Change, American Folklore Society, Philadelphia 1959. For the position of the governing class see John T. Hitchcock, "The idea of the Martial Rajput" in the same book.

on contract basis. It was obligatory to that vassal to supply a predetermined number of troops and personal military services to the king when the need arose. Thus the jagirdars and mansabdars emerged as the new feudal nobility. The nature of these elites was partly patrimonial and partly feudal. Besides, there were various categories of administrative elite who looked after the functions of the royal court and its department.⁷⁰

The Muslim rule in India only replaced the persons or offices involved in elite status and not the system as such which, hitherto, prevailed in Indian society. It was succession of one class of elites by another in the same system rather than a change in the structure or functions of existing elites. It was simply the reshuffling of the incumbents acquiring the elite status before the Mughal rule. The elite structure,

70. R.C.Majumdar, H.C.Raychaudhuri, Kalkinkor Datta: An Advanced History of India, Macmillan Co.ltd. London p.557

however, continued to be feudal, patrimonial and charismatic.

The gradual downfall of the Mughal empire was accompanied by the emergence of an entirely new structures of elites. The monarchical feudal type of elites were to be replaced by the national liberal type.⁷¹ The structural changes were brought in the hitherto existing traditional elite structure as a consequence of British Policy. Throughout much of Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and parts of South India many new landed elites came into being as a result of the British revenue policy.⁷² The transfer or auction of land took place as a result of rise in the revenue demands. However, the transfer of land helped to creat a new landed class but it did not necessarily lead to the extinction of the older landed class. The older resident elite probably continued to cultivate that land from which they were

71. Y.Singh (1977), op.cit,p.133

72. Eric Stokes analyses thenature of traditional elites in the rebellion of 1857 and corroborates this view. For detail see Eric Stokes, 'Traditional Elites in the Great Rebellion of 1857; Some Aspects of Rural Revolt in the Upper and Central Doab in South Asia', in E.R.Leach & S.N. Mukherjee (eds.)Elites in South Asia. Cambridge University Press; London, 1970

dispossessed as tenants with adjustments with the new owners because these resident rural elites had dominated social position in the villages they formerly controlled.

Moreover, British administration helped to create a new middle class through its 'settlement policies' by which land passed from the 'ancient families' to the new moneyed class. Simultaneously, it helped to create a Hindu Middle income group and many Muslim elites lost their positions. Mukherjee writes aptly, "If the British rule brought misery to the Muslim 'nobility' and the high-ranking Hindu Officers, the misery was shared by the old zamindars and the old bankers. The men who gained most in the New World were small traders, brokers and junior administrators, pykars, dallals, gomasthas, munshis, banyas and dewans."⁷³

It was a structural break from feudal monarchical type of the traditional elites. The new elites were there on the basis of their professional achievements and modern education. This new elite which was a product of cities rather than villages belong to the professions

73. S.N. Mukherjee, 'Caste, Class and Politics in Calcutta' 1815-38 in E.R. Leech and S.N. Mukherjee(ed.), op.cit. P.

like lawyers, journalists, social workers etc. It constituted a new middle class which grew in India as a consequence of English education and the expansion of administration, judiciary and teaching professions. In professional terms lawyers were predominant in the early social structure of the political elite.

Misra writes that "the total of 13,839 delegates who attended the various annual sessions (of the congress) between 1892 and 1909 as many of 5442 or nearly 40% were the members of the legal profession. The other important groups were those of the landed gentry with 2,629 delegates and of the commercial classes with 2091. The rest of the total was made up of the journalists doctors and teachers."⁷⁴

The selection of elites in pre-independence India remained narrower and confined to upper castes. Since Independence the social and economic basis for the recruitment of elites in India have also widened. The former monopoly of the upper castes landed aristocracy, monarchs and princes, jagirdars, Tikhanedars is breaking and giving way to the emerging middle classes and castes

74. B.B.Misra, The Indian Middle Class, Oxford University Press: Bombay, 1960.p.353

from villages. Now the scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes are also being recruited to the elite structure in India through the "constitutional reservation" of seats for them. They had no say in pre-independence India except certain tribes like 'Meenas' which ruled in some parts of Rajasthan for a specific time period.

The new elite of political pluralistic orientation grew in India after the independence. These elites differ from the new elites of the pre-independence time in the fact that they have more pragmatic and specific policy orientation in political goals; their political ideology is not diffused but specific; they do not appeal to masses on the ground of generalized nationalistic-themes but on specific issues which form part of the social structure of the contemporary interest groups in their community or region; they are also now increasingly recruited from rural, agricultural and lower middle caste or class backgrounds; they are less westernized than the national liberal elites of the British times.⁷⁵

Thus three stages of transition in the elite structure of the Indian society could be visualized as, (1) the monarchical-feudal elites of traditional type; (2) the

new nationalist liberal elite and (3) the new elite of political populist orientation.

CHAPTER 3

DEMOGRAPHIC OUTLINE, FEUDALISM AND
PANCHAYATI RAJ SYSTEM IN RAJASTHAN

Rajasthan as a conglomerate entity, came into existence after the merger of 22 small states, soon after India got independence on 15th August 1947. Territorially Rajasthan is placed next to Madhya Pradesh in the Republic of India occupying a total area of 3,42,239 sq.Km.¹ The Western frontier of the state is formed with West Pakistan through the sands of the Thar, "The Great Indian Desert", thereby occupying 750 miles long international boundary while the states of Punjab and Haryana form the North and North east frontiers respectively. The eastern boundary is formed with Uttar Pradesh and then with Madhya Pradesh surrounding it in the south east and in the south. Its southwest boundary is common with the state of Gujarat. Rajasthan lies between 23° .3'N to 32° .12'N latitude and 69° .30'E to 78° .17'E longitudes. It is

1. I.C.Srivastva, :Census of India:General Population Table: series 18 part II-A (1981) But the total area of Rajasthan according to V.S.Verma, Census of India:General population Table, series 18 part II-A (1971)p.XXVIII, LS 34,42,214 sq km.

an interesting fact to observe that area wise Rajasthan is bigger than UK, Italy, Austria and Hungary.

According to 1981 census the total population of Rajasthan is 34,261,820 comprising of 17,854,254 males and 16,407,708 females with a very high growth rate of *32.97. More than 79% of Rajasthan's population is still distributed over 34,968 inhabited villages. The percentage of urban population to the total population is distributed over 201 towns and 20 districts. The density of population per square km in Rajasthan as a whole is 100. Sex ratio in Rajasthan comprises of 919 females to 1000 males. Although the sex ratio in the state has been adverse to females all/along but has improved over the last 20 years. Nevertheless, it is much below the national average (933). The Hindus constitute the overwhelming majority of the population in Rajasthan. The percentage of scheduled caste and scheduled tribes in Rajasthan is approximately 17.04 and 12.21 respectively. They are chiefly scattered in the districts of Jaipur, Bharatpur, Alwar, Swai Madhopur,

Udipur, Dunagaspur and Banswara.

(1) WORKING POPULATION IN RAJASTHAN

The 1981 census observes that over 63% of the total population of the state consists of non-workers. The main workers constitute a little more than 30% while the marginal workers about 6%.62.2% of the total working population of the state engaged in cultivation and 7.4% in agricultural labour as against a proportion of 64.9 and 9.2% respectively in 1971. The male workers constitute 49.65% of the total male population of the state and the non workers constitute 49.24%. In case of female workers 66.6% are engaged in cultivation and 15.6% as agricultural labourers as against the corresponding ration of 63.9 and 20.8% in 1971. Only 3.1% as against 2.4% of 1971 are found engaged in household industries. About 14.6% as against 12.3% of 1971 of the total female working force engaged in other services.

(2) VILLAGES OF RAJASTHAN BEFORE INDEPENDENCE

The villages of the state were divided into three

categories namely the Khalsa, the Jagir and the Dharmada village. The Khalsa villages were actually the Crown owned lands i.e., the lands directly administered by the crown—the Maharajas. The king was the sole sovereign entity of the administration. The executive powers were vested in the Diwan, who in the mid forties began to be designated as the Prime Minister. There was sometimes an Advisory Council entrusted with the work of disposing of the disputed matters to it by the Jagir Darmada villages. Members to the Advisory Council were nominated by the rulers, largely from amongst the sixteen grade jagirdars.³

The jagir villages were ruled by the petty Jagirdars who owed their allegiance to the ruler. They were the immediate authority at the Jagir level administration. Jagir was a second power centre in the feudal set up. Its domination and its legitimacy was, however, restricted by the ultimate authority of the Maharajas.⁴

3. Colonel Tod, Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, Part I George Routledge & Sons Ltd: London, 1832, p.113

4. G.S.Ojha, History of Rajputana, vol. V, ^{Pt 1} Vedic Yantralaya: Ajmer, Vikram Samvat 1996 p.37.

The Dharmada villages were those donated to the Purohit (priest) or the charans by the Maharaja. These villages (owing of course, an absolute loyalty to the ruler) were exempted from the payment of tribute or tax to the ruler, nor were they required to keep a military force with them or render such services at the Centre.

(3) LAND TENURE SYSTEM IN RAJASTHAN

The nature of the land and the total area under the control, determined the political power in Rajasthan. Three categories of land system could be discerned in Rajputana state prior to the independence, viz; Khalsa, Jagir and Bhumias. Jagir and Khalsa were the main systems of land holdings. We will discuss each of them separately in brief:

(I) KHALSA

The land under the direct control of the ruler of a princely state was called 'Khalsa'. It was directly managed by the concerned ruler. The states of Alwar, Bharatpur and Dholpur had Khalsa holdings. In Mewar, the central part, some twenty five miles of the state

was under the Khalsa forming the -crown demesne of the Maharana.⁵

(11) JAGIR: The Jagir lands were under the control of the Sardars or Jagirdars. Tod writes that Jagirdar is a feudal class in which a lord (THAKUR) held the land by grant (PATTA) of his prince. The Jagirs were the estates of varying values and size. The Jagirdari system was found mainly in Jodhpur, Bikaner and Shekhawati areas of Jaipur state. It was a second power centre in the feudal set up. Ojha⁶ writes that its domination and legitimacy were restricted by the ultimate authority of Maharaja. Approximately forty percent of the land was not entirely under the crown but under the Zamindar's charge. Therefore, this land was called ZAMINDARI LAND. A person appointed to manage the treat under ruler's influence was designated as 'land holder' or 'Zamindar' of his territory. The duty of a Zamindar was to collect revenue and retain only his share of the total.⁷

5. Col.Tod.op.cit.p.116

6. G.S.Ojha (1966) op.cit.p.37

7. K.L.Sharma,The Changing Rural Stratification System.
Orient Longmans:New Delhi,1974 pp.29-32.

(iii) BHUMIAS

Besides Jagirdars (landlords), there existed another class of tenure-the Bhumias. These Bhumias, scions of the earliest princes of Rajputana held their lands on prescriptive possession, exempted of any revenue control and fine for investiture because their grants required no renewal. The only liabilities they had, were small annual quit-rent and local service as frontier guards or as a sort of irregular feudal militia. In Mewar, as many as four thousand Bhumias persisted in Khumalmeer, the wilds of Chhappan or plains of Mandalgarh since remotest antiquity.⁸

(4) FEUDALISM

The extensive usage of the term feudalism in the field of social science has by and large aimed to connote 'a phase of development of society'. In its restricted sense the term denotes "feudal society," a form of civilisation that flourishes especially in a closed agricultural economy⁹ and a political system originating in western and Central Europe which was

8. Col. Tod. op. cit, p. 195-7

9. The New Encyclopedia Britannica, 1977 Micropedia, vol. IV. pp. 115-16.

dominant there during the greater part of the middle ages. Feudal society was seen by Marx and Engels as intermediate, chronologically and logically, between the slave society of the ancient world and the world of capitalists and proletarians in the modern era.¹⁰

In its technical meaning feudalism is "a social system of rights and duties based on land tenure and personal relationships in which land (and to a lesser degree other sources of income) is held in fief by vassals from lords to whom they owe specific services and with whom they are bound by personal loyalty."¹¹

The specific technical meaning of the term brings forth two aspects of the system, viz; institution of Vassalage and manorial or seignorial system. In respect of the institution of Vassalage, feudalism is a "method of government"¹² in which --

1. those who fulfil official duties, whether civil or military, do not, for the sake of an abstract notion of

10. T.B. Bottomore (et.al) Dictionary of Marxist Thought Oxford University; Delhi, 1987. pp.166-171

11. The New Encyclopedia... 1977 op.cit.

12. R. Strayer Joseph and Coulborn Rusthoton "The Idea of Feudalism in India, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1956 p.4-5

'State' or public service but because of personal and freely accepted links with their lords;

2. the officials receive their remuneration in the form of fief which is hereditary; and

3. public authority becomes fragmented and decentralized, because various functions are closely associated with the fief rather than the person who holds fief.

In Manorial system, the land lords exercise a wide variety of police, judicial, fiscal and other rights over the unfree peasantry (serfs).¹³

The feudalism in Rajasthan was an integrated whole from top to bottom, that is, from the ruler of a state to a Bhomia in a village; predominated by hierarchical system. It was the system (feudalism) that was the source of power and not the land as property or as a source of livelihood.

Feudalism an easily discernible phenomenon not only in the annals of India but its traces could easily be seen in the existing socio-cultural milieu and the socio-historical context of politics in Rajasthan.

13. The Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1977 op. cit.p.116

It has sustained itself through the prolonged dominance of princely states till India got freedom because, it existed in such a form that it penetrated into all aspects of social structure including the economy and agriculture.¹⁴ However, the origin, growth and development and the persistence of feudalism has generated mooted issues among the social scientists in India and abroad. But it can be asserted without any skepticism and ambiguity that this system had been in vogue for a large part of the history of Rajputana. Hence, it assumes a very significant position related to the existing power structure in Rajasthan. Understanding of the changes in power structure entails a clear and distinct picture of the power structure as it existed in past. Therefore, it is necessary to probe into the authentic sources revealing the power structure in Rajasthan.

The 'Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan' can be considered as a reliable and authentic source material concerning the social system of the princely states of the erstwhile Rajputana. The chief features of the feudal system described by Tod can be delineated as follows :

14. K.L. Sharma Caste, Class and Social Movements. Rawat Publications; Jaipur. 1986. p.119

The hierarchical structure of society was headed by several dozens of leading princes of Rajputana. Each of the superior houses had the colourful regalia of feudalism : armorial bearing, banner, palladium, Kettle drum, silver mace as well as a bard to spread its fame. The great chiefs had under them, vassals of higher or lower ranks, according to the size of the landed estates which they held as fiefs. The obligatory of the vassals included military services, attendance on the persons of prince for varying periods, and a number of payments, such as reliefs, escheats, aid and wardships. The lower houses rested upon the sub-division of the great grants, which Tod explicitly extended to the lowest subdenominatio the Charsa or "hide of land", sufficient to furnish one equipped knight.¹⁵

5) THE GOVERNMENT

Legislative authority rested in the hands of prince, his council and his four chief ministers and their deputies. In practice, the council of prince dealt with

15. Daniel Thorner. The Shaping of Modern India. Allied Publishes (Pvt.) : N. Delhi. 1981, pp 274-75

the issues related to the general peace and threats to the normal functioning of administration. During the "no war period", the main business of the council was to supervise revenue collection and to administer justice in the crown demesne.

In the outlying districts two sets of officials wielded the authority of prince. The officials were: head of garrisons manning boarder posts and "resider rulers" (a civil officer and a military officer conjoined of the district. Owing to the extreme jealousy of the chiefs concerned with their own prerogatives, the civil rulers usually could not exercise their civil powers regarding the distribution of justice and economy of the estates of chiefs. Even in criminal cases, the chiefs did not deem necessary to act with the required sanction of the court of justice of prince. The sitting of the corst of justice, within the chiefs' bounds was considered as humiliating intrusion or equal to sequestration.¹⁶

(6) RAJPUTANA AND BRITISH HEGEMONY

The downfall of Mughal empire gave way for the rise of Marathas and subsequently the chaos evacuated the Pinda to be emanated. The unrestrained Marathas and Pindaris

16. Col. Tod. op.cit., pp.166-171

invaded and extorted the princely states of Rajputana at the end of eighteenth century to the second decade of 19th Century. Under these invasions and extortions the institutions like the relationship between the prince and his nobles, the land system, the revenue system and military system were varying towards a collapse of the whole group of these states.¹⁷

At that time Lord Hastings deemed it necessary to bring all the states under the British protection to rescue them from the destruction and devastation being carried out by the Pindaris.¹⁸ Treaties of alliance between 1817 and 1818 were conducted with the conditions of protection and defence from the East India Company and the employment of troops in return for legal cooperation with the supreme power. Moreover, the states were assured of independence in their internal matters from the British. And the alliance brought a condition of perfect security to people of the States

Apart from some occasional military uprisings, the princes and nobles of the states remained loyal to the British power during the first war of independence (1857). Disturbances of this great revolution only excited the feudatories, the

Thakurs and hereditary nobles to go

17. A.C. Banerjee, "Purapur", The Indian Historical Quarterly (Calcutta) March 1964 p.15

18. M.S. Mehta, Lord Hastings and the Indian States, Tarapur and Sons: Bombay, 1930 p.127

against their liege chiefs. Since 1858, the states had been transferred from independent allies to the protracted feudatories under the assumption of direct sovereignty of the vast empire of the British Crown. For external purposes the territories and subjects of the states were in the same position as those of Britain.¹⁹ G.N. Singh observes that 'in internal matters the British resident (the political officer in charge of the State) was the real ruler and the 'Master' of the prince.'²⁰

The aforementioned analysis helps us to conclude that the Britisher's interference in the internal matters of the state resulted into the significant impact on the politico-administrative institutions of the States in the subsequent years.

The present name of Rajasthan is a modified version of its popularly known designations - "Rajputanas" or "Rajwara" both denoting "A body of Rajputs". It has had its links and associations with the activities and gains of Rajputs. Rajputs were a warrior group who has played a dominant role in the Indian history from 8th

19. K.R.R.Sastry, Indian States, Delhi 1950, p.22

20. G.N. Singh Indian States and British India, Nand Kishore and Brothers, Banaras. 1930, p.50

Century onwards, especially in the northwestern region.²¹

It is a historical fact that Rajasthan's history is overwhelmed by conflict and competition rather than by cooperation and mutual understanding and assistance. Jaipur, Jodhpur and Udaipur had dominated in the history of Rajputana. Despite the incessant efforts to reconcile on the part of Mughals and other Muslim rulers, Udaipur had striven hard to maintain its political autonomy. Udaipur's resistance, particularly its reluctance to the offer of inter-marriage with the Mughal King, is considered as one of the proudest dimension of its historical supremacy in Rajasthan today. However, the struggle with the dominated power of North India and later with the Maratha invaders from the South reduced the state and the ruling house to a condition of destitution and only the agreement reached with the Britishers saved them from annihilation.

Jodhpur's relationship with the dominant power of North India ranged from open defiance to an alliance with both the Mughals and British Government, depending upon the indispensable and exigencies of military requirements. Of the three major states only Jaipur entered into a sustained and stable relationship with

21. S.P. Varma, C.P. Bhambari & P.C. Mathur, (ed.) A Report on the Third General Election in Rajasthan., University of Rajasthan, Jaipur. 1965

the dominant powers of North India. The rulers of Jaipur served the Mughal rulers, and when the British succeeded the Mughals, Jaipur rulers negotiated a treaty with the Great Britain. The contacts with the Britishers had its influence in the politico-administrative system in Rajasthan.

The process of integration of Rajputana state was completed in five stages. In the first stage of integration four princely states, viz; Bharatpur, Alwar, Karauli and Dholpur were formed into a union. The Union of the state was designed as 'MATSYA UNION'. In the second stage of integration of a smaller states such as Banswara, Bundi, Dungarpur, Jhalawar, Kisangarh, Kota, Pratapgarh, Shahpura and Tonk were merged on the 25th March, 1948 and came to be known as 'UNITED RAJASTHAN'. In the third stage Udaipur which has not yet joined the United Rajasthan was taken into the Union and the Union was inaugurated on 18th April 1949.²² In the fourth stage of integration 4 major states, namely, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner and Jaisalmer also joined, which led to the formation of

22. V.P. Menon, The Story of the Integration of the Indian State. Orient Longmans; New Delhi. 1956, p267

'GREATER RAJASTHAN' which was inaugurated on 30th March, 1949.²³

Finally in the fifth stage, Matsya Union and United Rajasthan were amalgamated which led to the emergence of Rajasthan on the 15th May 1949.²⁴ Thus on this date the process of integration was completed except for the state of Sirohi including Mount Abu, whose future remained undecided till 1956. The state Reorganisation Act 1956; further brought about territorial changes in the integrated Rajasthan. Under its provisions, on the 1st November 1956, Ajmer which was a centrally administered area upto 1956 was merged with Rajasthan.

(7) POLITICAL AWAKENING IN RAJASTHAN

The historic event that took place in political and constitutional history of Rajasthan was the inception and evolution of representative institutions. The most significant element responsible for the inception and evolution of representative institutions in Rajasthan was political.

The emergence of political awakening was a consequence of operation of many forces which were acting from within the society and outside the society. The religious and social reform movements were led by Swami Dayanand Saraswati,

23. Ibid, 268

24. Ibid., 270

Swami Vivekanand, Sandhu Nischhal Das, Sanyasi Atma Ram and Swami Govind Giri in Rajasthan. The dissemination of Western education through the contact of Britishers introduced scientific ideas, democratic values rational outlook. However, the benefit of the Western thought to the common masses was negligible. A number of schools were set up in Sirohi (1915), Bundi (1921), Dungarpur (1922) etc. This made the people conscious of the ideas of political freedom and the enlightened minority started thinking in terms of equality and liberty.

The role of development of press and literature contributed significantly in the growth of political consciousness in Rajasthan. The most important newspapers were 'Rajasthan Kesari' (Wardha); 'Navin Rajasthan' (Ajmer) 'Tarun Rajasthan' (Beawar); 'Prabhat' (Jaipur); 'Jai-Hind' (Kota) etc.

The introduction of speedy means of transport and communication and growth of political consciousness in India, humiliating conditions of the subject people, people's economic distress, repressive and oppressive acts of the states, the effect of world wars, rise of

political organisation, the emergence of enlightened political leaders, agrarian rising, movements by aboriginal tribes, political movements (movements of the twenties, movements in the early thirties, praja mandal movement, the August movement of 1942, movement in the years preceding independence) are some of the major causes which can be held responsible for the rise of political consciousness among the people of Rajasthan.²⁵

It is significant to point out that the peasant movements in Rajasthan played very important role in awakening the rural people of Rajasthan. K.L. Sharma²⁶ analyses peasant movements in Rajasthan in two phases: (1) from 1913 to 1930; and (2) from 1930 to 1947. The first phase refers to the terrorist and violent activities which challenged the feudal system itself. The movements in second phase were initiated by the Praja Mandals. The Praja Mandals Movements were chiefly related with the problems of peasants in various princely states.

25. For detail see R.S. Darda. From Feudalism to Democracy A study in the Growth of Representative Institutions in Rajasthan, (1908-1948). S. Chand & Co. New Delhi. 1971 pp 1-35

26. K.L. Sharma. Caste, Class and Social Movements. Rawat Publications; Jaipur. 1986. Chapter 5

The Bijolia movement which started under the leadership of Sadhu Sitaramdas in 1913 and later on led by Vijay Singh Pathik, sprang mainly due to unjust taxes and 'Lagats', maladministration of the Jagir redoubled by the indifferent attitude of the bureaucracy towards the people. Bijolia movement was the most effective movement which, for the very first time gave greatest jolt to the deep rooted institution of feudalism. It resulted into the initiation of the process of decay of the feudal set up.

(8) PANCHAYATI RAJ : HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

After attaining independence it was imperative for Government of India to erect strong pillars which could bear the weight of democratic process and dynamic rural social system. These pillars were envisaged in the form of land reforms, cooperatives, Panchayati Raj and Community Development. The philosophy inherent in Panchayati Raj was to mobilise the masses into active political participation and to establish a genuine political control of the grass roots level by acting as a basic unit of government in Rural India. It is indeed a process and a dynamic movement

based on universal adult franchise which will make sincere efforts to decentralize democracy. It can be defined as a complex system of rural local self government in India which inheres the notion of "power to the people". This local self government is a body representing the local people, possessing a large degree of autonomy. In other words, it is the "ethno-government", i.e., government of the people by the people and for the people in Lincoln's sense. It is an effective instrument of participation in democratic process and carrying democracy in real sense to the 'grass roots level'. Furthermore, Panchayati Raj is of the greatest importance, for the system can make an impact upon the traditional bases of power that is, caste and kinship, and individual, particularly the young man and woman, providing a vehicle for leadership. Panchayati Raj as such is not a modern phenomena on the arena of India's polity but the inspiration for Panchayati Raj is derived from the tradition of Panch Parameshwar where God speaks through the five and official publications speak of "village Republics" as established historical facts

27. Gray Hugh, "The Problems" in AR. Desai (ed), Rural Sociol in India Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1988 , p. 535

but do not list any source for this well established myth. From time immemorial ideas of local self-government prevail in India to a far greater extent than anywhere else in the world.²⁸ The villages and towns were small states in miniature where all the local needs for sanitation, communication, the judiciary and the police were served by assemblies of the people themselves with a chief executive officer.

These self-governing organisations almost entirely disappeared from towns and greatly lost their existence in villages during the turmoil that followed in the wake of dissolution of the Mughal Empire. The British Government made an effort to keep up the village assemblies wherever they were in working order, and revived in places where they were wanting.²⁹ Nevertheless, the British administration with its power system of justice replaced the traditional powers of the panchayats in more serious judicial cases, its system of tax gathering and of administration made such a violent impact that the corporate life of the villages was enfeebled and in most cases lost its existence.

28. R.C. Majumdar, H.C. Raychaudhuri and Kalikanar Datta, Advanced History of India, Macmillan India (Delhi, 1974) p.853

29. R.C. Majumdar (etc.al.) op.cit. p. 853

A great stimulus was given to the development of local self-government by the Government of India's Resolution of 1870. But the earnest efforts were made by Lord Ripen to introduce a real element of local self-government somewhat on the lines of English law. His ideas were laid down in the form of a government resolution in May 1882.³⁰ The two salient features of this new plan were : (1) The sub-division, not the district, should be the maximum area served by one Committee or local board with primary boards, under it, serving very small areas so that each member of it might possess knowledge of, and interest in, its affairs.

(2) The local boards should consist of a large majority of elected non-official members and be presided over by a non-official Chairman. In 1909, Royal Commission on Decentralisation urged that the sub district boards should be once more established everywhere as the principal agencies of local government in order to ensure a return to local knowledge and local interests. Following the first world war and the passing of 'Government of India Act 1919', rural self-government was transferred to Indian ministers who were anxious to

30. The aim of these resolutions was to develop self-governing bodies, which included panchayata to provide opportunities for training the people in the art of self-governance.

make the pattern of local government more effective.


The composition of the boards was changed to that of being fully representative, and the chairmanship became a non-official phenomena.

Article 40 of the Constitution (Part IV-Directive Principles of the State Policy) contains a specific provision directing the state to "take steps to organise village panchayats and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self- government". The state list of the Constitution includes "local self government or village administration".

The Constitution in its 7th Schedule under Article 246 lists local government legislation as being reserved to the states : 'Local government that is to say the Constitution and powers of municipal corporations, improvement trusts, district boards, mining settlement, authorities and other local authorities for the purpose of local self government or village administration'.

However, it was the Community Development Programme launched in 1952 which brought the higher levels of local self government into focus. Both, in its programmatic

content and organisations evolution, panchayati raj was integrally connected with community development. Thus Community Development Programme anticipated the formulation of the policies programmes of and objectives of panchayat raj.



The first Plan stated that so long as local self governing institutions are not conceived as parts of the same organic constitutional and administrative framework the structure of a democratic government will remain incomplete. The Second Plan recommended "the restructuring of local government and development administration at the district level on democratic lines with the village Panchayats organically linked to higher tiers". The National Development Council appointed a study team under the leadership of Balwant Rai G.Mehta in 1956 to suggest measures for maximum economy and efficiency in implementing various Plan projects.

The Balwantrao G.Mehta Committee submitted its report in 1957, incorporating into it the historic chapter 'Democratic Decentralisation'. It was suggested that if the Community Development Programme was to be made a success there should be a three tier system of

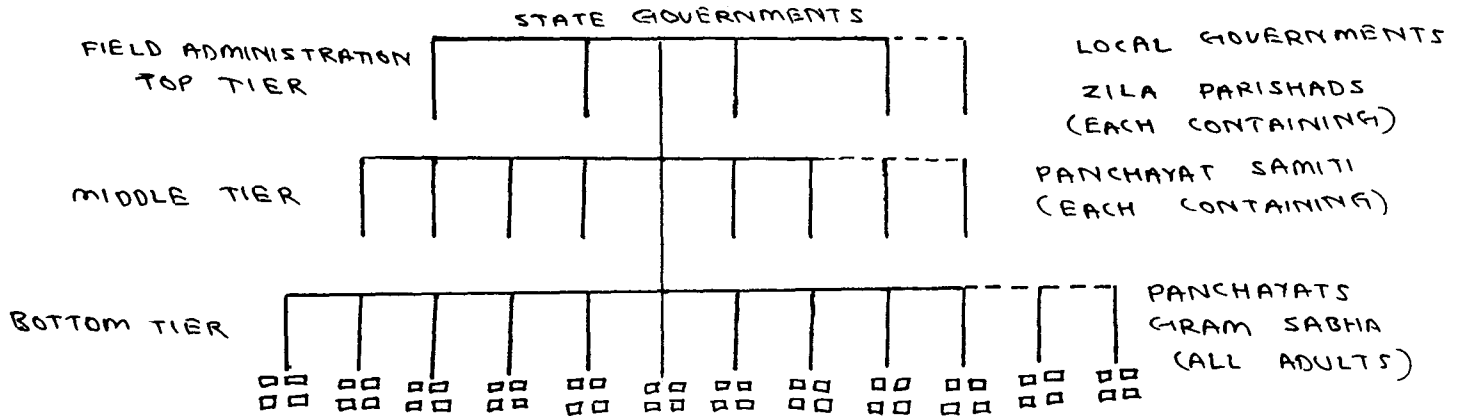
the Panchayati Raj. Since there were three main administrative levels in the countryside - the village, the block and the district, the Committee recommended the formation of the Gram Panchayat, the Panchayat Samiti and the Zila Parishad corresponding with these levels (see table 1) Panchayati Raj was introduced in various states in different patterns. Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh were the first to introduce the three-tier system of Panchayati Raj as envisaged by the Mehta Report.

(9.) PANCHAYATI RAJ IN RAJASTHAN

Rajasthan was the first state to adopt democratic decentration or panchayati raj. It was inaugurated on 2nd October 1959 by Jawaharlal Nehru. It was established under a special Act of the Legislature³¹ according to which the broad objectives of the scheme were : "to enable the people to participate fully and actively in all development programmes. The government hopes that this would develop the initiative to the local people and

31. Rajasthan Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads Act, 1959. The third or the lowest tier, panchayats continued to be governed by the provisions of the Rajasthan Panchaya Act 1953.

TABLE - I - THE STRUCTURE OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTION



SOURCE: HENRY MADDICK, PANCHAYATI RAJ: A STUDY OF RURAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN INDIA, LONGMAN GROUP LTD: 1970: p4.

that sound leadership which is highly indispensable to the successful working of democratic institutions will arise and be developed at all the levels in the district".³²

(i) GRAM PANCHAYAT

The Panchayat as provided by the 1953 and 1959 Acts is a corporate statutory body composed of 5 to 15 members. Its individual member is known as 'Panch' while the chairperson is called 'Sarpanch'. It is elected by universal adult franchise by secret ballot for a period of 3 years and operates in a village or group of villages. Besides the elected members every panchayat can co-opt the following members: (1) two women (2) one member of scheduled tribes and (3) two members of scheduled castes.³³

At the time of introduction of the 1959 Act there were as many as 3058 panchayats but after reorganisation

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32. M.V. Mathur, Iqbal Narain V.M. Sinha and Associates, Panchayati Raj in Rajasthan: A Case Study of Jaipur District Impex India. New Delhi 1966 p.15
33. The Sadiq Ali Commission (1962) recommended that the president of service cooperative society should be made an associate member of panchayat and in case of more than one such societies in a panchayat circle the President should elect one person from amongst themselves to serve on the Panchayat.

of the size of panchayats their number increased to 73094 each with a population of 1500 to 2000 covering 34441 villages and a total rural population of merely 131 lakhs. The population and number of villages per panchayat being 1772 and 4 respectively.

Fresh election^{to} these reconstituted panchayats were held in December 1960 and elections to panchayat smitis and zila parishad were completed by March 1961. A process of sharing of power with the hitherto deprived section of village community was initiated. It gave a great jolt to the jamindars, land lords, thikanedars who wielded power till date.

According to the third schedule attached to the the Rajasthan Panchayat Act 1953, the distinction between 'obligatory' and 'discretionary' functions was abolished and the panchayats entrusted with the duty of making 'reasonable provisions'³⁴ for (1) public works; (2) sanitation; (3) self-defence and panchayat circle defence; (4) administration; (5) education and culture; (6) agriculture and

34. M.V.Mathur (et.al.). op.cit.,p.17

and preservation of forests; (7) welfare of people ; (8) village industries; (9) breeding and protecting cattle and (10) miscellaneous. Moreover, the 1959 Act also authorizes the panchayats to act as executive agents of the panchayat samiti with reference to any scheme launched by it within the panchayat area.

The panchayats are authorised to levy a number of taxes; the major ones being building tax, entertainment tax, vehicle tax, pilgrimage tax and water supply tax. They can also charge fees or insist on licences for temporary erections. They are also empowered by a separate Act to levy a special tax on community service to be realised in cash or labour from every able bodied resident for certain public works.

In order to promote increased political participation of women in panchayati raj, reservation of seat for women in panchayats and zila parishad was proposed in the October 1988 National Perspective Plan for Women . It recommended that "reservation should be made of 30% seats at panchayat and zila parishad level and local municipal bodies for women". It also recommended

that "whenever possible, higher representation of dalit /tribals, women of weaker sections should be ensured."

The Panchayat (Constitution (64th amendment) Bill specifies two schemes of reservation for women. First, of seats reserved for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. ^{30% of the seats then one seat should be reserved for women from the} scheduled castes and tribes. Second, "As nearly as may be, thirty percent (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the scheduled castes and tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every panchayat shall be reserved for women and allotted by rotation in different constituencies in a panchayat."³⁵ What kind of changes this 64 amendment will bring in the village power relations, is a matter of empirical investigation. But it is expected that it will help in breaking the monopoly of male-dominating Indian rural society. Moreover, it may have, in future, bearings on the existing caste-class nexus in power structure.

Moreover, the 64th amendment will give more power

³⁵, D.N.: Reservations for Women in Panchayats Economic and Political Weekly. vol. XXIV No.23. June 10, 1989, p.1269

to panchayats, make periodic elections to panchayats mandatory. The panchayats will be made financially more stronger.

(ii) PANCHAYAT SAMITI

The panchayat samiti forms the Intermediate rung of the three tier structure of panchayati raj. Panchayat samitis in Rajasthan are formed at the block level; their total number being 232. Though an elective body but its members are elected indirectly. The sarpanchas of all panchayats within the jurisdiction of a panchayat samiti are its ex-officio members. There is a provision for the cooption of the following categories of members.³⁶

(1) Presidents of gram sabhas of villages which have been placed, under gramdan according to the Rajasthan Gramdan Act, 1966.

36. The Sadiq Ali Commission (1962) strongly disapproved of the misuse of the provision of cooption and recommended that cooption of persons having experience in public life, administration or rural development should be abolished. However, it recommended associate membership for representatives of cooperative institutions like service cooperative marketing societies and other cooperative societies. The commission also suggested cooption of members before the election of pradhan so as to discourage them from participating in such elections. Otherwise they were to have full voting rights including right to hold office.

- (2) two women, if no woman is a member of panchayat samiti and only one if a woman is already its member;
- (3) two persons belonging to scheduled castes if no such person is a member of panchayat samiti;
- (4) two persons from scheduled tribes whose population is more than 5% of the population of the block;
- (5) one person from amongst the members of managing committees of cooperative societies registered and functioning in the block; and
- (6) two persons whose experience in administration public life or rural development would be of benefit to the panchayat samiti.³⁷

Besides these categories of ex-officio and coopted members the Rajasthan Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishad Act 1959 provides for making every MLA an 'associate'³⁸ member of panchayat samiti falling in the Vidhan Sabha constituency from which he is elected.

The term of a panchayat samiti is 3 years, It is chaired by Pradhan who is elected from amongst its

37. M.V.Mathur. (et.al), op.cit.p.18

38. Associate member is a member of Parliament and State legislature enjoying associate membership (without voting or office holding rights) of panchayat samitis and zila parishads belonging to their constituency.

members. Both the ex-officio and the coopted members are entitled to vote in the election of pradhan³⁹.

The panchayat samiti performs a number of functions: animal husbandary; cooperation; agriculture; health and rural sanitation; social welfare; community development; primary education; social education; rural housing; rural and cottage industries and miscellaneous matters, such as collection of statistics, publicity and emergency relief etc. Furthermore, the entire community development programme has been placed under the jurisdiction of panchayat samitis.

The financial resources of panchayat samitis flow from three sources: the community development 'schematic block budget', grants and grant-in-aid for transferred schemes and their own resources including income from various taxes which it is authorised to levy. These are:

1. tax on trades, callings and professions at rates specified by the government.

39. The Sadiq Ali Commission recommended that the constitution of a broad-based electoral college should be composed of all panchayats and all members of panchayat samiti. Thereby radically altering the mode of election of the pradhan.

2. primary education tax;
3. 5% tax on the rent of agricultural land;
4. tax on panchayat samit fores; and
5. surcharge on stamp duty on transfers of immovable property.

They are also authorised to raise loans with the prior approval of the government and receive a share of land revenue at the rate of 25% head of the population residing in their respective jurisdiction.

(ii) ZILA PARISHAD

The zila parishad is the third and the top tier (constituted at the district level) of panchayat raj system. It is merely an advisory body whose main function is to maintain general supervision over panchayat and panchayat samitis. Each zila parishad comprises of the following ex-officio members:

1. Members of Lok Sabha whose constituency falls in the district;
2. members of Rajya Sabha residing in the district;
3. pradhans of all panchayat samitis in the district;
4. members of Vidhan Sabha whose constituency falls in the district; and

5. president of the central cooperative bank working in or serving the district.

Besides the ex-officio members, the following persons are required to be coopted as members;

1. two or one women as the case may be;
2. two person with experience in administration, public life and rural development ;
3. one person belonging to scheduled castes if no such person is otherwise a member; and
4. one person belonging to scheduled tribes whose population exceeds 5% of the total district population provided no such person is already a member.⁴⁰

Generally, the zila parishad acts as a coordinating and advisory body, linking the activities of various panchayats and panchayat samitis in the district and maintaining close liasion with the State Government.⁴¹

It also maintains general supervision over the plans and programmes and can take steps to coordinate the schemes of panchayat samitis under its jurisdiction.⁴²

The zila parishad is also empowered to scrutinize the budget of panchayat samitis but its advice in this

40. The Sadiq Ali Commission recommended the removal of this clause .

41. M.V.Mathur (et.al.) op.cit.p.22

42. The Rajasthan Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishad Act, 1959 authorises the formation of standing committee of zila parishad but does not specify their number of

regard is not binding.

The financial resources of zila parishad consists mainly of grants and grants-in-aid from the government for meeting its establishment charges, salaries and allowances of its employees and the honorarium of the pramukh including such other facilities which are provided to receive contributions or donations from their constituent panchayat samitis but they are not authorized to levy taxes or raise funds.

(iv) GRAM SABHA

The Gram Sabha⁴³ is a non-statutory general body comprising of all the adult voters residing in the jurisdiction of Gram Panchayat. According to the Rajasthan Panchayat Act, 1953 (as amended in 1959) the meeting of Gram Sabha has to be called by every panchayat twice a year, generally during the months of May-July and October-December.

Although gram sabha is not a tier of panchayat raj of the annual statement of accounts, administration but it plays vital role like consideration report of the Gram Panchayat, audit report of the Gram Panchayat, taxation

43. Though the specific term gram sabha is not used in the Act but it is generally used in praxis.

proposals, work programme for the ensuing year and any other specific development schemes. The Gram Sabha is supposed to act as the watch-dog of the Gram Panchayat which is its executive body. In practice, however, it has been observed that Gram Sabha is not functioning effectively.

(v) NYAYA PANCHAYAT

Till 1959 there was no separation of the executive and judicial functions of panchayats. As a result of comprehensive amendment of the 1953 Act, the judicial functions were vested in a separate institution called the nyaya panchayat⁴⁴. It resulted into the formation of 1370 nyaya panchayats. They were statutorily empowered to entertain and dispose of criminal cases of simple nature and civil suits upto Rs.250. In exercise of its criminal jurisdiction, a nyaya panchayat can impose fines upto
45
Rs.50/-

The members of the nyaya panchayats⁴⁶ are elected by their constituent panchayats. The chairperson of the nyaya panchayat is elected by the members from amongst themselves.

44. It is a non statutory body. The jurisdiction of nyaya panchayat extends to include 5 to 7 panchayats.

45. M.V.Mathur.(et.al), op.cit.p.13

46. Members of any panchayatiraj institution (including MPs and MLAs) can become member of a nyaya panchayat until he resigns from such office.

CHAPTER 4

SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF RAJASTHAN

In the first half of the 19th Century the social structure of Rajasthan was a blend of both feudal and conservative, based upon caste and privileges. It could be compared to a pyramid in appearance. The rulers of the states and their feudal chiefs were at the top of the social edifice and they were considered to be kingly in their respective areas. The traditional pattern relating to the professions to be followed by the four varnas - the Brahmans, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Sudra - was not strictly adhered to during the period under review. Each varna was divided into several sub-castes or sub-sections whose positions in the social hierarchy were to be determined in order of precedence, superior or inferior, based on occupations they had chosen.¹

The Brahmans were not only confined to their normal priestly functions of learning and teaching but they were also engaged in agriculture, cattle rearing, trade, diplomatic assignments and military services. The same

1. G.N.Sharma, Social life in Medieval Rajasthan.Laxmi Narayan Aggarwal :Agra,1965,p.78

was the case with the Rajputs who in the 19th centuries with the change of circumstances, where the state armies constituted of a heterogeneous people like Sindhis, Rohilas, Afghans, Pathans and persons of even non-militant sections of the society, were compelled to choose agriculture, cattle rearing and other vocations suiting to their temperament for their livelihood.²

Next to these so called upper classes there was the agriculturist class which comprised Jats, Bisnois, Malis, Kurmis, Kalbis, Firs, Pilhils, Dhakads etc. In social hierarchy their position was just equivalent to the artisans of higher category.³ The artisans like Sonars (Goldsmiths), Darjis (Tailors), Khatis (Carpenters), Silawats (Stone Masons), Mochis (Shoe makers), Dhobis (Washerma Churigars (makers of ivory bangles and toys), Lohars (Blacksmiths), Dholis (Drum beaters), Julahas (Weavers) Kalais (sellers of wine) etc. enjoyed a lower status in the society.⁴

The aboriginal tribes like Meenas, Bhils and Mers played an important role in ^{the} history of Rajasthan. Meenas

2. R.P. Vyas, 'Social change in Rajasthan from the middle of 19th century to the middle of the 20th century' in Some aspects socio-Economic History of Rajasthan (ed.) Ghanshya Lal Devra. Rajasthan Sahitya Mandir Jodhpur, 1980 pp. 130

3. G.N. Sharma op.cit. p.97

4. C.M. Walter, Gazetteer of Marwar and Malani, p.24

were found in the hilly regions of Kota, Bundi, Sirohi, Jahazpur and Jaipur. Bhils lived in large numbers at the variegated patches of Mewar, Dungarpur, Pratapgarh, Sirohi and Banswara.⁵ Mers were the inhabitants of the hilly tracts known as Marwara. They could hardly be included in a social order existed in Rajasthan.⁶

A class of hereditary domestic servants, known as Darogas, Chakars and Golas was also found. They were at the disposal of their masters and the latter could give their daughters in dowery as well.⁷ This type of slavery was a slur on the society till the second decade of the 20th century. Due to a general awakening before the pressure from the British government and the League of Nations which prohibited traffic in slave trade and slavery, the Rajput nobility had to succumb and the Darogas became freemen.

The Muslim population of the region like Hindus had also adopted same kind of social hierarchy. At the apex of the social order were the Qazis, the Sayyads and the men of piety and religious devotion. Among the converts in status the Muslims who adopted military service as their profession were paid respect by the

5. Sherring: Hindu Tribes and Castes; vol. 111, pp. 78-79

6. B. N. Dhoundiyal, Raj District Gazetteers, Ajmer pp. 131-137

7. Marwar Gazette Vol. 51. No. 1. dated Dec. 16, 1916, p. 70

people and graded just below the theologians. The Muslim masses generally composed of artisans like blacksmiths, stone cutters, tinkers etc., occupied the same status in the social order of the Muslim community as the Hindu artisans in the Hindu Society.⁸

(1) JATI-PANCHAYATAS

Indubitably the organisation of Jati-Panchayatas was based on caste system. The membership of the caste Panchayat is based on the birth in a particular caste. There were separate Jati-Panchayatas for different castes in villages, for instance, MOCHIYOH-RI-PANCHAYATA (Cobbler's Panchayata), DARJIYON-RI-PANCHAYATA (Tailors' Panchayata) MONIYON-RI-PANCHAYATA (Goldsmiths' Panchayata) and so on.⁹ These Jati-panchayatas were also known as NYATS. The members of these Panchayatas were known as Panchas of the caste accordingly, i.e., Darjiyon-ra-Pancha (Tailors' Pancha), Maliyon-ra-Pancha (Gardeners' Pancha), Bamnon-ra.Pancha (Brahmins' Pancha) and so on.¹⁰ Panchas

8. G.N. Sharma op.cit. p.103

9. See Sanañd Parwana Bahi (Marwar) VS 1823, No.5 p.236, (Ibid V.S.1830 No.13 pp.136. Bahi Peshkashiare-Lekhe-ri (Bikaner V.S.1839 No.6 pp.19, Ibid, pp.36-37 Ibid.V.S. 1840, No.7pp.

10. Kagdon-Ki-Bahi (Bikaner) V.S. 1839 No.6 pp.36-37 Also see G.S.L. Deogra op.cit.

for a Jati Panchayata were elected or appointed out of the members of caste to which that Panchayata belonged because they were well acquainted with the traditions, values, beliefs, customs and norms of a particular caste which facilitated them to impart impartial justice.

In India most indigenous local consultative bodies has had a caste origin. There were 'intra caste', 'inter caste' and 'regional caste' Panchayatas to hear cases and to deal with the disputes of fellow caste member of different caste and people - involved from different villages respectively. Panchayatas have existed as effective administrative and judicial institutions in the local administration of the Medieval Rajputana.¹¹

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11. Many historians have proved the existence of Panchayat: as an important unit of local administration in contemporary Rajputana. For details see James Tod: Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan Vol.II pp.114 Delhi, Jagdish Narain Sarkar. A study of Eighteenth Century India, Vol.I pp.163-164, 1976, Calcutta G.N. Sharma: Rajasthan Ka Itihas, Vol.I pp.634-638, 1978, Agra

The existence of Panchayats can be visualized in the tradition of social and administrative institutions called as the 'PANCHKOOLS' in the premedieval Rajputana.¹² Panchayats in the medieval Rajputana were of three types, viz. (i) Gaon Panchayats (Panchayats of Villages), Jati Panchayats (Panchayats of Caste), Vyavsayic Panchayats (Panchayats of the Traders and Brokers).¹³ As a social body Jati Panchayats played a crucial role. The caste Panchayats have been a well known and indispensable institutions of power in the villages all over India. They played a significant role in preserving the caste system against the onslaught of hostile forces.¹⁴ In course of the extension of the British system of judiciary and the infeudation of the rural polity, the caste panchayats lost most of their original complexion. Researches have revealed that

12. G.N. Sharma, op.cit. p.636

13. For detail see G.S.L. Deora, Panchayat System and its Arch. Sources in Rajasthan (1700-1800 A.D.)

14. Yogendra Singh (1969) op.cit., p.716

each village had separate Jati-Panchayatas for different castes,¹⁵ but in villages inhabited by members of a single caste, Jati-Panchayatas functioned as 'Gaon Panchayats'. During the medieval period Jati Panchayats played a significant role in safeguarding social traditions, cultural values, custom, rituals, maintaining discipline within their own caste and finally the settlement of social disputes in their spheres.

(2) APPOINTMENT AND SELECTION OF JATI PANCHAS

In Rajasthan three methods existed for the appointment of Jati Panchas, viz; (1) hereditary or patronymic basis, (2) election by the caste people and (3) appointment by the State.¹⁶ The person to be appointed as a Jati Pancha was required to have a good reputation among his caste fellow and was expected to adjudge the disputes in accordance with the traditions and customs of that caste.

15. G.N. Sharma, op.cit. pp.643

16. Rulers appointed those panchas who were already working as recognised panchas of the caste.

The appointment of Jati-Panchas also depended upon the type of dispute. For example, in disputes related to a particular caste of a village the residents of that very village belonging to that cast only would be employed. But in many complicated cases residents of other villages were called upon to act as panchas, but they should belong to the same caste.

The appointment of Jati-Panchas was further effected by the region which was influenced by the problem. For example, in disputes pertaining to the members of a caste of two different villages, Jati-Panchas from a third village were generally appointed.¹⁸ The organisation of these power personnel transcended the village boundaries and consisted of ten to twenty villages. The area of power was confined to : (1) safeguarding the commensal and connubial rules of the caste, (2) punishing any gross moral, social and economic deviation of the members of caste, and (3) resisting against any threat extended towards the prestige security

17. Kagdon-ki-Bahi (Bikaner), V.S. 1839, No.6 pp.36 Ibid V.S. 1840 No. 7 pp.27 Ibid V.S. 1857 No. 11, pp.196

18. Sanand Parwana Bahi (Marwar) VS 1823 No. 5 pp.236 p.257 Kagdon-ki-Bahi (Bikaner) VS 1840 No. 7 p.18

and vital interests of the caste by external enemy castes or groups.

Generally the meetings of Jati-Panchayatas used to convene for two reasons: (1) if a complaint was lodged accusing the caste members against violation and slackness in observance of caste traditions and customs and (2) if a social dispute was raised in a complaint made directly to the Darbar.

Besides the above reasons, the meeting of a Jati-Panchayatas could be summoned with the objective of making unavoidable amendments and additions in the customs of that particular caste. In case a person was not satisfied with the verdict of the panchas, he/she could protest it to the 'Darbar' and make an appeal against the judgement. Available sources indicate that it was customary that Darbar referred the case, again to the Jati-Panchayat for disposal.¹⁹

19. Sanand Parwana Bahi (Marwar) VS, 122 No. 3 pp.90
Ibid. VS, 1828 No. pp 261, Ibid, VS 1830, No. 13 p. 40

Almost all social problems and disputes were under the jurisdiction of Jati Panchayatas. Broadly speaking, the matters related to engagement, marriage, re-marriage,²⁰ adoption, division of ancestral property and subsistent of forsaken women were placed before Jati Panchayats.

On the eve of the abolition of feudalism, the village had very weak and loose panchayat organisation. During the phase of the abolition of landlordism and introduction of the new elected panchayat system, that aspect of caste panchayats is highly active which is related to the preservation of prestige and security and vital interests of the caste from external enemy

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29. Three types of remarriage could be revealed from the available sources which were cause of disputes. These are (1) Nata means making a marriage like social contact with a woman of one's own caste who is a widow or a lady already deserted by her husband. Disputes in this regard comes out only on the question of money involved in it. (2) Palle-Legai means present a 'Saree' or an 'Odhani' to a beloved by a man with the due support of the members of his family and ceremony is also performed on their occasion. (3) Gharmain-Ghalana means keeping a lady in one's house on one's own responsibility without the required social sanction behind it.

caste or groups. It has resulted into the formation of strong caste factions and the process of horizontal mobility in the caste organisation can easily be visualised in rural caste organisation. The caste panchayats were a secondary and ignored institution of power during the pre independence Rajasthan owing to the feudal character of state but after independence they have become a potential instruments wielding considerable power in social economic and political relations of groups in the village community. Politicians mobilize caste groupings and identities in order to organise their power. They find in it'extremely well articulated and flexible basis for organisation, something that may have been structured in terms of a status hierarchy but something that is also available for political manipulation and one that is a basis in consciousness.²¹

Jati panchayatas acted as a most powerful and significant part of Judicial and social bodies in the

21. Rajni Kothari, Caste in Indian Politics(ed). Orient Longman, New Delhi 1986 p.5 Also see by the same author politics in India Orient Longmen. New Delhi 1986 224-45.

local administration. The state acknowledged the autonomy of this institution in enabling different castes to safeguard their traditions, customs, beliefs, rituals norms and values and did not interfere in matters related to any kind of social disputes by adopting a sympathetic and respectful attitude towards the decisions of Jati-Panchayatas.

After independence changes in the structure and functioning of caste has occurred and caste has adapted itself in such a manner that it can exercise the power of its numerical strength to gain some benefit for its members.

(2) VILLAGE PANCHAYAT

The village Panchayat was a broad based structure of power rather a federation representing all rural sub-structure of power i.e. the caste panchayat. Sir Charles Metcalfe referred to village Panchayat as the 'little republics'. Theoretically speaking it occupied a very powerful and supreme status in the structure of rural power. Metcalfe had supported them :

"The village communities are little republics having nearly everything they can want within themselves and

almost independent on 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".²²

Moreover,.....'Village Panchayatas paved the way to the acceptance of some form of decentralisation and had stressed the importance of this in continuing the Indian tradition and in providing for a sound basis for the life of the nation.²³

22. Report of Select Committee of House of Commons, 1832
quoted in Report of the Congress Village Panchayat
Committee, New Delhi. 1954

23. Henry Maddick; op.cit.p.25

The village Panchayat generally remained dormant in the structure of rural polity and used to take 'Manifest structural form' when the prestige or security of the village as a whole was in danger. The main functions of the village Panchayat are as follows: (1) the preservation and maintenance of general law and order in the village. Maddick aptly writes, '...the village panchayat provided some form of order in the village life and where the panchayats were not supplanted by the landlord or his agent, they did provide in their public meetings a medium through which people could participate as passive listenersthey (village panchayat) were concerned with the simplest aspects of living within a small space.'²⁴ (2) hearing appeals against caste panchayats (3) to provide the village people an opportunity to run their administration and (4) to provide the village people an opportunity to discuss their problems.

In their modern forms the village panchayats began to be established in Rajasthan as late as 1925. In the same year Maharaja Kisan Singh of Bharatpur passed the 'Bharatpur state panchayat Act' and Maharao Umed Singh of Kota passed the Kota State Panchayat Regulation (1925)

Of these the latter regulation alone was enforced. In 1928 the (Bikaner State Village Panchayat Act) and the 'Banswara State Panchayat Act' were enacted of which the former was put into force. In 1937 the Government of India in the wake of provincial autonomy brought some pressure on the rulers to set up some sort of democratic institutions. The directives had its stimulating effect and the rulers of a few states of Rajasthan enacted legislations concerning Panchayat and local self governing institutions e.g. 'Jaipur Panchayat Act' (1937), 'Marwar Panchayat Act' (1938), 'Kisangarh Village Panchayat Rule' (1938), 'Mewar Village Panchayat Act' (1938), 'Bundi State Village Panchayat Act' (1939), 'Partbgarh Act' (1939), 'Tonk State Panchayat Rules' (1939), 'Shahpura State Village Panchayat Act' (1939), and Sirohi State Panchayat Act (1941)

Later on those legislations were amended in the light of experience and then new Panchayat Acts were passed in the states of Udaipur, Jodhpur, Jaipur and Shahpura in the years that followed. In 1946 the State of Jhalawar and in 1947 the State of Bansware enacted legislations for the establishment of Panchayats in their respective

25. For detail see R.S. Darda from Feudalism to Democracy, S.Chand & Co. N. Delhi. 1971, Chapter 9

states. In 1947 there existed a Panchayat legislations in the states of Banswara, Bharatpur, Bikaner, Bundi, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Jhalawar, Karauli, Kishangarh, Kota Partbgarh, Shahpura, Sirohi, Udaipur and Tonk. The States of Alwar, Dholpur, Dungarpur, Jaisalmer, Kushalgarh and Lawa were without any Panchayat legislations. In 1948 the popular government of the Union of Rajasthan (Udaipur) passed the promulgated the 'Panchayat Raj Ordinance.'

(3) JAGIRDARS

Prior to the abolition of landlordism, the power structure of the villages in Rajasthan was founded upon Jagirdari system on the one hand which represented the 'material and economic interest or expectation system of the community, and the village Panchayats and caste panchayats on the other which symbolized the basic social dimensions of the rural polity.'²⁶ The significance of jagirdari system in the power structure of village community could be perceived from the fact that it itself

26. Y. Singh (1969) op.cit.p.712

grew into a power institution and influenced the selection of leadership. It also intervened in the caste and cad community panchayats in the villages.

The jagirdars/Thikanedars(princes)/landlords were such persons who commanded the high status by virtue of possessions of large pieces of land which was a basic source of power in the villages. Besides that they also owned the village habitation site—the village grove, pasture land and village ponds.

The economic superiority in the form of large pieces of cultivable land in the hands of jagirdars had given shape to a regular power structure in the villages. They were the 'law in the villages' for all kinds of practical purposes beyond the caste councils. The landlords maintained their own courts and records room and dealt with offenders with the help of their dependent followers. The jagirdars exercised their influence and jurisdiction in the following spheres:

1) collection of house tax, 2) collection of rent, 3) to hear appeals against the caste panchayat of their tenants belonging to different castes, 4) distribution of pasture land on occasion of birth, marriage and, at certain

festivals like 'Teej' and 'Gangaur'.

Thus zamindari/jagirdari²⁷ system the village panchayat and the caste system are the three basic institutional determinants of the power system of village communities before the abolition of zamindari by law. The villagers usually had to refer to the jagirdar or the Thikanedar and the village panchayat (council of elders, jagirdars and a few elders from other castes generally high castes) in the matters related to economic and political aspects, and to their caste leader in case of any problem related to social, cultural and rituals of their caste. The jagirdari system, village panchayats and caste panchayat as the three distinct levels of the power structure were not completely independent or insulated from each other. Instead there existed functional interdependence, a state of relative dependence, adjustment and symbiosis. Moreover, these three institutions of power structure were cutting across each other.

(4) RURAL ELITE : A SOCIAL PROFILE

A study of the rural elite is basically an enquiry into the cultural orientation and structural determinants

27. With some peripheral & superficial changes the power of jagirdaris was transferred to them under the name of 'Zamindari System'.

of power processes in society. We will delineate the profile of the socio-economic status of these elites on the basis of available secondary sources.

(1) AGE

Though the minimum age laid down for the membership of Vidhan Sabha is 25 years but the forthcoming analysis of the age structure of members of legislative assemblies indicates a great discrepancies.

In rural society age is an important factor in acquiring elitist position.²⁸ The analysis of the graph no.1²⁹ indicates that the percentage of legislative elite in the age group 25-35 has decreased from 38 to 15 per cent whereas it has increased from 24 to 42 per cent for the age group 40-60 since first Vidhan Sabha election.

It indicates peoples' perception of maturity as

28. It is difficult to extrapolate the trend from the available sources about the age of MLAs whether the people are inclined to elect elder age group or younger because it depends upon numerous factors like region, educational background, the personal attributes, etc. of the leader.

29. Sources:(1) CM Jain, State Legislature in India, S.Chand & Company: New Delhi, 1972.

2) R.Sisson, The Congress Party in Rajasthan, University of California Press: Berkeley. 1972

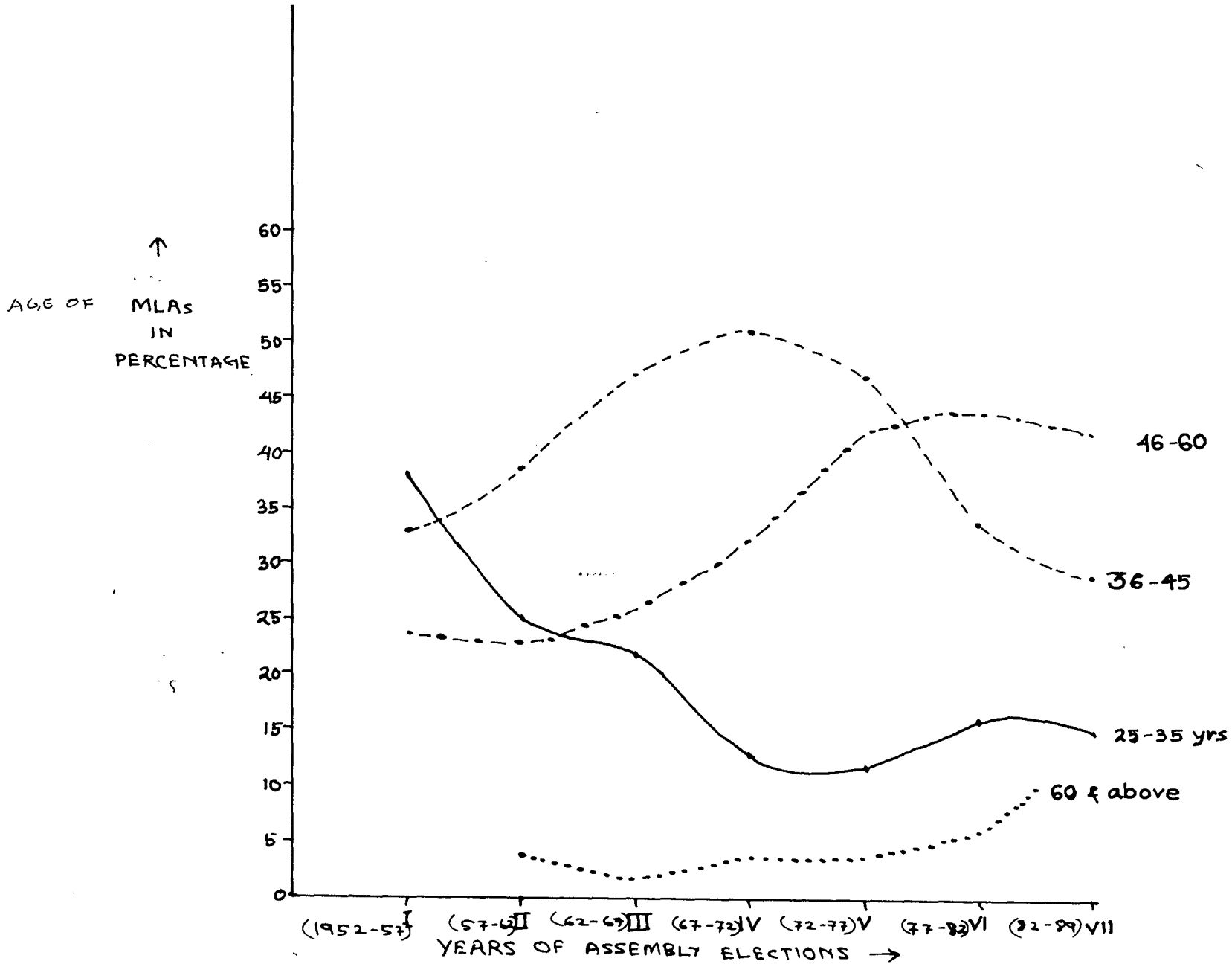
3) R.Sisson & R.L. Shrader, Legialative Government and Political linkage in an Indian State. University of California Berkeley. 1972.

4) Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha Ke Bees Varsha (1952-72)Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha Sachivalaya: Rajya Kendriya Mundralaya. Jaipur 1972.

5) Chaturth Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha (1967) Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha Sachivalaya;Rajya Kendriya Mundralaya Jaipur 1972

6) Pancham Rajasthan Vidhana Sabha (1972), Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha Sachivalaya, Rajya Kendriya Mundralaya Jaipur.1977

7) Shastha Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha (1977),Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha Sachivalaya. Rajya Kendriya Mundralaya Jaipur 1980.



GRAPH NO. 1

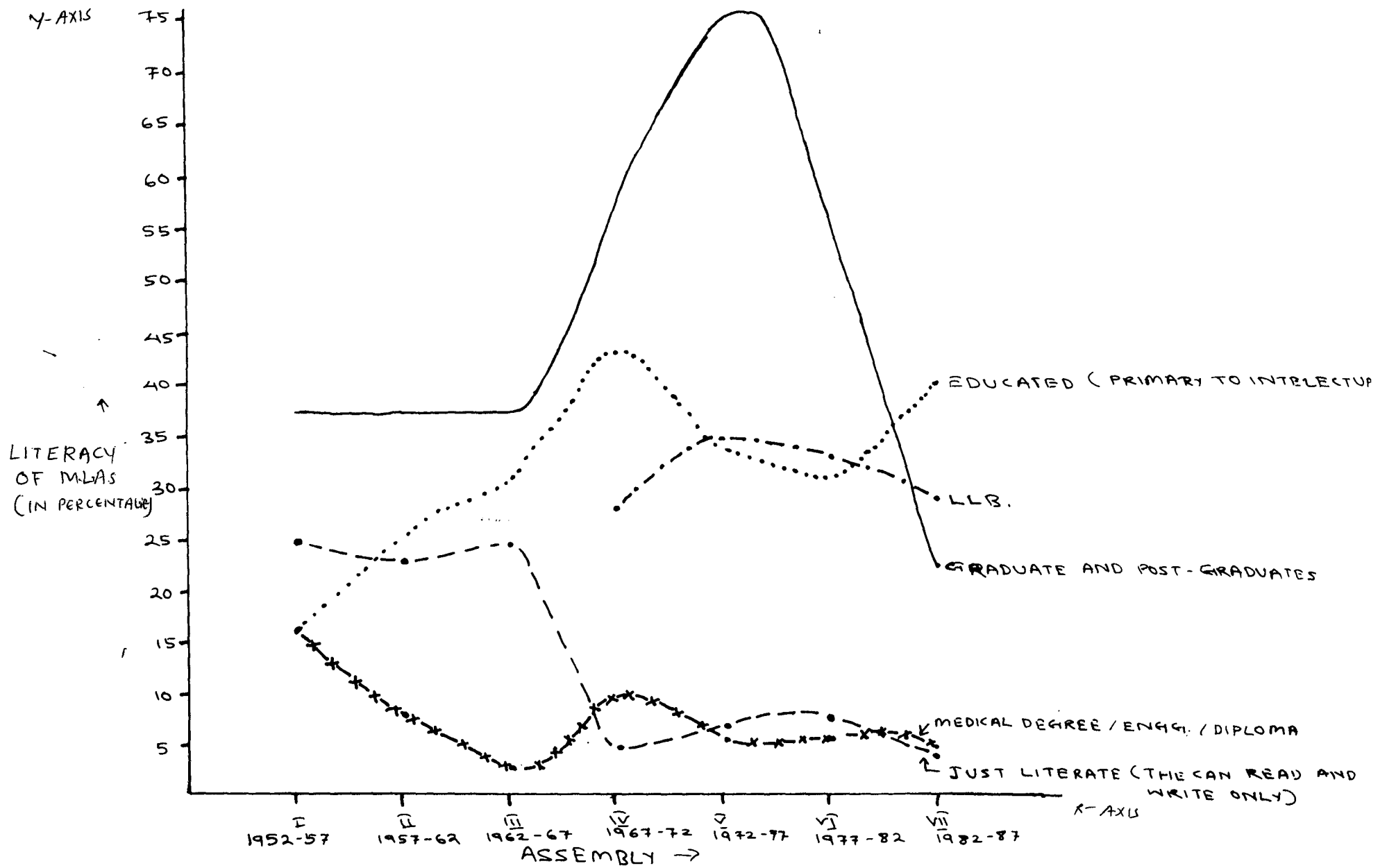
THE GRAPH SHOWING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PERCENTAGE OF MLAs, THEIR AGE AND THE GENERAL ELECTIONS TO RAJSTHAN STATE ASSEMBLY

an important aspect for selection of elites which reflects the importance given to age while selecting the leaders from the rural community. MV Mathur³⁰ & others study also indicate a tendency to select younger people belonging to age group of 30-40 & 40-50 years. But a constant decrease in selection of legislative elite from the age group 25-30 has been observed simultaneously. There is an increase in legislative elites falling under the category of 60 and above years after vth assembly election.

(ii) EDUCATION

Education is an important instrument of attaining a substantial political career. This is because the incumbent play the role of elite which acts as the guiding force behind all kinds of development, innovations, political activities and in decision making related to issues and events of both national and regional importance. The educated elite can play his role far better than the illiterate. In fact comparatively, a high level of literacy ensures an elite position. Nevertheless, education is

30. MV. Mathur (et. al.)op.cit., p. 29.



GRAPH NO. 2. EDUCATIONAL STANDARD OF LEGISLATURE ELITE IN RAJSTHAN

not the sole determinant of elite position. It works efficiently with other factors such as caste occupational status and like. The findings of TK. Oommen³¹, Iqbal Narain³² and RC Swarankar³³ supports this view.

The graph NO. 2 indicate that after vth general election of state assembly voters did not east their vote in favour of illiterate leaders. Their percentage has gone down from 25 (1952) to 4(1980). Similarly, the number of professional /doctors,engineers & diploma holders have also decreased considerably. It reveals that these professional are obsessed with their profession and do not find time to engage in political activities. The graph no.2 also indicates a steep decline in the graduate and post graduate elite. On the other hand there is a gradual increase in the legislative elite who are educated upto intermediate level.

The shift in the selection of elites from non literate to literate indicates the growing consciousness

31. TK Omen, "Rural Community Power Structure in India"
Social Forces" 1979, 49 (2) 226-239

32. Iqbal Narain op,cit.pp.28-31

33. R.C.Swarankar, "Political Elite" Rawat Publication
Jaipur 1988

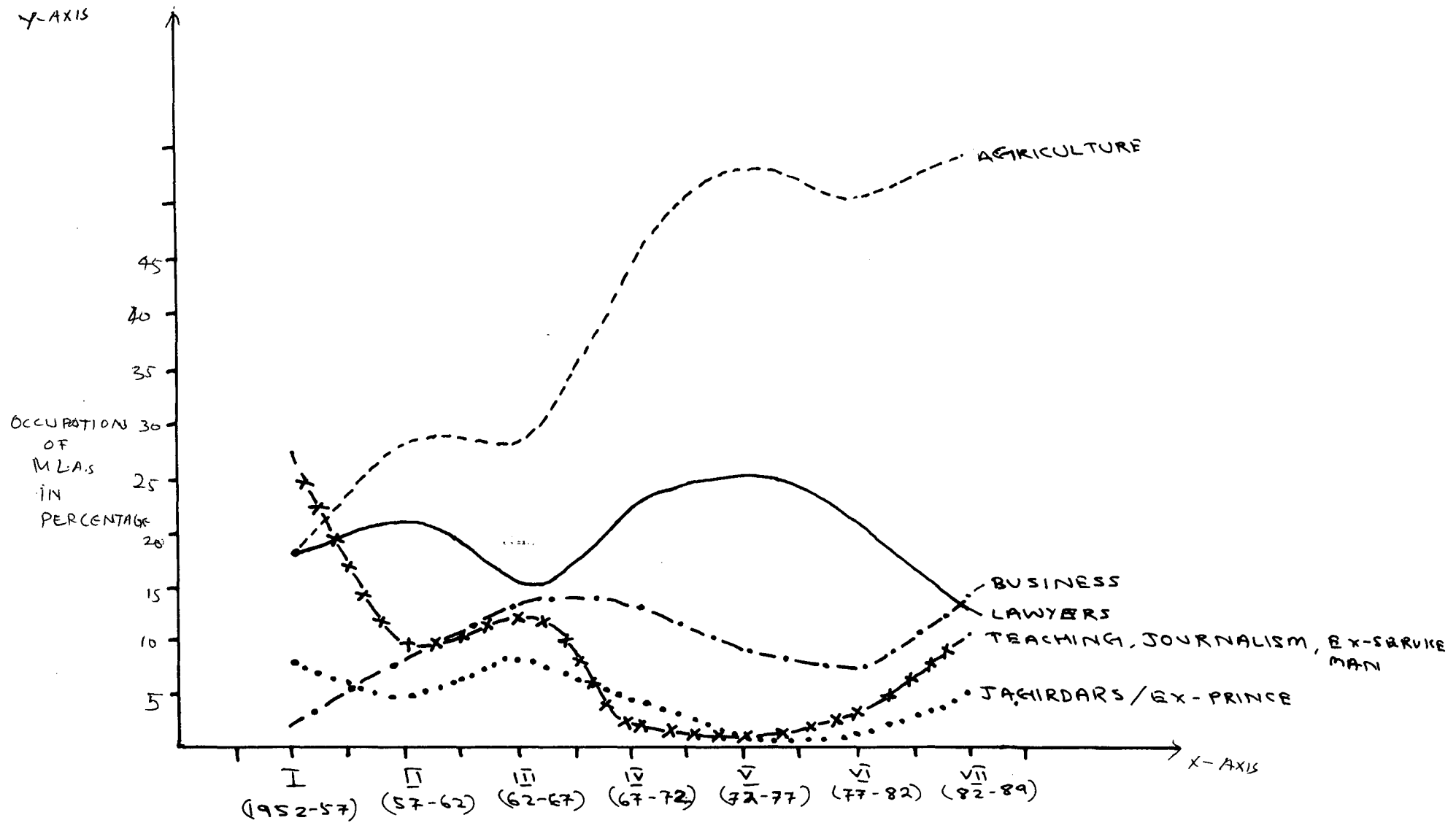
of the rural masses towards the importance of education in the policy and decision making. Furthermore, it confirms the notion of 'dominant individual' rather than the conception of 'dominant caste' dominating in the community power structure.

(iii) ECONOMIC CONDITION

The economic factors plays crucial role in determining leadership position. Elites generally come from the upper strata of society supplemented by a substantial number from middle group. The graph no.3 shows an increase in considerable number of elites with agricultural background. They have increased from 18% in 1952 to 54% in 1980. It corroborates the thesis that the peasant caste is acquiring the leadership position.

On the other hand we find that ex-princes have not participated in the democratic process upto 3 decades. The new generation of ex-princes have realized the importance of power after VI assembly election.

The number of legislative elites engaged in the legal profession has also declined from a maximum of



GRAPH NO. 3 . RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ECONOMY , %00 MLAS ENGAGED IN DIFFERENT SECTORS , GENERAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS .

25% in V general election to 13% in VIIth general election.

(iv) CASTE STRUCTURE

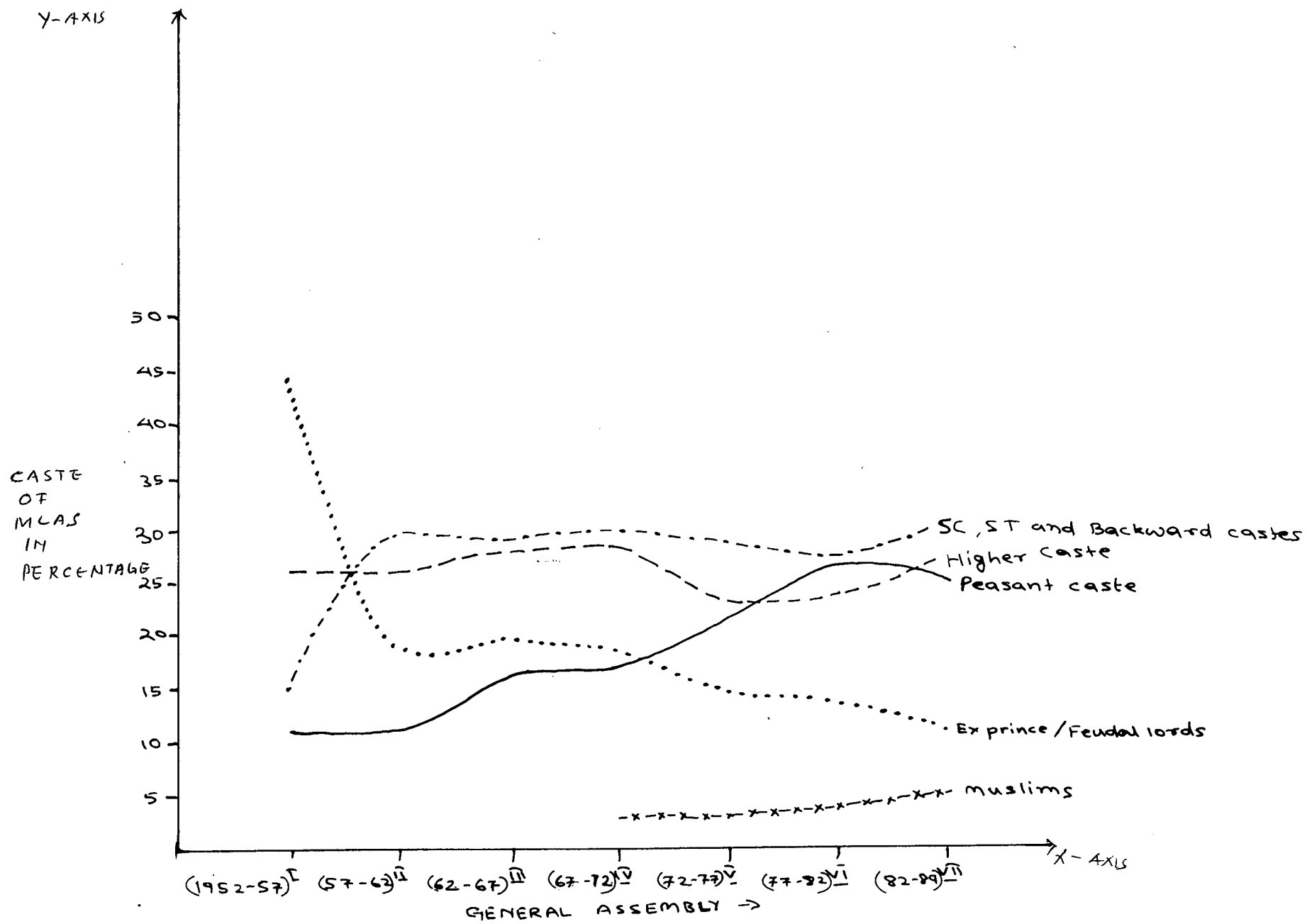
It is virtually impossible to speak of politics not only in Rajasthan but in any Indian state without meaningfully incorporating the element of caste in it. 'Caste is the most important determinant in patterns of political life'³⁴ Rajni Kothari observes very aptly, "Politicians mobilise caste groupings and identifies in order to organise their power. They find in it extremely well articulated and flexible basis for organisation, .. and political manipulation."³⁵

The graph no, 4 indicates that the percentage of MLAs of feudal Rajput aristocrat declined from 44 in the first assembly to 11 in the VIIth assembly whereas the percentage of peasant castes has increased to 25%. It indicates that in Rajasthan³⁶ the middle castes are assuming leadership position but they have not pushed the upper castes in the background- a trend which has

34. M.N.Srinivasan, Caste in India and other Essays. Asia Publishing House. Bombay 1962 pp.36-37 Also see Andre Beteille: Caste Class and Power: Changing patterns Stratification in a Tanjore Village, University of California press 1971.

35. Rajni Kothari: 'Caste in Indian Politics' Orient Longmen Ltd. New Delhi 1986 p.5

36. M.V.Mathur (et.al.) op.cit.also found the emergence of middle castes (Jat, Gujar) in the leadership position pp.27-29.



GRAPH NO.4. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CASTE, % OF MLAS FROM THE CASTE AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

been identified in the states of Tamilnadu and Maharashtra.³⁷ Iqbal Narain findings also corroborate the findings of Andre Beteille and Sirsikar. He finds that 'upper castes constitute 56.3% of elites while the strength of the upper caste is 16% within the elite group.³⁸

The graph no.3 shows that a steep downfall of ex-princes/feudal lords from 44% in first assembly election to 11% in VIIth Vidhan Sabha election. On the other there is continuous gradual increase in the number of legislative elites from middle castes/peasant caste (Jat, Gujar, Yadava). Their number has increased from 15% in Ist assembly election to 31% in VIIth general elections of Vidhan Sabha members. They have replaced the Rajput aristocracy which wielded power during the pre-independence days and in the first decade of just after the independence. It highlights the dominance of one of the attributes of dominant caste, vis, numerical strength, just after the independence

37. V.M.Sirsikar, op.cit. (See chapter Ist)

38. Iqbal Narain (et.al.) op.cit.p.26

in the democratic framework of Indian polity. After independence zamindari was abolished; feudal lords were paralysed by the laws related to the share of produce by tenants. This placed peasant caste in a good economic position which enabled them with superior numerical position to acquire leadership position in a democratic polity. This suggests that the dominance of a caste in the political structure also depends upon the nature of political set up. Although 'peasant caste' was numerically superior than the Rajput aristocracy before independence yet they could not wield power. Moreover there are ample evidences of middle caste persons participating ⁱⁿ various movements related to the excessive atrocities and exploitation by the Rajput princes of many regions. These middle caste persons acquired the position of leadership. It indicates that a person who is not a member of dominant caste may achieve leadership and can become powerful because of his individual merits or because he possesses certain personality traits.³⁹

39. Andre Beteilla (1966) op.cit.p.144. It is difficult to accept caste as the exclusive criteria of determining elite position. This is illustrated by Rajni Kothari(ed) Caste in Indian Politics.Orient Longman ltd.New Delhi 1970 (see particularly Kothari's introduction pp.3-25).

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as a consequence of this polity of reservation of seats, have emerged to the leadership position. They were absolutely denied of weilding any kind of power in British India. Besides that the graph shows the emergence of muslim elites and their constant participation since fourth general election. It reflects the development of feeling of security among Muslims due to the considerable increase in their numerical strength.

EPILOGUE

The study of community power structure at village level before the abolition of landlordism reveals that the control of economic resources, and its centralisation in the hands of certain class as remained by far the most important source of power. Thus, the economic system of Zamindari, in course of time, effected a metamorphosis in the social system as well as power system of villages. The village panchayat remained under the control of landlords and 'Thikanedars' which restricted its emergence and development as an effective instrument of power. However, caste panchayats wielded a considerable amount of power within the periphery of caste and could not transcend this periphery due to the excessive subjugation in the hands of landlords. A structured pattern of leadership revolved around the 'Thikanedars' and landlords on the one hand and caste on the other hand. It resulted into substantial blockage of vertical mobility of power position on the basis of caste status on the one hand and economic status on the other. Hence, the circulation of leaders and their selection was relatively closed.

After the independence, the introduction of adult franchise, the end of the princely states, the formation of the state of Rajasthan from Rajputana, the abolition of Jagirdari, Jamindari system, the introduction of agrarian reforms, the establishment of the district administration on the foot-steps of the British-Provinces of the pre-independence India, the re-organisation of local self government and the launching of the new system of the Panchayati Raj through Democratic Decentralisation scheme, the rapid means of transportation and communication and the spread of education on all levels had a cumulative and powerful effect on the social set up of rural Rajasthan. The combination of these factors together, helped immensely in accelerating the process of dissolution of the traditional feudal social structure and its replacement by an egalitarian society in Rajasthan.

The important trends of change in the elite structure which appeared during the post-independence period are : (1) increasing influence of rural-based political elites and decrease in the influence of the elites drawn

from various professions;

(2) greater differentiation in the elite structure with significant increase in the number of persons belonging to the middle classes;

(3) greater articulation of regional and interest-group oriented goals in political and cultural ideologies

(4) breakdown in the exclusiveness of landlords/princes and upper castes to the elite position;

(5) emergence of political leaders amongst the bottom rung of the society; viz, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes through the constitutional provisions;

(6) gradual increase in the number of muslim elites;

(7) active participation of women in decision making

(8) emergence of elites irrespective of any caste or ethnic background who attached themselves to a 'status-quoist' ideology;

(9) the ascribed attributes like, caste, kinship, lineage, the role of personality of an individual is dominant in rural areas;

(10) power wielding groups are drawn amongst those

who derive their source of legitimacy from tradition
have established their reputation for certain personality
attributes and finally;

(11) who occupy positions in organisations related
to developmental activities in rural areas.

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