| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Political Socialisation and Capacity Building through Decentralisation Rural Local Leadership

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| ABSTRACT

After attaining Independence in 1947, a committee headed by Balvantrai Mehta studied the problems of local government, like the absence of people's participation, and suggested ways and means for improving the execution of 'Community Development Programme' (CDP) and 'National Extension Service' (NES) scheme, launched on 1952 and 1953 respectively, in a phased manner. The partial success of both CDP and NES led to the formation of a three-tier arrangement, which is the process of democratic decentralization. The political socialization process is through every human being learning the essentials of socio-political life science he or she comes into the world. The behavioral movement has sensitized scholars in comparative politics to shift their research area from the static aspects of structural, legal, and historical analysis of the rural local governments to the dynamic aspect of the functions of these institutions. This area has received impetus, especially from scholars who have been oriented toward the methodology of functionalists. India is acknowledged for its local administration through the ages. The present local government structure has its roots in Lord Mayo's strategy of decentralization of 1870, followed by Lord Ripon's enunciation of local government in 1884, which had heralded a new trend of bringing people to the centre-stage in managing their own affairs. Mahatma Gandhi said that "the centre of power is not in Delhi or Calcutta or Bombay or in big cities; it should be distributed among the seven hundred thousand villages of India." The significance of local government in India has considerably increased in the post-independent India. There is a paucity of research work on political socialization aspects of the rural local body leaders at the national and international levels. This research work would add to the multidisciplinary research literature relevant to Politics and Public Administration, Social Work, Sociology, Rural Development, Economics, etc. The present research paper examines the political socialization aspects of the rural local body leaders from Cuddalore district, Tamil Nadu, India.

| KEYWORDS

Administration, Culture, Centre, Decentralization, Historical, Local Governments, Legal, Political Socialization, Structure, Policies.

1. Introduction

After attaining Independence in 1947, a committee headed by Balvantrai Mehta studied the problems of local government, like the absence of people's participation, and suggested ways and means for improving the execution of 'Community Development Programme' (CDP) and 'National Extension Service' (NES) scheme, launched on 1952 and 1953 respectively, in a phased manner. The partial success of both CDP and NES led to the formation of a three-tier arrangement as the process of democratic decentralization.(Bada, C.R., Bhargava, B.S. 1979), Which later became known as 'Panchayati Raj Institutions' (PRIs). This mechanism was recommended by the Balvantrai Mehta Committee, and both the central and state governments have enacted a number of legislations to give more momentum to local government, especially Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) over time. However, a constitutional status was accorded to them after a prolonged struggle. Although many States have not shown interest in establishing local self-government institutions, the States were forced to accept the PR as it has the backing of the Constitutional 73rd Amendment Act in 1992 (Harjinder Singh, 1968). This amendment fulfills the long-felt demand for the rejuvenation of the

rural local bodies to have a meaningful mechanism at the grassroots. In other words, it gives a Constitutional mandate to the three-tiered PR system in India (Airan, J. W. 1975, Baker, Donald G. 1971, Bhargava, B.S. 1979, Kothari, Rajni, 1970),

The aspire of this amendment includes (1) conducting usual and appropriate elections at all levels Panchayati Raj institutions through the State Election Commission (SEC) once in five years; (2) empowering downtrodden community of the society, i.e., Schedule Caste (SC) Schedule Tribe (ST), Backward classes and women leaders Local self- government through reservations in elective offices; (3) intensification the Gram Sabha for direct participation of the people in identifying their felt needs and fulfilling the same through PRIs; (4) providing a mechanism State Finance Commission (SFC) to ensure flow of funds to rural local governments to facilitate them to emancipation their functions and duties; and (5) ensuring devolution of powers as mention in the XIth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. In sum, the main objectives of the PR system include (i) promotion of people's participation in local governance activities; (ii) ensuring representation of weaker sections, especially the SC, ST, BC, minorities, and women in the Panchayats at all levels; (iii) achieving rapid rural development and removing interpersonal and regional imbalances, etc. Thus, in fact, the Constitution's 73rd Amendment has become a milestone in the Constitutional History of India (T.N. Dhar& S. R. Gupta, 1995 Guru, S.P. (1991)). To give effect to the Constitution's 73rd Amendment Act, the government of Tamil Nadu has enacted a new Panchayat Raj Act, known as the Tamil Nadu Panchayati Act, 1994. Tamil Nadu is one of the states in the Country which had rich experience in establishing the PRI's since 1959. As per the Constitution's 73rd Amendment, TN has not only introduced the three-tiered system but also conducted elections for these bodies. (Almond Gabriel A. and Verba Sidney. 1963, Fleishman E. A. 1955),

2. Review of Literature:
Suresh and Krishnamurthy (2011) analyzed the functions of the new panchayat raj system established through the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. He emphasized achieving economic development and social justice by performing and planning the exercise at the grassroots level with the active participation of the stakeholders.

Suresh and Krishnamurthy (2012) have examined rural transformation after the introduction of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. This law has increased awareness among the common man about socio-economic and political aspects relevant to rural communities. It has also strengthened the relationship between state government and stakeholders in rural areas.

Suresh Mishra and Rajvir. Dhaka. (2004), in their research study, evaluated the role of Panchayat Raj Institutions in democratizing the decision-making process at the local level and mobilizing the people for social and economic development. The study also provides an overview of the genesis of the Panchayat Raj system in the country and in the state of Haryana, the electoral process, the emerging pattern of leadership, capacity, and capability of Panchayati Raj institutions in implementing poverty alleviation programmes besides suggesting measures to enable Panchayats to emerge as true institutions of democratic decentralization.

Malik (2005) evaluated the status of the 73rd Amendment Act and the status of the state finance commission in India. The author critically examines the implications of the provisions of this new legislation. He also notes that the empowerment of weaker sections and women will enable the people at the grassroots level to enter politics and participate in the process of self-government.

Analysis of the literature reveals that there is a scarcity of research work on political socialization aspects of the rural local body leaders at the international and national levels. Research has taken this research work based on the identified research gap.

Objectives of the research study. This research study aims to understand about political socialization aspects of rural local government respondents. The researcher has formulated the objective based on the identified research gap.

3. Research Methodology:
The research design used in this research study is quantitative and cross-sectional. Quantitative research design is used as the results of the research work are documented numerically. A cross-sectional research design is used as data is collected at a single point in time.

This research study uses both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data refers to data collected for the first time and are original (Kothari, 2004). Primary data is collected through interviews with rural local government leaders in Cuddalore district, Tamil Nadu, India. Secondary data is used for literature review purposes. Secondary sources that the researcher used to undertake this research are books, journals, Government reports, and records.

Its respondents are units of analysis for research work. Respondents are village panchayat presidents in Cuddalore district, Tamil Nadu, India. The total number of village presidents in the Cuddalore district is 682, which constitutes a unit of analysis. A stratified random sampling method was used to select respondents for the research Study.

3.1 Sample size

20 percent of the universe was selected as samples by using stratified random sampling. 160 respondents constitute the sample for the research study. The interview method is used to collect data from the respondents. Self prepared questionnaire was used by the researcher to tap into their perception of themes related to political socialization and grassroots democracy.

3.2 Hypothesis

H01: There is no association between the gender of the respondents and political activities during school days.
H02: No association is found between the gender of the respondents and their views on political activities during college days.

3.3 Statistical tests used in the research study

Researcher used the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) 25th version to numerically analyze the data. Frequency and Chi-square test are used in this research work.

4. Justification of the research study:

This 32nd anniversary year of constitutionally buttressed Panchayati Raj and Nagar Palika Institutions is a re-stocking of the experience of all states, which will enable us to review and appraise the time-bound implementation of the decentralized planning process at the grassroots. Besides, providing for good governance at the grassroots through local institutions in India will be examined through the Constitution 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts to make the Panchayati Raj and Nagar Palikas any better than their pre-Constitutional phase. Will the district plan consist of only those devolved to the local bodies? What are the factors contributing to the disempowerment of Panchayati Raj and Nagar Palikas in contemporary India? Are the local governments having the full potential to prepare their plans and thereby measure up to the expectations and aspirations of the people? What reforms are necessary to promote decentralized planning more effectively to deliver goods and services at the grassroots level? Hence, the study, particularly the role of political socialization of grassroots governance and decision-making components of local government institutions as a public delivery system at the grassroots, besides exhibiting higher significance and relevance in the context of the completion of 32 years of journey of the 73rd and 74th constitutional Amendment Acts. It is necessary to appreciate the functioning of the system by scrutinizing whether the constitutionalization of PR is a progressive foot-step at the door of rural transformation. (Easton David and Dennis Jack, 1969, Harjinder Singh. 1968, Airan, J. W. 1975)

5. Significance of the research study:

There is a paucity of research work on political socialization aspects of the rural local body leaders at the national and international levels. This research work would add to the multidisciplinary research literature relevant to Politics and Public Administration, Social Work, Sociology, Rural Development, Economics, etc.

6. Socio-Economic Background of the Grassroots Leaders:

The extent to which citizens themselves participate in politics and the ways in which they do so are largely the responses to the stimuli provided by the social circumstances. These circumstances include how individuals live, the kind of social culture they are embedded in, how much and what they have, the kind of work they are engaged in, how much they earn, and the opportunities they have for improving their lives. Social circumstances affect the level of resources available for role perceptions and serve to foster or inhibit the development of attitudes and beliefs that underlie various types of role perceptions. Indicators of social circumstances include such characteristics as age, race, sex, region, education, employment, marital status, social standing, etc. (Verba Nie and Kim, 1978. Collins, B. E. and Guetzkow. H)

Differing social circumstances lead to differing life experiences of individuals. They, in turn, affect the patterns of citizens' role perceptions. Life experiences, with their resultant evaluations of the past and expectations of the future, induce individuals to varying levels of role perceptions, political judgment, and political activities (Davies, James C, 1965; Paige, G. D. 1972). Social circumstances affect the social roles and the political roles that people play. Influencing both the expectations others apply to individuals and the expectations that those individuals apply to themselves and to others are also essential factors on the part of the respondents. Again, social circumstances affect the flow of political communication with individuals in some social locations, receiving and expressing more role perceptions than others. Certainly, circumstances affect both the citizens' stakes in political outcomes and their perspectives of those stakes. Thus, individual and individual differences are important because they are not simply artifacts of larger social forces. Citizens pay heed to some aspects of social experiences, and they reinterpret others. They are attracted to some environments while they seek to avoid others. In these and other ways, individually motivated choice becomes an important element of the structural basis underlying democratic politics (Paul Eulau, Heinz, Eldersveld, Samuel J., and Jamowitz, Morris (Eds) 1956, Hess Robert D. 1963).

7. Political Socialization of Grassroots Leaders:

The present research work is an academic endeavor intended to enquire into and discern the pattern of political leadership of a sample of grassroots political leaders of the Cuddalore District of Tamilnadu. Political leadership at the District level occupies a significant place of importance in the context of the working of the Indian political system. Political leadership at the local level provides leadership to the local political system; they operate it and thus become instrumental in taking democracy to the grass-root level. Leadership refers to the act of leading others in social situations. As a central figure of society, he not only decides societal goals but also creates a congenial atmosphere for goal attainment. Since political leaders are at the helm of affairs, the people of the Cuddalore District tend to look toward them for guidance and direction. The stability and viability or instability or changes are determined by the act of leadership. Leaders may develop their authority through legitimacy. The stability and development of the political system are crucially determined by the nature and culture of the political leaders, which he learns through the process of political socialization; unless the leader develops a congruent political culture with the structural framework of the political system, the political system's stability and viability will be threatened and obstruct the development and socio-political modernization in India. Out of the three broad levels of the political system of India, i.e., National levels, the state levels, and the local levels, political leadership at the local level, especially at the District levels, seems to have special significance as it is entrusted with the task of taking democracy at the grassroots levels. Political leadership at the District levels enjoys the positions and status of the trend-setters, and they significantly influence the ideas, feelings, and behavior of the people and successfully implement the plans and programmers of socio-economic and political development. If the leadership is change-prone, dynamic, and articulates congruent with democratic culture, the constitutional goals as enshrined in the preamble of India may be translated into action (Lipset, S. M. 1960, Lindzey. C. (Ed.), 1954, Bottomore, T. B. 1964); therefore, emerging pattern of political leadership deserves careful study and analysis for appreciating the process of socio-political change and modernization in India. Because of the immense importance of the political leaders in the political process of Indian polity at the local level, especially at the district level, a micro-study has been humbly undertaken to find out and discern the emerging pattern of political leadership in the Cuddalore District of Tamilnadu.

8. Results and Discussion:

Table 1: Frequency Distribution Regarding the Influence of Family on the Respondents to Join Politics

S. No.	Influence of family	Frequency	Percent
1.	Agree	144	90.0
2.	Disagree	16	10.0
	Total	160	100.0

Sources: Computed

Table 1 depicts that the majority (90 percent) of the respondents agree on the impact of family joining politics. 10 percent of the respondents do not agree about the same.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution regarding the Respondent's Family Affiliation to a PoliticalParty

S. No.	Family association to a political Party	Frequency	Percent
1.	Agree	142	88.8
2.	Disagree	18	11.2
	Total	160	100.0

Sources: Computed

It is evident from Table 2 above that the majority (88.8 percent) of the respondents agree about the family's inclination to a political party. 11.2 percent of the respondents do not agree with it.

Table 3: Frequency Distribution regarding the Respondents' Mother's Inclination toward a particular Political Party

S. No.	Mother's Inclination towardsa Political Party	Frequency	Percent
1.	Agree	122	76.25
2.	Disagree	38	23.75
	Total	160	100.0

Sources: Computed

Table 3 shows that more than three-fourths (76.25 percent) of the respondents agree with their mother's association with a particular political party. 23.75 percent of the respondents do not agree with it.

Table 4: Frequency Distribution Regarding the Respondents' Membership to a ParticularPolitical Party

S. No.	Membership to a particular political party	Frequency	Percent
1.	Agree	147	91.88
2.	Disagree	13	08.12
	Total	160	100.0

Sources: Computed

Table 4 shows that the majority (91.88 percent) of the respondents agree about their membership to a particular political party. 8.12 percent of the respondents do not agree with it.

Table 5: Frequency Distribution Regarding the Respondent's Political Activities during School Days

S. No.	Political activities during school Days	Frequency	Percent
1.	Agree	133	83.1
2.	Disagree	27	16.9
	Total	160	100.0

Sources: Computed

Table 5 shows that more than four-fifths (83.1 percent) of the respondents agree about their political activities during school days. 16.9 percent of the respondents do not agree with it.

Table 6: Chi-square test for association between gender of the respondents and political activities during school days

Gender	Political activities during school days		Total	Chi-squarevalue
	Agree	**Disagree**		
Male	48	9	57	0.74
Female	85	18	103	(p value = 0.785)
Total	133	27	160	

Sources: Computed

Table 6 shows that chi-square value is 0.74, and it is not significant at t h e 5% level (i.e., p value = 0.785 < 0.050). It shows that a relationship is not found between the gender of the respondents and political activities during school days. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H01), "There is no association between gender of the respondents and political activities during school days." is accepted. It is concluded that there exists no relationship between the gender of the respondents and political activities during school days. It is seen from the above table 6 that 48 male respondents agree about political activities during school days. 9 male respondents do not agree with it. Table 6 shows that 85 female respondents agree about political activities during school days. 18 female respondents don't agree to it. 133 respondents agree about political activities during schooldays. 27 respondents do not agree with it.

Table 7: Chi-square test for association between gender of the respondents and politicalactivities during college days

Gender	Political activities during college days		Total	Chi–squarevalue
	Agree	**Disagree**		
Male	69	34	103	2.51
Female	45	12	57	(p value = 0.110)
Total	114	46	160	

Sources: Computed

Table 7 shows that chi-square value is 2.51, and it is not significant at the 5% level (i.e.,p value = 0.110 < 0.050). It shows that a relationship is not found between the gender of the respondents and political activities during college days. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H02), "No association is found between gender of the respondents and their view on political activities during college days." is accepted. It is concluded that there exists no relationship between the gender of the respondents and political activities during college days.

It is seen from the above table 7 that 69 male respondents agree about political activities during college days. 34 male respondents do not agree with it. Table 7 shows that 45 female respondents agree about political activities during college days. 12 female respondents don't agree with it. 114 respondents agree about political activities duringcollege days. 46 respondents do not agree to it.

9. Major statistical findings
➢ Majority (90 percent) of the respondents agree on the impact of family to join politics. 10 percent of the respondents do not agree about the same.
➢ Majority (88.8 percent) of the respondents agree about the family's inclination to a political party. 11.2 percent of the respondents do not agree to it.
➢ More than three-fourths (76.25 percent) of the respondents agree with their mother's association with a particular political party. 23.75 percent of the respondents do not agree with it.
➢ The majority (91.88 percent) of the respondents agree about their membership to a particular political party. 8.12 percent of the respondents do not agree with it.
➢ More than four-fifth (83.1 percent) of the respondents agree about their political activities during school days. 16.9 percent of the respondents do not agree with it.
➢ There exists no association between the gender of the respondents and political activities during school days.
➢ There is no association between the gender of the respondents and political activities during college days.

10. Conclusion:
a) Government and civil society organizations should create awareness about welfareschemes in rural communities.
b) Females in rural areas should participate actively in t h e political activities of rural areas.
c) Rural families should encourage youth to actively participate in local governance.
d) Civil society organizations should create sensitization among socially disadvantagedpeople to actively participate in local government activities.

e) Academicians and researchers should undertake research studies in the area of capacity building and training of rural local body elected leaders. He or she can also undertake research studies in other contemporary areas of local governance.

The political socialization of rural local body leaders is a contemporary topic of researchin a political system that has been scarcely researched. The researcher aimed to understand the political socialization aspects of rural local government respondents. It is evident from the resultsof the research study that there is no association between the gender of the respondents and political activities during school days. No association is seen between the gender of the respondents and political activities during college days. Suggestions were given by the researcher to increase people's participation in local governance. Academicians and researchers were suggested to undertake further research pertaining to areas of local governance.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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