

**Executive Summary of the findings of the UGC funded  
Minor Research Project of  
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On  
“Leadership in Panchayati Raj Institutions(PRI) Post 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment  
(A study with special reference to Belthangady Taluk in  
Dakshina Kannada District of Karnataka)”**

During the course of the study the researcher has made following observations regarding the working of grassroots level leadership in Panchayat administration. The research on leadership in Panchayati Raj Institutions(PRI) was conducted in Belthangady Taluk of Dakshina Kannada District of Karnataka State. This study covers all the aspects of leadership in local governance post 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment to the Constitution of India. The findings are based on the experience, opinions and observations of common citizens, elected leaders, officials etc. The sample has got representation to both sexes, all castes and categories of people.

Education level of the Panchayat members is generally low. The findings reveal that the educated citizens are not opting for politics at the grassroots level.

Almost all the backward class people and those belonging to SC and ST category got elected because of the reservation of seats for them. But we must remember that reservations are only a temporary prop. Unless these sections are weaned away from the comfort of reservations and are encouraged to show their real talents by competing with the others by their own merit, the working of grassroots level democracy may not be laudable. Crutches are comfortable only for the lame but a hindrance for those who can walk on their own legs. A healthy democracy depends on people who

can walk on their own legs and show achievements by competing with others on an equal footing.

Among elected members many are doing their own business,. Self employment is more convenient for the people who opt politics. Since they are not dependent on others they will be able to move freely with the people and they have freedom to spend their time as they wish.

The leaders who are residing in the respective wards for a long time can understand the problems better than others and can also prioritize the local problems, possible solutions, available resources, mode of operation etc., very easily as they are aware of the background of the people, their area, their expectations and also the limitations as well. Thus familiarizing with the local people, places, problems or in general, public contact is very essential for a leader to win their trust. Totally he/she should be able to create a healthy public image or public opinion about himself / herself.

Social service activities had motivated the leaders to get in to political life. They say that their concern about the society, their involvement in the social activities, association with the common people had helped them to win the elections.

There are some members who say that their political background or their contact with political leaders supported them to enter into the politics and they have won the election because of their support.

Many women are elected as members of Panchayats. At least because of reservations, women are getting a chance to occupy responsible positions, otherwise, in the male dominated scenario, women might not have gone out of the house. Women should come forward and they should be encouraged by the others too. Only then the purpose of making reservations shall be served best. Democracy within local self governing

institutions can be achieved in its genuine spirit only when women become equal partners and participants in the process of decision making.

Most of the elected members are representatives of one or the other political party. All the contestants get support of political parties and they use the image of that party at the higher level while campaigning. They focus on themselves as future leaders of that party and thus, try to influence the people about their contact at the higher level.

Leaders need training in leadership skills and the art of administration. They can perform better if they are given proper training. The public suggests that the leaders should be trained for effective problem solving methods/techniques. They need training for running the local government effectively.

Study has shown that the relationship between public and the leaders is fairly good. Majority of the people are having direct contact with their leaders. This shows that the leaders are showing concern in meeting the people frequently. This is a good practice for a leader so that people can feel free to reach their leader and this is not difficult in the Panchayat Raj.