

GROUP DYNAMICS IN A NORTH INDIAN VILLAGE-1954

1. The Study

This study grew out of a larger pilot research project sponsored by the Programme Evaluation Organisation of the Planning Commission. This was based on a Survey conducted in a village near Delhi by Dr. Oscar Lewis, Consultant, Ford Foundation with the assistance of Indian students to find out significant characteristics of leadership and group action that may have a bearing on schemes of organised rural development. The contents 'of the report are analytical and not critical. Though several aspects of social life in the village came within this review, the concentration was on the observations and study of those groups among villages which had come to be styled as "factions".

2. Objectives

- i) To demonstrate the relevancy of an intimate understanding of village life and organisation for the work of the evaluation officers as well as for the multi- purpose village Workers;
- ii) To obtain significant base line data in a village within a community Project area prior to the start of the action programme, so that some measure of control can be had in the study of the impact of the community development programme upon the culture and economy of the village;
- iii) To develop some research papers which would reflect modern fieldwork techniques of cultural anthropology and sociology and could thereby serve as research models for the evaluation officers; &
- iv) To develop some relatively simple but reliable methods. for the study of social organisation, leadership, and value systems-methods which might be applied on a broader scale by the evaluation officers.

3. **Sample Size/Criteria for Selection of Sample**

Primarily for reasons of convenience of access to New Delhi, a village in the Community Development Project of Delhi State was selected for this intensive type of study. After a brief review of 100 villages, 15 characteristics (variables) were considered significant for a cultural study of community. These were location in the relatively unhealthy low-lying area along the Jamuna river; population size; the number of separate castes and their occupational distribution within the village; relative degree of isolation due to differences in communication facilities; the incidence of disease; the presence/absence of school in village, degree of influence of Arya Samaj Movement, incidence of tenancy; the extent of irrigation; the extent to which government programmes had been active in the village in past years. Apparently no single village could possibly give sample of the total range of diversity found in project area. On the other hand, any village could serve the purpose so long as it was known that what the village was typical of and what it was not typical of. Therefore, it was decided to select a village that would be about in the middle of the population range of the 100 villages in the project area and would have a good representation of castes and occupations.

4. **Reference Period**

The field work was carried on for over a period of seven months from November 1952 to May 1953.

5. **Main Findings**

1. Factions were an old, ingrained pattern in village life and should be considered as a basic aspect of traditional village social organisation along with castes, tholas, panas, gotras and other groupings. Factions are primarily kinship groupings which carry on important social, economic and ceremonial functions in addition to their factional struggles against one another. When faction membership changes, it was the family rather than individual which shifts allegiance from one faction to another.

2. It was observed that new factions developed as a result of quarrels over : (i) inheritance of land; (ii) adoptions of sons; (iii) house sites and irrigation rights; (iv) sexual offences; (v) murders; and (vi) quarrels between the Castes.

3. In future, elimination of faction based on kinship might be possible by elimination of poverty and ignorance, increase in education and raising of living standards of peasants.

4. Village-wise leadership did not exist.

5. In the case of leadership pattern, there was almost complete absence of youth leadership and women did not attend panchayats and had no direct role in leadership.

6. **Major Suggestions**

Psychological factors should be studied to find out changes brought about by Community Development Programmes in social organisations like family structure, caste system. Class System, factions, voluntary local organisations and local Government. Knowledge of the social organisation of the village might enable one to successfully channelize the hostility between groups into positive and constructive directions by encouraging their competition towards village-wide goals.