



EMERGENCE AND ROLE OF LEADERSHIP: VOTING BEHAVIOUR AND EXPECTATIONS AMONG TEA GARDEN PEOPLE IN THE DISTRICT OF BISWANATH, ASSAM

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ABSTRACT:

Leadership is an important part of any organisation or political system. The emergence of leaders depend upon their role and activities towards the society. Generally, the common people supports those leaders who fulfill or try to fulfill the interests of the common people. Such kind of leaders may also influence the voting behaviour of the people. They may increase the political awareness and consciousness of the people. However, it is not seen up to the expectation level of the tea garden people in the sample gardens of the present study. Therefore, the present study attempts to analyse the concept of leadership, voting behaviour and expectations of the tea garden people of the two gardens in the district of Biswanath, Assam. The present study is based on both qualitative and quantitative approach. The researcher interviewed sixty two respondents taking thirty one from each sample garden. The study also collected secondary source materials from books, journals, Government reports, seminar reports and newspaper articles. The present paper argues that the leadership and organisations among the tea tribes community should come forward to help the tea garden people to increase their awareness and influence in the political aspects of the state in an organized way.

KEY WORDS: Education, Expectation, Leadership, Respondents, Voting Behaviour.

INTRODUCTION:

Leadership is an important part of any organisation or political system. It is leaders who lead their followers. The emergence of leaders depend upon their role and activities

towards the society. Generally, the common people supports those leaders who fulfill or try to fulfill the interests of the common people. Such kind of leaders may also influence the voting behaviour of the people. They may increase the political awareness and consciousness of the people. At the same time, the people also expect more from their leaders. As a result, the leaders should play an important role so that interests of both are protected. In this context, the present paper “*Emergence and role of leadership: Voting behaviour and expectations among tea garden people in the district of Biswanath, Assam*” is selected.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:

In this section, the available studies relating to the present study are reviewed. But, before that, the present study first clarifies the term leadership and voting behaviour. Leadership is interpersonal influence, exercise in situation and directed, through the communication process, toward the attainment of a specified goal or goals (Hill, 1961:24). Voting behaviour is nothing but a form of electoral behaviour which provides scope to the citizens to participate in political activities. It is a study which is related with the political behaviour of the human being specially the voters during the time of election (Das, 2020:612).

The qualities, characteristics and skills required in a leader are determined to a large extent by the demands of the situation in which he is to function as a leader (Das, 2014:139). The leadership role is not taken continuously by one individual or the same person but taken at one time or another by each individual (Hill, 1961:25).

Scholars like Siddharaj (1993) argued that for the successful working of Democracy, people must participate in an active way. They should also involve in the planning and implementation programme for their development. He also opined that there must have cordial relations and mutual trust between the people and the government (Siddharaj, 2014:27).

There are various problems among tea garden people which have hampered in their development. In this regard, highlighting the various problems Meghraj Karmakar opined that incapable and illiterate guardian, unconscious society, selfish and uninterested leaders have stood as an obstacle in the way of the development of the Tea-Labour society. He argued that in order to be equal with the other people of the state, the tea garden people must be conscious about their various rights and responsibilities (Gogoi, 2001:208).

Political leaders can play an important role in creating awareness among the people which is also applicable in case of the tea garden people. Expressing his concern, Rabidas remarked that in spite of the increasing number of political leaders among the tea tribes community, they are not so much interested and conscious about the various problems of their own community. In this regard, he urged the educated youths and leaders of the labourers to make their people conscious about their rights and responsibilities (Rabidas, 2001:352).

Some scholars argue that consciousness of the people is the key to their success without which they will not be able to understand about various issues related to the development of their community. Highlighting the importance of the consciousness among the Adivashi people, Tirkey and Murmu urged the people to be conscious about power and politics. They also mentioned the famous remark of Dr. B.R.Ambedkar that *politics is the master key, which unlocks all the locks*. Again they urged that without the consciousness the Adivashi people, they will be deprived of their rights and privileges (Tirkey and Murmu, 2008:183).

In this way, different scholars have highlighted various aspects of the tea garden people. But, there are further scope for study in this regard. Therefore, the present paper analyses the emergence and role of leadership including voting behaviour and expectations of the tea garden people in the district of Biswanath.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The present study contains the following basic objectives:

- 1) To assess the emergence and role of tea tribes leadership; voting behaviour of the tea garden women.
- 2) To analyse the voting behaviour and expectations of the tea garden people.

METHODOLOGY:

The present study is based on both qualitative and quantitative approach. With the help of field study about the role of leadership including voting behaviour and expectations of the tea garden people of the sample garden i.e. Monabari and Shakomato tea estate under Biswanath District, Assam, the necessary data are gathered. Biswanath was declared as a separate district on 15th of August, 2015. Previously, Biswanath was under the erstwhile Sonitpur district, Assam. The boundary of the district is Lakhimpur district on the East, Sonitpur district on the West, Arunachal Pradesh district on the North and the Brahmaputra River and Golaghat district on the South.

In our course of investigation, observation as well as interview method is also adopted for collection of data. Since the study is an empirical one, a questionnaire is also prepared and used for this purpose. The researcher interviewed sixty two respondents taking thirty one from each sample garden. The study also collected secondary source materials from books, journals, Government reports, seminar reports and newspaper articles.

The present paper mainly highlights a comprehensive analysis of the role of leadership including voting behaviour and expectations of the tea garden people of the two Tea Gardens of Biswanath District, namely—*Monabari* and *Shakomato Tea Estate*.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS:

In this section, we have presented and analysed the data collected from the sample tea gardens. On the basis of their responses, we have analysed the role of the leaders including voting behaviour and expectations of the tea garden people under study. In this regard, the respondents are asked some questions which are analyzed in the form of tables.

To know the political awareness and voting behaviour of the respondents, an attempt was made whether they attend any election meeting or not. It is presented in the table 1.1.

Table No. 1.1
Do you attend any election meeting?

Response	Respondents		Total Respondents	Percentage
	Monabari T.E.	Shakomato T.E.		
Yes	24	22	46	74.19
No	05	04	09	14.52
No Response	02	05	07	11.29
Total	31	31	62	100.00

It is clear from the above table that majority of the respondents i.e. seventy four percent had attended the election meetings. Only fifteen percent of them responded negatively leaving eleven percent as no response. It clearly reveals in the table that majority of the respondents are aware about their voting behaviour. However, it is found during the time of interview that in spite of attending the election meeting, a good portion of them were not aware about the objectives of such meetings. In this regard they informed that they attended these as per the advice of their Sardar or political leaders.

The respondents are also requested to give their responses whether they want a separate political party of their own community or not. Their responses are given in the following Table No. 1.2.

Table no. 1.2
Do you support a separate political party of your community?

Response	Respondents		Total Respondents	Percentage
	Monabari T.E.	Shakomato T.E.		
Yes	26	25	51	82.26
No	04	04	08	12.90
No Response	01	02	03	04.84
Total	31	31	62	100.00

It is clear from the table no. 1.2 that majority of the respondents want their own political party which constitutes eighty two percent. They, without any hesitation responded it positively. Around thirteen percent of the respondents did not give positive responses to this question leaving only five percent as no response category.

The respondents were further requested to inform about some of the important problems faced by their community. It is displayed in table no. 1.3 below.

Table No. 1.3
Name the important problems faced by your community.

Problems	Response of the Respondents (in %)		Total Respondents	Percentage
	Monabari T.E.	Shakomato T.E.		
Economic	16	17	33	53.23
Education	10	09	19	30.65
Health and others	05	05	10	16.12
Total	31	31	62	100.00

Regarding this question, it seen in the table that majority of them consider economic problems as their main problem that constitutes fiftythree percent. From the opinion of the leaders as well as the respondents, it is found that the tea garden people are living in a deplorable economic condition for which they are unable to get proper education. Another important problem faced by them is problem of education. It is expressed by thirty one percent of the respondents. Besides these, more than sixteen percent informed about health and other problems. It is thus clear from the above table that tea garden people have been facing with various problems which have hampered their developmental process.

As such, we enquired our respondents about their choice regarding public and private incentives. It is shown in the following Table.

Table No. 1.4
What is your preference regarding public and private incentives?

Response	Respondents		Total Respondents	Percentage
	Monabari T.E.	Shakomato T.E.		
Interest in Public incentives	07	05	12	19.35
Interest in Private incentives	20	21	41	66.13
No response	04	05	09	14.52
Total	31	31	62	100.00

From the table no. 1.4, it is seen that sixty six percent of the respondents are in favour of private incentives i.e. private goods. Nineteen percent of them are interested public incentives and around fourteen percent are not willing to disclose their preferences. It is, thus clear from the above table that in the sample gardens, majority of the voters are influenced by private incentives. It is because of their poverty, lack of education and other problems which have compelled them to be more individualistic in nature.

From the above discussion and analysis, the major findings of the paper are as follows:

- Although the tea garden people attend the election meetings, most of them are not aware about the objectives of such meetings. They attend these meetings as per the advice of their Sardar or political leaders.
- Almost majority of the respondents of the present want their own political party which reveal their political consciousness.
- The tea garden people are living in a deplorable economic condition for which they are unable to get proper education.
- Generally, most of the tea garden people are influenced by private incentives. It is because of their poverty, lack of education and other problems which have compelled them to be more individualistic in nature.
- The leaders have not been able to fulfill the expectations of their community in real sense specially in the field of poor economic condition and education.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION:

From the analysis and findings of the present study, following recommendations may be forwarded:

- There should have proper policy and guidelines of the government and the tea garden management for economic development of the tea garden people. In other words, they should be economically empowered.
- Sufficient educational institutions should be established in the tea garden areas.
- The leaders should come forward to politically educate these people along with imparting knowledge about political participation and voting behaviour. They should also try to mix up with the common tea garden people so that the people may keep faith upon them.
- Government should take proper steps to eradicate the problems of poverty, illiteracy and economic backwardness which exist among the tea garden people.
- It is also suggested that the leaders should try to make their community economically empowered by abolishing different socio-economic and political hurdles among them which will be beneficial not for the leaders but for the common people as well.

It is evident from the above discussion that there are enormous problems among the tea garden people for which they are unable to develop themselves in different aspects of their life. Therefore, the leadership and organisations among the tea tribes community should come forward to help them to increase their awareness and influence in the political aspects of the state in an organized way. In this regard, it can be said that the emergence of increasing numbers of leadership and organisation among the tea tribes community should help them to increase their awareness and influence in the political aspects of the state in an organized way (Das, 2020:106).

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