The Emergence of Leadership Among the OBCs in the North Telangana-Nizamabad, Nirmaland KarimnagarDistricts

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ABSTRACT:

The Indian Caste system is wide and varied. Hindus who form the largest majority in the country have always been mobilized on the caste basis, although the constitutional system explicitly discourages the practice of caste and creed, the political party system has been dominated by caste politics of various kinds. Caste has been able to develop a new form of political activity i.e. Caste sabha/Sangham – Caste association, which was primarily visible in the mid-nineteenth century. After independence, it became apparent that they would play a pivotal role in Indian politics.Political Leadership represents one of the most important forms of leadership. Social evolution and the sociological changes in society have brought many changes in the concept of political leadership. It is a very important concept that brings in political processes and outcomes. Political Mobilization and leadership have a crucial role to play in working towards achieving the required goals for OBCs in India. These are the two important concepts that involve coordination among individuals and organizing them to make a collective influence and bring about socio-political changes. OBC community in Telangana needs to work towards the attainment of political mobilization and in turn, develop good leadership who can take forward the community towards the attainment of set goals. The leadership needs to emerge out of the mobilization with the strong support of the common man. Telangana needs to see such a movement which can mobilise and strengthen the leadership towards the development of the OBC community.

KEYWORDS: Caste system, OBC, Political leadership, Community, North Telangana

INTRODUCTION:

In India caste system is broad system. Hindus who form the largest majority in the country have always been mobilized on the caste basis, although the constitutional system explicitly discourages the practice of caste and creed, the political party system has been dominated by caste politics of various kinds. Hence involving caste mobilisation of diverse methods. In India electoral politics has continuously depended on the caste based mobilisation. The caste system plays a constructive role in politics externally – based on historical, social, political, cultural and economic factors and internally based on caste its strength, the strands of mobilization, structure and political consciousness.[1] Political leadership is the important founding stone of a democracy. It played a very important role in the

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[1]Ballundagi, Bhgawantharay. B. (2017). *"Political mobilization and identity politics of obc's in karnataka: a case study of hyderabadkarnataka region"*. Ph. D. diss., Central university of Karnataka.

national struggle for freedom. Mobilization of the masses with the influence and motivation from the leadership has played a vital role in the success of many social movements all over the world. These mass movements not only created mobilization among the masses but created a rippling effect on the emergence of leadership and also the impact of a leader on the mass movements at the international level. In India also social movements have witnessed the mobilization of masses both politically and socially. This mobilization has strengthened the leadership and the leadership, in turn, has helped in the mobilization of the masses both politically and socially. If we look at the Dalit movement in India the mobilization of the masses was possible because of strong leadership like Dr B R Ambedkar. As the masses started supporting the cause for which the leadership was standing mobilization process increased and the leadership became deep-rooted. It is so deep-rooted that despite the physical absence of the leader, his ideology and the cause for which he worked still ignite the people and mobilize them earnestly.

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP:

Political Leadership represents one of the most important forms of leadership. Social evolution and the sociological changes in society have brought many changes in the concept of political leadership. It is a very important concept that brings in political processes and outcomes. Different branches of knowledge have contributed to the concept and theory of leadership, which include history, psychology, sociology, management studies and political theory contributed to the concept. Authors like Niccolo Machiavelli, Max Weber and Robert Michels contributions are of great importance. Political leadership is an essential characteristic of the government and governance. If the government has to have good governance good leadership is inevitable. In the absence of leadership, there will not be any life to the governance and its political and creative features fade away. Every nation-state has its form of political leadership and the people that follow it. It may be to the problems at the national level, international level or even at the local level, the leadership pattern has its outlook depending on the problem and its significance.

What are the factors that are leading to the emergence of leadership?:

Political leadership is one of the many types of leadership. It is a very subtle concept that needs to be understood thoroughly. The emergence of the concept can be traced back into the history of political thought. The most important thinker on the topic is Max Weber and his writings date back to 1920. The evolution of the leadership theories, later on, is mostly expansion or refinement or development from his theory.[2]

Leadership is mostly defined as a process of influencing others for the completion and accomplishment of a given task by providing purpose, direction and motivation.[3] A good leader has a vision and mission to set a plan of action, manage resources, and motivate the team members, he/she becomes part of every action of the team and plan. The leader becomes the centrifugal force of the team.

[2]Dion, L. (1968). The Concept of Political Leadership: An Analysis. *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue Canadienne De Science Politique, 1*(1), 2-17. Retrieved January 7, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/3231692

[3]Albertus Magnus.(March 30, 2020). Four Key Factors of Leadership.College Blog, Retrieved from https://blog.albertus.edu/2015/03/19/four-key-factors-of-leadership/

Leadership is about human endeavour, it's about the positive relationships that are built in the process of achieving the goal.

According to a blog written by Albertus on "The Four Factors of Leadership", there are four factors that align with leadership. They are the leader, the lead, the situation and the communication.These four factors have interrelationships and act according to the situations and the circumstances that make the situations. They go together in establishing leadership and make the leader stand erect during tough situations.

The relationship between the leader and the leader should always be a positive one with dignity and respect.[4] The leader has to set up a positive environment to make the leader work with confidence. This relationship is of mutual trust, respect, confidence and safety.[5] The leader should have a thorough knowledge of himself, his weaknesses and his strengths. This makes him stand safe during times of crisis. As the situations keep changing from time to time the leader should be motivated, confident and aware of all the requirements from time to time. Communication also plays a vital role in the relationship between the leader and the leader. The Leader should be able to understand the emotions of the people and make decisions. Emotional imbalance can create turmoil for the leader and his leadership skills.

The authors of the paper "Leader Emergence: The Development of a Theoretical Framework" suggest that the team member's perceptions of leadership fit depend on the potential leader's domain competence, fluid intelligence, willingness to serve, credibility and most importantly goal achievement. It emphasises that an individual will evolve as a leader if the team member's perceptions of the characteristics that fit the situation merge with that of the leader.[6] According to a theory of leadership, there can be three paths to the emergence of leadership apart from hereditary, they are by appointment, election and emergence. The appointment is based on the rules and regulations of the organization, institution etc. and is done by the seniors in the respective systems based on the competence, potential of the candidate, need of the hour or the opportunity (Bass,1990; Zaccaro and Klimoski, 2001). The election represents a deliberate decision by a group with some form of governance structure in which a functional majority chooses an aspirant (Hollander and Julian, 1969; Lester et al., 2002). Emergence is a concept of leadership that is very complicated and changes from situation to situation. Emergent leaders are defined as group members who possess no formal authority, yet exert significant influence over other group members (Schneider and Goktepe, 1983).[7]

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[4]Ibid, Albertus Magnus College Blog, 2020
[5]Ibid, Albertus Magnus College Blog, 2020
[6] Norton, William & Murfield, Monique & Baucus, Melissa. (2014). Leader Emergence: The Development of a Theoretical Framework. Leadership & Organization Development Journal. 35. 513-529. Accessed Mar 27, 2020, doi: 10.1108/LODJ-08-2012-0109.
[7]Ibid

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Cognitive resource theory developed by Fred Fiedler and Joe Garcia in 1987 focuses on intelligence, experience and how they influence stress. It states that certain cognitive factors like intelligence and experience affect the abilities of a leader. The leaders who perform best are those who use their cognitive abilities to work with their groups. Cognitive Resource theory works as a pathfinder for many of the theoretical frameworks of leadership theories.

Leadership Emergence: The Development of a Theoretical Framework – This framework predicts the emergence of a leader. It suggests that the "interaction of perceived leadership fit with situational stress predicts leader emergence".[10] It works on perceived leadership fit which includes five attributes – priors or domain competence; intelligence; willingness to serve; credibility and most importantly goal attainment. On this perceived leadership fit the effect of situational stress and effective leadership behaviour play a vital role in the emergence of a leader.

Caste and Leadership:

Caste has been able to develop a new form of political activity i.e. Caste sabha/Sangham – Caste association, which was primarily visible in the mid-nineteenth century. After independence, it became apparent that they would play a pivotal role in Indian politics.[11] Membership in caste is by birth in India. Once born into a caste the social identity of a man cannot be changed. Caste organizations and authorities enforce the caste rituals, occupational norms and marital and social relationships within the caste and with other castes.[12] As they share the same occupation, norms of society and relationships, the members of the caste are homogeneous. The unit of action and location of caste have been around for a long time Villages, but in recent times they have taken their place in the urban areas as well with the migration of the population and urbanization that has taken place. Leaders were hereditary, generally the senior members of a specific lineage group.[13]

With independence and the understanding of political democracy, the castes in India started finding new places in the administration, educational institutions and political representation. The caste

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[8] Norton, William & Murfield, Monique & Baucus, Melissa. (2014). Leader Emergence: The Development of a Theoretical Framework. Leadership & Organization Development Journal. 35. 513-529. Accessed Mar 27, 2020, doi: 10.1108/LODJ-08-2012-0109.

[9] Norton, William & Murfield, Monique & Baucus, Melissa. 2014

[10] Norton, William & Murfield, Monique & Baucus, Melissa. 2014

[11] Lloyd I. Rudolph, & Susanne Hoeber Rudolph. (1960). The Political Role of India's Caste Associations. *Pacific Affairs, 33*(1), 5-22. doi:10.2307/2753645.

[12] Ibid

[13] Ibid

system in India had its members as representatives in various political parties to attain representation for their caste at various levels of administration and electoral office.

With the change of time, democratization and urbanization, leadership is no longer hereditary. It is now in the hands of those who can articulate, represent and lead the purposes of the caste for which they should be literate in political democracy.[14] The people with these skills of achieving the goals of the caste have taken up the positions as leaders or representatives of the caste. These leaders are accountable and responsible for the followers of the caste.

The caste system has seen a shift from a social structure to a political structure. It is not only a social structure in society but has a political structure with offices, membership, electoral representation, publications and a democratic process attained through conferences, elections, delegates and resolutions.

Caste has becomea major basis for the emergence of leadership in India. A survey carried out by the Azim Premji University and Lokniti (Centre for the Study of Developing Societies [CSDS]) in 22 assembly constituencies across eight states namely Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh- concluded that 55% of Indians would prefer a political leader from their caste or religion.[15] It is making an emphatic statement that identity politics are playing a significant role in politics. Caste and religion bias for political leaders is highest in Madhya Pradesh and lowest in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.[16]

The role of Leadership in achieving the goals for OBCs in India:

Political Mobilization and leadership have a crucial role to play in working towards achieving the required goals for OBCs in India. These are the two important concepts that involve coordination among individuals and organizing them to make a collective influence and bring about socio-political changes. They can work on set goals like Building Awareness and Unity, Advocacy and Representation of policies, Demand for Reservation, Reducing socio-economic inequalities, Consolidation of Political Power, and Strengthening their identity and Culture to understand their role. Political Leadership works towards creating awareness among OBCs about their rights, privileges and the discrimination they may be facing. At the same time, it encourages bringing them together as a common unit to stand for their demands and achieve them. Leaders articulate these demands and amplify the concerns and aspirations of the community. They can at the same time demand their rights and reservations in educational institutions and government jobs. Leaders represent the interests of OBC communities and can negotiate with the policymakers and the concerned authorities to ensure their rights and reservations. They also can mobilise the common people on their responsibilities to ensure their representation and opportunities. Political leadership can involve drafting and planning policies that can foster welfare and address the specific needs and requirements of the OBCs. The leaders work towards ensuring the concerns and the grievances of the community and address them through legislation or government welfare schemes. Leadership work intends to reduce the socio-economic and political disparities faced by OBCs. They can demand the inclusion of the communities in the reservations, for the quality of

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[14]Lloyd I. Rudolph, & Susanne Hoeber Rudolph. 1960

[15]Saldanha, A.(July 18, 2018). How caste and religion influence selection of political leaders in India, Bussiness Standards. Retrieved from https://www.business-standard.com/article/_politics/how-caste-and-religion-influence-selection-of-political-leaders-in-india-118071800122_1.html

[16]Azim Premji University (2019). Politics And Society Between Elections, Center for the study of developing societies (CSDS-Lokniti)

education, opportunities at the different levels of entrepreneurship and skill development. Leaders often work towards creating policies to uplift OBCs and ensure access to equality of opportunity and resources. Leadership is involved in encouraging OBCs to actively participate in the process of political upgradation. The leaders guide and organize the community voting patterns to support and empower the community representation in the legislatures at local, state and national levels. This consolidation of political power helps in supporting and strengthening the political power of OBCs. Most importantly they strengthen the identity and culture of the community. Different platforms are created to preserve the identity, history and culture of the community to create an empowering wheel to preserve the heritage. Political leadership among OBCs in India help streamline their collective efforts towards achieving the needed goals of socio-political empowerment, reservations, equal opportunities and the elimination of socio-economic disparities and foster political empowerment. These are the basic concepts that play a significant positive role in bringing change and addressing the concerns of the OBC community.

The factors contributing to the leadership's role in the mobilization of OBCs in Telangana State, India.

There are major factors that contribute to the role of leadership's role in the process of political mobilization of Other Backward Classes in the state of Telangana, India. Firstly, OBC representation of the leaders can champion the interests of the community while addressing the concerns. This mobilization can help the OBC leadership in articulating the grievances and aspirations of the OBC population. It can increase political awareness and mobilization among the OBC population. Secondly, the leadership can work on channelling the socio-economic disparities and work towards the political mobilization of the people. Effective leadership can streamline the grievances and the marginalization of the OBC population by advocating and pushing for equal access to resources, opportunities and benefits for all. Thirdly the policies of reservation for OBCs in different fields like education, employment, skill development and politics can contribute to political mobilization. Leaders who take up these issues and work towards the attainment of the benefits and their implementation can be of great importance in motivating and influencing the OBC community for political engagement. Fourthly, Another major aspect of the leadership's ability to connect with the OBC community is through sociocultural identities. At the socio-cultural level leaders can be identified by the community and resonate the unique identity, traditions and customs of the community effectively and work on the common political objectives with ease. Fifthly alliance building can strengthen the mobilization of OBCs. Leaders who can form alliances with like-minded individuals or groups can make a substantial contribution to the voices of OBCs in the political community. Sixthly effective communication and strategies for outreach efforts can increase political mobilization and awareness among the community. Leaders have to utilize various mediums of communication like social media, print media, direct interaction with the community, mass rallies, public meetings and individual interactions when needed, Addressing the grievance and supporting the community in times of need can help in gathering the support and build a close-knit OBC political network. The above-discussed factors contributing to the leadership's role in the political mobilization of OBCs in Telangana state may vary over some time and depend on a specific circumstance leading to the dynamics of the concerned issue, but the core factors cannot change.

The factors missing in the OBC leadership of Telangana state that hinder the mobilization of the community:

Several factors are missing in the OBC lead of Telangana that hinder political mobilization of the community which include lack of proper representation, internal disparities, weak organizational structure, limited resources and funding, inadequate awareness and outreach, co-opting by dominant political parties and lack of education and empowerment are few to discuss further. The diversity that exists in the OBC community should be represented adequately in the state. If the same is not done to the requirements, then there cannot be a consensus among the community and cannot appeal for political mobilization. Internal disparities, fragmentation, infighting among the community and lack of unity among the OBC leadership can weaken their ability to mobilize and organize the OBC community. The foundations are to be robust. If the organizational structure is not strong enough and the support network is not strong enough, there cannot be an effective political mobilization. The limited resources, insufficient funding and logistical support can constrain the leadership's ability to reach out to the masses and engage the community initiatives with focus. Inadequate awareness and outreach can lead to the failure of the leadership as they are failing to effectively communicate their goals, policies and achievements. It can only result in limited mobilization of the community. Internal fragmentation, infighting or lack of unity among OBC leaders can weaken their collective ability to mobilize and organize the OBC community. When the mainstream political parties are absorbing the OBC leadership into their folds, the OBC leadership as such is getting diluted and their ability to represent the concerns and interests of the community is reducing the mobilization of OBC. Limited opportunities for education and empowerment can also be a factor in hindering political participation and active involvement in mobilization activities. The community has to address these factors and escalate the efforts to enhance representation, attain unity and collaboration, strengthen the organization and its structure, attainment of adequate resources, safeguard the leadership from co-opting by the large political parties and empower the OBC community can help in reducing the leadership problems and helps in the strengthening of leadership and in turn political mobilization.

Leadership in BC of Telangana:

A census of all OBC leaders is necessary to bring unity among them and the root of all problems of OBCs lies in the OBC census. At all India levels, a BC seminar was held in 2020 to bring consensus among the BC leaders to demand the government on the caste-based census so that the government can ensure the outreach of its schemes to BC for their welfare and upliftment. This seminar was attended by political leaders from different political parties and as well not attended by a few political leaders from a few political parties. It is quite visible that unity among the OBC leaders from all the parties is not as required. It is more only at the party level and not at the community level.

Table-2 Assembly's caste matrix - 1989- 2018

S No	Community	1983	1985	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014	2018
1	**Reddy**	34	35	40	35	31	44	40	42	40
2	**Kamma**	7	8	3	6	3	3	4	5	5
3	**Vyshya**	1	2	1	1	1	-	-	1	1
4	**Velama**	8	11	14	12	12	9	10	10	10
5	**BC**	**17**	**14**	**14**	**21**	**26**	**17**	**25**	**20**	**22**
6	**SC**	17	17	17	17	17	19	19	19	19

7	ST	8	7	8	8	8	8	12	12	12
8	Muslim	8	7	6	5	7	6	7	8	8
9	Others	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-

Source:timesofindia.indiatimes.com

If we look at the above table, it is evident that the representation of the highest majority of the population in the state assembly of Telangana at present or the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh is not according to the population proportion. With 52% of the population, BCs are only 22 in the 2018 assembly whereas the Reddy community has 40 seats.[17] Throughout the assembly results if we look at the figures from 1983 onwards it is proportionately very less. Only during the 1999 assembly matrix we can the bigger number. The highest number of seats are won by the high-class community as they were allocated to them and not to the majority of the composition of populationi.e. BC community.

- One of the important reasons could be that the BC community is not under one name like Reddy/Kamma/Brahmin, it is an agglomeration of small communities brought together.
- Secondly, for ages, the BC community was under the control of the elite communities and never had a fruitful try to grow beyond.
- Thirdly as it was under the umbrella of different castes, unity among them is a continuous question raised. How far they could be brought under one umbrella is a hundred-mark question.
- Fourthly single leadership is not growing in the OBC community. It is still identified only based on the caste from OBC and not as an OBC leader.   This shows that there is a lack of consensus or unity among all the castes of OBCs.
- Fifthly whether it is at the national level or state level there is not much work done by the existing leaders to bring in unity. In case of any work initiation taken by any specific leader, that is coming to a halt as they are being given a higher post or moved from the existing to subside the initiation as per the desires of the party. This movement is not being obstructed by the leaders as it is paving the way for their individual growth or selfish ends.

Role of Leaders in Mobilisation among BCs in Telangana State:
The leaders can be classified in the context of Telangana State as
a. Political leaders
b. Intellectual leaders
c. Student leaders

a. Political Leadership

Political power plays a very important role in socio-economic upliftment for any community and in the case of BCs also it applies. BCs are playing mostly a subordinate role in politics and have been working under the leadership of upper-caste leaders for a long time now. In an All India Backward Class Federation [AIBCF] meeting in Vijayawada in the year 2018, its president Justice V Eswaraiah stressed

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[17]Sudhakar Reddy,U.(Dec 13, 2018). Reddys lead flock with 40 MLAs, next in line are BCs. retrieved from timesofindia.indiatimes.com

the need for the backward classes to have a collective struggle in the eradication of inequalities among BCs in the society and to attain their rights, political reservations.[18]

Political leadership is focused on political goals. It could aim for short-term or long-term goals. Its focus is more on the political dimension alone. It thrives to attain political goals and in nature, it is more politically centric. In the process of attaining political goals, there is a possibility of irrationality at times. The goals also become self-centric to attain political power. Losing focus on the main goal in the process of attaining power can happen at any point in time. If we look at BC leaders in political parties, [not to name] whether it is the party in power, opposition parties or any other party, they are working on the terms of the political party they are working for and not for the BC community they belong to. If the party in power is working towards the attainment of certain goals for the BC community, the opposition party is demanding or asking for some other set of goals. This is causing rupture among the leaders of the same community and they are not able to unite. This is a major cause of the failure of political leadership.

b. Intellectual leadership:

Intellectual Leadership is focused and goal-oriented. It is not for short-term goals and aims for long-term goals. It is more of a multidimensional – theoretical dimension, intellectual dimension and most importantly applicational dimension. They work for the attainment of success and development in a sustained manner. They strive towards the attainment of new dimensions in the process of their struggle.

c. Student leadership:

Student leadership is at the budding stage. They are usually with tender minds on the issues. They are either influenced by political leaders or Intellectual leaders. The bottom line of their nature is often aggressive. They can have a strong hold on the issues/problem if guided accordingly and at the same time can fluctuate in the plight of pressures from both political and intellectual leadership.

The emergence of leadership is one factor and the sustenance of the same is another important factor. It is not true that there is no leadership among OBCs, the factor is that the growth of leadership to lead the OBC community is the core point to be understood and analysed. There is a lack of a self-sufficient or autonomous OBC movement in the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh or the Present Telangana. From the time of Sri Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy to the present-day government of Telangana all the chief ministers throughout the history of the United State of Andhra Pradesh to the present day Telangana government, tried to untie the OBC organisations. If we look at the history of chief ministers, they created their OBC leaders to control and command the OBCs for their benefit to weaken the mainstream movement and to protect the upper castes and the ruling castes from the threat of the backward caste's unity and integrity. The unity and integrity of the backward castes could lead to the demand for mainstream power and with the highest percentage of the population it can become mandatory to give the power into the hands of OBCs. To stop this and to retain power among themselves, these so-called ruling classes are side-lining the OBC movements. They are following the British's rule of "Divide and Rule". To achieve this they are in recent times, trying to develop an unhealthy growth of elitist tendencies and the benefits of

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[18] The Hans India. (05 Nov, 2018). Need for united fight by BCs for rights stressed. thehansindia.com retrieved from https://www.thehansindia.com/posts/index/Andhra-Pradesh/2018-11-05/Need-for-united-fight-by-BCs-for-rights-stressed/437310

socioeconomic development are given to a privileged few among the backward castes.[19] Intentionally the ruling elites are dividing and creating rifts among the OBC community. There is a need to check on this tendency and create awareness among the OBC community so that unity can be established and they can work towards the attainment of strong leadership and thus lead to political mobilization. To some extent, it is also observed that the so-called elite-class political leaders are utilizing the OBC community leaders to get their vote bank filled and later ignoring their contributions. This act is creating a destabilization among the OBC community leadership. The identification of the leaders based on the OBC community divisions is against the spirit of the OBC movement's aspirations of equality and unity. The power politics and the group or the divisional approach among the OBCs and from the external forces have led to factional politics[20] These divisional politics or factional politics are to be unrooted to help the movement take off and the realisation of the common objectives of the community. The backward class movements all over the country whether it's in Tamilnadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Bihar or Uttar Pradesh have helped the leadership to sustain power whereas in Telangana the movement hasn't yet taken off.

CONCLUSION:

The motivation and set goals are not yet seen in the state of Telangana. OBC community in Telangana needs to work towards the attainment of political mobilization and in turn, develop good leadership who can take forward the community towards the attainment of set goals. The leadership needs to emerge out of the mobilization with the strong support of the common man. Telangana needs to see such a movement which can mobilise and strengthen the leadership towards the development of the OBC community. There is a need for the OBC community in the state of Telangana to rise to the needs of the community and work for the upliftment of the community by uniting. Internal rivalries are to be settled permanently and move towards the community's upliftment and accomplishments. The socioeconomic and political aspects are to be considered in the process and all the divisions in the community are to be brought on the same path to achieve their set goals. For this, the leaders have to come out of the self-centred goals or individual goals and have to concentrate on the achievement of the community goals together.

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[19]Ravinder Dandeboina. (2022). Mapping Backward Class Movements in Residuary State of Andhra Pradesh: Issues and Challenges. *Journal of Polity and Society.* Vol. 14 No. 01
[20] Ibid, Ravinder,Dandeboina. (2022).