

Incentives and Motivations for women taking leadership roles in collectives

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*Leader as the vanguard of the Poor : Understanding
the motives of leaders in collectives*

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Background

- ▶ Women's collective organisations (WC for short) take many forms: Self Help Groups (SHGs), "Mahila mandals", co-operatives for undertaking or supporting economic activity
- ▶ Such WC are floated by promoting organisations (PO)
- ▶ The objectives of these collectives also vary: savings and credit; joint or group economic enterprises, pooled marketing; acting as a local pressure group for getting entitlements; advocating for gender justice; countering gender-based oppression and violence or facilitating literacy
- ▶ Thus some of these WC produce and strengthen private goods; some produce and strengthen common goods and others produce public goods

Social Capital

- ▶ Social capital has been transposed from sociology and has found increased usage in everyday life while also being viewed as a panacea to most maladies in the context of developing societies (Portes, 1998)
- ▶ The idea that participation in groups can have positive consequences is not a new idea and dates back to Durkheim's idea of group life as an antidote to anomie or self-destruction and Marx's distinction between an atomised class in itself and a more mobilised and effective class for itself
- ▶ “the profits which accrue from membership in a group are the basis of solidarity that makes them possible” (Bourdieu 1985, p.248)
- ▶ “when relations among actors change in ways that facilitate action” (Coleman 1990, p.304).

Why has the term gained traction ?

- ▶ Source of Importance for the concept
 - ▶ Attention that the concept places upon positive consequences of sociability while putting aside its less attractive features
 - ▶ Positive consequences are subsequently placed in the framework of broader discussion of capital and calls for attention to how non monetary forms can be important sources of power and influence

Bourdieu's Definition

- ▶ The aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition (Bourdieu,1985)
 - ▶ The profits that accrue from membership in a group are the basis of the solidarity which makes them possible
 - ▶ Social networks are not a natural given and **must be constructed through investment strategies oriented to the institutionalization of group relations**
 - ▶ Bourdieu insists that while the outcomes of possession of social or cultural capital are reducible to economic capital, the processes that bring about such alternative forms are not
- ▶ The closest equivalent to human capital in Bourdieu's analysis is embodied cultural capital, which is defined as the habitus of cultural practices, knowledge, and demeanors learned through exposure to role models in the family and other environments

Sources of Social Capital

Sources

- Value Introjection
- Bounded Solidarity
- Reciprocity Exchanges
- Enforceable trust

Consummatory

Ability to Secure Benefits through Membership in Networks and other Social Structures

Instrumental

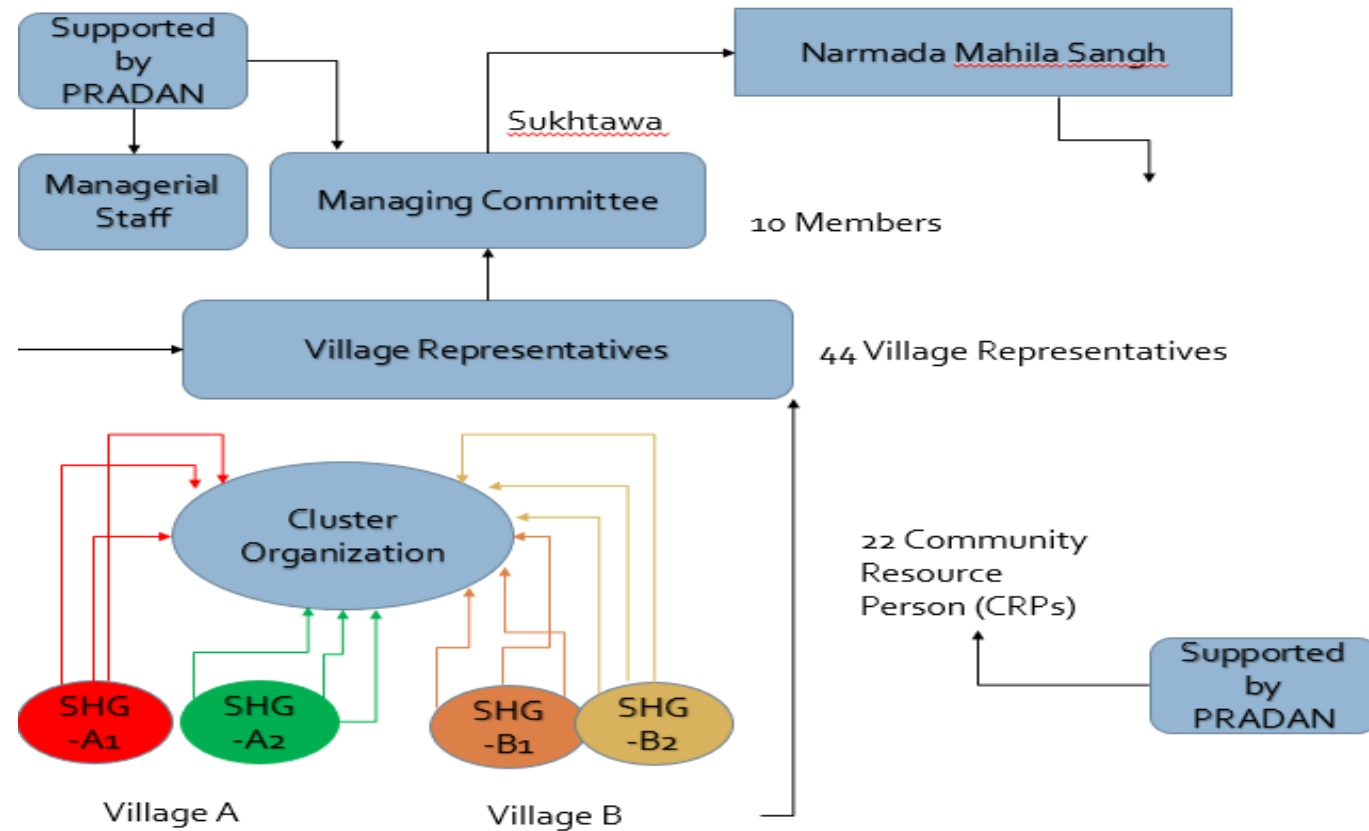
Consequences

- Norm Observance
- Family Support
- Network Mediated Benefits
- Restricted access to opportunities
- Restrictions on individual freedom
- Excessive Claims on Group Members
- Downward levelling Norms

Leaders in Collectives

- ▶ Conflicting requirement to function within as a mobiliser and outside as an articulator linking the structure to larger society (Gusfield, 1966)
- ▶ Weberian Classification of authority as charismatic, traditional and legal rational
- ▶ Charismatic leadership leads to neglect of social relationship between leader and followers. Followers are seen as lacking agency
- ▶ Structures of opportunity
- ▶ Emphasis in literature is placed on the method by which leaders infuse agency among the members, and thereby determine the direction of the organization

Organisation structure



Primary Inferences-I

- ▶ We categorise the set of incentives into three categories economic (direct and indirect), social and moral. In our understanding, motivation is what encourages a person to be a leader; incentives are what make her continue to work as a leader and perform diverse roles
- ▶ The studies from Kesla and Hazaribagh highlight the importance of economic incentives, over social and moral incentives in members taking up leadership positions in the collectives
- ▶ We aimed at differentiating between generalised altruism and group solidarity by analysing the responses on the behaviour of leaders towards the members of the collective and non-members
- ▶ Although at an abstract level, almost all the respondents agreed on the importance of generalised altruism in determining their motive for taking up leadership positions, a finer look at the data provides enough evidence to suggest that this, in fact, is not generalised altruism but a feeling of group solidarity with the other members in the collective

Primary Inferences-II

- ▶ Due to a considerable diverse set of social backgrounds of the members, the leadership position helped them enhance their 'status' not just within the collective but also in the immediate social context
- ▶ Additionally, the improvement of the economic condition of the family, through easy access to loans, also further enhanced their position within the household as well
- ▶ It was further affirmed, that such an improvement of social status is very closely associated with improvement in economic conditions of the families of leaders
- ▶ The non-homogenous character of the leadership in Kesla also gives rise to 'factions' among the decision making leaders.

Primary Inferences - III

- ▶ The members from the tribal community have expressed more importance to the feeling of generalised altruism than group solidarity
- ▶ While their affiliation to the leadership comes from group solidarity, they cite generalised altruism repetitively as their reason for taking up the leadership positions
- ▶ Distorted incentives structures within the collective
- ▶ A gerontological analysis of the motives presents several insights
- ▶ The older leaders of both the Kesla and Hazaribagh federation evoke memories of their association with the federation being centred on economic and social incentives

Primary Inferences - IV

- ▶ As the NGO had been carrying out livelihood based activities, the initial association saw an increase in the economic status of their households, even in the absence of a formal collective
- ▶ As most of these older leaders came from extremely low-income families and had gone through, abduction, child abuse they developed a tendency to find meaning and purpose to the activities about social issues

Discussion

- ▶ In the context of imbibed behaviour (outsider) transformation through persuasion, the role of key actors becomes instrumental in determining the rules of the collective
- ▶ These key actors, through the acquired agency, play a dynamic role in inducing the norms into the members and diffusing action within the collective
- ▶ However, these key actors are identified by the promoting organisations through various persuasions, ranging from the intuition of the professional's education standards of the members to a vague psychological analysis

Discussion

- ▶ Our analysis presents two assertions
- ▶ Firstly, the excessive burden of morality imposed upon leaders (thereby exemplifying their role as *Vanguards*), leads to a situation of burn out of motives among the leaders of the federation
- ▶ In a situation where incentive structures are not explicitly mapped out in the collective, and ambiguity of purpose exists between the collective and the promoting organisation, the leaders tend to divulge their inability to undertake concerted efforts to manage the day to day affairs in the absence of any direct economic incentive
- ▶ This becomes extremely important in the context of economic activities wherein economic activity might threaten the mutual trust among women in the federation
- ▶ The significant differences in motives of older leader's vis-à-vis the new further strengthen this assertion.

Discussion

- ▶ The second assertion pertains to the durability of the incentives that exist within the collective
- ▶ In order to define the very clear distinction between the role of a leader and member, specific incentives associated with these position need to be explicitly mentioned
- ▶ While boundary conditions for the collectives are elucidated, the member-leader distinction regarding incentives needs to be better institutionalised