

CHAPTER 6

PANCHAYAT LEADERS AND VILLAGERS - THEIR IDEAS- ASPIRATIONS AND EXPECTATION

The names and number of seats for the different constituencies in the Panchayati Raj election in the Kargari Anchal and the background of the candidates who contested from different villages for the different levels of the Panchayati Raj institutions have already been discussed. In this chapter, we shall first of all discuss the names and socio-economic background of the candidates for the different posts in the Panchayati Raj elections and then the ideas, aspirations and expectations of these elected leaders and also the villagers about the Panchayat and its functioning will be discussed. In order to identify the different classes in the villages data were collected from 100 villagers, covering the landless, submarginal farmers, marginal farmers, small farmers, and the big and very big farmers of the region. The details of the background of the elected leaders are given below in table 5.1.

The age groupwise classification of the members is given in table 5.2. It, more or less, indicates the age when they were elected, i.e., in 1978-79, when the election was held.

It clearly indicates a significant change in the age of present elected members, unlike the traditional type and previous panchayat members, majority of the members belong to 30 years or below age group. Members of the elder age group are characteristically absent.

The educational background of the elected members is given below in table 5.3:

Table 5.3

Educational Background of the (Present) Elected Members

Table 5.1

Name and Background of the Elected Candidates

| Name | Village | Political background | Elected for | Name of the constituency |
|------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Ajit Mahato | Sarakata | CPI(M) | Zilla Parishad | Anchal Kaggari |
| S.K. Sirajuddin | Beragari | CPI(M) | Panchayati Sanity | 'B' of Anchal-3 |
| Deman Hasda | Kandnasuli | CPI(M) | - do - | 'A' of Anchal-3 |
| Pranindra Nath | Haliasule | CPI(M) | Gram Panchayat | Haliasut |
| Manik Pratihari | Kaggari | CPI(M) | - do - | Kaggari |
| Mharat Mandal | - do - | CPI(M) | Gram Panchayat | - do - |
| Gauranga Mandal | Beragari | CPI(M) | - do - | Beragari |
| Mohini Polra | Alampur | CPI(M) | Gram Panchayat | Alampur |
| Gaur Mahato | Benasuli | RSP | - do - | Kapatkata |
| Upen Mahato | - do - | CPI(M) | Gram Panchayat | - do - |
| Jagannath Mahato | Barsole | CPI(M) | - do - | Bersole |
| Ratan Jena | Sangram | CPI(M) | Gram Panchayat | Sangram |
| Dharini Mahato | Sarabata | CPI(M) | - do - | Sangram |
| Duleraj Sorn | Gagnasuli | Independent | Gram Panchayat | Gagnasuli |

Table 5.2

Age Group of the Selected Members (Present)

| Below 30 Years | 31-40 Yrs. | 41-50 Yrs. | 51 Yrs. | Total |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------|
| 8 | 4 | 2 | - | 14 |

| Without any formal education | Up to Class IV | V-X Class | SF/HS/FU/Matris IA etc. | Degree and above | Total |
|------------------------------|----------------|-----------|-------------------------|------------------|-------|
| - | - | 5 | 5 | 4 | 14 |

So it is seen that among the recently elected members, there is none without any formal education. There is even none who have read only up to the primary level. The majority of the elected members have passed School Final, Higher Secondary, Pre-University etc. examination. Considering the backwardness of the region this is a fairly good trend. Here the educational background of all the family members (including the panchayat members) is given in table 5.4.

Table 5.4.

Educational Background of the Family Members of the (Percent) elected members

| No. formal Education | | | Having formal Education | | | Total | | |
|----------------------|--------|-------|-------------------------|--------|-------|-------|--------|-------|
| Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 | 27 | 37 | 45 | 29 | 74 | 55 | 56 | 111 |

The table indicates that the majority of the members male and female are educated and it is more conspicuous among the males where the percentage of literacy is as high as 82 percent. Among the females also it is fairly good considering the general backwardness of the region. Again one person was expected to have formal education, while others were either too young or very old. Among the females also the same trend is noticed in a few families. The bulk of the uneducated females come from some families, notable the Muslim and Santal families. In the 14 families, there were at least persons with degree or other qualifications.

The occupational background of the elected members and their families are discussed below :

Table 5.5

Occupations of the Elected Members (Present)

| <u>Service Exclusive</u> | <u>Cultivation</u> | | | <u>Teacher</u> | | <u>Day labour</u> | | <u>NAL</u> |
|--------------------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|----------------|------------|-------------------|-------------|------------|
| | <u>Excl.</u> | <u>Pr.</u> | <u>Sec.</u> | <u>Excl.</u> | <u>Pr.</u> | <u>Excl.</u> | <u>Sec.</u> | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 1 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

Table 5.6

Occupations of all the Family Members

| <u>Cultivation</u> | | | <u>Teacher</u> | | | <u>Service</u> | | | <u>Day labour</u> | | | | <u>Business</u> | | <u>Total</u> | | |
|--------------------|----------|----------|----------------|----------|----------|----------------|----------|----------|-------------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------------|----------|--------------|----------|----------|
| <u>E</u> | <u>P</u> | <u>S</u> | <u>E</u> | <u>P</u> | <u>S</u> | <u>E</u> | <u>P</u> | <u>S</u> | <u>E</u> | <u>P</u> | <u>S</u> | <u>E</u> | <u>P</u> | <u>S</u> | <u>E</u> | <u>P</u> | <u>S</u> |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 15 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 1 | - | 2 | - | 1 | 2 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 23 | 4 | 4 |

It is evident that the majority of the members as well as their family members follow cultivation either exclusively or primarily. In such a rural setting where scope for other occupations is limited, this is not totally unexpected. Some members as well as their family members, also follow other occupations like service, teaching which require formal education. There are again day labourers also among them.

Table 5.7

Number of Family Members & Earning Members

| Family Members | Earning Members | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Upto 5 | 3 | - | 1 | - | - |
| 5-7 | 3 | - | - | - | - |
| 8-10 | - | 2 | 3 | - | - |
| 10 - | - | - | - | - | 1 |

It is evident that there was only one earning member in most families. These are, however, mostly the nuclear families. In the other type, there are always more than one earning members and many of them follow occupations other than cultivation and thus do not exploit the major family resource, i.e., the land.

Out of the members, 11 persons were connected with a cooperative society and received loan from that source.

The caste/community background of the members indicates that there were five Mahatoes, two potters, two Santalas, one Napit and Muslim each. Thus there was none from the very low castes.

The class-category indicates that there were six big farmers, four small farmers, two sub-marginal farmers, and one marginal and landless each. Incidentally, it may be added here that the landless person is a school teacher and thus does not belong to the landless class in true sense.

The caste/communitywise distribution of population and the social background of the elected candidates (Table 5.8 indicate certain interesting sociological facts. In all the constituencies, except one the candidates were elected from the major castes and communities at the gram Panchayat level. Thus ten elected candidates out of eleven at the gram panchayat level came from castes/ communities which were numerically larger in the constituency. In case of the other seat, the candidate was elected from the major caste of that constituency. This is also true even in case of the candidates elected at the levels of Ancha lik Panchayat and Zilla Parishad. Except the Santals, there was not a single elected member from the other tribal group or very low castes. In fact, there was no candidate from these groups. The fact that too much emphasis on political background and ideology at least in the Gram Panchayat level, influenced by traditional social cleavages

indicates that in many areas elections were largely influenced by traditional social cleavages like caste and religion (Table 5.8 and 5.9). The win by the CPI(M) candidate from Sangram constituency who belongs to the Napit caste, is the only exception. Since there were only a few Napit families in the area, it probably indicates a voting pattern along political lines.

The class category of the population and class background of the elected members (Table 5.9) indicate that out of 14 candidates elected, the big farmers were more in number, but members were there representing all the categories. It does not necessarily mean that the big farmers were always elected. In fact, the number of candidates representing marginal, landless, and sub-marginal groups is good as compared to the big farmers which can be seen from the following table :

Table 5.8

| | Landless | Submarginal farmers | Marginal farmers | Small farmers | Big farmers |
|----------------------|----------|---------------------|------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Candidate con tested | 1 | 4 | 4 | 10 | 27 |
| Candidate elected | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 6 |

To explain this interesting phenomenon, we shall have to look to other factors notably the political affiliation. In this context, the political support of the political parties was the important contributing factor and the awareness about their/national policies was also indirectly linked to it. At the time of election, Congress (I) was not in power either in the centre or in the state, while CPI(M) was the main partner in the ruling Left Front Government of West Bengal. The result indicates that people did not support Congress (I) and as nearly all the candidates of Congress (I) were big farmers, they lost in the election. On the other hand CPI (M) had candidates from all sections viz. small farmers, sub-marginal farmers, and big farmers and most of them except one small and one sub-marginal farmer, which are thought to be their strong base, were elected. The wining of CPI (M) candidates specially at the higher levels, if Anchalik Panchayat and Zilla parishad indicates the influence of political parties. None of these candidates is a big farmer. One of them is an old political supporter of CPI (M) of this region. The reasons of election of the other candidates at the Gram Panchayat level besides political consideration were also their/ caste/community background. In fact, when caste/community and political support of CPI (M) were favourable the candidates always elected. Thus the

chance of a high clean caste candidate belonging to the big farmer group and also enjoy the support of CPI (M) had better chance of win when a poor member of low caste supported by CPI (M). At least in one constituency the importance and role of a traditional tribal leader and a big land owner has been noticed and in these two seats CPI (M) candidates lost the election.

The clear win of CPI (M) candidates indicates how state/national policies affect even at the village level. Since, CPI (M) was in power in the state, it had more political activity at the village level and thus exercised more influence. It does not necessarily imply that all the villagers have ideological involvement or have become committed to the ideas of CPI (M) all of a sudden. The big farmers, who supported congress become neutral or were supporting CPI (M) due to their class interest. Thus quite often a number of such people who were not involved with and party so far, became candidates of CPI (M). Unless and until one is aware of socio-economic system and political process, one may not fully appreciate these mobility and oscillation. And for this the simple correlation of caste, occupation, landholding factors with voting behaviour does not lead us any where and indicates the real process.

The Panchayat has got its own structure, constitution, scope, function and activities. Though the leaders were familiar with the structure, they did not seem to be aware of the constitution, scope, function, and activities carried on at the different levels of the Panchayat. The villagers, though are very much aware of the existence of the Panchayat only a few have adequate idea about its structure, scope, and activities. But both the leaders and the villagers were very much aware about the political background of the leaders.

The leaders, except the members of Zilla Parishad and Panchayat samity have no political background in the past. None except the leaders in the higher bodies had participated in the political activities in the past.

All the villagers except a few big farmers noted major differences in the functioning of the present Panchayat. They all noted that it is definitely more democratic in nature and different sections of the village population are consulted for the Panchayat's programme. However, the villagers do not have very clear idea about the suitable development plans and programmes for the over all development of the region.

The village leaders no doubt have clear idea about plans and programmes suitable for this area. Some of the village leaders suggested that drinking water and educational facilities should be extended more and more. Construction of roads, wells for drinking water, houses for the poor are some of the activities suggested and initiated by the local Panchayat.

Table 5.9

Constituencywise caste/community background of the Elected Candidates

| S. No. | Constituency | Caste/community familywise | | Caste/community background of the elected candidate | | | |
|--------|--------------|----------------------------|-----|---|-----|---------|---|
| 1. | Alempur | Baisnab | 6 | Sadgope | 78 | Sadgope | 1 |
| | | Dom | 36 | Santal | 1 | | |
| | | Goldsmith | 2 | Washerman | 16 | | |
| | | Hadi | 3 | Majhi | 27 | | |
| | | Karmakar | 1 | | | | |
| 2. | Beragari | Bhumi j | 10 | Santal | 20 | Potter | 1 |
| | | Muslim | 80 | Weaver | 4 | | |
| | | Potter | 39 | | | | |
| 3. | Barsole | Bagal | 3 | Ruidas | 5 | Mahato | 1 |
| | | Baisnab | 2 | Sadgope | 28 | | |
| | | Barbar | 3 | Sahis | 3 | | |
| | | Brahmin | 2 | Santal | 8 | | |
| | | Lodha | 50 | Sristikar | 1 | | |
| | | Mahato | 62 | Weaver | 1 | | |
| | | Washerman | 8 | | | | |
| 4. | Cagnasule | Santal | 173 | | | Santal | 1 |
| 5. | Hatissule | Bhumi j | 17 | Potter | 67 | Potter | 1 |
| | | Gandhabanik | 14 | Sadgope | 5 | | |
| | | Karmakar | 2 | Santal | 58 | | |
| | | Mahato | 20 | | | | |
| 6. | Kapatkata | Bauri | 1 | Mahato | 77 | Mahato | 2 |
| | | Hadi | 1 | Sadgope | 16 | | |
| | | Karmakar | 28 | Santal | 61 | | |
| 7. | Kapgari | Bagal | 4 | Dom | 7 | Sadgope | 2 |
| | | Baisnab | 3 | Kalu | 1 | | |
| | | Barbar | 7 | Majhi | 15 | | |
| | | Brahmin | 16 | Muslim | 5 | | |
| | | Bhumi j | 13 | Potter | 5 | | |
| | | Ruidas | 1 | Tanoli | 1 | | |
| | | Sadgope | 75 | Washerman | 6 | | |
| | | Santal | 14 | Weaver | 13 | | |
| 8. | Sangram | Baisnab | 5 | Lodha | 43 | Barbar | 1 |
| | | Barbar | 2 | Majhi | 1 | | |
| | | Chvatri | 1 | Mahato | 62 | | |
| | | Khandaia | 6 | Muslim | 17 | | |
| | | Karmakar | 6 | Sadgope | 1 | | |
| | | Kalu | 2 | Samata | 6 | | |
| | | Goala | 36 | Santal | 107 | | |
| Rajput | 6 | Weaver | 7 | | | | |

Table 5.10Constituencywise caste/community background of
the Elected Candidates of the panchayat Samity

| S. No. | Constituency | Caste/community familywise | | | | Caste/community background of the elected candidate | |
|-----------|--------------|----------------------------|-----------|--------|-----|---|---|
| 1. | Alampur | Bagal | 4 | Majhi | 42 | Muslim | 1 |
| | | Baisnab | 9 | Muslim | 85 | | |
| | Beragari | Barbar | 7 | Potter | 44 | | |
| | | Brahmin | 16 | Ruidas | 1 | | |
| Gagnasule | Bhumij | 23 | Sadgope | 155 | | | |
| | Don | 43 | Santal | 214 | | | |
| Kargari | Goldsmith | 2 | Tamoli | 1 | | | |
| | Hadi | 3 | Washemen | 22 | | | |
| | Kalu | 1 | Weaver | 17 | | | |
| | Karmakar | 1 | | | | | |
| 2. | Barsole | Bagal | 3 | Mahali | 20 | Santal | 1 |
| | | Baisnab | 9 | Maghi | 1 | | |
| | Hatissule | Barbar | 5 | Mahato | 202 | | |
| | | Bauri | 1 | Muslim | 17 | | |
| Kapatkata | Bhumij | 17 | Potter | 67 | | | |
| | Brahmin | 2 | Rajput | 6 | | | |
| Sangram | Chhattri | 1 | Ruidas | 5 | | | |
| | Gandhabanik | 14 | Sadgope | 50 | | | |
| | Goala | 36 | Sahis | 3 | | | |
| | Khandaist | 6 | Semata | 6 | | | |
| | Karmakar | 35 | Santal | 234 | | | |
| | Kalu | 2 | Sristikar | 1 | | | |
| | Lodha | 92 | Weaver | 8 | | | |

Table 5.11Constituencywise class/background of the
Elected Candidate of the Panchayat Samiti

| Constituency | Class Facultywise | Class background of the elected candidate |
|--------------|-----------------------|--|
| Alampur | LL - 131 Middle - 42 | MF - 1 |
| Berugari | MF - 359 B.F. - 34 | |
| Gagriasula | SF - 104 VBF - 18 | |
| Barsole | LL - 207 Middle - 444 | SF - 1 |
| Hatia Dule | MF - 137 BF - 31 | |
| Kapatkata | SF - 17 VBF - 15 | |
| Sangram | | |

Table 5.12

| Candidates and Booth | Votes Polled | Political Background | Remarks |
|-------------------------------|--------------|----------------------|---------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1. GAGNASULI BOOTH | | | |
| Saren Dubrari | 219 | Ind. | Elected |
| Hemteam Mohini Mohan | 120 | CPI(M) | |
| <u>Polled : 56.5 per cent</u> | | | |
| 2. HALIASULI BOOTH | | | |
| Palkanaital | 68 | Cong.(I) | |
| Pratekar Ratan Chandra | 2 | Ind. | |
| Dhanenda Nath Das | 148 | CPI(M) | Elected |
| Murmu Suklal | 53 | RSP | |
| Hemran Sitar | 95 | Ind. | |
| <u>Polled : 61 per cent</u> | | | |
| 3. KAFGARI BOOTH | | | |
| Karan Seenil | 148 | Cong.(I) | |
| Satra Sudhangan | 80 | Ind. | |
| Bej Rabindra | 169 | Ind. | |
| Bharat Lal Mandal | 236 | CPI(M) | Elected |
| Manik Chandra Pratikar | 220 | CPI(M) | Elected |
| <u>Polled : 71.8 per cent</u> | | | |

4. BERAGARI BOOTH

| | | | |
|-----------------|-----|-----------|---------|
| Khan Didar | 91 | Cong. (I) | |
| Gauranga Mandal | 212 | CPI (M) | Elected |
| Pal Nakul | 28 | RSP | |

Vote Polled : 55.16 Percent

5. SANGRAM BOOTH

| | | | |
|---------------------|-----|-----------|---------|
| Jana Ratan | 271 | CPI (I) | Elected |
| Tudu Ganesh | 191 | Ind. | |
| Das Prafulla | 27 | Cong. (I) | |
| Mallick Isa | 32 | Cong. (I) | |
| Mahato Dhaini | 266 | CPI (M) | Elected |
| Mahato Furnachandra | 13 | Ind. | |
| Saran Satyan | 253 | RSP | |

Vote Polled : 87.75 Percent

6. KAPATKATA BOOTH

| | | | |
|--------------------|-----|-----------|---------|
| Kirtti Dandapat | 95 | Cong. (I) | |
| Tudu Santan | 17 | Ind. | |
| Dandapat Saktipada | 77 | Ind. | |
| Satra Manik | 73 | Cong. (I) | |
| Mahato Upen | 134 | CPI (M) | Elected |
| Mahato Gaur | 161 | RSP | Elected |
| Mahato Birendra | 113 | Ind. | |
| Mahato Lal Mohan | 131 | RSP | |

Vote Polled : 66.75 Percent

7. BARSOLE BOOTH

| | | | |
|------------------|-----|-----------|---------|
| Jagannath Mahato | 163 | CPI (M) | Elected |
| Mallick Binod | 161 | Cong. (I) | |

Vote Polled : 54 Percent

8. ALAMPUR BOOTH

| | | | |
|---------------|-----|-----------|---------|
| Mandal Tarini | 168 | Cong. (I) | |
| Mohini Pariya | 211 | CPI (M) | Elected |

Vote Polled : 63.15 Percent