

The Marxist

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**Review of the Thirteenth West Bengal Assembly Elections
(Adopted by the West Bengal State Committee
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Thirteenth Assembly Elections Posed

The Toughest of Challenges Before Us

1.1 Given the background of the setbacks to socialism, the imperialist offensive in the quest for a unipolar world, the rise of reactionary and communal forces within the country, and the persistent weakness of the Left and democratic forces the nationwide, the spread of negative outlook amongst the people towards the 24 years of unbroken existence of the Left Front government was quite natural. A majority of voters were in the age group of 18-40 years. They do not possess any memories of political experience about any other government. The memories of the older generation had already started to fade. Despite the class-based and welfare-oriented success of the working of the Left Front, the reflection of the countrywide economic situation certainly cast its shadow in our state as well. The problem of unemployment has gone on to become more acute. This has created a feeling of frustration and restlessness among the youth. The inevitable commercialization of services like education, health etc, in the backdrop of increasing disparities has created a feeling of natural discontent among the poorer sections of the people. The ruling classes did their best to ensure that the blame for the social-economic system of India and the baneful policies they pursue fall on to the shoulders of the Left Front government. Unless the level of political consciousness of the people is heightened about the entirety of the socio-economic system and about Center-state relations, it becomes difficult to resist and contain such developments. An attempt was also made to transfer onto the Left Front government the blame for the negative attitude of the Union government about putting a stop to riverbank erosion and preventive measures against floods. Various reasons have led to the inadequacy of power supply in the villages as against the demand generated and this has caused discontent to grow to some extent. The opposition also used against us administrative lapses which led to the problem of non-availability of ration cards.

1.2 The ruling classes began resort to armed assaults against us after the realization that the Left Front cannot be defeated through political struggle. For this reason the ruling classes

focused on the Trinamul Congress from the time it was born as the alternative to the Left Front. The murder of our workers in covert attacks has been going on for the past two decades and during the tenure of the Left Front government, more than 3500 workers of our Party have been murdered. In the wake of the Panchayat polls of 1998, the attacks against our party under the leadership of the Trinamul congress took a serious and violent turn. The BJP, and in some instances the Congress became a party to these attacks against us. A situation where attacks by “storm troopers” comprising goondas, dacoits and professional, anti-socials that were carefully organised in armed groups. The flow of arms started from the jotdars and zamindars who found themselves cornered by the policies of the Left Front government. Choosing a few police station areas at a point where the borders of the districts of Midnapore, Bankura and Hooghly converge, they were declared as having been “liberated.” In a matter of a few months, more than a hundred Party workers were murdered, four thousand houses were torched, more than three thousand households looted, and crores of rupees extracted as “fines.” To spread this line of attack elsewhere, attempt was made to create terror in other districts as well. The BJP-Trinamul combine inducted a handful of retired IAS-IPS officers in their ranks and tried to influence the police and the general administration in their favour. US imperialism has attempted to try and finish off the Left in the past. They attempted a “probe” into the Nanur incident transgressing all diplomatic norms. After the staunch protest launched by the state government, the US ambassador was forced to apologise to the Union government for the incident. The Trinamul-BJP combine continued to try and exonerate US imperialism from all charges in this regard. Everybody now knows the real intent of the arms-drop made in Purulia some years back. The Trinamul-BJP alliance also kept on demanding clamping of Article 356 on West Bengal or at least to declare it a disturbed area. A series of Union government’s “fact finding” teams were sent to West Bengal although could not succeed in their devious game. The election campaign started with indecent and slanderous language and gestures and threats about finishing us off through armed attacks. The aim was to make the elections a farce and to create fear, anxiety, hopelessness among both the people and our workers. To make their activists desperate, the slogan “now or never” was raised. The process of murdering our workers and leaders was continued in the run up to and during the polls. They first struck an alliance with the Kamtapuris and raised the slogan of terror and murder: “*Kamta to the north, Mamata to the south.*” Despite the breakdown of understanding, the Trinamul kept supporting and aiding the politics of murder of the Kamtapuris.

1.3 The bulk of the media has long been fiercely against us. The role of a few mass-circulated newspapers and TV channels has

been alarming during the Assembly polls. They went ahead to fix the line of campaign of the opposition here. Their activities included: falsification and "creation" of news, publishing organised photo-shoots, suppression of news that would favour the Left Front, spreading the canard that West Bengal under Left Front has deteriorated into a hell compared to the rest of the country, assisting the creation of terror directly, identifying the terror created by the Trinamul Congress as "people wrath" and dubbing all resistance as "goondaism" on our part. They would describe the inhuman, fascistic, aggressive and violent leadership of the Trinamul Congress as honest, self-sacrificing, imbued with childlike simplicity, pro-poor and even as it heaven-born and run appropriate stories to prove this. The inevitability of the defeat of the Left Front was carried out via various opinion polls and surveys. The TV programmes allegedly aired to debate various issues were actually aimed at creating opinion against us. The mass media tried to whip up a storm about "change everything" against us and hoped us and hoped that the Party and the Left Party and the Left Front get blown away by that storm. One mass circulated publication gave out the slogan in their publicity hoardings of "turn over and see how everything has changed." A new definition of democracy was heralded as changing government and that without change there can be no democracy. They had no doubt that the Trinamul supremo was to become the new chief minister. It needs a separated booklet to detail out the vicious role of the media. We cannot claim that we could totally negate all the facts of the campaign against us. Still, the victory assumes importance in view of the united campaign conducted by the forces of reaction.

1.4 On the plea of political debate, some comrades kept alive factionalism. Their ambit of influence and activities became smaller following the unified programme adopted at the Special Party Congress. However, their factionalism started to get a planned organised shape. The state committee countered the situation with patience, self-control and firmness by drawing a line between the anti-party workers and those who were merely misled and set to remove all confusion. A former member of the Party's central committee first quit the Party and the former secretary of the south 24 Parganas district unit of the Party and a few district committee members of some other districts set up a new Party. The media did its best to give them importance and blow them out of all proportion.

OUR PREPARATIONS AND CAMPAIGNING

2.1 In this background, from the month of January this year, we started to activate the Party for the election campaign. The list of Left Front and CPI(M) candidates could be published by the end of February, more than two months before the polls.

2.2 The main planks of the political campaign were :

- The effect of the policy of liberalisation of the union government on industry, agriculture, services, unemployment etc and the responsibility of the Trinamul, the BJP and the Congress as in the government at the Central level.

- The efforts and the successes of the pro-people policies of the Left Front government in this backdrop and the limitations of the state government.

- The character of terrorist authoritarianism and the dangers it poses for the democratic rights of the people.

- The danger of communal and divisive forces in the backdrop of the gravity of class attack and the need for class cohesion. The danger imminent in the call given for a virtual re-partitioning of Bengal through an alliance with divisive forces in the name of a "*Bangla Bachao Front.*"

- The terrible role played by the media to throttle the truth.

2.3 Five booklets were published from the state center along with the manifesto of the Left Front. In carrying through the basic campaign matter and in the supply of facts, the role of Ganashakti and other Party publications remained important. The process was aided by the decision to publish a sliguri edition of the Ganashakti and the number of copies of Ganashakti in circulation went up. In view of the alliance formed between the Trinamul and the Congress by the middle of April, an "Appeal" by the Left Front was published. Various other campaign materials were published by the mass organisations and by the district committees.

2.4 Aiming at creation of a feeling that was positive about a win by the Left Front and about the electoral support of the Left front towards that victory, intensive campaign was carried out through smaller area-wise meetings in the urban and rural areas, contact was maintained with each voter, and coming face-to-face with the people, and this was done without ignoring the importance of large central rallies.

2.5 The workers' meetings, central and local were carried out at every level between January and March of 2001. With restriction on the public address systems being used before April 12 because of the secondary and plus two examinations, no big meetings were convened during this period and the exception was the large rally held at the brigade Parade Grounds on March 25. Speakers sent from the state center addressed more than 1500 meetings. Comrade Jyoti Basu put in an amazing amount of effort for his age. Among those who took part in the campaign were; Harkishan Singh Surjeet, Prakash Karat, Manik Sarkar, M K Pandhe, and Sitaram Yechury. Among others who took part in the campaign were Brinda Karat,

Subodh Roy and Janardan Pati. Laloo Prasad Yadav came to address some meetings from Bihar. Some student-youth leaders from other states also took part in the campaign.

ELECTION RESULTS AND SOME FEATURES

3.1 The elections results have been declared. In 1996, of the 294 seats, the CPI (M) had got 150 and the Left front in all 203. This time we got 143 seats and the Left Front, 199. Some seats were lost but by making a breakthrough in circumstances of stiff challenges, the success has been without precedent and encouraging. It has been proven beyond doubt that if we succeed in keeping our Party, dear to us all, free from the evil effects of the bourgeois society, we can certainly keep trust of the people and rely upon them. It may not be possible to make an assessment either at the state level or at the levels of the districts and localities right now. The district reports and the understanding of the state leadership allow us to make a few observations.

3.2 At the very outset, the party and the people of Midnapore, Bankura, and Hooghly need to be congratulated. Putting their life at stake, they took the people along with them and defeated the terror-tactics and put a stop to the spread of terror. This has had a positive effect on the elections this year. The challenge thrown to the so-called "Panskura line" encouraged the Party and the people throughout the state to rally around. Congratulations should be extended also to the Party and the people of north Bengal and of the district of Jalpaiguri who stopped the Kamtapuri attacks in their tracks and paid for the success in blood.

3.3 There were good gatherings in the campaign meetings and the people listened to the speakers to the end. Because of the posture of confidence and threat forthcoming from the Trinamul Congress, the spirited outlook of the Party workers and sympathizers made sure that the meetings went on becoming bigger. Even those who do not vote for us joined in to attend the meetings. They listened to whatever we had to say about liberalization, central budget, democracy, and our successes, although all this may not have translated in a big way into changing their opinion in our favour. But the powerful campaign energized the people and checked the fervour and the loquaciousness of our opponents and pushed them onto the defensive. The end result was positive.

3.4 Our campaign about the danger of authoritarianism did have an effect. The threats and low-grade comments of the Trinamul leader made our followers consolidated and determined. It also created worries among other sections of the people about the future. A section of well known artistes, litterateurs, and other intellectuals who do not otherwise take an active part on behalf of the Left Front did do so this time. There was thus an atmosphere created in our favour. It is also to be noted that while the threatening

pronouncements of the opposition went to increase the firmness of most of our workers and sympathizers, it also created indecisiveness among small sections of them.

3.5 The pro-people policy of the state government and the work of development left its positive impact on the people. The effect of developmental work is, however, dependent on circumstances. In an underdeveloped country as ours, the condition and the standard of living remain low. Thanks to the effect of the electronic media that bombard the people with a limitless vista of riches, the desire among the people living in an repressed state progresses by leaps and bounds. That is why it has been seen that the results of development would be negligible unless the need to sharpen political struggle in the task of raising the political consciousness of the people with regard to the present social-economic system, the policies of the central government, and the subject of center-state relations is properly emphasized and implemented.

3.6 What has further advanced the prestige of the Party and has had a positive impact on the people has to be seen in two developments. First, the open strife among the opposition on the issue of power. Second, the unprecedented manner in which Comrade Jyoti Basu chose to step down on health grounds out of his own volition and kept up campaign work, plus the acceptability among the people of Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee as the new chief minister.

3.7 The dubbing of floods in the wake of three continuous days of incessant rain as "man-made" and the unwillingness of the union government to send in assistance as well as the role played by our Party and the government in providing flood relief including rescuing of the stricken people have come worked to our favour for the polls.

3.8 The desertion by a small section and their setting up a new party and the backing they received from the media as far as publicity is concerned has also helped us. Their attack full of calumny on the issue of democracy in conjunction with the Trinamul Congress isolated them from the people. At first the workers of the Congress-Trinamul alliance assisted these elements in campaign work and in organization of rallies. While most of them subsequently chose to return to their own folds, those confused could not. Despite this, they could poll an average of 1500-2000 per candidate. In one or two constituencies they polled around 3000 and it should be noted that despite being an MP, Saifuddin Chaudhuri could poll just 4900 votes in a constituency that falls in his parliamentary seat. Not all the votes they polled were ours. But in south 24 Parganas and adjoining areas they did manage to ensure defeat of our candidates in five constituencies. By keeping the party unit inactive while pretending to remain with the Party and continuing to be the district secretary, the person concerned carried on preparations for a factional endeavour. Then he chose to decamp with documents,

funds, and other equipment of the party. The south 24 Parganas district committee did not have the time to regroup in such a short period before the polls.

3.9 Trinamul Congress gave the call for a grand alliance with BJP. Then they took in the Kamtapuris who subsequently walked out. With the Tehelka-exposure raising the stench of corruption, the Trinamul Congress as a protective measure and to gather the votes of the minority communities sought to dissolve the alliance with the BJP and went in for a fresh alliance with Congress and the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha. The new alliance concentrated their ire not against the BJP but against us. The initiative of the Trinamul to keep unclear the relation with NDA and their sudden preference for the Congress helped us to unmask the unprincipled self of the Congress-Trinamul alliance.

3.10 The Union budget was placed when the Trinamul Congress was in the NDA. This year's budget has unmasked the true face of liberalization and served to push the alliance and the BJP into a defensive position. The reaction to the budget, too, may have influenced the Trinamul Congress to change partners.

3.11 The closer the polls got the more uncontrolled the Trinamul Congress became in their insane megalomaniac actions. The state center of the Party openly warned the Party and the people that there was a real possibility of attempts to create violent events to try and influence the people. This was effective in blocking the plots.

3.12 Compared to the past more and more young men and women could be involved in the polls. If they are not made politically conscious, there is the possibility of their hopes being shattered and discontent being generated.

3.13 Women were more active organizationally this time. There was good attendance in the women's rallies as well.

3.14 the unity of the Left Front was better compared to that in the past. There was sincere urge for unity among the top leaders, but lower down this could not be implemented in some instances. We are the principal force in the Left Front and the Left Front cannot function without our sincere efforts. In some very minor instances, our sincere approach. The district committees, will have to enquire and make the correct assessment. There were differences of opinion in the RSP and the Forward Bloc. The disunity in RSP caused some losses to occur in Murshidabad and Jalpaiguri. At least one more seat could have been won had there not been inner conflict in the Forward Bloc.

3.15 The statistics of these elections have been published separately. In sum we can say that in comparison with 1996, our voting percentage decreased slightly by 0.33%. The percentage of votes polled by the Left Front has increased in Coochbehar, Howrah,

Maldah, Hooghly and Kolkata. The lowest increase is in Kolkata (+0.33%) and the highest in Coochbehar (+9.36%). In Coochbehar during the last Vidhan Sabha polls, Kamal Guha of Forward Bloc had an electoral understanding with the Congress after forming the Socialist Forward Bloc. This time he was back in the Forward Bloc and joined the Left Front. We have won all the seats of this district. The percentage remains as before in north 24 Parganas. In the other districts, our support base has eroded. Highest in Darjeeling district (-8.30%) and the lowest in Bankura (-0.3%). Our seats did not go down in Nadia but our vote share did which is alarming (at -6.16%). We have again won all the seats in south Dinajpore although our vote share has gone down. In 1996, Congress was unified and had gone in for an alliance with the Jharkhandis. Last time they polled 39.69% of votes. This time, there was unity between Congress, Trinamul, and Jharkhandis (seven seats). The alliance got 39.45% of votes. The addition of three rebel candidates' votes would increase the percentage slightly. BJP which got 6.45% in 1996, got 5.19% in these polls but their vote share in Purulia, Nadia, Darjeeling, and Midnapore has increased. The increase is by 2.32% in Purulia, and 0.37% in Midnapore. While their support has gone down among other sections of the people, they have tried to make some headway among scheduled tribes, Nepalis, and Bodos. This is seen in Jalpaiguri, Maldah etc.

3.16 The Kamtapuris did not get any seat and on the other hand we have managed to increase our support. The vote share of the Kamtapuris should not be ignored. They got 2.09% in Coochbehar for nine seats, 8.60% in Jalpaiguri for 11 seats, 6.85% in Darjeeling for two seats, and 2.82% in Maldah for two seats. Their workers did not slacken efforts despite the certainty of defeat.

3.17 Despite electoral defeat, the gatherings which turned up at the meetings of the Trinamul leader should not be ignored. And in spite of the belated commencement of the rallies, a large section would wait with patience. The number of the poor people in their midst, too, should not be glossed over. Anti-communist hostilities that arose out of local confrontations made them go in favour of the Trinamul Congress. They have also managed to get votes in good measure in some constituencies despite the lack of public campaign work.

3.18 The BJP could increase its vote share quite well in some seats. They have played the traditional communal card over and above their anti Left Front slandering. They launched attacks on the Gangas water-sharing agreement and infiltration. They also campaigned that the policy of liberalization was in the interest of the country. In some instances, their supporters supported the Trinamul; elsewhere they chose to attack the Trinamul.

3.19 We had changed candidates in 77 seats. Of these 44 were constituencies, which we had won earlier, and 33 where we had been

defeated in 1996. This time we won in 46. We lost nine seats that we had won earlier. We won in 11 seats where we had earlier lost.

ROLE OF THE VARIOUS SECTIONS OF THE PEOPLE

4.1 No uniform picture can be presented in this regard. There were differential outcomes in districts and within districts. Detailed and specific review alone can bring out the true picture.

4.2(1) We could generally maintain our support base among the khet mazdoors, the sharecroppers and the rural poor, but there was some erosion in some instances. The petty bourgeois frame of mind in the Party has resulted in a lack of interest in the khet mazdoor movement (with the exception of 4-5 districts) and this has slackened our bonds with them. There is information about instances of allurements for votes taking place.

4.2(2) In areas where khet mazdoor movement has flourished, there has been an increase of rights and not that much of political consciousness. This creates an opportunistic frame of mind and creates discontent among others. With a lack of workers who possess a class-based outlook, any interference in a bureaucratic manner in matters of opportunism makes the discontent increase. This is something that will be difficult to tackle unless we ensure the bringing up of party workers from the poor and then to equip them properly with political consciousness. The whole party has to give thought to this aspect.

4.3 In areas which were touched by the terror campaign and in areas that have shaken free from terror, the class-tenacity of the poor against the Trinamul alliance has also influenced various other classes.

4.4 The majority of the scheduled caste people are poor. We are their principal strength. We have won 67.68% of the seats while we have won 48 out of 59 (i.e., 80%) seats in the scheduled caste areas. We have an even greater amount of influence in the scheduled tribes despite the formation of the Jharkhand state and they have remained with us. We have won 16 of the 17 scheduled tribe seats i.e., 94%. We have lost the Kalchini seat due local causes. Among the scheduled caste's the Mundas and the Oraons are solidly with us. In one instance, however, our Santhal candidate has lost some votes to the Trinamul candidate who was an Oraon. But we did win this seat. The deshwali majhis of Midnapore, Bankura, and Purulia got confused on the issue of their recognition as scheduled tribe. A section of the Santhals too got confused over the issues of Alchiki script and Santhali language. The majority of the Rajbanshis have remained with us although support for the Kamtapuris must not be overlooked.

4.5 A section of the middle farmers remain with us. We need to do a booth-wise review to find the correct picture. With one or two

exceptions, ideological compulsions kept the rich peasants arrayed against us. Liberalization of the economy did create some doubts among them but not enough to change camps.

4.6 With the crisis overwhelming the industries, the campaign we have conducted against liberalization appears to have had little effect upon the organized and unorganized workers. The view has gained ground that the Left Front can take remedial measure and cure the problem if it so desires. It is difficult to demarcate which are the industrial seats and which are not. Still, in areas marked as industrial we got 42 seats as against 49 the last time around. Doubtless our support base among colliery mazdoors has increased. Some advance could also be made in the case of non-Bengali Hindu workers.

4.7 We believe that we could make some more inroads amongst the middle class employees in the public and private sectors. The support did not reflect the kind of leading role the advanced sections among them had displayed this time, however.

4.8 With a few exceptions, non-Bengali Muslims continued to support us. Asansol was an exception where we did not get the expected support. With the Hirapur seat left to the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), there was a rebellion amidst a large section of zonal and local levels. The Party took measures against then and a campaign was carried in the fullest sense in favour of the RJD candidate. Since the RJD candidate was a Muslim, there was slander campaign that the CPI (M) has deliberately let him down. This confused a section of the Urdu-speaking Muslims. The Bengali minority community remained with us because of class-based reasoning. Muslim fundamentalists were more active against us this year. Secret campaigning was carried out that Saifuddin Chaudhury had been removed because he was a Muslim and how the Left Front had done little for reservation for Muslims, and has interfered with the building of mosques. Some cases of fatwas being issued by the moulvis in a coordinated way has been noticed. Generally we have been supported well by the Muslims in general. Of the 41 MLA's of the minority community, there are 27 from Left Front, 10 from Congress, one from Trinamul, and 3 independent candidates who were disgruntled Congress candidates.

4.9 We have gained ground among the refugees who live in the refugee colonies although not generally among the people of erstwhile East Bengal.

4.10 We had expected our vote share to go up among the small traders of towns and cities. While this was not reflected everywhere, we did get their increased support in general.

LOW PERCENTAGE OF POLLING

5.1 There has been a notable downturn in the percentage of votes cast. It was 80.13% in 1996. This year it is 73.58%. The highest drop has been in Kolkata (-11.89%) and the lowest in north Dinajpore (-5.28%). This is noticeable in the background of intense political struggle. The report received from the districts show these features:

(1) There is some impact of the system introduced of photo ID cards.

(2) Those who do not traditionally vote for us did not go out to vote in disgust

(3) A section of supporters who are poor could not come back to cast their vote in time after having earlier gone out in search of work

(4) Threat of rain was a factor, as was the urgency to reap the boro crop. With votes being cast in machine there was no instance as earlier of voters standing in line with slips even after the scheduled time had gone by. This time most polling booths downed shutters at 4 in the afternoon catching some of our rural supporters like the khet mazdoors on the wrong foot. The number of such occurrences did not involve more than 20-30 voters per booth although in some instances the number was larger. The state committee could not issue cautionary notice earlier as it was not aware of this phenomenon. But it is to be noted that class tenacity has generally gone down among the poor.

MACHINE AND OUR SYMBOL

6.1 Symbols were printed on ballot papers hitherto. Our symbol was generally drawn in thin lines but this caused no problems. The plastic cover obfuscated the view of our symbol this time. Complaints started to come once the machine has been sealed, and by then it was too late. We need to draw our symbol in thicker lines.

6.2 The electronic voting machine was not fixed firmly on the table. We had trained our supporters to vote with the machine in the correct position and the buttons on the right side. Whenever the machine was turned away from this position, some amount of confusion would arise. We think that the plastic cover should be clearer and the symbol placed right under the switch.

LOCAL PARTY ORGANISATION AND ITS INFLUENCE

7.1 Such issues as those concerning the international situation, the national and state scenario, do have an effect on the voting. But the impact of local issues is much higher. Not just in the period of the election time but the stream of continuous political struggles have the necessary effects on the polls. The chief reasons behind the extension of support must be found in the level of political consciousness of the local leadership and the workers, the unity of

Party functioning at various tiers, clarity and honesty that mark the daily working of the Panchayats, municipalities, TU's and Kisan sabhas and other mass fronts. The indices also include respecting the democratic aspirations of the people, having a profile before the people that reflects Communist behaviour, and skill in conducting political-ideological campaign. The differences in the make up of the population in various areas too influences the polls.

7.2 The rectification campaign that was to be run from the Central and the state committee onwards has become formal and is not being implemented in practice and with sincerity. The problem runs deeper than what we had imagined it to be. There is no scope for any pause even in the midst of the pressure from undertaking other tasks. A non-personal and non-specific discussion would be of no help. The moment any deviation comes into observance, it should be discussed organizationally, criticized, and rectified. Through this process the Communist values of all workers would get improved.

7.3 Our attention was drawn to quite a few cases of those aspiring to be candidates and factional squabbles as a result, and a careless frame of mind on the part of the local leadership including district committee members as far as Party tasks are concerned. These are harmful portents and but for these developments we could have won a few more seats.

7.4 While this was not a general phenomenon, the fact remains that we have polled fewer votes in certain Panchayat areas where we hold office, and more votes in areas where we are not in office in the Panchayats. The lessons are easy enough to draw here.

7.5 In the backdrop of the Trinamul leader calling the floods "man made", the kind of rescue work our Party workers did has enhanced our prestige. The supply of relief material was organized in a much better manner with more materials reached out to the affected than any time in the past. Yet, the slightest of unprincipled deviation has made popular opinion go against us.

7.6 In conducting the intense campaign, we had called for face-to-face meets with the people during the village level meetings. This was not always done everywhere. The workers who deviated from principles did take part in the election campaign but dared not come face-to-face with the people.

7.7 The booth-wise results have remained at a lower level than that presupposed during pre-election booth-wise surveys. Except by conducting survey in the backdrop of campaign work, house-to-house approach, face-to-face discussions, dividing up the people "for and against" as per presupposition does not reflect the true picture.

7.8 Delays have occurred in many instances in mobilizing all sections of the workers in the election campaign work. In some instances pressures exerted by the initiative of the people have compelled the

workers to get down to work in larger numbers.

TASKS AHEAD

8.1 Detailed analysis and review is not possible at the level of either the state or of the districts. This is possible at lower levels via booth wise exercises. The task is to be completed on a strict time-schedule. It is not merely a task that explains our victories and our defeats. In 111 seats we have got over 50% votes. Yet, we have lost seats where we have polled more than 45% votes. We have also won in seats where our vote share has been lower. The basic issue to address is whether our support base is flourishing or eroding and if the latter among which sections of the society does it happen? The working people of villages and cities comprise our basic strength. We need to identify the gains and losses among these people over the years and at present.

8.2 A section of the working people have not merely turned away from us but have become inimical to us. Without local unprincipled behaviour, arrogance, wrong functioning such hostile frame of mind can never develop. That the confused people remain our class allies and not class enemies could not sink into the realization of the Party comrades despite our telling them so in the past. Following electoral reverses these sections remain dispirited. We need to approach them before they are made to become aggressive. We have to approach them not with anger and bitterness but with empathy of their close relations, and we must know the reasons why they have become frustrated and angry with us, and if wrong has been committed we must rectify it appropriately and on an emergent basis.

8.3 A petty-bourgeois-like hesitation lingers in the mindset while going ahead with organizing the khet mazdoors. Initiatives should be taken from the district centers of the party to do away with such tendencies. It is important and emergent to bring up workers from among the khet mazdoors and to put them through a process of political development.

8.4 Panchayat polls are but two years away. The process of booth-wise counting has made clear our position at the moment as far as vote share is concerned. On the basis of this, we have to strengthen our supervision on the working of Panchayats where we hold office. We have to provide special emphasis on doing away with all kinds of mistakes and errors and make sure of the participation of the people. The small issues that does not need great expense for tackling suitably must be resolved on an emergent basis. We need to discuss the working of the Panchayats again at the state level. We have also to identify the corrupt working of the Panchayats run by the opposition and highlight their misdeeds and lead popular movements against them by organising the people.

8.5 The number of unorganized workers spread over villages and towns in a distracted pattern is considerable. While there are formal organisations for them, very few of these organizations touch anything but the marginal fringes of the unorganized workers themselves. Without initiative on the part of the local party units it is not possible to either bring them within the fold of the organisation in a real sense and to make them conscious. Initiatives must be taken in this regard.

8.6 The assembly polls have seen the participation of very many new faces – both young men and women. We have train them up ideologically and politically otherwise there is the danger of losing them for lack of guidance or their becoming victims of despair. A study course must be drawn up from the state level to bring them into the process of educative discussion sessions.

8.7 There is a continuous erosion of idealism, Communist morality and democratic centralism within the Party organisation. Factional feuds continue to linger. These are dangerous portents. It is essential to commence inner-Party struggle against these tendencies. The process must be decided at and started from the state level. A syllabus must be drawn up to improve the standards of ideological and political standards and Party education given adequate emphasis.

8.8 The role of mass collection is crucially important for expanding our mass base and mass contact. Monthly mass collection must be started forthwith as a regular programme.

8.9 Trinamul Congress is the principle opposition group in the state and despite the fact that the BJP has not managed to win any seats, especially because of their position at the Center, the danger that they pose must not be underplayed. Slowly but steadily they have been engaged in spreading the poison of fundamentalism and communal disharmony. They are supporting the aggressive policies of US imperialism and becoming desperately implementing the policy of liberalization. Thus it would be wrong to slacken off the struggle against these policies.

8.10 The sale and circulation of Ganashakti was increased in a planned manner during the polls. Booth-wise sale of Ganashakti was undertaken at a number of places. The number of boards where Ganashakti was displayed too had gone up. But we find that there are payments overdue from sales and that the agencies have started to close down. The scale of sale of the special issues of the newspaper during the time of the elections must be continued. It is also important to increase the sale of the Hindi Swadhinta and Deshhitaisi. Further, it is not just a matter of increasing the sale and circulation but also about fostering the habit of reading the publications among party workers.