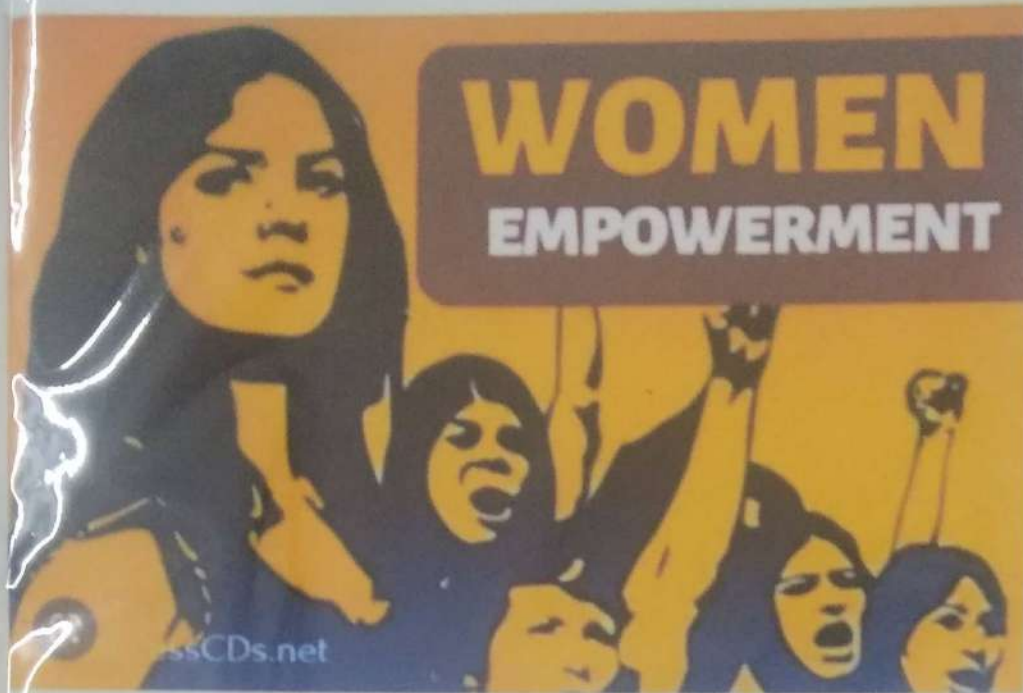


PROJECT ON

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN PANCHAYAT SYSTEM IN WEST BENGAL



DURGAPUR WOMEN'S COLLEGE

POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

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Debarati Ghosh (23.6.23)				

PROJECT'S TOPIC

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

IN

PANCHAYAT SYSTEM

IN

WEST BENGAL

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my ^{profound} gratitude towards many individuals as without their kind support it would not be possible for me to complete this project-report. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to my teacher, who gave me the golden opportunity in enhancing my hidden capabilities.

Unfortunately, I addressed several difficulties in coordinating the activities of the project but I am highly indebted to my supervisor Sir Bijoy Prasad Das for his guidance and constant supervision as well as for providing necessary information regarding the project and also for his support in completing the project.

I would ^{also} like to express my gratitude towards my classmates and subject matter for their kind cooperation and encouragement as they helped me a lot in completion of this project.

At last I end up by thanking all who helped me in finalising the project within the limited time-frame.

- Debarati Ghosh.

INTRODUCTION

Women consist of ~~the~~ half the population of our countries so there should be nearly half of women as well in the political sector. Panchayat is the backbone of many Indian villages since the beginning. Mahatma Gandhi was always in the support of Panchayati Raj and his dream came into reality with the 73rd Amendment Act also known as the Panchayati Raj Act. This Act provides a total of one-third of seats to the women including the reserved seats for the SC and STs. It also give one-third of the total no. of offices of chairperson reserved for the women.

The role of women in the Panchayat are:

- Participation in election
- Participation in social development
- Participation in decision-making
- Agent of social revolution
- Reducing corruption
- Reducing violence against women
- Reduction of violence against Dalits

So, under the 73rd Amendment Act, 1/3 of the seats is reserved for general scheduled, backward caste women in the village Panchayat. People have to volunteers to accept this reservation made for women & respect the status of women in society which is no less or than that of the males. New policies should be made to further more our conquest to equality between males & females and participation in activities in mutual understandings.

Initiatives that have been taken for action participation of women in Panchayat Raj Institutions are:

1. Steps have been taken to enhance the participation of women in higher numbers.
2. All the elected leaders should have a minimum of literacy to carry out guidelines & to educate the villagers about the PR-Act.
3. Literacy is a very major part to educate women about governance and increasing the higher participation of women in these sectors.
4. To develop women's leadership and communication skills by enhancing travelling.
5. Train them to speak up & find means to interface with the local-self governance to claim panchayat entitlements.
6. To educate women on the facilities and programmes of the state and central government have done for them.
7. To empower and motivate them to achieve big things by breaking all cultural barriers.



Girls In Schools
Balarpur RC Hindi High School

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main objective of women empowerment in the panchayat system in West Bengal is to create opportunities and provide equal representation for women in decisionmaking processes at the grassroot level. This is achieved through several aims including:

1. Increasing the participation of women in the electoral process - this involves creating awareness about the importance of voting & encouraging women to contest elections.
2. Enhancing the skills and capacities of women representatives in leadership, management & governance skill.
3. Ensuring gender sensitive development - this involves ensuring that development programs & policies are designed and implemented in a way that is inclusive of women's needs & priorities.
4. Promoting social & economic empowerment - this involves providing women with access to resources, credit, land & technology that enable them to be economically self-sufficient and socially empowered.

Overall, the aim of women's empowerment in the panchayat system in West Bengal is to create a more equitable and just society where women have an equal say in decisionmaking and access to resources.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN PANCHAYAT SYSTEM IN WEST BENGAL

The Panchayat system in West Bengal plays an important role in rural governance and development. Women Empowerment has been a key focus of the State Govt. in recent yrs. & it has made significant efforts to increase women's participation in the Panchayat system. The 1992 Amendment Act of Panchayat Raj Institutions in West Bengal was a significant step towards decentralization of power to the grassroots. It provided for the establishment of a three-tier Panchayat system consisting of Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti & Zilla Parishad. The Act introduced a number of measures to empower the Panchayats, including the devolution of funds, functions & functionaries to them. It also made provisions for the reservation of seats for women, SC and STs in the Panchayat bodies. Overall the Act aimed to promote greater participation of people in the governance process and to bring about a more equitable distribution of power & resources at the local level.

In 1993, West Bengal became the first state in India to reserve $\frac{1}{3}$ of all seats in the Panchayat system for women. This move aimed to promote women's empowerment & increase their participation in the decision-making process at the grassroots level.

The reservation policy has been a game-changer for women in rural West Bengal. It has provided them with a platform to voice their concerns & contribute to the development of their communities & challenge patriarchal norms. Women have been

Dalā Charat	Male	Female	Total
Zilla Parishad	1	1	2
Panchayat Samiti	10	5	15
Graam Panchayat	38	21	62
Total	49	29	78

Source: Paschim Burdwan, Zilla Parishad

elected to various positions in the Panchayat system including the positions of sarpanch, deputy Sarpanch and ward members. In addition to reservation the state government has also taken various other measures to empower women in the Panchayat system. It has provided them with training in leadership and management, financial management & other skills to enable them to effectively discharge their duties as elected representatives. Women have taken a lead role in implementing various development programmes, including sanitation, health, education & infrastructure development. Overall, the empowerment of women in the Panchayat system has been a significant step towards inclusive governance & development in rural West Bengal. It has provided women with a voice & a platform to contribute to the decision-making process and has resulted in positive outcomes for their communities.

Women Political participation in Panchayat System.

The Panchayat system in West Bengal has been hailed as one of the most successful models of decentralization of power in India.



Women as Voters

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Date

One of the most notable features of the Panchayat system in West Bengal is the significant participation of women in local politics. West Bengal has a long history of social movements & political activism & women have been at the forefront of many of these movements. In the Panchayat system, women have been given 50% reservation in the seats, which has resulted in a significant increase in their political participation. The participation of women in the panchayat system has brought about many positive changes. Women have been able to address the issues that are of particular concern to them, such as the provision of safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health care & education. However, despite these positive developments, there are still some challenges that need to be addressed. Firstly, women face significant obstacles in terms of access to resources and lack of financial resources. They also face social & cultural barriers which often prevent them from participating in public life. In conclusion, the political participation of women in the panchayat system in West Bengal has been a significant achievement. However, there is still a long way to go in terms of achieving gender equality & empowering women. The govt. & civil society need to work together to address these challenges & create an enabling environment for women's political participation.

Women as Voters

Women participation as voters in the panchayat system in West Bengal has been steadily increasing over the years. The Panchayat system in West Bengal has three tiers - Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti & Zilla Panchayat.

Teacher's Signature

and women has been given reserved seats in all three tiers. According to the data from the ~~state~~ state election commission, the percentage of women voter in the panchayat elections in West Bengal has been steadily increasing. In the 2018 panchayat elections, the percentage of women voters was around 51.5%, which is significant increase from the 41.6% recorded in the 2013 panchayat elections. The increase in women's participation as voters in the panchayat system in West Bengal can be attributed to various factors such as awareness campaigns, education and social and political empowerment of women. Overall, the reservation of seats for women in the panchayat system in West Bengal has played a crucial role in promoting women's participation in the democratic process and empowering them to make decisions that affect their lives & communities.



Women Representation in Assembly

WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN PANCHAYAT SYSTEM IN WEST BENGAL

In West Bengal, the Panchayat system plays a crucial role in the governance and administration of rural areas. The system consists of three levels of local self-government bodies: Gram Panchayat (village level), Panchayat Samiti (Block level) and Zilla Parishad (district level). Women representation in these bodies is an essential aspect of the state's democratization process and the empowerment of women. The West Bengal Panchayat Election in 2018 saw a significant rise in women's representation in local government bodies. As per the State Election Commission's data, the total no. of elected representatives in the Panchayat system was 58,692 out of which 41% were women.

Data sheet	SC	ST	GEN	Minority	Total
Male	8	-	1	1	10
Female	4	-	-	1	5
Total	12	-	1	2	15

Source: Paschim Burdwan, Zilla Parishad.

The Gram Panchayat level witnessed the highest percentage of women's representation with 41.98% of elected representatives being women. At the Panchayat Samiti level women's representation stood at 38.92% while at the Zilla Parishad level it was 31.24%. It is worth noting that the West Bengal govt. has taken several steps to increase women's participation in local governance. In 2003, the state govt. reserved 33% of seats for women in the Panchayat system, which was later increased to 50% in 2018. Despite the progress made in women's representation in the Panchayat system, there are still challenges to be addressed. Women often face barriers such as lack of education, social norms and financial constraints, that hinder their participation in the democratic process. Furthermore, some women elected representatives face resistance from their male counterparts in decision-making and implementation of policies.

In conclusion, the representation of women in the Panchayat system in West Bengal has seen significant progress in recent years. However, continued efforts are necessary to overcome the challenges faced by women in local governance and ensure their effective participation in decision-making processes.

WOMEN SELF-HELP GROUP IN PANCHAYAT IN WEST BENGAL

Main Activities

1. Implementation of *Susam Vivekananda Susamrohan Karmasandhan Prakashya (SVSKP)* to generate self-employment to the unemployed youth.
2. To provide interest subsidy for self-help groups through the scheme namely *West Bengal Susamrohan Sahayak Prakashya (WBSSP)* to reduce interest burden on loan obtained from Banks.
3. Training programmes especially for the unemployed youths of *Tangal Mahal* covering the districts of *Bankura, Purulia & Paschim Medinipur*.
4. Organizing state level *Sabamela*, *Kolkata Sabamela* & district level *Sabamela* to open up avenues for marketing the products of self-employed and for publicising and creating awareness of the quality, prices, usefulness of the products of SVSKP entrepreneurs, participated in other fairs and exhibitions.
5. To create and maintain sustainable livelihood of self-help group members so as to eradicate their poverty a project named '*Muktidhana*' has been launched.



Women Self-Help Group In
Ballypore Panchayat



Sukamni Vivekananda Sasanirbhan
Karmasamethan Prakalpa (SVKSP)

1. Sukamni Vivekananda Sasanirbhan Karmasamethan Prakalpa (SVKSP):
The flagship scheme "Sukamni Vivekananda Sasanirbhan Karmasamethan Prakalpa (SVKSP)" all over the state to create self-employment opportunities for unemployed youth, including members of backward classes, minorities & women all over the state. Unemployed youths on fulfillment of certain criteria laid down in the scheme are helped out to start - individually or group enterprises with bank finance. The main objective of the scheme was to generate self-empowerment in the state. The unemployed are identified and wherever possible are treated before they come up with their projects for institutional finance whereby subsidy provided to the entrepreneurs by state government.

2. West Bengal Sasanirbhan Sahayak Prakalpa (WBSSP): In order to provide relief to the interest burden on the Bank loan availed by the self-help groups the state govt. has introduced the WBSSP scheme. According to this scheme from 01/01/2014 the govt shall provide an interest subsidy to the eligible SHGs on a portion of the interest charged by commercial, Regional Rural and Cooperative banks on the Bank loan. Considering that the Bank, is charging interest @ 11% p.a. on the loan component of SHGs, the govt shall subsidize interest component of the loan @ 9% p.a and the beneficiary has to pay the rest part @ 2% p.a in order to streamline the system, it has been decided by the govt. that the Banks will submit the claim of subsidy electronically to West Bengal Sasanirbhan Karmasamethan Ltd. who will verify the status and make a payment directly to the accounts of the eligible SHGs through RTGS/NEFT.

3. Skill Development Training of SHG members & enterprise promoters

With a view to create employment opportunity upgrading the skills, developing qualitative standard of the products of self-employment entrepreneurs the Development of SHG & BE has been organising training programmes on various trades through.

- District level functionaries
- West Bengal Surajgan Corporation Limited (WBSCCL)

Several number of trainings have been imparted on the following subject: Tailoring, soft toy-making, Zori Craft, Floriculture, Jute products manufacturing, Good farming, Computer Application, Handmade Paper Bag Making, Napkin making, Organic Farming, industrial hand gloves making, ornamental candle making, Agarbatti Making etc.



Skill Development Training in Ballarpur Panchayat

Thrust for training in Jangal Mahal areas of the State with a view to create employment opportunity and to develop qualitative standard of the products of the SHGs special training programmes have been organized in 23 blocks of 3 districts namely - Purulia, Bakura, Paschim Medinipur in Jangal Mahal. Training have been imparted on Production of Herbal Dye from flowers, making, making varied products from Balsui grass, making quilt broom, Hembeather, Plates from sal leaves, Eucalyptus oil extracting, Designer Musk making.

4. Organizing Fairs and Exhibitions: Fairs and exhibitions are organized on regular basis to open up avenues for marketing the products of self-employed entrepreneurs to establish their linkages with potential buyers apart from publicizing and creating awareness regarding quality, prices and usefulness of the products of the SVSKP entrepreneurs. The SHGs not only succeeded in selling their merchandise considerably but also a majority of them succeeded in establishing links with some business houses, wholesalers and eminent persons of the marketing world for future sale of their products through them all the year round. Cultural programmes were also held every evening to make this fair more attractive. A few selected SHGs and individual entrepreneurs take part in India International Trade Fair every year wherein the products specially the innovative ones manufactured by the SHGs and self employed entrepreneurs were showcased and purchased by buyers from all sections of the society of Indian capital city and also buyers from outside the country. Apart from this, a large no. of SHGs take part in the fairs organized by different state Government Department. Various fairs organized by NGOs etc.



Muktidhara

5. Construction of Training-cum-Marketing complex (KARMA TIRTHA) under State Plan: The Department has undertaken a programme on setting up of projects of Training-cum-Marketing complex (Karmatirtha) in the district and sub-divisional headquarters under State Plan to facilitate training of SHGs for skill development and for marketing of their products.

6. Muktidhara (Sustainable Livelihood Project):

The Department undertook a sustainable livelihood project named "Muktidhara" during 2012-18. It has been initiated in Purjola and Pashim Medinipur district to create and maintain sustainable livelihood of 346 members as to alleviate their poverty and to develop them economically. The project is going to be implemented in 7 more districts of the state namely Hoshang, North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas, Nadia, Murshidabad and Bardhaman.

Financial Help through Self-Help Group in West Bengal

Purchase of Loan

- i) The purchases for which the group will lend to the members should be left to the common wisdom of the group.
- ii) Loans to self-help groups are purpose neutral loan. Bank shall embrace concept of Total Financial Inclusion & meet the entire credit requirements of the SHGs members namely:
 - (a) Income generation activities
 - (b) Social needs like housing, education, marriage etc.
 - (c) Debt swapping. Eligible SHGs can be financed directly and also under the following products which covers the housing needs, income generating activities & also have component for consumption to fulfil entire credit requirement of SHG members.
- iii) Sanction of cash credit limit for 3-5 yrs based on expected future saving corpus of SHGs.
- iv) Sanction of term loan for project based requirement of SHGs.

Features:

i) Loans to SHGs are provided preferably in the form cash credit and term loan as per requirement of SHGs. Sanction of a cash credit/overdraft system of lending for SHGs for a longer operational tenure of 3-5 yrs may therefore be adopted to permit SHGs to have longer loans in line with increasing pooled savings. This approach will provide considerable flexibility to SHGs in meeting their frequent needs as well as help them in reducing their cost of borrowings.

ii) ~~However~~ ~~the~~ ~~limit~~. The limit so sanctioned will be reviewed each yr and disbursement limit may be increased in the ratio of saving corpus as prescribed by RBI. At the time of annual review, it should also be ensured that all or at least 30% of the principal draws during the operational yrs are repaid besides remitting of monthly interest.

However in those governmental schemes which have bank aided subsidy and release of subsidy is contingent - on repayment of term loans the SHGs can be extended term loans. The term loans can also be given to those SHGs in such cases where all the members of the group are engaged in the same activity and the loan from the bank is taken to undertake this activity by the group. The SHGs will get cash credit limit in all cases other than mentioned above. The SHG members inter-se will get a term loan from the group. Repayable in monthly/quarterly/half-yearly instalments in 3-5 yrs coinciding with cash flow of the activity undertaken by the group.

Loan Disbursement: Loan amount can be disbursed fully in cash. All transactions are routed through the saving bank account of the SHG.

WOMEN EDUCATION IN WEST BENGAL

All-round development of the state is possible only when girls are ahead in social, economic and educational fields. Even today in several parts of Bengal, underage girls are given a thumbs up to the law. Because if we look into it, it will be understood that their economic condition is responsible for this. Girls are the only ones who can stand against the growing oppression of women. So they need to be established in terms of education as well. West Bengal Government has launched a bunch of projects which think about the development of the mothers & sisters of Bengal. The ~~first~~ scheme launched by the West Bengal Govt. are-



Kanyashree Scheme

Kanyashree Scheme: The Kanyashree scheme of West Bengal is a state initiative for girl child schemes designed to improve the status as well as the well-being of girls especially those from underprivileged socio-economic classes. The Kanyashree scholarship is ₹ 12,000 per annum for girls between the age of 13 and 18 yrs along with a one-time grant of ₹. 25,000 for girls between the age of 13 and 19 yrs.



Sabuj Sothi Scheme

Sabuj Sothi: The Sabuj Sothi scheme provides bicycles to students of class IX to XII studying in government schools. The aim of the scheme is to improve school attendance and physical fitness of students.

Yuvashree: The Yuvashree scheme provides financial assistance to unemployed youth aged 18 to 45 yrs. The scheme aims to promote self-employment and entrepreneurship.

Banglora Juba Shakti: The Banglora Juba Shakti scheme aims to provide skill development training to the youth of the state. The scheme provides training in various fields such as healthcare, tourism and IT.

Shikshashree: The Shikshashree scheme provides scholarships to Scheduled caste and Scheduled tribe students. The scheme aims to promote education among marginalized sections of the society.

Humanitarian Scheme: This scheme provides financial assistance for education, training and livelihood assistance to disabled persons in West Bengal.

Student Credit Card: Student Credit Card is a scheme offered by the govt. of West Bengal to lend up Rs.10 lakh to the students of our state for their higher education and better future at an interest rate of 1% per annum.



Shikshashree Scheme

REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM CONTROL FOR WOMEN IN WEST BENGAL

Since 2011, the Trinamool Congress Government, led by Mamata Banerjee, has stressed on the need to develop facilities and introduce schemes and programmes especially for women-tee in the areas of livelihood, health, social upliftment, law enforcement or accommodation. Bangla is number one in the country in terms of empowerment of women.

The government has ensured optimum help for all aspects of women's health, the important ones are given below:-

Waiting Huts: waiting Huts are residential medical facilities including adequate diets, available free of cost to pregnant women living in far-flung rural areas to enable institutional deliveries.

Bangla Matri Prokhalpa: Under this scheme, which came into force on January 1, 2018, for their first child, mother would receive from the government in three instalment a total grant of Rs. 5000 with Rs. 1000 being paid immediately on birth of the child. The money would be transferred directly to the bank account of the mother. The grant is being given to ensure the growth of a healthy child.



Waiting Huts for Pregnant Women

Mother and Child Hubs: Thirteen Mother and child Hubs (MCH) are being set up for ensuring qualitative & quantitative improvement in maternal and child services in hospitals with high case load.

Human Milk Bank: In August 2013 the govt had launched India's first Human Milk Bank named "Madhu Sheba" by the chief Minister at SSKM hospital. Babies who are pre-maturely born or are of very low birth weight - or whose mothers are unable to feed them directly can be recipients of the banked milk.

Health Workers: ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) and ICDS (Integrated Child Development Scheme) workers, though appointed under the National Rural Health Mission (NHRM) are paid by the state Govt to raise their standards of living the government last year raised their salaries.

Nurses: Since 2011, the government has set up 24 nursing training schools, for conducting General Nursing and Midwifery (GNM) courses. The best-performing nurses (and doctors) of State Govt facilities are awarded the Swasthya Puraskar.



Mother and child Hubs



Accredited Social Health Activist

Hike in Salaries: From October 1, 2018 for the 60,000 ASHA workers, monthly salary was raised from Rs. 2000 to Rs. 3000 while for the 2.3 lakh ICD workers many of whom are women, monthly salary would go up Rs. 1000.

Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) is a trained female community health activist selected from the community itself and accountable to it. The role of an ASHA worker is perceived to be more of a link worker/facilitator rather than a community health worker or a social activist. Although the primary focus of ASHA's work is on mother and child health issues, they are also entrusted with other public health activities like facilitating govt. initiatives to prevent and control of communicable and non-communicable diseases under NHM. ASHA will be a health activist in the community who will create awareness on health and its social determinants and motivate the community towards health planning and increased utilization and accountability of the existing health services. ASHA will take steps to create awareness and provide information to the community on determinants of health such as nutrition, basic sanitation and hygienic practices, healthy living and working conditions, information on existing health services and the need for timely utilization of health and family welfare services.



Anganwadi Scheme

Anganwadi Scheme: An Anganwadi is a type of normal child care centre in India. They were started by the Indian Government in 1975 as part of the Integrated Child Development Services program to combat child hunger and malnutrition. An Anganwadi centre provides basic health care in village. It is a part of the Indian public health care system. These centres provide supplementary nutrition, non-formal pre-school education, nutrition and health education, immunization, health checkup and referral services and of which the last three yrs are provided in confluence with public health systems. The centres are may be used as depots for oral rehydration salt, basic medicines and contraceptives.



Ballarpur Village Panchayat
Office



Ballarpur Panchayat
Chief's
Room

FIELD SURVEY OF BALLARPUR GRAM PANCHAYAT IN WEST BENGAL

Visiting Ballarpur Panchayat under the initiative of political science department of Raniganj Girls College is done.

A field survey is conducted to understand how the empowerment of women has been implemented in the panchayat. Students and Teachers of political science department participated in this program.

Teacher Sucheta Kundu, Deepti Mondal, Syed Kuseem, Zinnat Akbar and Teacher Gopinath Ruidas participated. There is a strong enthusiasm among the students. Mamata Devi, the chief of the Ballarpur Panchayat said the panchayat was giving an with 5 members. After the next election, the new board will be with 5 panchayats.

Voters Number 1. This panchayat with four mouzas is Ballarpur Baklanagar Raghunath Nupur.

5% Save Female and Scheduled Caste have been objective for the tribal community. Women have taken plans to self-reliant.

Self-Reliant groups under the Ballarpur Panchayat: There are 3 members of each group 1 to 5. These self-reliant groups have been associated with the schools mid-day meal project.

the hospital has been involved in the cautions and the school children's school dresses have been added. The groups are given a loan at a rate of two percent so that they can be self-reliant.

Education Centre: Twelve non-paying primary schools three higher secondary schools including one for Hindi speakers.

Health Centre: There are 3 sub health centres, Ballarpur has a Primary Health Centre. There are 32 Anganwadi Centres and two child Education Centres. Plans for Afforestation are taken up in Panchayats. There are two mango orchards. Among them, Ambagan has been recognized as a Biodiversity Park by the State Government.

Annual Income: is the Panchayat is 70 to 80 lakhs.

Gram Samad and Gram Sabha meet regularly.

Problem: The problem of drinking water is obvious. Drinking water has not yet been supplied from house to house. Solar submersible pumps have been set up to solve this problem in the Nupur and Baklanagar tribal neighbourhood.

Pollution has appeared in this panchayat as a terrible



Ballarpur Gram Panchayat Visit.

পঞ্চায়েত পরিদর্শন

▶▶ **স্থান:** রানিগঞ্জ গার্লস কলেজের রাষ্ট্রবিজ্ঞান বিভাগের পক্ষ থেকে বুধবার ৩ই বিসময়ের পড়ুয়াদের বঙ্গতপুর পঞ্চায়েত কার্যালয়ে পরিদর্শন করানো হল। এই বিভাগের শিক্ষিকা সূচতা কুন্ডু জানান, নারী ক্ষমতায়ন কী ভাবে পঞ্চায়েতে কাজ করছে, সে বিষয়ে কর্মসূচি নিয়ে যিয়ে পড়ুয়াদের দেখানোই উদ্দেশ্য ছিল। এই পঞ্চায়েতের প্রধান সমতা প্রসাদ।

In Newspaper Ananda Bazar
Raniganj Girls College Pol. Sci Dept
Panchayat Visit

problem. As there are many small factories in Mangalpur area under this panchayat, the smoke emitted from the factories is spreading excessive pollution in the environment. Afforestation is decreasing in comparison. A tree plantation plan has been adopted to address the problem but it is not sufficient.

Income Source: The Panchayat has build a marriage hall to generate income. Rented for weddings and various festivals. The water supply is also made in exchange for money by making a tank of drinking water. ATM has been set up at the Panchayat office. Taxes are also collected from different factories. It is associated with home and land tax.

Teacher Susheta Kundu said that the empowerment of women in the Panchayat has brought women a lot more courageous and determined. As the problem of drinking water and pollution in the area is not resolved before the next panchayat elections, their anger will be accumulated in the area. A suitable plan should be taken to solve this problem immediately. And this problem must be solved by the beginning of summer itself.

CONCLUSION

In West Bengal, women's empowerment in the Panchayat System has been a major success story. The state has implemented a 50% reservation for women in the Panchayat System, which has resulted in a significant increase in the number of women participating in local governance. As per the latest data, more than 90% of the Panchayats in West Bengal have women in leadership positions. This has led to the development of a more inclusive and gender-sensitive approach to decision-making at the local level. Furthermore, it has given women the opportunity to participate in the development of their communities and has helped to reduce gender inequalities. The Panchayat system in West Bengal, therefore, serves as an excellent example of women's empowerment and gender equality and other states can learn from its successes.

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