

0314. Report on the Gram Panchayat 2000 Elections (Mar 2000)

1. THE BROADER CANVAS

1.1. Preparations for GP'99 Elections

In early 1999, all the village level Coolie Sangha Unit (CSU) and Mahila Meetings spent many weeks making preparations for the then slated GP'99 Elections.

- It was decided that ADATS would have no role whatsoever in village level decisions on contests, candidate selection, and forming local alliances. Our role would be confined to monitoring and providing the CSUs with hard facts and figures.
- Cluster functionaries carefully studied earlier writings on the Mandal Panchayat Elections (*Documents of ADATS – Book 2* dated May 1987) and GP'93 Elections (*Documents of ADATS – Book 4* dated February 1994) and identified areas that they needed to correct/strengthen.
- The CSUs selected tentative candidates belonging to different categories from among themselves. When a suitable candidate was not found within the membership of the CSU, they chose someone from the neutral population. In this manner, a loose network of village level Allies, as different from established party formations, was formed in the different taluks.¹
- The Taluk Coolie Sangha Meetings prepared a Manifesto and placed it before Member Coolie families as well as non-CSU voters. While this Manifesto had many village variances, some of the common promises were:
 - Immediately upon winning, elected GP Member would declare their present level of income and assets.
 - Elected GP Members and their family members would not undertake contract works.
 - Total transparency in the financial matter of the Gram Panchayats.
 - Women's participation in *Gram Sabhas* would be more than token or nominal.
 - Members found inactive or corrupt would be forced to resign their seats, and the right to recall would be liberally exercised.
 - An overt preference would be given to non-CSU persons when deciding on government sponsored anti-poverty benefits.

But Gram Panchayat elections were arbitrarily postponed by the then State Government at the last minute. The Coolies were not unduly worried. They already had the opportunity to state the type of grassroots democracy that they believed in, and this was readily accepted by the neutral population.

1.2. State and National Elections in September 1999

In the meantime, state and national elections were held in August-September 1999. At Chintamani and Bagepalli, the overwhelming majority of the electorate (including the newly formed Allies at the village level) felt that established national parties had come to some sordid arrangement amongst themselves and were together subverting democracy. Spontaneous

¹ This network was to work as a combined force in the state and national elections of August-September 1999.

popular protest spread like wildfire throughout the 2 taluks/MLA constituencies. But they could not be effectual unless the Coolie Sangha supported them.

Each and every CSU and Mahila Meeting discussed this peculiar development and, after very careful deliberation, decided to give a lead to the popular protest in these 2 taluks, while maintaining their links with the established national party in Chickballapur and North Sidalaghatta. The voters were jubilant, but the Coolie Sangha was placed in an almost impossible position of having to support 2 MLAs and 2 MPs from a national party and another 2 MLAs who stood against the official candidates as rebels. No one thought that they could pull it off. But the frank and open manner in which the situation was placed before the voters was accepted. All 4 MLAs and 2 MPs supported by the Coolie Sangha won.

1.3. Alliances made by the CSUs for GP'2000 Elections

When the new State Government was installed in October 1999, one of their first declarations was that the much delayed elections would be held. The ordinance passed by the earlier Government was revoked, and GP'2000 Elections were declared for 23 February 2000.

In February 1994, when analysing the GP'93 Elections, we had stated that civic bodies are not the idyllic vehicles of self-government that many of us imagine them to be. They are the first rung for aspirants to step on in order to fulfil larger electoral ambitions. Even a national party with weight and consequence is quite unable to reign in its cadre when the lust for power sets in during electoral scrambles.

But this astute truism did not prevent the CSUs from making a serious bid to capture the Gram Panchayats. They realised that they had the strength to do more than merely make a statement of presence, but geographic coverage was the inhibiting factor. They knew that it would be a utopian fancy to contest the GP'2000 elections alone, without any electoral understanding with the neutral population. They revived the village level alliances that had been forged in early 1999, took the lead in villages with a CSU presence, and left it to their Allies in the rest of north Kolar district.

- Since their mass organisation was active on a day to day basis in about half the region, they believed that they were best suited to give the lead. By and large, the neutral population of villages with functioning CSUs accepted this stance.
- In villages without CSUs, the wider presence of the Coolie Sangha did have some overall impact. But, overshadowed by parochial issues and local personalities, such impact was less than during the just concluded state and national elections.

In 3 of the 5 taluks, these village level Allies formed themselves into loosely knit political formation. In 2 more taluks, after making their own electoral calculations, the established national party desisted from fielding their own candidates. Instead they lent support to the village level Allies of the CSUs.

A 3-fold CSU objective emerged for the GP'2000 Elections:

- de-party-politicise local body elections;
- propel their village level Allies into power and, at the same time, keep a significant control with themselves; and
- consolidate their position as a grassroots mass organisation in 5 taluks of north Kolar district.

1.3. Drought, Famine & Uncertainty

With rains failing for 3 successive years, near-famine conditions prevailed in most of north Kolar district. Already, long before summer had set in, irrigation tanks were dry, borewells

had failed, drinking water problems had started, and there was hardly any fodder. Nearly all the Coolie families had disinvested their hard earned assets, a large number had migrated in search of seasonal labour, elderly people had been abandoned, children went to school hungry, susceptibility to malaria, paratyphoid and TB had increased. CCF Overdue had mounted and Sangha Tax collections declined.

ADATS was not in a position to intervene because of problems that the Consortium had run into with the European Union. Salaries had to be cut, administrative expenses slashed, jeeps and motorcycles grounded, discretionary assistance stopped, and worst of all, it was not possible for us to implement life saving DLDP works. An air of uncertainty loomed large while our northern partners negotiated with the EU.

This pallor of gloom had an implication for the GP'2000 Elections. The voters, especially the neutral population who were otherwise inclined towards the CSUs, suspected it's carrying strength. We shall, later in this Report, examine how this effected the final outcome in particular Polling Booths.

1.4. Electoral Strength of the CSUs

This part of the Report should be read with extreme caution. We do not want to mislead the Reader that the CSUs actually sat and made calculations on a sheet of paper before embarking on their venture to capture the Gram Panchayats.

Instead these calculations should be read as a post-event attempt, on our part, to rationalise the individual village level grassroots processes that led hundreds of CSUs to arrive at near similar assessments of their capacity to contest the GP'2000 Elections.

It is inconceivable that the implications of these figures did not seep into the collective sub-consciousness of Coolie Sangha functionaries who alone, along with the voters, shaped the entire GP'2000 strategy. Each and every CSU and Cluster had a finely developed tip-of-the-fingers sensitivity about the exact number of votes that they could muster.²

1.4.1. POPULATION & GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE

There are a total of 97 Gram Panchayats in the 5 taluks of north Kolar district, with a total of 1,361 seats for as many elected GP Members, covering 1,175 villages. Some seats are shared by 2-3 villages, while a few have more than 1 seat per village.

GP Seats in 5 taluks

| | Bagepalli | Chickballapur | N. Siddalaghatta | Chintamani | Gudibanda | Total |
|---------------------------|------------|---------------|------------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Number of Gram Panchayats | 23 | 22 | 11 | 34 | 7 | 97 |
| Total Seats | 342 | 309 | 148 | 461 | 101 | 1,361 |

The Coolie Sangha does not at all exist in 15 GP's. Even in the remaining 82 GP's, there are no functioning CSUs in many villages, leaving 861 seats uncovered. CSU presence exists only in 500 GP seats. Seat coverage thereby works out to 36.7% of the geographic area of the 5 taluks of north Kolar district. We will come back to coverage figures in a moment.

² Over the past 22½ years, we have inculcated not just the structure and discipline that created a cohesive mass organisation, but also instilled a communication culture which has to be understood as more than an information flow system. It has made the Coolie caste-class in hitherto isolated villages acutely aware of intricacies of happenings in not just their surrounding villages, but in the region as a whole.

The sharing of nuances that go beyond bland reasoning make experiences relevant and applicable for different locales and varying situations. It is this communication culture, as different from mere information and management skills, which has contributed to creating a common and single sixth sense which we term as collective sub-consciousness.

GP Seats in GP's/Polling Booths with CSU presence

| | Bagepalli | Chick- ballapur | N. Sid- dala- ghatta | Chinta- mani | Gudi- banda | Total |
|----------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Number of Gram Panchayats | 18 | 18 | 11 | 28 | 7 | 82 |
| Total Seats | 139 | 88 | 67 | 159 | 47 | 500 |

We shall, throughout this Report, give demographic, contest and performance figures, for CSU candidates as well as their Allies, for the 5 taluks as a whole (overall figures) in **Arial Bold 9 font**. Separate figures shall be given for the lesser number of Gram Panchayats/Polling Booths where there are active CSUs in *Arial Italics 8 font*.

As we start building up the table of information, we shall dim the font for figures already given. In the concluding section of this Report, comparisons shall be drawn from both blocks of figures in order to re-assess Coolie Sangha strength and presence in each taluk of north Kolar district.

1.4.2. ASSURED VOTES IN THE CSUs

As on September 1999, CSU membership and coverage figures for 4 taluks were as follows:

Membership & Coverage as on 30 September 1999

| | <i>2nd Consortium Application</i> | Last Report | This Report |
|--------------------------------|--|-------------|--------------------|
| 1st 3 year Formation phase | 73 | 64 | 66 |
| 2nd 3 year Formalisation phase | 326 | 135 | 135 |
| 3rd 3 year Consolidation phase | 26 | 201 | 213 |
| Independent CSUs | 82 | 81 | 82 |
| Normal Member Families | 14,590 | 13,299 | 13,731 |
| Women Memberships | 3,211 (22%) | 3,143 | 3,185 (23%) |
| Coverage of Village Population | 38% | 34% | 35% |

Gudibanda taluk has an additional 2,276 Normal Member families in 66 village CSUs, taking the grand total to 16,007 families in 562 villages.

When polled *en block*, this would translate to about 48,000 assured CSU votes.

1.4.3. THE ARITHMETIC OF ELECTORAL STRENGTH

The 5 taluks together have about 750,000 votes. A voter turnout of 75-80% is normal in local body elections, bringing down the active votes at play to 562,500. The assured 48,000 CSU votes would, in this eventuality, work out to 8.6% of the total votes. Going by past experience, the CSUs could rely on 6-8,000 Cancelled Members in dropped out CSUs to push their coverage figure to 12-14%. They could depend upon neutral population votes and the push-pull appeal of Polling Booth Allies to make up for fluctuations in Member loyalties.

562 functioning CSUs, in a region with 1,175 villages, represent a coverage of 47.8%. The 500 seats which they could contest, out of a total of 1,361, translate to 36.7%. Taken together, these figures meant a coverage of a little over 42% of the geography of north Kolar district.

A concentration of 12-14% CSU votes over a limited geographic spread of 42% would result in 29-33% of the total vote in those GP's/Polling Booths with CSU presence. If they ensured that CSU voter turnout was 100%, and if the opposition votes were split through triangular contests, the Coolies were confident of securing clear majorities in more than half their contests.

With the final results in, we see that these calculations were not far off the mark. The CSUs polled 29% of the popular vote in villages with a presence (13% overall) and converted 55% of their contests into wins.

1.4.4. POPULAR PERCEPTIONS OF ELECTORAL STRENGTH

Arithmetic alone is not enough when chalking electoral strategies. The best of calculations can go awry unless supported by a congenial milieu.

Local factors have to be taken into account to make pragmatic interpretations of electoral strength in each and every Polling Booth. This requires an intimacy of knowledge that just cannot be shared in any Report of this kind.

Coolie Sangha **presence** at the taluk level is another factor. The Reader is advised to please go through section 5 of our Special Progress Report dated September 1997 (Documents of ADATS – Book 6).

5 months before the GP'2000 Elections (4 months before candidates filed their nominations) the Coolie Sangha had embarked on a major socio-political campaign. The prolonged campaign had established the CSUs as a disciplined and non partisan upholder of gender justice. Women, Harijans and Muslims stood solidly with the Coolie Sangha. The popular mood of the moment, in February 2000, was that hard earned gains should not be frittered away and that the *Gumpu* (a new found grouping) should be kept intact with a healthy spirit of give and take.

Alongside with individual CSUs giving leadership in their respective villages, the Coolie Sangha as a whole had assumed a position of moral leadership for north Kolar district as a whole. Their involvement in the just completed campaign was seen as totally principled and completely selfless.

ADATS' decision to assiduously stay off candidate selection paid unbelievable dividend. Our commitment to de-party-politicise the GP'2000 and make candidate selection a totally voter-determined affair was accepted by all 4 MLAs. They too refused to prop "their" candidates. The unique situation which was created can best be described by the utterance of a totally baffled opposition:

“All the *good guys* have, overnight, become *their* candidates...”

All these and much more contributed to creating popular perceptions of strength, or lack of it, in different GP's and Polling Booths.

Self perception of strength, or the level of self-confidence with which different contestants entered the fray, is quite another matter. We will shortly be commenting on this.

1.5. Referendum on ADATS & the Coolie Sangha

It is a self-gratifying practice, when electoral results turn out favourable, to quickly term the exercise as a referendum on one's performance. Being merely mortal, we too cannot resist the temptation to make such a claim. Heaven knows that we desperately need a shot in the arm after all the slurs, aspersion, well-meaning-doubts, the yes-but's and constructive criticism that has been hurled at us, almost non-stop and albeit for our own good, for the past 2 years.

The manner in which this referendum took place needs 3 comments.

- It was not well meaning development experts and consultants who opined on our 22½ years performance. Neither was it our beneficiaries who said a kind word in our favour. It was the entire population of north Kolar district, clubbed in blocks of 250-400 voters per candidate/Polling Booth, those who liked us and those who didn't, who spoke out through a secret ballot.

- Neither was it a referendum on the performance of the personality of ADATS. It was hundreds of ordinary Member Coolies, 334 to be precise, and 881 Allies who went and placed our case before the population.
- Considering the less-than-strong position that we were in, it was a rather holistic referendum where the population was not swayed by any populist prank.

29% of the population of the villages we work in (and 13% of the total population of 5 taluks – it could, of course, be argued that they didn't know any better) said that we were good guys.

22% of the population of the villages we work in (and 37% of the total population) said that the CSUs' choice of Allies was good.

The total count goes up to a whopping 51% of the population of villages we work in (and 50% of the total population of 5 taluks).

2. THE CONTEST

2.1. Reservation of Seats

Category-wise Reservation of GP Seats (incomplete)

| | Bagepalli | | Chick-ballapur | | N. Sid-dala-ghatta | | Chinta-mani | Gudi-banda | Total |
|--|------------|------------|----------------|------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------|
| Scheduled Caste | 49 | 15% | 56 | 18% | 23 | 16% | | | |
| Scheduled Caste Women | 37 | 11% | 34 | 11% | 17 | 11% | | | |
| Scheduled Tribe | 4 | 1% | 15 | 5% | 6 | 4% | | | |
| Scheduled Tribe Women | 20 | 6% | 17 | 6% | 11 | 7% | | | |
| Backward Castes & Minorities (A) | 40 | 12% | 39 | 13% | 17 | 11% | | | |
| Backward Castes & Minorities (A) Women | 43 | 13% | 43 | 14% | 23 | 16% | | | |
| Backward Castes & Minorities (B) | 20 | 6% | 21 | 7% | 9 | 6% | | | |
| Backward Castes & Minorities (B) Women | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | | | |
| General | 59 | 18% | 50 | 16% | 24 | 16% | | | |
| General Women | 37 | 11% | 33 | 11% | 18 | 12% | | | |
| Total Women | 132 | 40% | 127 | 41% | 69 | 47% | | | |
| Total Men | 164 | 50% | 181 | 59% | 79 | 53% | | | |

2.2. Seats Contested by CSU Candidates

GP Seats contested by CSU Candidates (Incomplete)

| | Bagepalli | | Chick-ballapur | | N. Sid-dala-ghatta | | Chinta-mani | Gudi-banda | Total |
|--|-----------|--|----------------|--|--------------------|--|-------------|------------|-------|
| Scheduled Caste | 18 | | | | 9 | | | | |
| Scheduled Caste Women | 15 | | | | 10 | | | | |
| Scheduled Tribe | 3 | | | | 2 | | | | |
| Scheduled Tribe Women | 8 | | | | 6 | | | | |
| Backward Castes & Minorities (A) | 8 | | | | 2 | | | | |
| Backward Castes & Minorities (A) Women | 20 | | | | 6 | | | | |
| Backward Castes & Minorities (B) | 2 | | | | 2 | | | | |
| Backward Castes & Minorities (B) Women | 0 | | | | 0 | | | | |
| General | 12 | | | | 2 | | | | |
| General Women | 7 | | | | 4 | | | | |
| Total Women | 50 | | | | 26 | | | | |
| Total Men | 33 | | | | 17 | | | | |

2.3. Calendar of Events

Though GP'2000 Elections were held on 23 February 2000, the process was initiated 15 days ahead and is slated to get over only 1 month later with elections for 97 posts of *Adhyaksh* (President) and *Upa Adhyaksh* (Vice President).

Calendar of Events for the GP'2000 Elections

| | |
|--|-------------------------|
| Filing of Nominations (5 days) | 5 to 9 February 2000 |
| Scrutiny (1 day) | 11 February 2000 |
| Last date for Withdrawal of Nomination | 12 February 2000 |
| Campaign (9 days) | 13 to 21 February 2000 |
| GP'2000 Elections (1 day) | 23 February 2000 |
| Counting & Results (1 day) | 29 February 2000 |
| GP Formation | 23 March 2000 |

2.4. Self-Perception of Strength³

Electoral practice permits, nay demands, that contesting parties boast of a strength that is greater than what actually is – call it bravado or license to lie or whatever. The number of seats that they contest, put politely, is a self-perception of their strength.

This is not an arbitrary figure that each group or political formation can themselves decide upon. There are counter pressures that bring the figure down to earth.

The pressure that is placed on candidates during scrutiny and on the last date for withdrawal is just unbelievable. Very many candidates literally fall sick, break down, and withdraw. Just about every trick is used to weed out the weak and non-serious. In an inadvertent manner, even the authorities contribute to reducing the number of candidates since this considerably reduces their work, like printing ballot papers, providing security, etc.⁴

Even after the last date for withdrawal, vacillating Candidates are forced to “retire”. They are coaxed not to print pamphlets nor campaign for themselves. Instead they are dragged along by some other candidate(s) to show public repentance for having dared to contemplate...

The actual number of active candidates left in the fray is the self-perception of strength of the political formation. Later in this Report, when examining the Results, we shall see how the voters react to this phenomenon. We shall see how they actually reward an acceptable level of boast with victory for candidates whose chances hover on the margin. But when the boast is too much, the voters punish even those who otherwise stood winning chances.

Political parties and formations are acutely aware of this phenomenon. They can neither betray a weakness by under-contesting, nor can they alienate the voters by over-contesting.⁵

2.5. Total Contest

- The CSUs contested 334 seats (25%) and their Allies contested 881 (65%).

³ This applies only to groups like political parties who contest elections, and not to independent candidates.

⁴ The Election Commission continually discuss ways and means by which they can weed out “non-serious candidates” by raising the deposit amounts, increasing the numbers required to second, etc. In the USA it is called “Primaries”...

⁵ After the ignominious defeat of their official candidates at the hand of Rebels put up by the voters in September 1999, the Congress and the CPM vehemently declared that they would each field candidates for each and every GP'2000 seat in Bagepalli taluk. They did. But just before withdrawal, they climbed down to contesting 54% and 52%, respectively, forming an “unholy alliance” of sorts.

- Though they together contested only 89% of the total seats, both parties acted adventurous in Chickballapur and North Siddalaghata taluks by over contesting 14 and 17 seats respectively – i.e. alliances were not perfect in these Polling Booths where CSU Candidates and Allies were pitted against each other, each accusing the other of being audacious.
 - The lowest self-perception of strength in the CSUs was at Chickballapur and highest at North Siddalaghata. Inversely the highest self-perception of strength in their Allies was at Chickballapur.
 - At North Siddalaghata, everyone thought that they could win and so they over-contested by 8%.
 - The above observations, taken together, show that it was not possible for the CSUs to really strike a relationship of equality when their partners were supported by established national parties⁶ – each one tried to use, abuse and out-smart the other.
- The CSUs did much better when their Allies were self-chosen village level partners, even if these partners were to form loose political formations at the taluk level.

Overall GP Contests in 5 taluks

| | Bagepalli | Chickballapur | N. Siddalaghata | Chintamani | Gudibanda | Total |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---------------|-----------------|------------|-----------|-------|
| Number of Gram Panchayats | 23 | 22 | 11 | 34 | 7 | 97 |
| Total Seats | 342 | 309 | 148 | 461 | 101 | 1,361 |
| CSU CONTEST | | | | | | |
| Seats Contested | 95 | 57 | 54 | 97 | 31 | 334 |
| Self Perception of Strength | 28% | 18% | 36% | 21% | 31% | 25% |
| ALLIES CONTEST | | | | | | |
| Seats Contested | 225 | 266 | 106 | 241 | 43 | 881 |
| Self Perception of Strength | 66% | 86% | 72% | 52% | 43% | 65% |
| COMBINED CONTEST | | | | | | |
| Seats Contested | 320 | 323 | 160 | 338 | 74 | 1,215 |
| Self Perception of Strength | 94% | 105% | 108% | 73% | 73% | 89% |

2.6. Contest in villages with functioning CSUs

- In villages with a presence, the CSUs contested 334 seats (67%) and their Allies contested 219 (44%).
- They together contested 111% of the total seats. Over confidence made both parties act adventurous in 4 of the 5 taluks, though the problem was, once again, severely exacerbated in Chickballapur and North Siddalaghata taluks where the Allies were supported by established national parties.
- Self-perception of strength in the CSUs was more or less uniform. But there was a fluctuation in the number of seats that their Allies dared to con-

⁶ Technically, GP Elections are fought on non-party lines. But in actual practice, candidates are supported by one national party or the other.

test in the different taluks. Their self-confidence was highest at Chickballapur and lowest at Bagepalli.

- The CSUs were, in villages with a presence, clearly the leaders in any partnership that they entered into with Allies, even when dealing with those supported by established national parties.

GP Contests in GP's/Polling Booths with CSU presence

| | Bagepalli | Chickballapur | N. Sidalaghatta | Chintamani | Gudibanda | Total |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---------------|-----------------|------------|-----------|-------|
| Number of Gram Panchayats | 18 | 18 | 11 | 28 | 7 | 82 |
| Total Seats | 139 | 88 | 67 | 159 | 47 | 500 |
| CSU CONTEST | | | | | | |
| Seats Contested | 95 | 57 | 54 | 97 | 31 | 334 |
| Self Perception of Strength | 68% | 65% | 67% | 61% | 66% | 67% |
| ALLIES CONTEST | | | | | | |
| Seats Contested | 45 | 48 | 33 | 75 | 18 | 219 |
| Self Perception of Strength | 32% | 55% | 49% | 47% | 38% | 44% |
| COMBINED CONTEST | | | | | | |
| Seats Contested | 140 | 105 | 78 | 172 | 49 | 553 |
| Self Perception of Strength | 101% | 119% | 116% | 108% | 104% | 111% |

3. THE CAMPAIGN

(to be completed)

- Lasted for only 9 days (very short compared to the 2 month campaign in August-September 1999)
- Candidates had to keep issues alive all the time. Groups of them wandering around to show strength.
- Everyone spent huge amounts of moneys. Even CSU Candidates had to spend an average of Rs 5,000 each. For 334 candidates, this works out to a stupendous amount of Rs 1.6 million.
- Limited campaign by taluk leaders.
- Promises of total decentralism. *Gram Sabhas* would be held.
- Relatively violence free.

4. THE RESULTS

4.1. Overall Results

As the final results came in, their Allies realised that they stood no chance at all without CSU support. Though CSU candidates eventually polled only 13% of the total vote (29% in GP's/Polling Booths with CSU presence) and won 14% of the total seats (37% in GP's/Polling Booths with CSU presence), they propelled their Allies into victory by enabling them to poll 37% of the popular vote (22% in GP's/Polling Booths with CSU presence) and 36% of the total seats (21% in GP's/Polling Booths with CSU presence).

The combined performance netted in 50% of the popular vote, 50% of the total seats, and 59% of the GP's. The Coolie Sangha very definitely established its position as an effective minority in north Kolar district.⁷

⁷ Please see our writings on the concept of an effective minority, to be found in various *Documents of ADATS*.

Overall GP Results in 5 taluks

| | Bagepalli | Chickballapur | N. Siddalaghatta | Chintamani | Gudibanda | Total |
|--|-----------|---------------|------------------|------------|-----------|---------|
| Number of Gram Panchayats | 23 | 22 | 11 | 34 | 7 | 97 |
| Total Seats | 342 | 309 | 148 | 461 | 101 | 1,361 |
| Votes Polled | 178,583 | 124,986 | 55,199 | 202,953 | 48,649 | 561,822 |
| CSU PERFORMANCE | | | | | | |
| Seats Contested | 95 | 57 | 54 | 97 | 31 | 334 |
| Self Perception of Strength | 28% | 18% | 36% | 21% | 31% | 25% |
| Votes Polled | 22,506 | 10,613 | 7,244 | 25,392 | 5,362 | 71,117 |
| Percent Polled | 13% | 8% | 13% | 13% | 11% | 13% |
| Seats Won | 46 | 32 | 34 | 54 | 18 | 184 |
| Conversion (Seats Won / Seats Contested) | 48% | 56% | 63% | 56% | 58% | 55% |
| Actual Strength (Seats Won / Total Seats) | 13% | 10% | 23% | 12% | 18% | 14% |
| ALLIES PERFORMANCE | | | | | | |
| Seats Contested | 225 | 266 | 106 | 241 | 43 | 881 |
| Self Perception of Strength | 66% | 86% | 72% | 52% | 43% | 65% |
| Votes Polled | 57,846 | 55,704 | 22,859 | 63,667 | 8,296 | 208,372 |
| Percent Polled | 32% | 45% | 41% | 31% | 17% | 37% |
| Seats Won | 119 | 163 | 71 | 125 | 16 | 494 |
| Conversion (Seats Won / Seats Contested) | 53% | 61% | 67% | 52% | 37% | 56% |
| Actual Strength (Seats Won / Total Seats) | 35% | 53% | 48% | 27% | 16% | 36% |
| COMBINED PERFORMANCE | | | | | | |
| Seats Contested | 320 | 323 | 160 | 338 | 74 | 1,215 |
| Self Perception of Strength | 94% | 105% | 108% | 73% | 73% | 89% |
| Votes Polled | 80,352 | 66,317 | 30,103 | 89,059 | 13,658 | 279,489 |
| Percent Polled | 45% | 53% | 55% | 44% | 28% | 50% |
| Seats Won | 165 | 195 | 105 | 179 | 34 | 678 |
| Conversion (Seats Won / Seats Contested) | 52% | 60% | 66% | 53% | 46% | 56% |
| Actual Strength (Seats Won / Total Seats) | 48% | 63% | 71% | 39% | 34% | 50% |
| GPs with a clear Majority | 12 | 17 | 10 | 16 | 2 | 57 |
| | 52% | 77% | 91% | 47% | 29% | 59% |

- CSU candidates polled 13% of the votes and their Allies polled 37%. Together they polled 50% of the popular votes.
 - Votes polled by CSU candidates was lowest at Chickballapur (8%), but surprisingly good (11%) in the 2-3 year old CSUs of Gudibanda.
 - Votes polled by Allies was miserably low in Gudibanda (17%), and higher than average in Chickballapur (45%) and in North Siddalaghatta (41%) where they gained “symbol” votes – i.e. votes that automatically come to candidates supported by national parties.
- CSU candidates converted 55% of their contests into wins, while their Allies converted 56% into wins. Together they had a high conversion of 56%.
 - CSU conversion was below average in Bagepalli (48%), and very high in North Siddalaghatta (63%).
 - Allies conversion dropped miserably low in Gudibanda (37%).

- CSU candidates bagged 14% of the total number of GP seats, while their Allies bagged 36% of the GP seats. Together they bagged 50% of the total number of GP seats.
 - The CSUs bagged far more than their share of seats in North Siddalaghatta and Gudibanda, but lost out marginally in Chickballapur.
 - Allies did very well in Chickballapur and North Siddalaghatta, but slumped in Chintamani and failed in Gudibanda.
 - Together the alliance swept 3 taluks, dithers in the middle in Chintamani, and lost out in Gudibanda.
- The 678 GP seats won by them resulted in the alliance getting a clear majority in 57 of the 97 GP's.
 - Where the CSUs allied with those supported by established national parties, the alliance hogged the contest with clear majority of 77% of the GP's in Chickballapur and 91% in North Siddalaghatta.
 - Alliances with rebels in Bagepalli and Chintamani resulted in close calls with clear majorities in 52% and 47% of the GP's respectively.
 - At Chintamani, in spite of a low percentage of seats, the alliance managed to get a majority in nearly half the GP's.
 - The alliance collapsed in Gudibanda with a clear majority in only 2 of the 7 GP's.
- Except in Chickballapur, the Allies were not able to get a clear majority, on their own, in any Gram Panchayat.
 - Even in North Siddalaghatta, where both parties did so well, the Allies are marginally dependent on the CSUs to get a clear majority in the GP's.
 - In Bagepalli and Chintamani, this dependency on the CSUs is total and absolute.

A comparison of the overall self-perception of strength with the actual performance of the CSUs and their Allies, in all the 5 taluks, shows that both the CSUs and their Allies should have contested more seats than they did without, at the same time, stepping on each other's toes. The alliance paid a heavy price for under-contesting at Bagepalli and Chintamani. Since the CSUs had reached a saturation point, the onus for this mistake clearly rests with the Allies.

Comparison of Overall Self-perception with Actual Performance

| | Bagepalli | Chickballapur | N. Siddalaghatta | Chintamani | Gudibanda | Total |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---------------|------------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| CSU PERFORMANCE | | | | | | |
| Self Perception of Strength | 28% | 18% | 36% | 21% | 31% | 25% |
| Conversion | 48% | 56% | 63% | 56% | 58% | 55% |
| Actual Strength | 13% | 10% | 23% | 12% | 18% | 14% |
| ALLIES PERFORMANCE | | | | | | |
| Self Perception of Strength | 66% | 86% | 72% | 52% | 43% | 65% |
| Conversion | 53% | 61% | 67% | 52% | 37% | 56% |
| Actual Strength | 35% | 53% | 48% | 27% | 16% | 36% |
| COMBINED PERFORMANCE | | | | | | |
| Self Perception of Strength | 94% | 105% | 108% | 73% | 73% | 89% |
| Conversion | 52% | 60% | 66% | 53% | 46% | 56% |
| Actual Strength | 48% | 63% | 71% | 39% | 34% | 50% |

- For the CSUs
 - They had a modest self-perception of strength at an average of 25% of the overall seats – higher at North Siddalaghatta and Gudibanda, and lower at Chickballapur.

- They were rewarded with an overall conversion of 55%. North Siddalaghatta shows that higher the boast, more the seats to be gained.
- This being the case, the number of Wins seems to be directly proportionate to the claims made – i.e. a higher self-perception translated to a higher number of GP seats.
- For the Allies
 - They had a high self-perception of strength at an average of 65% of the overall seats – higher at Chickballapur and North Siddalaghatta.
 - They were rewarded with the same overall conversion as the CSUs, at 56%. But where they made very big claims, at Siddalaghatta and Chickballapur, their conversion was also noticeably higher at 67% and 61%.
 - As a result, there was a big fluctuation in their actual Wins, with a higher self-perception of strength paying off at Chickballapur and Siddalaghatta.

4.2. Results in Villages with functioning CSUs

CSU Candidates did exceedingly well in GP's/Polling Booths where there was a CSU presence. Whether it be in terms of Conversion (seats won / seats contested) or Actual Strength (seats won / total seats), they trounced their Allies and clearly established themselves as the leaders at the grassroots level GP's.

The results clearly show that while traditional electoral tactics of the Allies might have worked in over half the region without CSU presence, the general population preferred the openness and transparency of the CSUs. In villages with CSUs, the push-pull effect of the Coolie Sangha was more powerful than that of national parties.

But that is not all. Results in villages with CSU presence clearly reveal that, caught in the pointless election fever of one-upmanship, the CSUs cut their noses to spite their faces. They were not as loyal to their Allies as they should have been, and this has effected their combined performance in terms of Conversion as well as Actual Strength, except perhaps at Bagepalli.

- CSU candidates polled 29% of the votes and their Allies polled 22%. Together they polled 51% of the popular votes in villages with CSU presence.
 - Votes polled by CSU candidates was more or less uniform everywhere except for a dip in Gudibanda.
 - Vote share figures at Chickballapur compare favourably with other taluks in villages with CSU presence. This show that it was because of a low and non-strategic coverage of the taluk, and not because of any let in performance by the CSUs, that overall votes dropped in Chickballapur.
 - Votes polled by Allies was miserably low in Gudibanda and Bagepalli. In Chickballapur and North Siddalaghatta, even the “symbol” did not push up their vote share appreciably above the average.
- The Allies conversion dropped from an overall figure of 55% to 48% in villages with CSU presence. As a result, their joint conversion also dropped from 56% to 52%.
 - When compared to their overall conversion, the drop was very heavy at Chickballapur (61% to 44%), and slightly so at North Siddalaghatta (67% to 61%) and Chintamani (52% to 47%).
 - This indicates that the heavy CSU influence in villages with a presence was not very kindly inclined towards their Allies.

GP Results in GP's/Polling Booths with CSU presence

| | Bagepalli | Chick- ballapur | N. Sid- dala- ghatta | Chinta- mani | Gudi- banda | Total |
|---|------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Number of Gram Panchayats | 18 | 18 | 11 | 28 | 7 | 82 |
| Total Seats | 139 | 88 | 67 | 159 | 47 | 500 |
| Votes Polled | 70,297 | 37,512 | 23,553 | 87,899 | 22,036 | 241,297 |
| CSU PERFORMANCE | | | | | | |
| Seats Contested | 95 | 57 | 54 | 97 | 31 | 334 |
| Self Perception of Strength | 68% | 65% | 67% | 61% | 66% | 67% |
| Votes Polled | 22,506 | 10,613 | 7,244 | 25,392 | 5,362 | 71,117 |
| Percent Polled | 32% | 28% | 31% | 29% | 24% | 29% |
| Seats Won | 46 | 32 | 34 | 54 | 18 | 184 |
| Conversion (Seats Won / Seats Contested) | 48% | 56% | 76% | 56% | 58% | 55% |
| Actual Strength (Seats Won / Total Seats) | 33% | 36% | 51% | 34% | 38% | 37% |
| ALLIES PERFORMANCE | | | | | | |
| Seats Contested | 45 | 48 | 33 | 75 | 18 | 219 |
| Self Perception of Strength | 32% | 55% | 49% | 47% | 38% | 44% |
| Votes Polled | 11,926 | 10,226 | 6,327 | 20,410 | 3,516 | 52,405 |
| Percent Polled | 17% | 27% | 27% | 23% | 16% | 22% |
| Seats Won | 24 | 21 | 20 | 35 | 6 | 106 |
| Conversion (Seats Won / Seats Contested) | 53% | 44% | 61% | 47% | 33% | 48% |
| Actual Strength (Seats Won / Total Seats) | 17% | 24% | 30% | 22% | 13% | 21% |
| COMBINED PERFORMANCE | | | | | | |
| Seats Contested | 140 | 105 | 78 | 172 | 49 | 553 |
| Self Perception of Strength | 101% | 119% | 116% | 108% | 104% | 111% |
| Votes Polled | 34,432 | 20,839 | 13,571 | 45,802 | 8,878 | 123,522 |
| Percent Polled | 49% | 56% | 58% | 52% | 40% | 51% |
| Seats Won | 70 | 53 | 54 | 89 | 24 | 290 |
| Conversion (Seats Won / Seats Contested) | 50% | 50% | 69% | 52% | 49% | 52% |
| Actual Strength (Seats Won / Total Seats) | 50% | 60% | 81% | 56% | 51% | 58% |
| GPs with a clear Majority | 9 | 12 | 10 | 15 | 2 | 48 |
| | 50% | 67% | 91% | 54% | 29% | 59% |

- Marginal increases in combined conversion was noticed at North Siddalaghatta and Gudibanda.
- CSU candidates bagged 37% of the total number of GP seats in villages with a presence, while their Allies bagged only 21% of the GP seats. Together they bagged 58% of the total number of GP seats.
 - The CSU bagged more than it's share only in North Siddalaghatta, but dipped in Bagepalli and Chintamani.
 - Allies did well in North Siddalaghatta, but slumped in Bagepalli and Gudibanda.
- The 290 GP seats won by them resulted in the alliance getting a clear majority in 48 of the 82 GP's with CSU presence.
 - In GP's and Polling Booths with CSU presence, allying with candidates supported by established national parties paid only marginal dividends for the CSUs.
 - The alliance collapsed even in GP's/Polling Booths with CSU presence in Gudibanda, but for no fault of CSU Candidates – i.e. they did as well in Gudibanda as in any other taluk.

- Nowhere were the Allies, on their own, able to get a clear majority in the number of GP seats.
 - Even in North Siddalaghatta, where the Allies are so strong, they are totally dependent on the CSUs to get a clear majority in any GP with CSU presence.

A comparison of self-perception of strength with the actual performance of the CSU candidates and their Allies, shows that both parties had stretched themselves to capacity in villages with CSU presence, except perhaps at Bagepalli.

Comparison of Self-perception of strength in villages with CSU presence vs. Actual Performance

| | Bagepalli | Chickballapur | N. Siddalaghatta | Chintamani | Gudibanda | Total |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---------------|------------------|------------|-----------|-------|
| CSU PERFORMANCE | | | | | | |
| Self Perception of Strength | 68% | 65% | 67% | 61% | 66% | 67% |
| Conversion | 48% | 56% | 76% | 56% | 58% | 55% |
| Actual Strength | 33% | 36% | 51% | 34% | 38% | 37% |
| ALLIES PERFORMANCE | | | | | | |
| Self Perception of Strength | 32% | 55% | 49% | 47% | 38% | 44% |
| Conversion | 53% | 44% | 61% | 47% | 33% | 48% |
| Actual Strength | 17% | 24% | 30% | 22% | 13% | 21% |
| COMBINED PERFORMANCE | | | | | | |
| Self Perception of Strength | 101% | 119% | 116% | 108% | 104% | 111% |
| Conversion | 50% | 50% | 69% | 52% | 49% | 52% |
| Actual Strength | 50% | 60% | 81% | 56% | 51% | 58% |

- For the CSUs
 - The CSUs had an ambitiously high self-perception of strength and the average number of seats they contested in villages with CSU presence was fairly high at 67%.
 - The overall conversion was also high with CSU candidates winning 55% of the seats they contested. The figure was much higher at North Siddalaghatta, but lower at Bagepalli.
 - The average number of Wins was 37%, but higher at North Siddalaghatta (51%), suggesting that the CSUs had under-estimated their actual strength.
- For the Allies
 - The Allies had a modest self-perception of strength, at 44%, in villages with CSU presence. They toned down their ambitions in favour of CSU candidates, except at Chickballapur. But their self-perception was lower than average at Bagepalli.
 - They converted 48% of their contests into wins. At Bagepalli and North Siddalaghatta, they were able to convert 53% and 61% respectively, indicating that they had under-estimated their strength.
 - The average Wins for the Allies was 21% - abysmally lower in Gudibanda and much higher at North Siddalaghatta.

5. ELECTIONS FOR THE POSTS OF ADHYAKSH AND UPA ADHYAKSH

(to be written after 23 March 2000)