CHAPTER V

POLITICAL LINKAGE OF THE RURAL ELITE(S)
In a democratic political system, especially in the context of democratic decentralization, the study of "Political linkage" becomes very important. Decentralization of power to various autonomous lower level units facilitates greater participation and ensures transparency. The transfer of power and authority to such units is often referred as devolution. This process of decentralization through devolution is most commonly called as democratic decentralization or decentralized governance. Any political system, which intends to or attempts to adopt decentralized governance, to make the system more functional and people centric development, needs adequate organized dynamic leadership at the grass-roots level. Hence, the grass roots level elites' perseverance towards local development becomes a pertinent issue. In the previous chapter we have already discussed on the perception of the rural elites. In any rural society, the elites, if are clear about the various socio-economic and political problems, are expected to contribute meaningfully towards the solution of the same. Those elites who are having better linkages both vertical as well as horizontal, are expected not only to understand the problems better, but also will be able to solve the same through their influence at various levels – bureaucratic, political, as well as, local level.
It is believed that a person, having proximity with higher party leaders, can perform better and deliver better service in the society than the others\(^1\). Among the others, the links that the Elite have with political parties, with important political actors and with institutions at higher levels are the basis ingredients for the expansion of their influence structure. An Elite having close links with higher-level functionaries tends to contribute more towards the development of the society. Thus, "political linkage may be viewed as transmission channels established between individuals or groups on the basis of mutual identification and shared political goals\(^2\). The political linkages have both horizontal and vertical dimension and also upward and downward direction. The downward linkages provide for support structure and upward linkage for influence structure in a society.

Although, Ashok Mehta Committee in 1957 was in favour of keeping local elections above party politics, but by the 73\(^{rd}\) amendment of Indian Constitution, the political parties got inspiration to expand their influence at the grass-roots level and the role of rural elites became multiplied. It is true that, after the 73\(^{rd}\) amendment of Indian constitution, the role of rural elite in panchayats level and the role of political parties in panchayat elections have become an accepted fact of the political reality. As a result each and every got an opportunity to develop, political party link and influence between grass-roots level and upper level.

\(^{1}\) Pamecha, Renuka: *Elite in a tribal society*, Printwell publishers, Jaipur, First published 1985, p.185.

\(^{2}\) Ibid. p.185 and also see Jones, Rodey W., *Linkage Analysis of Indian Urban Politics in Economic and Political Weekly*, June 17, 1195-1203.
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2 Ibid. p.185 and also see Jones, Rodey W., *Linkage Analysis of Indian Urban Politics in Economic and Political Weekly*, June 17, 1195-1203.
After the introduction of panchayati raj and also community development programmes in 1952, the study of linkage pattern gained importance. The success of any programme at its grass-roots level depends on a good understanding and cooperation at both the upward and downward levels and that can happen only through a regular channel of linkage. It becomes especially important in rural areas. As the politics of panchayati raj is leader centric, these leaders must have links with the leaders of higher levels. Indeed, it is the (panchayati raj) institution, having leaders down to the remotest villages, has the key to successfully enable the ruling party to place itself in power. "Political linkages are expected to add to one's area of influence as they enhance one's leverage in decision making organs. Further, the intensity of linkages with high ups should have a bearing on the leverage one would come to acquire. And yet, these links in rural area are still in a nascent phase."

The main objective of the present chapter is to study the political linkage of the rural elites with higher party leaders, links with elected office bearers from the panchayats level to members of legislative assembly (MLA) and also with ministers and how far the rural elites are able to develop their areas by their linkage network. In other word, in the present chapter an attempt is being made to study the political linkage of rural elites with higher party leaders and elected members of various levels and how their linkage

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helps in developmental works especially in rural areas. For our study purpose we asked certain prepared questions to the respondents such as: -

First, we tried to know from the respondents whether they (respondents) personally know any political leader. If yes, how?

- (a) Closely
- (b) Not so closely
- (c) Formal

In response, 50.19\(^*\) per cent of the respondents informed that they know political leaders closely, 18.73 per cent informed that they know political leaders not-so-closely and 31.09 per cent respondents informed that they know political leaders only formally. (Table-5.1)\(^*\).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table-5.1</th>
<th>Political leaders known by rural elites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Narayanpur Block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closely</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not-so-closely</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal only</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents=72</td>
<td>Total respondents=73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^*\) The Table 2.13 shows that 68.16 per cent rural elite are member of one or the other political party. So, perhaps, most of the rural elites may know political leaders closely (Table-5.1).

\(^*\) "Formally" in the sense that the political leaders are known to them, but there is no informal interactions.
The Table 5.1 clearly shows that in Lakhimpur district most of the rural elites know some of the political leaders closely. It indicates that most of the rural elites in the district have personal touch with political leaders. Majority of the elites have personal intimacy with some of the political leaders.

After knowing the pattern of relationship of rural elites with the political leaders, we tried to understand level of the leaders who are known to the respondents. For this purpose we administered a question: "what level of leaders do you know?"

(a) Block level

(b) District level

(c) State level

(d) National level

The respondents reported that they know different levels of leaders. The levels of political leaders known to them are analyzed in Table-5.2. It also clearly shows that among the respondents, 40.45 per cent respondents know the block level leaders. It also shows that 48.31 per cent of the respondents know the leaders at both block and district level. Again 9.35 per cent of the respondents know block, district and state level leaders. But only 0.37 per cent respondents know all levels of leaders.

The table clearly indicates that most of the respondents in Lakhimpur district have close relations with block and district level leaders. Again the table also indicate that a sizable chunk of the respondents, have good relation
with only block level leaders. In a democratic political system, where power and functions are decentralized for rural developmental work, the rural elite needs to have good relations with block level leaders and also district level of leaders. The district level leaders have a greater leverage in distribution of developmental grants. So, it can be assumed that the rural elites who know and have better relations with both block and district level leaders, can help to develop their areas by enjoying governmental facilities with the help of the leaders known to them.

| Table-5.2
<p>| Different level of political leaders that rural elites know |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narayanpur Block</th>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Nowboicha Block</th>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Ghilamara Block</th>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Dhakuakhana block</th>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Grand total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Block level</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>40.28</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>45.21</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>35.48</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block &amp; District level</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>51.39</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>47.95</td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>56.45</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>36.67</td>
<td></td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District level Block, district and State level</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>5.48</td>
<td></td>
<td>05</td>
<td>8.06</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National level All levels</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td></td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
<td></td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
<td></td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents=72</td>
<td>Total respondents=73</td>
<td>Total respondents=62</td>
<td>Total respondents=60</td>
<td>Grand total respondents=267</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table shows that there is a declining trend as one moves upward. In this analysis we take for granted that as a sizable chunk of our respondents themselves are holding one or the other office in the panchayat or were once the office bearers, all of them know the leaders at the panchayat
level. The rest of the elites belonging to the service category, equally know the panchayat functionaries at the panchayat level as well as block level due to their proximity and due to the nature of their services. As the table indicate, 40.45 per cent of the respondents have acquaintance with block level leaders; where as 48.31 per cent of the respondents know the leaders at both the block and district level. The trend gradually declines, as we move upward to the state level, in which case, only 9.36 per cent of the respondents do have acquaintance with state level. Further, in case of the national level, only a microscopic percent that is below one per cent have some relations. When it comes to acquaintance with all the levels, only 1.50 percent responds are positive in their response. This is so because, the access of the rural elites is better in case of block and district level. This level of functionaries usually play a direct role, so far as the distribution of developmental fund is concerned. The block and district level functionaries are at the proximity and easily accessible. Further, they are the implementing agencies for rural development. Hence, the elites have better acquaintance with them than the functionaries at the higher level. Again, the frequency of meeting is more in case of lower level functionaries than the functionaries at the high up due to the proximity of the lower level of functionaries.

The political leaders are known to the masses of a society in a democratic system due to various reasons. Sometimes they are known by their charismatic personality and at times due to their ability to resolve the socio-economic problems. Political leaders try to influence the people through
the goodwill they have earned and become popular in the society. Again, elites in any society always try to establish link with the leaders for various purposes. The purposes may be for the developmental works of the society, for the fulfilment of personal interest, etc. Sometimes elites of the society try to establish link not only with the leaders of any single political party or party in power, but also cutting across the party line. In this context during the time of interview cum discussion with the respondents of Lakhimpur district we tried to understand how the respondents know the political leaders. For this purpose we specified certain basic reasons as due to: (a) Same party (b) Across the party line (c) Belong to the same area (d) Through attendance of political meeting (e) Interaction due to developmental activities (f) Due to multiple reasons.

From the responses, we found that elites of the district know different political leaders for various reasons. The respondents who know political leaders for various reasons are analysed in Table 5.3. The Table clearly shows that 29.21\(^5\) per cent of the respondents know the political leaders as they belong to the same political party. Again among the respondents, 11.99 per cent know the political leaders across the party line, while 20.97 per cent respondents know political leaders as they belong to the same area. Again, interestingly it shows that the percentage of respondents who know the political leaders through attendance of political metings is “zero” (0). However, 0.74 per cent respondents know political leaders by interaction due to...

\(^5\) The Table 2.14 (chapter Socio economic background of the rural elites) shows that 68.16% respondents of Lakhimpur district belong or affiliated to any political party
developmental activities of the area. Further, it also shows that the respondents who know the political leaders for multiple reasons, constitute 37.08.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.3</th>
<th>Reasons for knowing political leaders by the elites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narayanpur Block</td>
<td>Nowboicha Block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to same party</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Across the party line</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belong to the same area</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance of political meeting during developmental activities</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction during developmental activities</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple reasons</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents=72</td>
<td>Total respondents=73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: Fig. = Figure, % = percentage

It clearly indicates that only 37.08 per cent respondents of Lakhimpur district know the political leaders due to various or multiple reasons, which can be regarded as poor in a participatory democratic country. It indicates that most of the political leaders are not very popular among the rural people. Again the Table 5.3 also shows that the respondents who know the political leaders by interaction due to developmental activities is equally very low (only 0.74%). It indicates that the rural elites of Lakhimpur district who go to the political leaders to interact in relation to the developmental works in their
areas, their number is very low. In other words, insignificant number of rural elites go to the political leaders to discuss the developmental works of the society. Further, a sizable number of the respondents know the leaders at the upper level due to party affinity. Only 11.9 per cent of the respondents have some linkages cutting-across the party line. On the other hand, geographical proximity is an important factor for the acquaintance of the respondents with the officials. Another important insight could be drawn from the data is that attendance of political meetings does not work as the facilitator for acquaintance. It could be so due to the fact that either they know the leaders without attending the political meetings, or they are not in favour of attending political meetings. But while enquiring about the attendance of political meetings in the earlier chapter related to political socialization, it was found that majority of the respondents do attend political meetings. Hence, it could be safely concluded that inspite of participation of the rural elites, they failed to establish any fruitful link with the upper level leaders.

To develop one's own area or village, link with only one's own party is not sufficient. Because in a democratic system of government, no single or one political party constantly remains in power for a long period. Hence, for the developmental works, the elites should have link across the party line. But the Table 5.3 shows that among the respondents only a negligible number of (11.99) respondents know the political leaders across the party line. It indicates that rarely the rural elites know and have link with the leaders across the party line. Hence, basically, the rural elites do have intra-party linkage. As
a result, they are able to influence the party high up whenever their party is in power. As a result, whenever there is a difference between the party in power and party affiliation of the rural elites, the developmental activities get affected.

In any governmental machinery, the bureaucrats do play a very significant role for the smooth and proper implementations of the welfare measures. Bureaucrats and government officials are the prime movers and permanent machinery of the government. They help the elected representatives of the people in policy formulation and solely responsible for its implementation. The developmental policies, which are formulated by the government for the welfare of the rural people, are practically implemented by the bureaucrats and officials of the government. The welfare government also aggregates the problems of the people through their officials. The rural elites of the society need to know the bureaucrats and government officials to solve the problems of the people of their area or to develop their society by solving the problems through government assistance. Again through the government officials, the elites may know about the governmental policies and facilities, earmarked for the development of the rural areas. So, during the time of interview with the respondents, we tried to understand whether the respondents know any of the government officials and bureaucrats. In response to the question, 90.64 per cent of the respondents informed as "Yes" while only 9.36 per cent respondents informed as "No" (Table-5.4).
The Table-5.4 clearly shows that majority of the respondents know the officials in the bureaucracy. But during the time of interview cum discussion with the respondents it is learnt that majority of the respondents know the officials only of their concerned departments. (Particularly L.P. teachers and other service holders). The governmental officials, who are concerned with the developmental works of the community, are known closely to the panchayat members. Again during the time of interview we also came to know that most of the respondents are having access to the local governmental officials, but rarely go to them to discuss the problems of the village and about the developmental works of their areas. Only few respondents go to the governmental officials to discuss with them about the problems. Table 5.4 is a clear indication that although most of the respondents of Lakhimpur district know the governmental officials in the bureaucracy, but they rarely take initiative for rural development by approaching the government officials in the bureaucracy.
Subsequently, we administered another question to understand the level of linkage of the elite. To that effect we forwarded another question to them to know what level of governmental officials in the bureaucracy they know. "If yes, what level officials in the bureaucracy do you know?"

From the responses of the respondents we came to know that 45.69 per cent know the block level government officials whereas 37.83 per cent respondents know both block and district level governmental officials, and only 5.62 per cent of the respondents know all the three levels of officials. Such as block, district and state level officials in the bureaucracy. Again from the report of the respondents it is clear that none of the respondents know the national level officials in the bureaucracy. Of course, it is obvious keeping in view the access level of the rural elites. Among the respondents of the Lakhimpur district, 9.74 per cent respondents informed that they do not know any level of officials in the bureaucracy. The Table 5.5 substantiates our findings.

The Table 5.5 clearly indicate that most of the respondents (45.69%) know block level government officials in the bureaucracy. No doubt, block level officials are very important and necessary for rural development but it can be assumed that for rural development, linkage only with block level government officials is not sufficient. So, apart from the block level government officials, the rural elites need to know the other higher-level government officials in the bureaucracy. Interestingly the above table shows that the percentage of respondents who are having access to all levels of officials in the bureaucracy is very low. It is only 1.12 per cent. Again, the table also shows that 9.74 per
cent respondents do not know officials of any level in the bureaucracy. So, the all-round development of rural area cannot be expected from the elites who do not know any level of government officials. It also could be drawn from the data that as majority of the elites have linkage with the lowest level of the bureaucracy, they are heavily dependent upon them. However, most of the developmental decisions are finalised usually at the district level. Again, as around 10 percent of the elites do not have any linkage with any level of the bureaucracy, they fail to contribute towards the cause of rural development. The reasons could be due to their lack of interest or confidence. Hence, this attitudinal indifference may play a detrimental role towards rural development.

Table 5.5
Level of officials in the bureaucracy known to the rural elites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Narayanpur Block</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Ghilamara Block</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes %</td>
<td>No %</td>
<td>Yes %</td>
<td>No %</td>
<td>Yes %</td>
<td>No %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block level</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>38.89</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>47.95</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>46.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only district level</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block &amp; District level</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>38.89</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>36.99</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>41.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block, district and State level</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>3.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National level</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All levels</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>9.59</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>8.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know any level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents=72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contd.....
Respondents, we tried to know from the respondents that whether the taken part in those meetings. During the time of interview with the grants for their area. Hence, we tried to examine, how actually, the elites have the meeting becomes an important criteria for eliciting more developmental capacity of these members to impress upon and influence other members of the meetings concerning rural development is essential. The ability and as they are the elected members and have legitimacy. Their participation in elected members do get an opportunity to impress upon the other members, various fields of activity and activities living in the block, are invited. The which, the president and other members of the panchayat, repeated elites in with the rural population. Usually, meetings are organized at the block level, to development, facilitate public participation through meetings and discussions those societies, which introduce democratic decentralization for rural society.

Those who know the problems of the society and can help to solve the problems of the influential persons of that locality are invited, because, they are supposed to generally, whenever any public meeting is organized in the locality, the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Respondents=60</th>
<th>Grand Total Members=267</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>02 3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.67 0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.67 0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.33 0.20</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>5.67 0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.37 0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.00 0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.69 0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes % No %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...contd.
respondents have ever been invited to any meeting related to rural development or not. In response, 67.79 per cent respondents informed that they were often invited, while 32.21 per cent respondents informed in negative.

Table 5.6
Access of elites to the decision-making process for rural development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narayanpur Block</th>
<th>Nowboicha Block</th>
<th>Ghilamara Block</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>66.67</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents=72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dhakuakhana block</th>
<th>Grand total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>71.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents=60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table clearly shows that most of the respondents (67.79 per cent) are invited to the meetings related to the rural development. It indicates that majority of the respondents are given due importance in the area. But during the time of interview with the respondents we came to know that although they are invited to the meetings related to the rural development, but their participation in the decision-making process for rural development is not satisfactory. Only a few respondents help and involve in developmental activities of their village. Most of the time, though they participate, seldom
contribute towards reaching at any decision towards solutions of rural problems advancing innovative ideas from their experience.

Human being, by nature, is selfish. They generally give priority on their own interest than the others. They want their own or personal benefits from any activity that they perform. In respect of political linkage also the individuals establish links with higher political leaders for their personal benefits. It is also true in case of the rural elite. The personal benefit of the individuals may be of various types. So, during the time of interview with the respondents of Lakhimpur district we wanted to know the personal benefits accrued by the elites from their political linkage. To know this we advanced a question to them as "Have you ever been benefited from your linkage? If yes, what kind of benefit have you got?"

(a) Power/influence  
(b) Status/position  
(c) Economic gain  
(d) Ego satisfaction  
(e) Socialization

Our findings regarding the benefits accrued by the respondents through their political linkage are analysed in the Table-5.7. From the information of the respondents we came to know that 0.75 per cent respondents are benefited in the field of power or influence from their political linkage. 9.74 per cent respondents are benefited in the field of status and position in the society. Again 11.24 per cent respondents are benefited economically from their
political linkage. The Table 5.7 also shows that 7.12 percent respondents got ego-satisfaction through their political linkage. 20.97 per cent respondents informed that by their political linkage they got socialisation in the area while 20.97 per cent respondents benefited in multiple ways by their political linkage. But interestingly 38.20 per cent respondents informed that they are not benefited at all by their political linkage (Table-5.7).

**Table-5.7**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits of the elites from their political linkage</th>
<th>Narayanpur Block</th>
<th>Nowboicha Block</th>
<th>Ghilamara Block</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Figure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents=72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Power/ influence                                  | 04     | 5.56     | 08     | 10.96     | 06     | 9.68     |
| Status/position                                   | 06     | 8.33     | 08     | 10.96     | 10     | 16.13    |
| Economic gain                                     | 08     | 11.11    | 04     | 5.48      | 04     | 6.45     |
| Egosatisfaction                                   | 06     | 8.33     | 06     | 8.22      | 09     | 14.51    |
| Socialization                                     | 13     | 18.06    | 14     | 19.18     | 15     | 24.19    |
| Benefited in multiple ways                        | 35     | 48.61    | 33     | 45.21     | 17     | 27.42    |

**Grand total**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dhakuakhana block</th>
<th>Grand total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents=60</td>
<td>Total respondents=267</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Total Figure</th>
<th>Total Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>13.33</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>9.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>11.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>18.33</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>23.33</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>28.33</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>20.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Grand total respondents=267</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>38.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Table 5.7 clearly shows that most of the respondents (38.20 per cent) are not benefited at all by their political linkage. It indicate that perhaps their political linkage is not strong enough as a result of which, they are not
able to be benefited themselves by their linkage network. Again they may not be strong party worker or perhaps they have no influential capacity to influence the higher party leaders. Although the percentage of respondents who are benefited from the political linkage is low but the Table 5.7 also shows that 20.97 per cent of respondents are benefited in various or multiple ways from their linkage network. But it can be assumed that the higher political leaders are benefited by the linkage network in spreading influence among the people with the help of the rural elites of the society. It also shows that there is client patronage relationship between a section of the rural elites and the political leaders at the upper level.

After understanding the personal benefits of the respondents from their political linkage we tried to know about the benefits to the society by the political linkage of the respondents. Elites are considered as responsible persons and society is supposed to be benefited by the political link of the elites. Again the elites are also supposed to try to develop their society by their linkage. The programmes of the rural development have been de-centralized by the government so that real benefits percolate down to the rural poor. The rural elites need to try to develop their village/area by availing facilities provided by the government, through establishing links with higher political leaders and through concerned government officials. To understand the possible benefits of the rural areas or benefits of the society from the linkage of the rural elites we tried to collect the information administering a direct question: "How far your linkage has benefited the village/panchayats? If yes,
what are they? As a response to the question, the respondents informed different views about the benefits of the village/panchayats by their political linkage which is analysed in Table-5.8.

**Table-5.8**

Social benefits from the linkage network of the elites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narayanpur Block</th>
<th>Nowboicha Block</th>
<th>Ghilamara Block</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Govt. financial help to the village/panchayat</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>5.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road/building/well, etc.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corresponding with various govt. authority</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spreading awareness among the people or doing social works</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By multiple ways</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>6.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not benefited the village/panchayats</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents=72</td>
<td>Total respondents=73</td>
<td>Total respondents=62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dhakuakhana block</th>
<th>Grand total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>6.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>13.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>11.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>8.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>8.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents=60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Table-5.8 shows that among the respondents of Lakhimpur district, 10.11 per cent informed that they work as the facilitator for financial help or assistance to the village/panchayats by their linkage. Again the table shows that 10.86 per cent respondents have benefited the village/panchayats by...
sanctioning grants for road/buildings/well (common facilities) and small houses under the central government schemes to the village people. The table also clearly shows that 4.87 per cent respondents benefited the village/panchayats by corresponding with various government authorities to develop the village/panchayats of their own area. 5.24 per cent respondents benefited the village by making the village people aware by disseminating information of the government programmes relating to the rural development through their linkage with political leaders. It also shows that 6.74 per cent respondents benefited the village/panchayats in multiple ways by their political linkage. In other words, with the help of their political linkages, 6.74 per cent respondents benefited their village in multiple ways. It indicates that these respondents really tried to develop their village and panchayats with the help of their linkage network. But the Table 5.8 interestingly shows that among the respondents of Lakhimpur district, 62.17 per cent respondents are not able to benefit their village/panchayats by their political linkage. It indicates that most of the rural elites (62.17 per cent) in Lakhimpur district have failed or not able to benefit their villages, although they have good political link. Perhaps it so happens due to their inability to convince their leaders at higher level. The respondents are influenced by the higher level of political leaders but they (rural elites) are not able to influence their leader at higher level (By the linkage network, the higher political leaders are benefited but not the rural population.
The Table 5.8 clearly indicates that majority of the elites of Lakhimpur district are not able to help their village people by their political linkage. The elites, through whose linkage the village and panchayats are benefited are quite negligible. It can be said that if the villages are not benefited by the political linkage or linkage network of the rural elites, than the role of the rural elites in rural development will not be satisfactory. If the village or rural areas are being not developed by the linkage network of the rural elites than it can be assumed that the rural development, that has been taking place in Lakhimpur district, is only due to governmental efforts, not due to the efforts of the rural elites of the district. The rural elites are trying to establish a good link between political leaders, government authorities and the society but this link, it seems is not working satisfactorily.

**Summary**

The findings from the analysis of the present chapter which is related to the linkage network of the rural elites and the link and benefits of both personal cum village or society, can be summarized as follows:

- Most of the rural elites of Lakhimpur district know the political leaders closely which means that they have close relation with political leaders.

- Most of the rural elites of Lakhimpur district know political leaders at the Block and district level. Only a handful of rural elites know state and National level leaders. The percentage of elites who know all levels of leaders is very low.
Although most of the rural elites of Lakhimpur district know the political leaders for multiple reasons, but only a handful of elites know the political leaders by interaction through developmental activities. Again the elites who know the leaders across the party line, their percentage is very insignificant.

Further, though majority of the rural elites know officials in the bureaucracy, but they rarely approach them to discuss rural developmental works in their area. The government service holders know only their concerned officials and they rarely know other government officials.

Most of the rural elites in Lakhimpur district have linkage only with Block level government officials. The percentage of rural elites who know block district and state level government officials are very low. It is also noteworthy that none except two of the rural elites of Lakhimpur district know the national level government officials in the bureaucracy. Only a few elites know all levels of government officials in the bureaucracy.

Most of the rural elites of Lakhimpur district are invited to the meeting related to the rural development. But only an insignificant number of elites involve themselves in developmental activities of the villages of their own area.

Most of the rural elites of the district are not benefited personally by their linkage network. The rural elites who are personally benefited and also benefited in multiple ways by their political linkage, their percentage is also not very high.
By the linkage network of the rural elites of Lakhimpur district the elites are not benefited personally and they are also not able to elicit benefit for the village/panchayats. In other words most of the rural elites of the district are not able to help their village/panchayats by their links. The elites who benefited their villages by their linkage network, their percentage is very low.

From the above analysis, it is very clear that personal benefit of power and status, as it is supposed to be, is not accrued out of the political linkage of the rural elites. However, a sizable chunk of the elites emphasized that they are benefited from the linkage in multiple way (Table-5.7). The findings in the present survey also points out that they could act as the facilitator for financial help/assistance to the village through their linkage network. Table-5.8 indicate that the rural elites could act as an agent of dissemination of information about various programmes and encouraged the people to take up social works at their village level.

When we look at the levels of interaction of the rural elites, we confront a very important dimension of the interactional linkage. Though 46.77 percent of the elites express their interactional linkage at block level, which is otherwise the base level for developmental activities, it gradually decreases when we move upward. Hence, the linkage is very low, when we look at the district and state level.

Hence, with regard to the interactional linkage of the rural elites, it could be safely ascertained that their level of linkage is basically localized and confined to the lower level of the functionaries in the bureaucracy. The overall
interactional linkage of the rural elites is low in nature. This, in fact, has a significant bearing of their inability to accrue sufficient benefit to the rural area. As a consequence, they also fail to exercise much influence over the decision making bodies and the process Table-5.1 stands testimony of the same, as around only 50 per cent of the rural elites closely know their political leaders. Another 31 per cent of the elites do have formal relations. Hence, the access level for exercising influence over the elected political representatives at the upper level is low in nature.