

A Study of The Causes and Results of The Change in Voting Behaviour During Elections

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Abstract

India is a democratic country which allows the people of India irrespective of caste, religion, creed or culture to participate in the functioning of democracy, in making the government, in functioning the government by electing the government representatives in the Lok Sabha Elections, Vidhan Sabha Elections and the Panchayat Election. The process of elections in India begin with the preparation of the voters' list, correction in the voters' list and publication of the voters list, notification about the dates and with the announcement of the code of conduct followed by the nomination of the candidates, withdrawal of the nomination for various reasons, training of the members of the polling parties at the district level or tehsil level, preparation of the polling booths, deployment of the police, military and paramilitary force, polling and counting, announcement of the results and oath taking by the winning candidates. The success of elections in a constituency depends on the coordination of all the organs of the election process. If any of the organs fails to function properly abiding the rules prescribed for the elections, the elections are found in doubt. Of the various organs of the election process, the voters are the most important one without whom no elections are possible, and no smooth working of democracy and no success of democracy are possible. It is the voters who decide the victory or defeat of the candidates contesting elections. The victory of the candidates in elections depends on the voters' positive attitude and behavior.

Keywords: Voting Behaviour, Constituency, Political Parties, Contestants.

Introduction

Democracy and elections are interrelated. Where there is democracy, there are elections. India is one of the best democracies in the world. Democracy allows the people to participate in the government directly or indirectly, and this is the very reason why the elections make the people in a country so worthy. In India, the people who have attained the age of 18 years elect their representatives who belong either to some political party or who contest elections as independent candidates, send them to parliament or Assemblies or Panchayats as the case may be. The victory or defeat of the candidates is decided by the voters and their behavior.

Undoubtedly, the voters in India play a pivot role in deciding the fate of the candidates. It is only through the support and vote of the voters that the candidates can win the elections. The voters' behavior, however, is not always the same. Moreover, the voters are not alike in their status, literacy level, expectations etc.

The only expectation of the candidates from the voters is to get their whole-hearted support and vote, while the expectations of the voters vary in accordance with their tastes, levels etc. Some of the voters take it their moral and citizen duty to use and exercise their franchise; some expect the candidates to belong to their own castes and religions; some expect the candidates rich enough to distribute valuables, gifts, wine etc. among them; some are the supporters of a specific political party; some come as the supporters of the independent candidates.

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Causes of The Change In Voting Behaviour

'Voting behaviour' refers to the behavior of a voter in constituency during the elections. Voting behavior has much to do with the elections and their success. The election commission, district election officers, political parties, candidates expect a positive voting behavior, but it generally happens. The looting of booths, firing at the booths, prevention of the weak voters from casting vote, casting of others' votes in their absence are some of the incidents that make one believe that the voting behavior changes during elections in India.

Some of the causes of the change in the voting behavior are as follows-

1. Dissatisfaction of the voters with the political parties and the nominated candidates thereof
2. Contesting of elections by the candidate other than of the voters' caste and religion
3. Excessive favour to some particular candidate and dislike for other candidates
4. Ignoring of the voters by the contestant
5. Superiority complex of the candidates
6. Failure of the candidates or their supporters to make personal visit or personal contact with the voters
7. Failure of the candidate to reach the doors of the voters
8. Failure of candidates to distribute gifts and money among the voters of some particular locality

Results of Change In Voting Behaviour

The change in voting behavior is not good for the spirit of democracy. The model voters are those who do not run after money or gifts and who exercise their franchise just because they want to contribute to the success of democracy. Some of the results of the change in the voting behavior are as follows-

1. Overnight changes are seen in the destiny of the candidates
2. The candidate who is likely to win elections, loses the elections, and the candidate who is likely to lose the elections
3. Violence breaks out
4. The dissatisfied voters do not cast their votes in favour of the candidate in whose favour they were going to vote before the changed behavior
5. The dissatisfied voters do not cooperate the candidate whom they no more likes
6. The calculation of votes gets disturbed.

Objective of the Study

1. To find out the inseparable organs of elections in general
2. To discuss the importance of elections in democracy
3. To focus the relationship between democracy and elections
4. To find out the role in and contribution of the political parties for the success of democracy
5. To explore the various political parties existing in India
6. To discuss the major trends of the elections in India
7. To discuss the election process adopted in India for the elections in general
8. To study the role and contribution of voters in the elections
9. To study the contestant-voter relationship
10. To discuss the expectations of the contestants from the voters
11. To enumerate the expectations of the voters from the contestants
12. To study the voting behavior
13. To find out the things that make the voting behavior positive
14. To find out the things that make the voting behavior negative
15. To explore the causes of the change in the voting behavior during elections
16. To bring forth the results of the changed voting behavior on the elections

Review of Literature

1. Sanjay Kumar and Harishwar Dayal (2004), in the study entitled 'Jharkhand: Reversal of Past Trends', have examined electoral behavior of voters in Jharkhand. For the study, a sample of 887 was drawn using multistage stratified random sampling method. The coalition of the Congress Party, Jharkand Mukti Morcha (JMM), Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), CPM and CPI was the major factor for the electoral success of Congress alliance. The authors concluded that caste and performance of the government played a predominant role in determining the voter's decision.
2. Rahul Verma (2009), in the article 'Dalit Voting Patterns' analysed the voting behaviour of dalits in 2009 Lok Sabha elections. The author observed that much of the BSP's dalit vote is gained from the rural lower classes while the Congress favour among dalit is in urban areas and among rural upper and middle class dalits.
3. As per the reports of the Election Commission of India, 2009 the dalit vote turnout in S.C. reserved constituencies was 58.2 per cent. Of the total 84 Lok Sabha seats reserved for S.Cs, the Congress and its allies won 38 seats while the BJP and its allies won 17 seats and BSP fared very poor as it won just 2 seats. Left won seats and the S.P. won 10 seats while others won 5 seats. In states where parties are an option dalits have preferred them to other parties.
4. The Congress has commanded strongest support where the BJP is the only alternative. But in states where the Congress has to fight against the combined might of BJP -led NDA dalit voters seem to be supporting both the political parties do mobilise dalit voters along intra-dalit caste lines.
5. Basing on these sources it can be inferred that the perception dalit voting in masse for a particular political party is nothing more than might. It is true that jati affiliations played a part in shaping the politics but the outcomes of elections often defined the caste or class logic to the outcomes.
6. Sandeep Shastri, Vena Devi and Padmavathi, B.S. (2009), in 'Karnataka: A Default Win for the BJP', made a study on 2009 Lok Sabha elections held in the State of Karnataka. In the study it was analysed that the caste factor is an important variable in explaining the Karnataka verdict. Karnataka has seen a domination of the peasant proprietary Lingayat and Vokkaliga communities in the politics of the State.
7. The conclusion of the study is that three factors have played a predominant role in determining electoral behavior in Karnataka 2009 Lok Sabha elections. It is found that caste had been an important determining factor, besides education and age. The BJP drew support from the more educated, while illiterates favoured the Congress. Similarly, younger voters favoured the BJP, while older voters supported for the Congress party.
8. Ghanshyam Shah (2010), in 'Beyond Caste Voting: Modasa, Gujarat Revisited', carried out a study in Modosa constituency of Gujarat and concluded that caste sentiments have a very limited say in voting behaviour.
9. The voter was more influenced by issues covered during the campaign local day to day problems faced by her/him and family, her/him own experiences with worker and perception of the performance of the parties and on. According to the author caste or community of the contesting candidate is only one of the factor but not the determinant factor in the voting behaviour.
10. Miller, Patrick R. (August 2011), in 'The Emotional Citizen: emotion as a function of political sophistication', finds that several variables have been proposed that may moderate the relationship between emotion and voting. Researchers have shown that one such variable may be political sophistication, with higher sophistication voters more likely to experience emotions in response to political stimuli and thus more prone to emotional biases in voting choice.

11. Braha, D., & de Aguiar (2017), in Voting Contagion: Modeling and Analysis of a Century of U.S. Presidential Elections, observe that social influence and peer effects, as originating from family and friends, also play an important role in elections and voting behavior. An important question in this context is how to disentangle the social contagion by peers from external influences.

Hypothesis

1. There are several inseparable organs of elections in general
2. Elections play a vital role in the existence and for the success of democracy
3. All the political parties contribute to the success of democracy.
4. Several political parties with their varied state and national significance exist in India.
5. The trend of elections in India is not enthusiastic due to murderous attitude of the contestants and their supporters.
6. The election process adopted in India is very lengthy
7. Voters play a dominant role in enabling the contestants to win elections and in the making of government through the winning candidates
8. The voter-contestant relations are vice-versa, and both need to satisfy each other for healthy relations
9. Voting behavior is both positive and negative

Methodology

The study is qualitative research and aims at the voting behavior, causes and results of the change in voting behavior during elections. The method adopted and exercised for the study is deductive method. For the study of the selected issue, first a research design was prepared encompassing all the aspects to be covered up in the study. Both the primary data and the secondary data were used. The scholar's non participant observation supplied the primary data in the form of observation, while the traditional sources of the secondary data enabled the researcher to go into the depth of the selected subject.

The study was given a start with the selection of the topic which was considered to be appropriate enough for the study. The second step that was taken for the study was the study of the related literature which not only made the researcher familiar with the theme but also provided her the details of the previously carried out studies in India and abroad.

The third step was the determination of the objectives of the study that provided a line of action for the present study, and that were borne in mind during the study. The fourth step was the formulation of hypothesis that allowed the researcher to formulate hypothesis on the basis of her own culture, experiences etc. The fifth step for the study involves the drawing of findings and conclusion. The sixth step was to put the whole stuff systematically and scientifically.

Findings & Conclusion

1. Election commission, District Election Officers, Block Level Officers, Political Parties, Political leaders, Political celebrities, Constituencies, Polling Booths, Polling Parties, Contestants, Voters, Supporters of the Contestants etc. are the organs of elections in India that contribute to the successful conduction of elections in the country.
2. Democracy and elections are inseparable from each other. Democracy is the government of the people, for the people and by the people. It recognizes the significance of the voters who, by electing the representatives, contribute to the making and functioning of the government in the centre and the states.
3. Where there is democracy, there are elections. The same is true about India where the elections like Lok Sabha elections, Vidhan Sabha elections and Panchayat elections are held from time to time to keep up the spirit of democracy.
4. In the success of democracy in India, the role and contribution of the various national and state political parties, such as, Congress,

Bharatiya Janata Party, Samajwadi Party, Lok Dal, Bahujan Samajwadi Party, Aap Party is so immense.

5. The political parties nominate their members to contest the elections, and thus, contribute to the success of democracy in India.
6. The election trends in India are not satisfactory. Violence, kidnapping, prevention of the voters from casting votes, distribution of gifts and money to the voters are the practices that raise question mark on the validity of elections and on the success of democracy in India.
7. The election process for the various elections in India begins with the notification made by the election commission and with the announcement of code of conduct. The other important steps that are included in it are- nomination of the contestants, withdrawal of the nomination forms, polling, counting, results and oath taking by the winning candidates.
8. There are several organs to elections, but the most important organ of the election process is the voters who decide the victory or defeat of the contestants through their votes and through their behavior during the elections.
9. There is a great contestant and voter relationship. If there is a break in this relationship for any reason, it becomes too difficult for the contestant to win elections.
10. The expectation of the contestant from the voters of his constituency is that they should support him whole-heartedly and cast their votes in his favour.
11. The main expectation of the voters of the candidate contesting elections is that he should always be ready to serve the public and to work for the well being of the voters of the constituency.
12. Voting behavior is the behavior of the voters that is exposed during the election process through active or passive participation.
13. The respect to the voter, agreeing to his ideas, considering his worth on all occasions etc. are the things that make the voting behavior positive.
14. ignoring attitude of the contestants, arrogance, superiority complex, prejudiced attitude of the contestant etc. are the things that make the voting behavior negative.
15. The cause why the behavior of the voters change during the election process is the dissatisfaction of the voter for various reasons.
16. The changed voting behavior changes the results of the election.

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