

A Study on Voting Behaviour: Specially focus on the Area Under Sarukhetri Development Block

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Abstract: Voting is an example of political behaviour. It refers to the actions of voters during elections in a democratic political system. Voting behaviour is influenced by a number of crucial aspects, including why people vote for a certain candidate and how these influences shape people's minds, which leads to all people voting for that candidate. Voting is an important aspect of democracy. All citizen's voting habits are distinct and unique. In reality, voting behaviour is influenced by the decisions of a group of people. In every democratic nation voting behaviour plays a very significant role in the politics and the decision-making process. The citizen and their right to vote is backbone for a democratic nation. In every social context the voting behaviour may differ from each other. There are many factors which are responsible for voting behaviour of the voters. The social structure and voting behaviour are inextricably linked. Voting behaviour was heavily influenced by social structure. Because religion, caste, and other factors influence voting behaviour. Religion, caste, and language are all aspects of the social system. Every community is inhabited by people of various religious beliefs. Various religious individuals' dwell in society.

Keywords: Voting behaviour, Social norms, Different factors, Political parties, Literacy

Introduction

In India, voting is one of the most democratic practises. Every adult uses his or her voting rights to voice his or her approval or disapproval of the government or candidates who are elected to serve as representatives of the people. Many people in society modify their vote decisions the night before an election for a variety of reasons such as social, political, emotional, and so on. One of the most essential parts of civic participation is voting. Voting behaviour is influenced by a number of crucial aspects, including why people vote for a certain candidate and how these influences shape people's minds, which leads to all people voting for that candidate. Democracy is based on voting behaviour. The voting habits of each citizen are unique.¹ The term "social structure" refers to the framework of a society in which human beings have a role. There are numerous subgroups in society. Political, economic, religious, familial, and group issues, to name a few. Tradition and culture are social structure aspects in society. The social structure is fictitious.

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Although religion is primarily a private matter, it does have a public role in elections. Because all parties and candidates are aware that voters. Vote solely on the basis of their religious beliefs. That is why the candidates belong to the same religious group as the one in which he is running for office. When candidates are campaigning at that time, all they talk about is their religion. Because the contender has attracted the public's interest. We also know that when India became independent, it was partitioned based on religion. Voting behaviour is also influenced by language. In India, different states are split based on their languages. As a result, throughout election season, language plays a critical role. Because everyone votes for candidates who believe their language is the best and that their language would be protected under those candidates. Candidates are also limited to working with persons of a specific caste. These individuals are completely unconcerned about whether the candidates are excellent or awful. People solely vote based on their caste. The study of voting behaviour is related to learning about the nature of political systems and providing knowledge about how they work. In a democratic society, voting is the most common form of political engagement, and its study in political science is highly specialised in sub-fields.² Social values, customs, and beliefs are other factors that influence voting behaviour.

¹ Goldman, Sheldon, "Voting behaviour on the United States Courts of Appeals, 1961–1964". *The American Political Science Review*, 1966, 60 (2): 374–383.

There is no society without these three aspects. These components influence how people act in society, how they dress, how they communicate with others, and so on. At that time, some people voted for a specific candidate because their cultures mandated that they do so. They are a part of this civilization because they are a part of it.

Statement of the Problem

Electoral behaviour includes voting behaviour. Our societal conventions, ideas, and structures continue to influence how we vote. In terms of caste, religion, language, family membership, and other factors, voting behaviour is influenced by the social system. The study will be focused on the voting behaviour of the people of the areas fall under the Sarukhetri Develop Block of Barpeta district. The study basically focuses on different voting behaviour in different places. The results I got about voting behaviour of educated person differ from the non-educated person. Different pattern of questioners are used during the period of interview to get better result.

Objectives of the Study

To find out different voting behaviour based on various factors

To examine the major factors which are affecting voting behaviour as well political behaviour

To analyse some measurements to improve democratic rights mainly focusing on right to vote

Method

The methodology used for this study is analytical. The collection of Data for the study has been drawn from both Primary and Secondary Sources of Data Collection

Method of Data Collection

In conduct field work different methods were applied for collecting data at different stages of investigation. Interview schedules were prepared and Surveys were conducted with the help of interview schedules. Basically, the researcher followed Simple Data Collecting method from both formal and informal interviews.

Review of Literature

Biraj Hazarika in his article "Voting behaviour in India and its Determinants" nicely elaborated on voting behaviour in India and highlight the factors that determine the voting behaviour in India. Author analyse some factor of effecting voting behaviour in India such as money, emotion, language, religion and so on.³

C.P. Bhambhri and Pratap Singh Verma written by an article whose name is "Candidate's Perception of the voting behaviour". The author of this article compares and contrasts the perceptions of successful and defeated candidates based on the candidates' political party affiliations, educational backgrounds, and caste backgrounds. India's political evolution is still in its infancy, according to the author. Participatory democracy and party formation are still in their infancy.⁴

"21st century Political Science A reference handbook" is edited by John T. Ishiyama and Marijke Breuning. In the book People's voting behaviour is discussed by C. J. Williams. The authors of this book address many ideas of voting behaviour. Writers examine societal factors, ethnic ties, and family traditions in order to identify a person's voting preference. Writers argue that the media plays a significant² impact in developing opinions that lead to specific voting choices.⁵

² Gordon Marshall, Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, First Indian Edition, 2004, p.696.

³ Hazarika, Biraj (2015), "Voting Behaviour in India and its determinants", IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 20(10):22-25.

⁴ Bhambhri, C. P., Verma, Pratap Singh (1971), "Candidate's perception of the Voting behaviour", The India Journal of Political Science, 32 (3): 332-348.

⁵ Ishiyama. T. John, Breuning, Marijke (2011), 21st Century Political Science A Reference Handbook, New Delhi: SAGE publications India Pvt. Ltd.

⁶ Negi, M. M. S. (2011), "Voting Attitude of Women in Uttarakhanda with special reference to Garhwal", The India Journal of Political Science, 72(3):803-818.

⁷ H. Verma, Rahul, Sardesai, Shreyas (2014)", Does Media exposure affect Voting behaviour and Political Preferences in India?", Economic and Political Weekly, 49(39):82-88.

⁸ Meenu Roy, Electoral Politics In India: Election Process And Outcomes, Voting Behaviour And Current Trends (Hardcover), Deep & Deep Publications Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2000.

M.M.S. Negi is written by an article whose name is “Voting attitude of women in Uttarakhand with special reference to Garhwal”. In this study, the author examines how women in this region have a greater socioeconomic burden than men and differ from women in other locations. The author discusses how voting orientation in rural areas is positively correlated with education and political knowledge, as well as age, family income, and political indoctrination.⁶

“Does Media Exposure Affect voting behaviour and Political Preferences in India?” Article is written by Rahul Verma and Shreyas Sardesai. The author in this article discusses the impact of media exposure on Indian elections. In the 2014 elections, electorates with more media exposure were more likely to vote for the Bharatiya Janata Party, according to the author. People's political preferences were influenced by media exposure.⁷

Meenu Roy's work is a real endeavour by the author to examine all facets of elections—electoral behaviour, caste politics, regional impacts, defections, and so on—which are frequently at the heart of the electoral war. She believes that voters have no say in who they vote for. Political parties with clout force their candidates from on high. As a result, voters are uninterested in voting. There are two further types of non-voters. First, the wealthy do not vote because they know they will get what they want anyway, and second, they do not vote because they know they will never receive what they want.⁸

Results and Analysis

This paper is basically focuses on the voting behaviour of the people under the Sarukhetri Development Block falls under Barpeta district of Assam. The paper is based on field study and the respondents are from different age group as well from two major religion, are Hindu and Muslim.

Table 1.1
Age of Respondent

Age of the Respondents	Numbers
18-30	20
31-40	20
41-55	20
56-70	20
Total	80

Among these respondents 70% are Hindus and rest 30% are Muslims.

Findings and Discussion

Several factors influence voter behaviour, including religion, caste, community, language, money, policy or philosophy, polling purpose, extent of franchise, political wave, and so on. These characteristics are used by political parties and groups in order to win the fight of the voting box. Despite professing to be proponents of enlightened secularism, politicians can be found appealing to people's religious and communal sensibilities; they can also be found manipulating elements such as language or money to attain the goal of winning the vote war. For the same reason, appeals are made and canvassing campaigns are held in the name of a certain programme or ideology. The nature or aim of the elections, as well as the breadth of the suffrage, influence voters' interests and, as a result, their voting behaviour (Akhtar, 2014).

Basically, I tried to discover how social structure influences voting behaviour and how people choose which politicians to vote for. On the basis of these questions, I went out into the field and asked all of the respondents why they voted for a certain candidate or party. I also discovered how voters' ethical norms, social rules, and beliefs influence their voting decisions. Many people have responded to my results. Many things came to people's minds when they were asked to vote for a certain candidate or party, according to the respondents. They informed me that society played a significant part in the voting process. Because without society, no one's life would be possible. The society encompasses all people. If a political party or candidate believes they will win an election, they have undoubtedly entered society. Various castes and religious groups coexisted in society. And religion and caste had a significant influence in this. The importance of social structure in elections cannot be overstated. Because there are many more significant aspects within social structure, such as family, marriage, caste, religion, and so on.

Caste is a major influence of voting behaviour in India, according to respondents. It is deeply rooted in society and serves as a vital foundation for all social relationships. Despite the passage of many laws forbidding caste-based discrimination and action, caste continues to affect political behaviour. Caste and casteism have been politicised in Indian politics for a long time. In India, every political party, without exception, takes caste into account while creating policies, programmes, and electoral strategies. Caste plays a role in the selection of candidates for elections in a constituency. In the name of caste, votes are demanded. Several researchers have looked into the importance of caste as a determinant of voting behaviour, and they have come to the conclusion that, as Morris Jones puts it, "politics is more important to caste and caste is more essential to politics than previously." The primary issue of voters in rural India is caste. Despite the embrace of democratic norms that envision a future free of casteism, caste still dominates Indian

politics. Indeed, it has become one of the most important ways for the Indian people to become involved in democratic politics. The decision to follow the Mandal Commission's suggestion for job reservation for other Backward Classes (castes) and the political reaction to it demonstrates that caste continues to be a political factor in India. However, it is important to note that the role of caste as a factor of voting behaviour is changing, at least in metropolitan areas. In the Indian polity, issue-based political warfare is gradually taking shape. However, the scenario remains perplexing. The caste system is an accumulative structure of rank and hierarchy in its most generic but fundamental elements. It is widespread and all-encompassing, and it is known for defining and controlling all social, economic, and political interactions for individuals. People's voting behaviour, including that of members of various political parties and government officials, is caste-oriented or influenced by caste considerations. Their attitudes are caste-based, and their values reflect caste society's values. While it is true that caste influences political parties, government officials, and the administration, it can equally be argued that caste influences politics. We may mention some voting behaviour in the context of effecting political behaviour, are:

- People of a caste vote for a candidate from the same or a different caste, either on the basis of a decision made by the Panchayat, a meeting of caste members, or even without a formal decision.
- People favour candidates from their own caste over candidates from other castes, regardless of the virtues or flaws of the candidates.
- The candidates for a constituency are chosen depending on whether or not they would be able to gain the support of a specific caste or castes.
- In the time of recommend the candidates, cast of the candidate plays a pivotal role.
- When a single caste is unlikely to be effective, politicians or voters create caste-based alliances.
- A party's office bearers are chosen on the basis of caste in order to appease or not appease a caste group within the party and in the constituency.
- If a caste candidate belongs to a majority caste with a significant voter base, it is assumed that he will be chosen because of his affiliation with that caste. If he is chosen, it is assumed that the majority of the caste will vote for him. If he does not win, it is assumed that the caste did not vote for him, or that electors from the other castes banded together to defeat him (*Homepage / Your Article Library* 2022).

Another key aspect that determines electoral behaviour is religion. Political parties engage in community propaganda and take advantage of people's religious beliefs. The existence of many communal parties has further exacerbated religion's politicisation. Despite the fact that India is a secular country, no political party denies the role of religion in electoral politics. One of the reasons for the persistent relevance of religion as a factor of voting patterns is the existence of political parties and neo-political groups linked to a particular faith, such as the Muslim League, Akali Dal, Hindu Maha Sabha, Shiv Sena, and others. Religious plurality in Indian society is a fundamental characteristic of the Indian political system's environment, and it has a significant impact on political party power struggles. Candidates are chosen based on whether or not a religious majority exists in a specific district. Candidates do not hesitate to court votes by playing the religious card with fellow religious voters and the secular card with non-religious voters. It is also common practise to use religious institutions for political purposes, especially during elections. Political parties and other organisations are once again turning to religionist approaches to social-political issues. Religious concerns are frequently used by voters (Akhtar, 2014).

In India, religion plays a crucial part in people's voting decisions. There are numerous religious organisations in India. In India, all religious individuals are treated equally. When it comes to elections, however, everyone just supports their own religious candidates. If a good candidate represents their area but does not share their caste, people will not vote for him or her. They exclusively vote for candidates from their own caste.

India is a country with many different languages. Linguists play a role in voting behaviour as well. The importance of language as a political component in India is shown in the structuring of states based on linguistic criteria. There have been issues in states relating to the status of one specific language in that state, or the quality of the status of a state's language. Because individuals have an emotional tie to their languages, they are easily affected anytime a language issue arises. Voting behaviour is usually influenced by linguistic interests. Many individuals in Assam inquired about other languages. Only those candidates who are safe in their language are supported by everyone. Also, culture influences voting since everyone strives to develop their own civilization and everyone respects their own language. As a result, many individuals only vote for candidates who speak their native language (D Laitin, 1998).

India is a developing nation with a substantial proportion of the population living in poverty. Money plays a significant impact in deciding people's voting behaviour in India. A wealthy candidate or political party has a better probability of winning elections. However, it should be noted that this only occurs in normal conditions, not during a wave election or when other important concerns are at stake. The importance of the monetary factor in explaining voting behaviour cannot be overstated. Despite the constraints on election expenses, elections cost crores of rupees. In exchange for their votes, voters want money, liquor, or products. To put it another way, "votes" can be freely exchanged for "notes." Money, on the other hand, can only influence voters' decisions in regular circumstances, not in a wave election.

So, based on all of my queries, I discovered that 80 people have responded. Means, caste, religion, society, societal Norms, beliefs, family, friends, gender, money, and other factors still influence India's voting behaviour in Sarukhetri Development Block.

Summary and Suggestions

The way that various people vote is referred to as voting behaviour. It is studied so that political scientists, or more precisely political psychologists, can better understand why people vote for different political parties and so that political parties can predict who will vote for them in the future, allowing them to better plan policies, interaction, and the people who will better reflect them and try and convince voters to vote for them in the next election. Long-term and short-term influences can be roughly differentiated in the study of voting behaviour. Social class, gender, race, culture, religion, age, education, housing tenure, and basic long-term political affiliation are all long-term factors. The performance of the ruling party, important topics, the electoral campaign, the image of party leaders, the impact of the media, and big political events are all examples of short-term influence.

When compared to illiterates, educated people are more interested in casting their vote because they understand the importance of their right to vote and consider exercising it a patriotic obligation. They are aware that exercising their right to vote allows them to pick the government of their choosing. Thus, education has an impact on people's voting behaviour, and as education spreads, so does the proportion of people who vote. During the election of the 16th Lok Sabha, the percentage of people who voted increased to 66.38 percent, which was a record high in compared to prior elections. It might be difficult to persuade someone to change their mind on political topics. When seeking to win an election, it may be better to concentrate on ensuring that one's own party votes.

Caste plays a crucial role in the study project I stated earlier, whether we like it or not. Candidate selection for elections is frequently based on caste. As a result, the impact of caste on voting behaviour cannot be dismissed. Elections, it is publicly stated, have entrenched caste. Caste has been politicised, and politics is based on caste. Class consciousness is less important than caste, but it is still important, at least in part. A voter's income level is reflected by the class, which is an economic entity. In metropolitan regions, voting is influenced by class-based organised associations and institutions. This awareness is exploited by political parties.

Voting is influenced by a variety of socio-economic factors. Age, education, income, sex, religion, land ownership, previous financial standing, and future expectancy (or lack thereof) are all factors that influence voting. The older generation, for example, is more conservative in their vote, whilst the younger generation is more liberal. When it comes to voting, the majority of educated people don't give the head of the family much weight.

In this study project, I examine how many rules exist in society and how everyone follows them. Because everyone is a part of the society, no one can ignore it. Also, election candidates are not oblivious to the needs of society. When candidates enter society, they make promises, and if they are elected, they work for the people and build their society. As a result, many people vote for them, and their society's leader has requested that everyone vote for them. They want the progress of society. However, we occasionally find that candidates offer large sums of money to society leaders in order to get support for their party. Because candidates understand that when society leaders back one of their candidates, many other societies will follow suit. People are behind them. Occasionally, society's leaders exerted dominance over the rest of the population. They are afraid of various vote-gathering strategies. This is extremely detrimental to the election.

As a result of the preceding explanation, we can see that numerous things have an effect on voting. Candidates use several strategies to garner votes in this situation. People sometimes don't vote for decent candidates because they don't know who is good and who is terrible. Many people vote based on their own financial gain. When they did not receive any benefits or money from a particular political party, they did not vote for that party again. They switched parties. They believe that if the other party gains power, they will offer them a new opportunity. And this isn't a horrible way to think.

Suggestions

People in Assam likewise did not vote for candidates of their choice and did not select good candidates. If individuals vote solely on the basis of religion, caste, wealth, and welfare, society will not advance and will eventually face a major crisis. So, if individuals believe society has progressed, everyone must accept decent education. The society was only developed as a result of the educational system. Because when everyone is educated, everyone chooses decent candidates in elections and no one thinks about caste or religion.

Furthermore, many strive to concentrate solely on the significance of their conscience vote. When people value solely their conscience vote, they vote for good candidates, and society develops otherwise leaders who constantly brainwash the common people. As a result, everyone tries to vote according to their conscience. Many people in society did not vote with their thoughts. This is a really horrible electoral situation. As a result, people's minds have matured, and they are better able to select qualified individuals.

People, in my opinion, choose the appropriate politicians when they comprehend political knowledge. Otherwise, people will always choose the worst candidates, and no one will progress. And the concept of religion and caste is becoming more prevalent. India may also confront a risk situation at some point in the future.

Conclusion

The democratic process has always included elections. The electorate's exercise of choice at regular intervals is essential to democratic systems. Elections protect democratic freedom by allowing for the rotation of rulers and the creation of leadership opportunities, among other things. And while voting is an individual choice for everyone, we occasionally see that people do not exercise their right to vote. They vote based on caste, language, religion, social standards, and beliefs, among other factors. That is why it is not uncommon for terrible candidates to win. Elections, on the other hand, play an important role in democratic government.

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