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Changing Patterns of Electoral Behaviour in Rural and Urban Settings: An Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Electoral Behaviour is the representative aspect of people's participation in a democratic system. In a democratic system, a large number of rural and urban peoples express their opinion in the process of election by the voting. But day by day every democratic system has significant changes in the electoral process. It means election or voting as an experience of the voter decision by using the various electoral behaviours such as religion, caste, money, language, welfare, agricultural, community, party loyalty, media, feasting, pre-election promises, social media etc. In this article the main purpose of the study is to focus upon the real and ideal picture about the changing patterns of electoral behaviour in rural and urban settings.

Keywords: Electoral Behaviour, Participation, Democratic System, Voters and Voting.

Introduction

Nowadays Indian democracy has witnessed significant changes in the rural and urban voting strategies by the political leaders and election commission. During the election voting has been influenced by various

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aspects of the electoral system, including modern advanced technology and social communication. In the 21st century the situation of electoral behaviour is changed by the voters because now most of the voters are aware about the vote and voting rights, not only urban voters but also rural voters because of education and propaganda of social and electronic media. Another side of changing Electoral Behaviour of political parties have adapted their new electoral strategies during the elections like election campaigns by the electronic media. Furthermore, the political parties and political leaders have shifted development agendas and addressed the concerns of the voters during the elections.

Theoretical Framework

Successful completion of the study I have followed some theories. The theories provide an idea of a particular topic that I have analysed and provide a brief overview of the theories of Electoral Behaviour such as:

Sociological Theory:

Sociological theory provides a basic understanding about the Electoral Behaviour. This theory highlights the importance of social communication that reflects the various divisions and tensions within the people of society. This theory provides the most significant of social class divisions that are religion, caste, class, gender, ethnicity and region etc. So that Sociological theory helps us to understand and explain various social aspects or factors that influence voter's behaviour.

Psychological Theory:

Psychological Theory provides basic understanding about the psychology of voters. Psychological theory highlights the importance of individual psychology during the election process. This study emphasizes individual personal attitudes and beliefs about the psychology of voters or candidates' perception. Lastly, we may say that the psychological theory of electoral behaviour provides a comprehensive framework for understanding individuals on how psychological aspects or factors influence voters' decisions.

Rational Choice Theory:

Rational choice theory provides a basic understanding about the voter decision by using the rationality of candidate's behaviour or ideology of political parties. Rational choice theory of Electoral Behaviour

changes the attention into the individual personal decision and the away from socialisation and behaviour of political parties and social groups. In this point of view, we may say that the rational choice theory of electoral behaviour provides a comprehensive framework for understanding whether the voters are aware how rational aspects or factors influence voters' decisions of vote.

Party Identification Theory:

Party Identification Theory is based on sense and attachment to people that provide the identity of Political parties. This theory is related to the identity of Political parties that are influenced by the various factors such as campaigning of Political parties, media, policies of Political parties and personality of political leaders etc. In this point of view, we may say that the party Identification theory of electoral behaviour provides a comprehensive framework for understanding whether the voters are aware how party identification aspects or factors influence voters' decisions of vote.

Review of Literature

Literature review is the summary of previous research on a related topic of this study. For successful completing of my study, I have reading lots of Books, Edited Books, Article etc. such as- **Meenu Roy** in his book "**Electoral Politics in India**" (2000) he explains the system of electoral politics over the India. **S. L. Sikri** in his book "**Indian Government and Politics**" (2004), one chapter deals with the voting behaviour and in Indian perspectives and its determinants. **B. B Jena and JK Baral** in their book "**Election Politics and Voting Behaviour in India**" (1989), explain overview of election process, system and voting behaviour in India. **B Hazarika** in his article "**Voting Behaviour in India and its determinants**" (2015), he highlights in his article voting behaviour in different angle and he point out some determinants of voter behaviour during the election process. **Sanjay Kumar and Praveen Roy** in their book "**Measuring Voting Behaviour in India**" (2013), consist of eight parts. All the eight parts of the books deals with the meaning of the term measurement, different connotations and theories of voting and historical overview of election studies in India, next part deals with the methodology and important tools and techniques of data collections. Last part of the books deals with the challenges and problems of voting behaviour in India. **Man Mohon Sing Negi** in his article "**Theoretical Aspects of Electoral Behaviour**" (2005), he explain in his article various theories of electoral behaviour

in Indian election. **Max Visser** in his article “**Voting: A Behavioural Analysis**” (1996), he explains psychology and voting behaviour, behavioural analysis or voting is and the different dynamics models of voting behaviour and voter respond, voting consistency etc.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this article are:

- (i) To highlight the overall impact of changing electoral behaviour during the elections.
- (ii) To find out the present situation of electoral behaviour through various aspects.
- (iii) To analyse the impact of rural and urban voting during the elections.
- (iv) To analyse the major problems faced by the violence during the elections.

Implications of the Study

- (i) This study would help us in understanding the present status of Rural and Urban settings of Electoral Behaviour.
- (ii) This article helps us to find out the present problems and issues of voters that are faced by the rural and Urban political leaders.
- (iii) This study helps us to understand the difference strategy of electoral behaviour between rural and urban areas.

Methodology and Data Collection for the Study

For doing this article I have followed the analytical method where the Changing Patterns of Electoral Behaviour in Rural and Urban Settings are being observed. In this article I have collected data from various secondary sources like reference books, eBooks, research papers, journals, newspapers and resources or Google search engine etc.

An Overview of Changing Patterns of Electoral Behaviour in Rural and Urban Settings

In this study changing patterns of Electoral behaviour has been long studied relating to the behaviour of voters and political leaders in both Rural and Urban areas. During the elections rural and urban voters exhibit distinctive voting patterns, but these are changed by the way to urbanization, digitalisation, social and economic changes, and

increasingly successful political awareness of voters. So, in the 21st century we saw lots of factors of voter behaviour but somehow under a galaxy of influences by several factors during the Electoral process. Some of the important factors of rural and urban voter behaviour are:

Changing Factors of Rural Voters:

In this study found lots of changing factors of Electoral Behaviour during the elections in rural areas. Such as:

- (i) **Most probably factors of rural voters:** All the grassroots level voters have been influenced by different factors such as muscle power, caste, religion, money and other welfare-oriented policies. So, in this study the most important observation and suggestions are the rural voters more importantly to participate in elections for such factors.
- (ii) **Welfare oriented voting:** Second another factor of rural voting is welfare-oriented decision-making voting of rural voters. Most of the rural voter's decision depends on the development of agriculture and various rural schemes like MGNREGA, Swasthya Sathi, Kanyashree, Oikya Shree, Sabuj Sathi etc.
- (iii) **Agricultural Concern Oriented Voting:** Most important factors in rural voting are Agricultural Concern Oriented Voting. Because, most rural voters are farmers and they like Agricultural policies, subsidies and rural development. So, rural communities and farmers are highly sensitive to their developmental policies that directly impact on the voting.
- (iv) **Community Oriented Rural Voting:** Forth other changing factors of rural voters is community Oriented Voting. Because most of the rural voters traditionally rely on rural leaders or village leaders, religious or caste related organisations and lastly local community influence to guide their voting or electoral choices.
- (v) **Party Loyalty in Voting:** Another changing factor of Electoral Behaviour is party loyalty. Because most of the rural people have historically shown strong loyalty to the political parties that best on historical affiliation and caste.
- (vi) **Poor Media Influence in Rural Voter:** Most of the rural voters depended on word but some rural voters believed in radio and newspaper for political information and making the right decision to cast their vote in the election.

- (vii) **Election Feasting in rural Voting:** Rural or Village Community feasting is one of the most important features of electoral behaviour in India. The political leaders organize this type of event during the election through party workers. On this occasion people expect very much from the candidate to bear all the expenses of the feast and others. Candidates would spare a certain amount of money for the purpose. Some were even given alcoholic drinks during the elections.
- (viii) **Pre- Election Promises in Voting:** Pre- Election Promises is the significant factor of rural voting because before election political leaders promise to the fulfilment of major needs of the people like employment opportunities, education, improvements of roads, bridges, drinking water facility and community development etc.

Changing Factors of Urban Voters

In this study found lots of changing factors of Electoral Behaviour during the elections in Urban areas, Such as:

- (i) **Economic Factors oriented Voting:** Economic issues are the most important factors for urban voters. Because urban voters are likely influenced by Urban development like employment, infrastructure, job creation, housing, environmental sustainability and transportation etc. So in this view urban development is the significant determinant of Electoral Behaviour in casting the vote.
- (ii) **Issue oriented Urban Voting:** Issue oriented Voting is another important factor for the urban voters. Because most of the urban voters focus on some issues. Such as health, education, Environmental policies rather than party loyalty. In urban areas issue oriented Voting reflects and informs the electoral demands of voters' decisions.
- (iii) **Individual Centric Decision in Urban Voting:** Individual Centric decision is another factor of Urban voters because the majority of urban voters are not influenced by community pressure or group decision. So in this situation urban voters make the decisions and take an independent observation about the political parties, political leaders and candidates.
- (iv) **Youth Participation in Voting:** Nowadays urban areas often have a higher concentration of young voters. Because in the

21st century Youth voters are likely influenced by the digital media and social media. Young voters tend to be more issue focused and less tied to historical party loyalty. In this situation young voters make them a crucial part for the engagement with political parties, party leaders or candidates.

- (v) Use of Social Media in Voting:** Use of social media is the prominent factor of electoral behaviour. Now a days rise of new media such as Face-Book, Blogs, Twitter, E-mail, WhatsApp, Instagram and other media platforms provided the benefits of political parties or political leaders for free campaigns during the elections. In this situation we saw political parties and party leaders upload their own Electoral manifest or send their pictures to the voters.

Key Findings of the Study

This study founds lots of key points as follows:

- (i) Most of the rural voter's decision depend on welfare activity of rural areas.
- (ii) Majority of rural voters are uneducated, for that reason they are confused in taking the proper decision during the elections.
- (iii) Most of the rural voter's behaviour are different from urban voters.
- (iv) This study found lots of changing factors of rural and urban voters.
- (v) This study finds out that, there is an important role played by media during the elections.

Concluding Observations

In this article we may conclude that there is no single factor in both rural and urban electoral behaviour which decides voting behaviour of the electorates during the elections. Now a days each and everybody are influenced by several issues, factors before he/she presents his/her opinion about a candidate, party or political leaders and assesses the representation of vote. Lastly, we may conclude that the system of voting and the total process legally express the right to vote as constitutionally guaranteed to establish every citizen's political right and make the country more democratic and fruitful.

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