

Voting Behaviour of People in Anantnag Constituency of J&K

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Abstract

In the democratic set up voting is an important process. Proper utilization of vote can lead to the development of a country to a greater extent. However political parties try to capture maximum number of votes in order to come in power. For this they tend to develop and determine the voting behaviour of the voters. The behaviour of a voter is influence by several factors such as religion, caste, community, language, money, etc. The political parties and groups make use of these variables for the sake of their interest. Issues related to the daily life such as unemployment, price rate, law and order system and other developmental issues often influence the vote of common people. The present paper is about the Anantnag constituency of J&K state of India. The main focus of the study is on the factors that affect on voting behaviour and to ascertain the basis on which people of the Anantnag Constituency vote.

Introduction

India is the largest working democracy, a parliamentary democracy, in the world. Election studies in India were mainly inspired by western studies on voting behaviour, especially the Columbia and Michigan studies in the United States. The behaviour of a voter is influence by several factors such as religion, caste, community, language, money, policy or ideology, purpose of the polls, extent of franchise and political parties and groups make use of these variables for the sake of winning the battle of the ballot box. Despite making their professions for enlightened secularism, politicians can be found invoking appeals to the religious and communal sentiments of the people; they can also be found involved in exploiting the factors of language or money to achieve the purpose of emerging successful in the war of votes.

Objectives

The study will focus on determinates of politics in Anantnag constituency Jammu and Kashmir. Therefore, the basic objectives of the study are:

- To ascertain the basis on which people of the Anantnag Constituency vote.
- To study the factors that affect on voting behaviour.

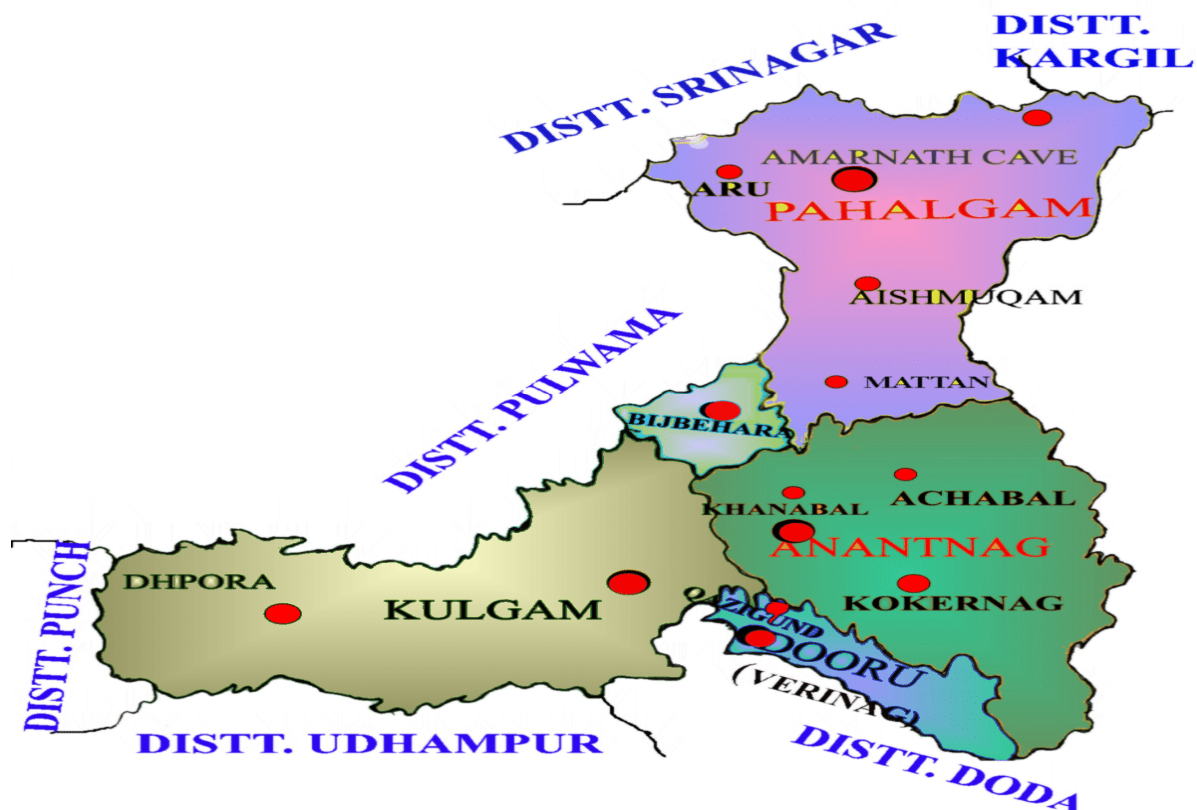
Methodology

The methodology employed in this study is empirical in nature designed by a convenient sampling; the collection of data and facts through reliable survey method has given the research a tinge of empirical investigation. These facts have therefore been properly processed and presented to their right context. Both the primary and secondary sources of data collection have been used. The primary data was collected through interview schedule and secondary data was collected through official reports, party documents, news papers, and the like have been exploited to present a factual electoral data both from macro and micro point of view.

Profile of Anantnag District

Anantnag District is located in the South-West of Kashmir valley. Srinagar and Pulwama districts bound geographically the districts in the North and Northern West respectively and in the North-East by Kargil District of Ladakh Division. Doda and Kishtwar in the East and south-east and by Tehsil Gool Gulabgarh of Udhampur District and Tehsil Budhal of Rajouri District in the South-west also bound it. The total area of the District is about 3934 Sq. Kms that constitute about 45% of total area of Jammu and Kashmir State. There are six tehsils viz., Anantnag, Bijbehara, Dooru, Shangus, Kokernag and Pahalgam. As per census 2011, the population of the di strict is 1,078,692 Lakhs with 282,887 Lakh in Urban areas and 795,805lakh in Rural areas.

Map of Anantnag district of J&K



Political history of Anantnag:

Political Parties

Political parties have become an integral part of present day political systems. These play more important role in a democratic system of government than in any other form of government. A party recognized in four or more states is known as national Political Party. National Political Parties are all- India political parties .A party recognized in less than four states is treated as state party or regional party.

The emergence of regional parties in India has a geo-political rationale. Jammu and Kashmir is a mayor of regional political parties, from its evolution in political system. The main regional political parties exist in Jammu and Kashmir are Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Awami National Conference, Jammu Kashmir National Panthers Party.

Basis of formation of political parties

In every country political parties came into existence and go out of same depending upon circumstances and situations. There are different important bases or determinants on which political parties are formed.

- Historical basis.
- Psychological basis.
- Ideological basis.
- Regional basis.
- Social basis.
- Economical basis.
- Religious basis.
- Racial basis.
- Political basis

Jammu and Kashmir came into being as a single political and geographical entity following the Treaty of Amritsar between the British Government and Gulab Singh signed on March 16, 1846. The Treaty handed over the control of the Kashmir State to the Dogra ruler of Jammu who had earlier annexed Ladakh. Thus a new State comprising three distinct regions of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh was formed with Maharaja Gulab Singh as its founder ruler. The feudal dispensation in the State, however, was too harsh for the people to live under and towards the end of a hundred years of this rule when their Indian brethren were fighting for independence from

the British under the inspiring leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, the Kashmiris led by a towering personality, the Sheri-Kashmir Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, rose against the autocracy. The autocratic rule came down heavily on the people's freedom movement. However, the people laid their lives in the cause of freedom and to uphold the ideals of secularism, equality, democracy and brotherhood.

The high point of the movement was July 13, 1931 when 22 protesters were martyred. The event strengthened the movement and contrary to the expectations of the then rulers, the people emerged more determined in their resolution to seek an end to autocratic rule. By the time the rulers could realize the futility of breaking the will of the people with the might of the State, the National Conference, headed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, had become a mass movement and a force to reckon with. It broke the barriers of region and religion and became a popular and secular voice of the people of the State whose collective yearning was freedom from autocracy and the establishment of a popular rule. The people's movement spearheaded by the National Conference saw several ups and downs with its leaders particularly the Sheri Kashmir suffering vicissitudes and long internment.

Major Political Parties in Anantnag Constituency are:

- Jammu Kashmir National Conference
- Indian national congress
- Jammu and Kashmir People's Democratic Party
- Jammu and Kashmir panthers party
- Bhartiya Janta Party

Determinants of voting behaviour in Anantnag constituency of J&K- An Analysis

Elections occupy an important place in the democratic government. It is a means through which masses express and enforce their political opinion and regulate political organization of the society. It is therefore, imperative that the elections be conducted in a very free and fair manner. It also depends upon whether the system allows freedom of thought, expression and association to the people. Mere presence of an electoral system does not make a political system democratic. The will of people is expressed through voting in elections and therefore, all undemocratic and unfair means like manipulating and rigging need to be avoided in the elections. No such action is taken which would in any way undermine the popular will expressed through elections.

The elections in Jammu and Kashmir were always questioned in terms of their freeness and fairness. It is being believed that almost all the elections of the state of Jammu and Kashmir (except 1977 election) were rigged. Under the grab of these elections, the most unpopular and undemocratic regimes were installed in Kashmir. It is also said that the elections history of Kashmir is replete with examples of being raped by the central government in collaboration with the political elite of Kashmir. Hence, an effort is made to understand the voting behaviour and will of the people of Kashmir afresh. For this purpose the survey was conducted in Anantnag constituency of Jammu and Kashmir through the means of interview schedule. The interview schedule contains three parts—first part deals with the independent variables, second part deals with political awareness and third part deals with determinants of voting behaviour. After data collection analysis of data has been made. Analysis of the data is the most skilled task of all the stages of the research. It is a task calling for the researcher's own judgment and skill. The data has to be processed and analysed in accordance with the outline laid down for the purpose at the time of developing the research plan.

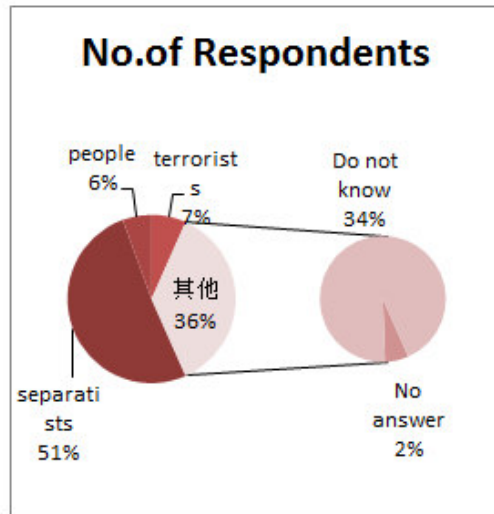
The third part of interview schedule deals with the determinants of voting behaviour in Anantnag constituency. The responses of voters which had been received from respondents are as under:

The 100 percent of respondents were included in the voter list. The 36.67 percent of respondents boycott in election while 58.89 percent of respondents take part in elections, while 3.33 gave no answer and 1.11 do not know.

The 51.11 percent of respondents say that separatists gave call for boycott in election while 5.56 percent say that the people gave call for boycott in elections and 6.67 percent say that terrorists and others gave the call. See Table no.1

Table No.1

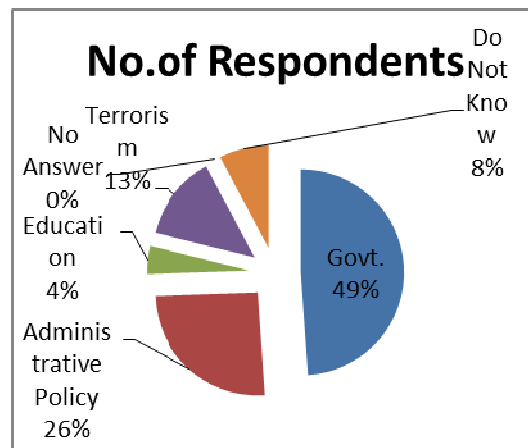
S.No.	Option.	No. of Respondents	Percentage.
a	Separatists	46	51.11%
b	People	5	5.56%
c	Terrorists	6	6.67%
d	No Answer	2	2.22%
e	Do not know	31	34.44%
	Total	90	100%



The 48.89 percent of respondents believe that government is responsible for unemployment in J&K, 25.56 percent believe administrative policy is responsible, 13.33 percent say terrorism and others gave no answer. See Table no.2

Table no.2

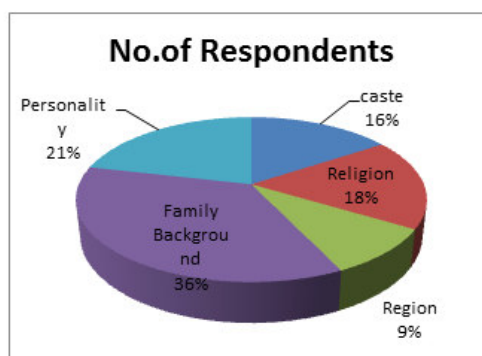
S. No.	Option.	No. of Respondents.	Percentage.
a	Govt.	44	48.89%
b	Administrative policy.	23	25.56%
c	Education System.	4	4.44%
d	Terrorism.	12	13.33%
e	No Answer.	0	0
f	Do Not Know.	7	7.78%
	Total.	90	100%



14 percent of the respondents say that elections are caste based, 16 percent say that religion has effect on elections, 8 percent are in favour of Region based elections, 21 percent of respondents are satisfied with the personality of the candidate, while 36 percent of respondents say that the candidate has a family background. See Table no.3

Table no.3

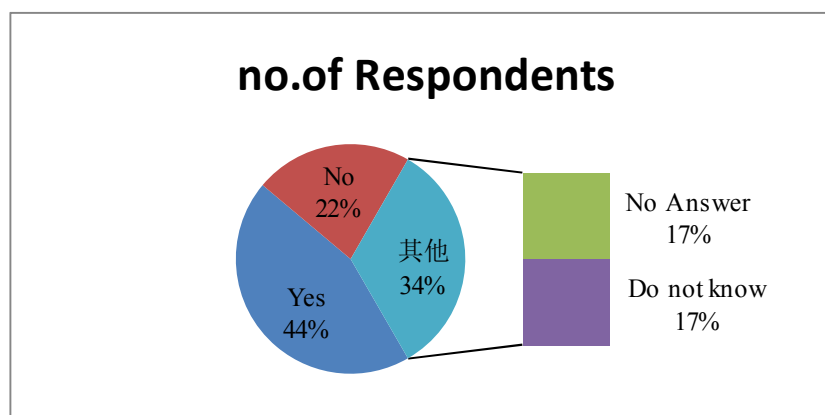
S. No.	Option	No. of Respondents.	Percentage
A	Caste Based	14	16%
B	Religion Based	16	18%
C	Region Based	8	9%
D	Family background	33	36%
E	Personality	19	21%
	Total	99	100%



The 44.44 percent of respondents are satisfied with the work done by the candidate of the constituency, while 11.11 percent are not satisfied with the work done and remaining gave no answer or do not. See table No. 4

Table No. 4

S. No.	Option	No. of Respondents	Percentage
a	Yes	40	44.44%
b	No	20	22.22%
c	No Answer.	15	16.66%
d	Do not know.	15	16.66%
	Total	90	100%



Conclusion

To sum up it may be said that the voters of the Anantnag constituency of J&K are politically aware. Most of them take part in elections. The determinants of voting behaviour like caste, religion and region do not have much effect on voters while personality of candidate, work done and family background have their effect on voters to a great extent. It may be said among those who are enrolled in electoral roll of the constituency, maximum number of voters participate in voting. Mostly youth, it may be also said that they vote for development, peace and prosperity.

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