

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of the most important features of the democratic polity is elections at regular intervals. Election constitutes the signpost of democracy; these are medium through which the attitudes, values and beliefs of the people towards their political environment are reflected. Elections are the central democratic procedure for selecting and controlling elected leaders. Elections grant people a government and the government has constitutional right to govern those who elect it. Elections symbolize the sovereignty of the people and provide legitimacy to the authority of the government. Thus, free and fair elections are indispensable for the success of the democracy. The growth of democracy is possible only when peoples are entitled to participate in the electoral process of the country. According to Article 326 of the constitution, elections in India are conducted on the basis of the "Adult Suffrage" which is most vital pillar of the democracy.

Chief Election Officer, government of Arunachal Pradesh has once again assigned Dera Natung Government College, Itanagar to carry out baseline survey to the eligible electorate of Arunachal Pradesh-citizens over the 18 years of age, in order to identify the level of voter's awareness to the Parliamentary and State Legislative Assembly Elections of 2009, summary revision during 1st January 2013 and also to study voters' access to information about the electoral process, exposure to media, level of political awareness, participation in public affairs, knowledge of voter registration, electoral procedures, voters' education and the general attitudes about democracy.

Methodology

The baseline survey conducted in 8 districts and 32 polling stations of the state with a multi stage random sampling procedure. Interviews were carried out from 17th July to 16th August 2013 by using direct interview method comprising 1008 rural and 1008 urban respondents. Gender distributions of respondents were 1076 male and 940 female. Hence, the quantitative component of the study involved a total respondent of 2016. Face to face interview was conducted with respondents.

The overview of the survey results are:

Background of the demography

❖ General Characteristics:

A general characteristic of our demographic survey is based on administrative jurisdictions and boundaries which found that 50% rural and 50% urban respondents. During our study it was found that male (69.94%) respondents were higher than female (30.06%). However, the female participation with the interview was significantly higher in urban (38.69%) than rural (21.43%). Reason for over representation of male is that male respondents are easily available to our interviews without any hesitations. Majority of the sample population surveyed (66.37%) were Arunachal Pradesh Schedule Tribe (APST) and rest (33.63%) were Non- Arunachal Pradesh Schedule Tribe (Non-APST) group.

❖ Family Characteristics:

Family characteristics on age reveal that 26.88% are between 18 -30 years age group, 29.46% in 31-40 years age group and 43.65% are more than 41 years. It was also found 75.99% were found to be married whereas 24.01% were unmarried.

❖ Socio-Economic Characteristics:

While attempting to identify occupation structure, most of the respondents were unemployed (38%) followed by government employees (28.22%), farmers (13.98%), business (8.93%), self-employed (4.96%), employee in private sectors (2.88%) and others (3.03%).

Attempting to identify the socio-economic status and voter attitudes and knowledge, it was found that 51.14% respondent's income per annum were less than Rs. 1,00,000 whereas 48.86% population were more than 1 lakh income.

The study also reveals that 40.43% of respondents used above poverty line ration card (APL), 36.21% used below poverty line ration card and 23.36% respondents claimed that they are yet to get ration card.

It was found that significant (49.69%) respondents of survey have attended school education followed by collegians (29.48%). However, 20.83% respondents were still illiterate. While comparing, the rural illiteracy level were more than the urban.

VOTER'S REGISTRATION:

❖ Possession of Voter's Card:

Survey shows that 92.85% possess their EPIC while 7.15% don't have the same. When non possession of EPIC was compared between rural and urban respondents, most of them were found to be in urban (11.8%). While interviewing the person to know the reasons for not having the EPIC, it was found that, 30.69% said not aware how to procure, 21.78% lost by self, 0.99% lost by issuing department, 13.86% could not get time to get photographed, 3.61% not interested in getting, 7.29% cumbersome procedures and 21.78% did not get the information when they are issued.

❖ Awareness of voter's list:

Majority of the sample population (92.66%) were aware of voter's list where as 7.34% did not knew about it. Out of this urban respondents (94.1%) were more slightly aware of the voter list than rural (90.1%).

When enquiry was made regarding enrollment and non enrollment of their names in voter list it was found that 87.65% respondents said that their names were in voter list whereas 12.35% were not aware of the same. Out of the respondents not aware of voter list, majority (56.25%) did not know about it, 21.25% was not told to them, 12.5% can't say and 10% not interested at all.

The study also found that respondents came to know that their names are enrolled in voter's list from friends/relatives (35.57%), BLO (23.21%), local community leaders (21.92%), newspapers (10.62%), TV (2.83%) and 5.85% can't say. It was also found that 73.26% respondents said their names were written correctly in voter list, where as 17.96% said no and 8.78% can't say.

❖ Awareness on minimum age for enrolment:

Attempting to identify voter's knowledge on eligible/ minimum age for enrolment in voters list, the majority (80.4%) of the respondents knew about that 18 year is the minimum age for enrolment in the voters list. However, 19.6% didn't know about the qualifying age for voters.

❖ **Awareness of summary revision 2013:**

More than half (76.85%) of sample (voters) knew about the programme of summary revision 2013. Out this, urban respondents (84.4%) were more aware of the programme of summary revision than rural (69.3%).

When asked about unregistered eligible voters in the family, 16.12 % respondents replied that they have family members who are above 18 years and their names were not included in the voter list. It was found that lack of awareness (33.5%) and their absence in the polling station (26%) are main reason behind non enrollment. However, 24.5% believes that due to lack of valid documents, 16% replied they are not interested in registration process.

❖ **Awareness of EPIC:**

Survey shows that 88.39% of the sample survey aware of EPIC whereas 11.61% did not knew about it. Out of this urban respondents (93.54%) were more aware of EPIC than rural (83.24%).

The study also found that 59.70% respondents said that they got it before last assembly election, 20.07% after last assembly election and 20.23% didn't remember. When asked about the time required to get the EPIC, 6.9% said they got the EPIC within 15 days, 28.46% got within 1 month, 29.27% got within 6 month and 35.37% didn't remember the duration. The respondents also mentioned few problems faced during procurement of EPIC like long procedures, inaccessibility of the concerned office and unfriendly officials.

When asked about other alternative ID use for voting, it was found that majority (44.99%) of them were using voter slip in the absence of EPIC. Rest use ration card (20.63%), driving license (12.85%), bank account pass book (8.13%) and others 13.39%.

❖ **Awareness about BLO:**

When asked about the involvement/appointment of locals for the help of enrollment appointed by govt./election offices, it was found that 80.21% of the sample surveyed were aware of the appointment, where as 19.79% were not aware of that.

When asked about the designation of the person (locals) appointed by election offices, 65% agreed that booth level officer were appointed to the locals, whereas 9.71% for identification officer, 13.47% for election agent and 11.82% replied don't know. Enquiry was also made whether BLO visited respondent's house / office then it was found that 53.15% replied positive, 33.9% negative and 12.95% can't say.

❖ **Awareness about Voter Centre and Services Provided:**

As per the feedback regarding voter centre more than half of the respondents (52.18%) were not known. However, 47.82% respondents were very much aware of it.

When they were asked, about the services provided by voter centre relating to the electoral roll than it was found in the study that 56.94% knew about the services. However, majority (59.21%) of them have not visited yet.

Majority (93.99%) of the respondents know their polling stations, whereas 6% of the populations even don't know their polling station.

ELECTIONS

❖ **Participation in State Assembly and Lok Sabha Elections 2009:**

Last State Legislative Assembly Election was held in the month of October 2009 with total voters turn out was 79.50% in the state. But when asked about their participation in the assembly election 95% of the respondents said that they have participated in the election of which rural participation is more than urban.

A total of 68.16% electorate had participated in Lok Sabha Election held in the months April-May 2009 in the state. However, the participation (90.43%) in Lok sabha was less than the assembly election in the surveyed area. The rural-urban divide also follows the same pattern. Only 5% of respondents didn't voted during assembly election whereas the percentage (9.57%) was little higher in parliamentary.

The reasons behind their non participation was many like, absence of electoral photo ID card, non availability in the constituency, name was not in the electoral roll,

there was no good candidate, felt insecure to go to the polling station, polling station was at distance, long queue and did not have time, no faith in political system, did want to vote as nothing will change, etc.

❖ **Experiences in last Elections:**

Regarding the experience of previous elections when question were asked, 78.97% respondents said that last elections were conducted conveniently, 7.69% inconvenient, 0.89% Taxing and 12.45% don't remember.

❖ **Motivations to vote during last elections:**

We were interested to know what motivated the voters in last elections to vote. The study found that 49.95% respondents voted because of the honesty of the candidate, 28.82% voted because the candidate was personally known to them, 17.01% because of experience of the candidate and 4.23% explained none of the reasons.

❖ **Factors affecting voting preference and influencing high voter turnout:**

When respondents were asked about the factors influencing the voting preference most (69.24%) of them believed candidate is the main reason of their preference while 16.37% thinks family is responsible for their preference. 1.98% also feels that religion as their influencing factor for voting preference, whereas caste as factor of influence was negligible (1%) and 11.41% of the sample couldn't explain any reason for their voting preference.

Attempt was also made to know about the factors influencing high voter turnout during last elections. It was found that 58% respondents believe that good candidate is main reason behind high turnout. However, 30.49% of the sample population believes political parties responsible for high turnout while 11.51% thinks that reason other than the above two may responsible for high turnout.

❖ **Free and fair election and security deployment:**

When voters were asked regarding the free and fair election, 27.97% of voters expressed the threat they had come across during election. This contradicts their opinion where majority (79.66%) of the voters expressed satisfaction over the security

arrangement. However, 9.47% of the sample survey was not satisfied with security arrangement.

❖ **Behaviours of Polling Staffs and difficulties in voting during last elections:**

Attempt has been made to know the behaviors of polling staffs towards voters during last elections. It was found that 71.62% respondents were satisfied with the behaviors of polling staff whereas 9.77% of the sample expressed their dissatisfaction over the attitude of polling staff towards them.

Sample survey also shows that 61.95% respondents didn't face any difficulties during voting in the last elections while 38.05% respondents said they have faced various types of difficulties. The main difficulties are very long queue, no separate queue for senior citizens, lack of drinking water and toilet facilities, etc.

Systematic Voter Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP)

❖ **Awareness of Election campaign by ECI:**

Attempting to identify voter's knowledge on the election related campaign of Election Commission of India during previous elections / Summary Revision it shows that 59.28% are aware while 40.72% are not at aware of such activities.

When asked about the source of campaign, respondents said that they received election related messages from Posters, Hoarding and Publicity materials (30.41%), AERO/ARO offices (35.97%), Newspaper (7.26%), Educational Institutions (8.73%), Doordarshan (3.84%), NGO and Civil Society Group (4.81%), Local TV Channel (3.62%), All India Radio (3.47%), FM Channel (1.64%) and others (0.25%).

❖ **Awareness on Voter information:**

Attempt has been made to know how aware and educated are the voters about important voter messages issued by ECI relating to elections. The sample survey reveals that 27.76% respondents claimed they have received messages related to **registration** whereas 17.45% voters believed **voting is their right and duty**. While 13.59% of sample expressed that they have received information related to **date of voting and schedules** whereas 7.79% sample receives the information about **application of code of conduct**.

The other information like, **step taken for free and fair election (7.62%), preparation of voter cards (6.43%), strict enforcement of ECI rules (4.43%), voter slip distribution schedule (4.29%), separate queue for old and sick (3.47%), do's and don'ts on polling day (2.79%), alternative identity documents for voting (2.57%), tendered vote (1.81%)** were also received by the voters.

❖ **Awareness on advertisement and message by Star/ICON campaigners of ECI:**

We are interested to know whether the tremendous efforts to educate the voters by Election Commission of India are really percolating down to the voters or not. The study reveals that 50.2% of respondents are very much aware of it while 49.8% of respondents don't aware of such advertisement/ campaigners.

The sample survey also reveals that 37.7% respondents expressed Ex-President APJ Abdul Kalam is the most appealing and motivating ICON used by Election Commission of India for voter's education whereas sports person like cricketer M. S. Doni (20.38%), Marry Kom (11.1%) and Saina Nehwal (8.27%) did had an appealing effect on the voters. Rest 22.55% of the voters claimed that the names mentioned above are not applicable.

❖ **Awareness of most appealing / motivating messages from ECI:**

Sample survey shows that 32.29% of respondents said the most appealing and motivating message from Election Commission of India is **"My vote my future"**, 17.71% claimed **Proud to be a voter ready to vote**, 14.93% **Say yes to vote and no to note**, 14.53% **Stand up you are 18**, 12.1% **Your vote is invaluable use it wisely**, 7.94% **Know your BLO** while 0.5% of the respondents were not aware about the aforesaid messages issued by ECI.