

AN ANALYTICAL STUDY ON VOTING BEHAVIOURAL PATTERNS OF INDIVIDUALS IN PONNAGARAM AREA OF THOOTHUKUDI DISTRICT

M. Nandhini* and Dr. A. Sudha

PG Department of Economics, St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi.

Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli, Tamilnadu, India.

ABSTRACT

The behaviour of voting for a party in an election has important social implications, yet, due to strong mentalistic influences in electoral research, it has rarely been studied from the behaviour analytical perspective. In this article a behavioural analysis of voting among the people. It is concluded that such an analysis is both theoretically fruitful and empirically relevant. Voting is one of the most commonly used terms in contemporary age of democratic politics. Voting behaviour refers to the decision-making process of individuals when choosing a political party or candidate to vote for. It takes into account various factors such as cognitive considerations, personal traits, political issues, ideology, and past performance. People's voting behaviour is influenced by limited attention, simplification strategies, and the perceived relevance of information at a given moment.

Key Words: Vote, Election, Democratic, Determinants, Voting behaviour, Decision making, cognitive consideration, Ideology, etc.,

INTRODUCTION

Voting Rights in India

With elections under way in many states of India, all Indian citizens who are eligible to vote are given a chance to exercise their franchise and participate in the electoral process. The Indian Constitution has granted the right to vote to all Indian citizens of sound mind above the age of 18, irrespective of an individual's caste, religion, social or economic status. This right is universally granted to all Indians, with a few exceptions.

As a voter, you are entitled to certain rights and privileges as laid down by the Constitution, which safeguards the rights of the voter. It also lays down the conditions under which this privilege is granted to citizens. Voting is not a fundamental right, but is a legal right granted to citizens. So, what are the rights granted to voters in India? Given below are some of right and duties of voters.

Voting Eligibility in India

As per the Indian Constitution, all Indian citizens above the age of 18 years who have registered themselves as voters are eligible to vote. These individuals can vote in national, state,

district as well as local government body elections. No individual can be Detained or prevented from voting, unless they fulfill the criteria for disqualification. Every voter is allowed one vote only. A voter can vote at the constituency where he has registered himself only.

Eligible voters have to register themselves in the constituency where they live, upon which they will be issued photo election identity cards (also known as EPIC cards). Individuals are not permitted to participate in the electoral process if they have not registered or do not possess a voter ID card.

Any citizen may cast a vote in any of the upcoming elections as long as they have a valid voter ID:

- National-level elections
- State-level elections
- District-level elections
- Local government body elections

Voting behaviour

Behaviour refers to the decision-making process of individuals when choosing a political party or candidate to vote for. It takes into account various factors such as cognitive considerations, personal traits, political issues, ideology, and past performance. People's voting behaviour is influenced by limited attention, simplification strategies, and the perceived relevance of information at a given moment.

Individual Choice:

In a democracy, rules are elected by the people. Abraham Lincoln says in democracy refers to, “the government of the people, by the people, for the people” the term democracy is derived from a Greek language and means “rule by the people”. In a democratic form of government, the political leaders are elected by the citizens only. During elections, people vote for representative of a political party of their choice, the political party wins, forms the government.

The Legal Voting Age:

The legal voting age in India is 18 years.

Factors influencing of voting behaviour

- Socio-economic factors
- Money factor

- Political factors
- Regional and Local factors
- Media influence
- Cognitive factors

Importance of voting in India

Importance of voting right in India the right to vote is of immense importance in India as it is the cornerstone of India's democratic system. It provides citizens with the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process of the country and hold their elected representatives accountable. Voting is a fundamental right in India, and it plays a crucial role in shaping the country's future. Every Single Vote Matters, as it has the power to change the outcome of an election. In fact, there have been instances where a single vote has decided the fate of a government.

- Voting is not just a right, but also are responsibility every citizen
- Voting is away to Exercise Democratic Power.
- Election Commission ensures that elections are free, fair, and transparent.
- Voting is essential for India's democratic fabric.

Right vote for right person

The phrase "Right vote for right person" means that voters should cast their vote wisely by choosing a candidate who is competent, honest, and capable of serving the people effectively. It emphasizes the responsibility of voters to select leaders based on merit, integrity, and vision rather than personal biases, social pressure, or external influence.

Why Should Citizens Vote?

In India, "Right to Vote" is a constitutional Right provided to every citizen over 18 years of age. But, voting right is treated as optional as we don't have any law which says that voting is compulsory for every citizen. Therefore, many voters, especially in urbanites, youth, etc., treat the polling day as a day of rest and holiday. While not exercising the vote may not cause any immediate harm but the long-term consequences are very disastrous.

Scope of the study

The study of voting behavior focuses on understanding how and why individuals make decisions in election it is a key area in political science, psychology, and sociology. The study of voting behaviour help policymakers, political parties and researchers predict election outcomes and understand democratic participation trends.

Objectives of the Study

- To analyse the key factors influencing voting behaviour
- To find out the awareness of upcoming election among the respondents
- To analyse some measurements to improve democratic rights mainly focusing on right to vote.
- To study the role of media, political campaigns, and social influences.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for this study is analytical. Data is collected from both primary as well as secondary sources. Structured questions are used to collect data from eligible voters regarding their voting preference and habits. Secondary data includes government election reports from websites, magazines, newspaper, journals, books, new articles.

Sampling method

Simple random sampling method was used for the study, with a sample size of 110 sample respondents.

Method of data collection

Studying voting behaviour involves analysing how and why individuals vote, considering factors like demographics, political awareness, social influences, and economic conditions.

DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

Descriptive Analysis:

Percentage distribution, mean, and frequency tables were used to summarize the data.

Statistical Techniques

Co-efficient correlation techniques were used to determine the relationship between two factors: that is factors affecting voting behaviour and awareness of upcoming election. These are the two factors to determinants the major voting behaviour.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

- Possible response bias in self-reported surveys.
- Limited sample size may not fully represent the entire voter population.
- Influence of social and political events on response at the time of data collection.

Table: 1
Awareness of upcoming election

S.No	Awareness of upcoming election	No. of the Respondents	Percentage
1	Highly aware	46	42%
2	Somewhat aware	16	14%
3	Neutral	22	20%
4	Not very aware	24	22%
5	Not aware at all	2	2%
	Total	110	100

Source: Primary data

Regarding upcoming election, the respondents are categorized based on their awareness level. Majority 42% of the sample respondents are highly aware of the upcoming election, 14% of the sample respondents are partial aware of the upcoming election, 20% of the sample respondents are neither have neutral about the upcoming election, 22% of the sample respondents have limited aware of the upcoming election process, and a small fraction (2%) of the respondents have no awareness of the upcoming election.

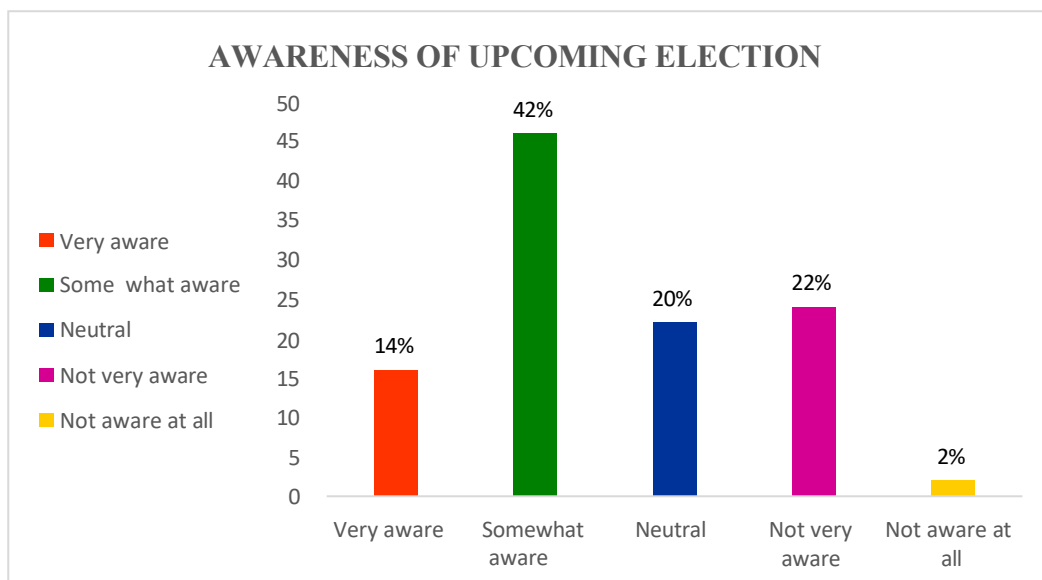
Figure: 1
Awareness of upcoming election


Table:2
Selection of candidate for the election

S. No	Selection of candidate for the election	No. of the respondents	Percentage
1	Who seems nice?	0	0
2	Honest	35	32%
3	Trustworthy	8	16%
4	Sincere	24	22%
5	Someone with experience	26	24%
6	New candidate	7	6%
	Total	110	100

Source: Primary data

The table presents data on the criteria that respondents consider when choosing a candidate in an election. Zero respondents based their decision on a candidate simply appearing nice, 32% of the respondents believe the honesty in a candidate, 16% of the respondents portion is trustworthiness, 22% of the respondents look for sincerity in a candidate, 24% of the respondents prioritizing it experience, and finally 6% of the respondents prefer new candidates respectively.

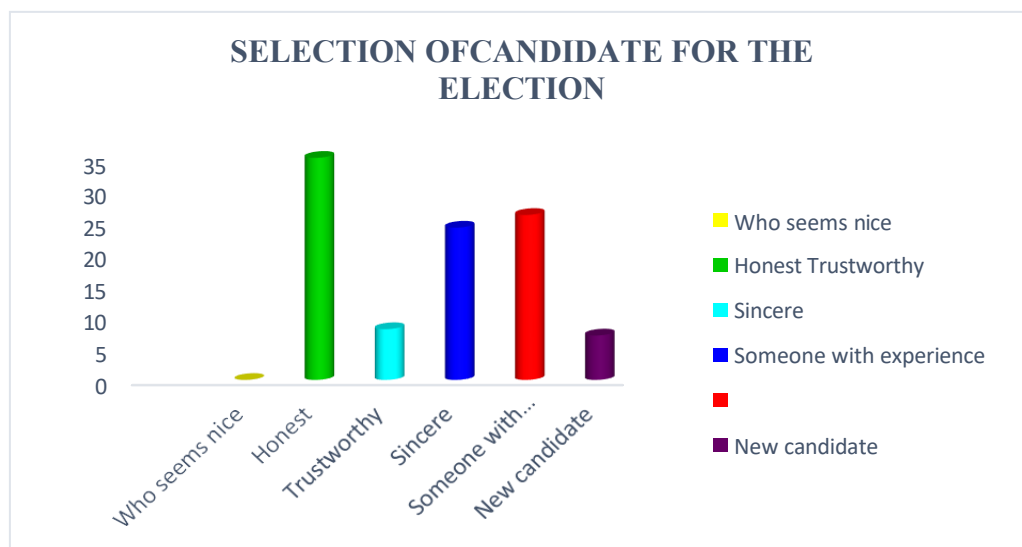
Figure: 2
Selection of candidate for the election


Table:3
Factors affecting voting behavior of the people

S. No	Factors affecting voting behaviour	No. of the Respondents	Percentage
1	It's my rights	43	39%
2	Media influence	32	29%
3	Party identification	22	20%
4	Family & Peer influence	13	12%
	Total	110	100

Source: Primary data

The table presents on the main influences that drive voter's decision during election. 39% of the respondents vote because they see it as their fundamental rights, 29% of the respondents are influenced by media highlighting the role of news and social platforms in shaping political options, 20% of the respondents indicates that some voters rely on party loyalty, 12% of the respondents showing that personal beliefs and external sources respectively.

Figure: 3
Factors affecting voting behaviour

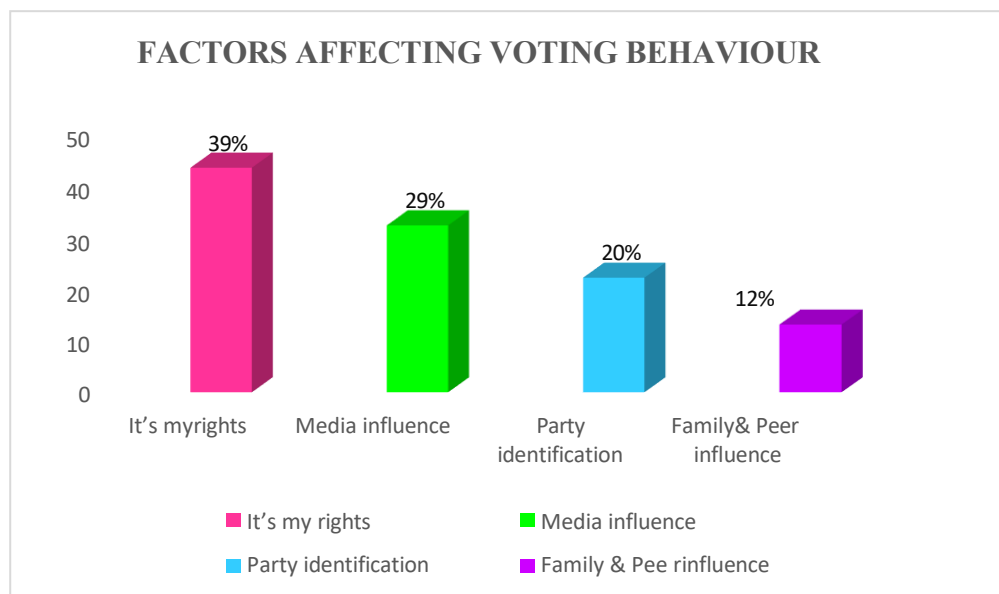


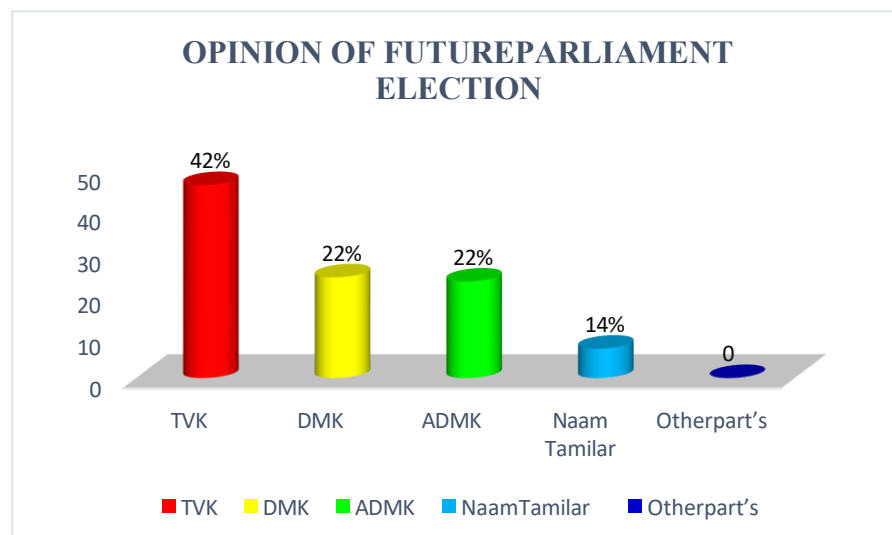
Table: 4
Opinion of future parliament election

S.No	Opinion of future parliament election Parties	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	TVK	46	42%
2	DMK	24	22%
3	ADMK	23	22%
4	Naam Tamilar	7	14%
5	Other parties	0	0
	Total	110	100

Source: Primary data

This table clear that respondents opinion of future parliament election. Opinion regarding their preferred political parties in a future election. The highest 42% of the respondents support to TVK, it's indicating strong public preference, 22% of the respondents favoured is DMK, it's making significant competitor to TVK, also 22% of the respondents supported by ADMK almost equal to DMK, 14% of the respondents supports to Naam Tamilar, Zero response for other parties among the 110 respondents respectively.

Figure: 4
Opinion of future parliament election



CALCULATE THE CORRELATION CO-EFFICIENT BETWEEN TWO VARIABLES CORRELATION CO-EFFICIENT

The correlation between two factors that is factors affecting voting behavior and awareness of upcoming election.

$$r = \frac{n(\sum xy) - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{[n\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2][n\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

$$r=0.62$$

RESULTS

This indicate a moderate positive correlation, meaning that the awareness of the upcoming election increases, the factors influencing voting behavior (Such as rights, media influence, party identification, and peer influence) also tend to be more prominent.

Explanation of Correlation between Two Variables: "Factors Affecting Voting Behavior" and "Awareness of Upcoming Election"

Correlation measures the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables. In this case, we analyze how factors affecting voting behavior (such as rights awareness, media influence, party identification, and peer influence) are related to awareness of the upcoming election (levels of awareness among respondents). If awareness of the election is high, people are more likely to engage in voting, influenced by media, party affiliation, and peer discussions. If awareness is low, voting behavior might be less affected by external influences, leading to lower voter turnout. A correlation helps us determine whether these two aspects are connected.

FINDINGS

1. 42% of the people highly aware of the upcoming election.
2. 78% of respondents believe civic education should be included in schools.
3. 58% believe voter fraud is a significant election issue.
4. 32% of the respondents believe the honesty in a candidate selection.
5. Majority 39% of the people vote because they consider it their rights.
6. Majority 42% TVK is the most favored party for the future parliamentary election.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Awareness of upcoming election increases impact of factor influencing (Rights, Media influence, Party identification, and Peer influence)

2. Introduce civic education as a core subject in schools to include practical lessons on voting, democracy, human rights and governance etc.
3. Use biometric verification (finger prints, facial recognition) to reduce impersonation
4. Voters prioritize honesty, experience, and sincerity when selecting the candidates.
5. Many individuals' voting decisions are influenced by family traditions, community beliefs, and peer discussions.
6. Majority of the people don't support these two parties. (DMK, ADMK)

CONCLUSION

Voting behavior is influenced by various factors, including personal values, political awareness, social influences, and party affiliations. Individuals tend to prioritize aspects such as honesty, experience, sincerity, and policy effectiveness when selecting candidates. Emotional and psychological factors, including party loyalty, media influence, and campaign strategies, also impact decision-making. Civic education plays a crucial role in empowering individuals to make informed voting decisions. An educated electorate is more likely to assess candidates based on integrity, experience, and policies rather than external influences like caste, religion, or propaganda. Voting for the right person ensures effective leadership, good governance, and social development. Therefore, strengthening civic education is essential to fostering a responsible and participatory democracy where citizens make choices that benefit society as a whole.

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