Research Paper

An Analysis of Voting Behaviour in the Tenth and Eleventh election to Mara Autonomous District Council (MADC)

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ABSTRACT: *In this paper, the voting behaviour in the tenth and eleventh election to Mara Autonomous District (MADC) is discussed. There are various elements that influence the voting decision of a voter such as clannism, kinship, money power, candidate's quality, local issues and political aspiration based on ethnicity. In this paper, to identify the voting behaviour, the occupation of the voters are categorized as govt. employee, self-employed, farmer, daily labourer and student. Elements like the choice of political party, candidates and others in both the tenth and eleventh election to MADC will be reflected.*
KEYWORDS: *Voting behaviour, MADC, election,*

I.   INTRODUCTION

Voting is one of the most commonly used terms in contemporary age of democratic politics. The ever-increasing popularity of democratic theory and practice has even made this term a household name. in democratic system, and their number is quite large and ever increasing, each adult citizen uses "voting", as a means of expressing his approval or disapproval of government decisions, policies and programmes of various political parties and qualities of candidates who are engaged in struggle to get the status of being the representatives of people.

Voting is one of the most visible form of political participation in democratic countries. The overall purpose of election studies is to find out the voting patterns and trends based on the opinions and attitudes of the voters. The purpose of election studies is not only to present the narrative account of various events that takes place during elections but also to scientifically identify and explain the recurring causal dynamics underlying the particular events of that election based on voter's opinion and feedback. The data of voting process available with election bodies provided the impetus to the psephologists to collect further electoral data through opinion polls for measuring voting behaviour and attitudes of voters.[1]

The study of voting behaviour has different connotations for different academic disciplines and the factors/variables they probe and compute are also different from each other. The sociological or social contextual approach refers to the social settings in which the individuals or voters functions and their voting behaviour is affected by it. On the other hand, the discipline of political science computes voting behaviour using political factor such as electoral issues, political programs, electoral campaigns, and the popularity of the political parties and leaders based on the opinions and attitudes of the voters. The focus of political science on enquiry in election study has focused on three main areas: the structure and motivations of the electorate, the operation and effect of the party and election system, and the impact of social and political institutions on voting behaviour. Political theorists are concerned with understanding the political community and the political animal, and to understand them eventually by means of precise and general statements.[2]

II. ELECTORAL POLITICS OF MARA AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Since the formation of Mara Autonomous District Council (MADC), Indian National Congress (INC) and Mizo National Front (MNF) have been voted into power interchangeably. Even though there were times when smaller regional parties have at times joint bandwagon on and off either with INC or MNF to form government. In the first election to MADC held in 1973, Mara Freedom Party (MPF) was voted to power. Before completion of the first term, MPF merged itself with Congress in 1975 and was later merged itself with Janata Party in 1977.[3] In the second election to MADC held in 1978, the Janata Party was voted to power. However, the Janata Party before the completion of its term was merged to Congress in 1980. Since the third election to MADC , Congress began to contest in MADC election. From the fourth term to the Sixth term of MADC, Congress formed government in MADC. [4]

From the Seventh term of MADC, coalition government start appearing in MADC politics. Coalition government was formed by Mizo National Front and Maraland Democratic Front but the coalition government could not complete its term due to the withdrawal of support by MNF. A new coalition government was formed by INC and MNF. In the Eight and Ninth term of MADC, MDF and Congress formed another coalition government which was again disrupted due to withdrawal of support in the eight term and defection of elected members of MDF in the Ninth term of MADC.[5]Congress emerged as a single majority party in the tenth term of MADC. Again in the Eleventh term of MADC, another Congress government was formed but before completion of the eleventh term, the Congress elected members merged with Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).[6] One significant event that occurred during the eleventh term of MADC was the dissolution and merger of MDF with BJP on October 25, 2017, in advance of the State Legislative Assembly election that would be held the following year, in 2018. MDF was a regional political party with its base in the MADC area and had two elected members. Along with the two MDF elected members, MDF was merged into BJP.[7]

III. Result and analysis of voting bahaviour in Mara Autonomous District Council

The present paper aim at identifying what are the elements that influence the voting behaviour of the voters in MADC. For the purpose of the study, samples are collected and characterized based on the occupation of the respondent. The characters are categorized as govt. employee, self-employed, farmers, daily labourer and student. It is often believed that the behaviour of the voters particularly in ADC area of Mizoram is mostly influenced by factors like clannism, kinship, quality of a candidate, local issues, political aspiration based on ethnicity. It is worth mentioning that quality of a candidate plays an important role in the voter's decision. A large number of politician have a strong electoral base on family ties, clan, locality. This is also evidently clear from the fact that no matter how often a candidate defect from one party to another, he always have a high chance of being elected again. [8]

To understand the voting behaviour of the voters in MADC area, different parameters are employ as given below:

Table.1.1. *Which Party do you vote in the Tenth MADC Election, 2012?*

Constituency	Character	Name of the Political Party (In Percentage)					
		MNF	CONG	ZNP	MPC	BJP	OTHERS
Saiha	Govt. Employee	5.3	10.66				
	Self Employed	9.3	13.33				2.66
	Farmer	12	16	_	_	_	4
	Daily Labourer	2.66	10.66	_	_		_
	Student	2.66	6.66	_	_	_	1.33
	Total	**31.92**	**57.31**	_	_		**7.99**

(Source: Field Study)

The above table illustrate the respondent's choice of political party in 2012 Mara Autonomous District Council election. Congress has the highest vote share with 57.31 per cent. Out of all the political party contesting the 2012 MADC election, Congress has the highest vote share from all occupation such as govt. employee, self-employed, farmers, daily labourer and student at 10.66, 13.33, 16, 10.66 and 6.66 per cent respectively. MNF has the highest vote share at 12 per cent from farmers. 2.66 per cent each from daily labourers and student and 5.3 and 9.3 per cent from govt. employee and self-employed. The total vote share of MNF in the 2012 MADC election is 31.92 per cent.

Table.1.2. *Which party do you vote in the Eleventh MADC election, 2017?*

Constituency	Character	Name of the Political Party (In Percentage)					
		MNF	CONG	ZNP	MPC	BJP	OTHERS
Saiha	Govt. Employee	6.66	9.33				1.33
	Self Employed	16	9.33				
	Farmer	10.66	17.33	_	_	_	
	Daily Labourer	2.66	12	_	_		1.33
	Student	2.66	6.66	_	_	1.33	
	Total	**38.64**	**54.65**	**_**	**_**	**1.33**	**2.66**

(Source: Field Study)

The above table also illustrate the political party the respondent vote in the 2017 Mara Autonomous District Council election. In this election also, the respondent who vote for Congress is at the highest at 54.65 per cent and MNF is 38.64 per cent. Congress has the highest vote from farmer at 17.33 per cent and the lowest vote from student at 6.66 per cent. self-employed stands as the highest voter of MNF at 16 per cent and daily labourer and student stands as the lowest voter of MNF at 2.66 per cent each. BJP has the lowest vote at 1.33 per cent among the pollical parties who contested the 2017 MADC election. The respondent who voted for 'Others' voted for either Maraland Democratic Front (MDF), Independent Candidate or NOTA (None of the Above).

Table. 1.3. Do you vote for the same political party in both the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election and MADC election?

Constituency	Character	Variables (in percentage)	
		Yes	No
Tuichawng	Govt. Employee	9.33	8
	Self Employed	13.33	12
	Farmer	4	24
	Daily Labourer	8	9.33
	Student	5.33	5.33
	Total	**39.99**	**58.66**

(Source: Field Study)

The above question aims to identify whether the respondent vote for the same party in the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election and Mara Autonomous District Council election. The above table illustrate that the voters who do not vote for the same party in both the election is much higher at 58.66 per cent than the voters who vote for the same party in both the election at 39.99 per cent. This shows that the voters choice differ from one election to another election.

Table. 1.4. Which of the following element influence you the most in your voting decision?

Constituency	Character	Variables (In Percentage)				
		Political party	Candidate	kinship	Locality or Village	No specific reason
Saiha	Govt. Employee	4	6.66	4	1.33	1.33
	Self Employed	8	9.33	4	1.33	4
	Farmer	8	12	1.33	2.66	4
	Daily Labourer	_	12	1.33	_	5.33
	Student	2.66	6.66	1.33	_	_
	Total	**22.66**	**46.65**	**11.99**	**5.32**	**14.66**

(Source: Field Study)

The respondent are mostly made influence by their preference of a candidate (46.65 per cent). The respondent who made their voting decision base on kinship and same locality or village is also not high like the respondent from other constituency which is 11.99 per cent and 5.32 per cent. The respondent who made their voting decision with no specific reason but out of duties and responsibilities is also the second lowest among respondent from Saiha Constituency at 14.66 per cent.

Table 1.5. *Do you vote for the same political party in MADC election who hold power in the State?*

Character	Variables (In percentage)	
	Yes	No
Govt. Employee		13
Self-Employed	2.66	24
Farmers	6.66	21.33
Daily Labourers	5.33	12
Student	_	10.66
Total	**14.63**	**85.32**

(Source: Field Study)

The above table aims to identify the respondent's choice on whether they prefer to vote for the same political party who is ruling in the State. The above table illustrate that majority of the respondent do not necessarily vote for the ruling party in the local elections. Looking at the above table, it is evidently clear that in the respondent who do not necessarily voted for the ruling party in the State is much higher at 85.32 per cent in MADC area. Those respondent who necessarily voted for the ruling party in the State is 14.63 per cent.

In contrary to MLA and MP elections, elections to the Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) are considered one of the most significant elections. MNF and Congress were given a greater preference than other parties in the tenth and eleventh elections for MADC. The votes of other political parties running in the elections were not favourable. Although voters have a higher preference for either political party than the other, the political party's choice of candidate also has a significant impact on the voter's choice of candidate. The role of the party candidate is greater when compared to other factors like political party, kinship, locality, or village. This is also clearly shown with the election of Independent candidates in various election of MADC. Since the constituencies in MADC elections are smaller in area with lesser voter, the candidate is mostly set based on who has the largest vote weightage base on family ties, to which clan do a candidate belong is an important element.

Another important factor is since MADC elections are generally held before the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections, the ruling party in the State government always play the State ruling card in MADC election. When the tenth election to MADC was held in 2012, Congress was the ruling party in the State and Congress in MADC could secured 15 seats out of 25 seats and formed government in MADC with the support of Independent candidates. Another congress government was formed in the eleventh term of MADC by winning 17 seats.

The decisions of the voters in the Mara Autonomous District Council election and State Legislative Assembly elections also show a changing pattern. In the 2013 Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election, Congress candidate S. Hiato was elected from Saiha Constituency and in the 2018 Mizoram State Legislative Assembly election, Dr. K. Beichhua from MNF was elected when the Congress led the government in both MADC and the State. This shows that the voters do not necessarily vote for the same political party who hold power in the State.

IV.   CONCLUSION

There are various determinants that influence the voter's decision in different elections in Mizoram. Determinant such as religion, political party affiliation, regionalism, Mizo nationalism and others. However, in Mara Autonomous District Council area, the voter's decision is influenced based on clannism, kinship, candidate personality, locality or village attachment etc. However it is fair to state that, many factors have a major impact on the voter's decision to vote, candidate's quality or personality can be consider as one of the most important element in the voter's decision to vote among other factors.

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