

Election Manifesto is the Key Determinant of Voting Behaviour in Tamil Nadu Electoral Politics

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Abstract - This research aims to examine how Election manifesto is the key and important determinant of voting behaviour in tamilnadu state assembly elections. Various determinants of voting behaviours are discussed along with their relation with Election manifesto. Election manifesto's of important political parties for 2011 and 2016 state assembly elections were taken as base for this study. It also aims to prove that although there are various factors involved in the voting behaviour, the main impact of the voting behaviour and election result would be based on the election manifesto. The paper rounds off with conclusions and an agenda for future research in this area.

Keywords: Voting determinants, election manifesto, voting behaviour, election results of 2011 & 2016

I. INTRODUCTION

Voting behaviour in India is determined mainly by various factors. Indian democracy being the biggest democracy is being influenced by various cultural and regional factors. Thus the national voting behaviour differs with state voting behaviour. Ethnicity, Religion, Culture, Voters Attitude and Orientation towards political participation deals with the voting behaviour. The strong correlation between these factors and the voting behaviour is well established. The importance of election manifesto and its relation with the other determinants proves that election manifesto as the key determinant of voting behaviour in tamilnadu state electoral politics.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

A broad literature review on the voting behaviour and its various determinants is made along with its relations to election manifesto. Election manifestos of winning political party of Tamilnadu state assembly elections 2011 and 2016 were studied and a mapping of its ingredients with determinants of voting behaviours were made and the impact of the election manifestos in the election results were also derived.

III. VOTING BEHAVIOUR

Voting behaviour and its study has become an important field in the political science research. This term voting behaviour has been coined by the new generation of

political research scholars, although which was not used directly by previous research scholars. It is not only linked with just statistics of votes and records, not only linked with the study of electoral swings and sifts. It is actually linked with the in depth study of individual psychological process of perception, emotion, motivation and also the communication process underlying in the election process and its impact on the election results.

Voting behaviour is influenced by various factors like caste, religion, language & community, current events and policy or ideology addressing them, purpose of the polls and election campaigns, local issues and the extent of franchise. Political parties and politicians take these factors as key and influence the voters for winning the elections. Political parties frame their election manifesto considering these key factors only. Election canvassing and campaigns are organized based on the election manifesto.

IV. DETERMINANTS OF VOTING BEHAVIOUR

The voting behaviour is influenced by various factors like religion, community, caste, language, ideology and etc., although the politicians strive for power through secularism, they have been appealing the religious and communal sentiments of the people to gain votes. They have been exploiting the language and regional factors for achieving the votes. Campaigns are organized based on certain policies or ideologies for the purpose of votes. Voters behaviours are also influenced by the nature of the elections or to the extend of suffrage. In national elections there is a wider attention where the charisma force plays a vital role for the election of chief executive. In the past this has been a proved factor with election phrases like “Indira means India, India means Indira”.

There are two schools of thoughts regarding the voting behaviour study. One is sociological school of thought which emphasis the socio-economic and ethnic status as the main influencer of voting behaviour. Political parties frame their policies based on the various range of social status linked with ethnic, religious and economic. The other school of thought uses psychological and political approach. The role of social characteristics like socio-economic status, religion and family influence are considered in this approach.

The distribution of social characteristics varies from time to time in wide spread population, hence such factors cannot be taken as independent variables. Political parties and their candidates and other issues considered as intervening variables. They are the immediate determinants of voting behaviour. The psychological school has considered the three variables party identification, candidate orientation and issue orientation as significant factors. Party identification means voters psychological attachment to a political party. Candidate orientation means the voters are much concerned about the candidates personal qualities like performance capabilities, honesty, ethical values followed by him. Issue orientation means voters are more concerned about the issues. Voters are more concerned towards the general issues than the specific issues. The voting behaviour studies so far conducted in India have identifies the following main political and socio-economic factors which are the key determinants of voting behaviour in India.

A.Caste

In Tamilnadu the major determinant of voting behaviour is measured as caste factor. The society has deep roots of casteism spread out in its nook and corner. Irrespective of the social status the people opt to vote for their caste candidates only. In recent elections of Tamilnadu for state assembly in 2011 and 2016 the political parties were particular in selecting the candidates of majority caste people in the constituency, especially in south Tamilnadu districts of Sivaganga, Ramanathapuram, Tuticorin, Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari. Election manifestos were developed in such a manner that it offers with attractive beneficiary schemes to get caste votes. Special economic beneficiary schemes were developed for getting the votes of SC/ST people. Although major activities and actions are taken nationwide for eradication of casteism, voting behaviour is still influenced by the caste factor. Political parties in formulating the election manifesto take consideration of the caste density spread throughout the state and their important needs to be addressed in the policy formulation.

B.Religion

Voting behaviour in particular is greatly influenced by this factor of religion also. Although India has been declared as a secular state by the constitutional articles, influence of various religious parties play a determinant role in electoral politics of India. Freedom religion was prescribed by the constitution, but its extension of establishing religion based political parties has grown its root in India. The existence of religious parties like Akali Dal, Muslim League, Shiv Sena are the major reasons for religion being the major determinant of voting behaviour. Some religion based political parties in Tamilnadu are Manithaneya Makkal Katchi, Christian Democratic Front. Especially in Tamilnadu the voting behaviour of minorities like Christians and Muslims play a major role in electoral politics. To gain the votes of minorities political parties

frame their welfare policies and schemes, which ultimately reflect in the election manifesto.

C.Language

In national politics language plays as a major determinant of voting behaviour. India after independence for the sake of administrative conveniences was divided on the basis of language. This has contributed to the growth of language and regionalism as important factors of voting behaviour. This has paved the way for the growth of regional parties like Telugu desam party in andhra, DMK and ADMK in Tamilnadu. Although Hindi is our national language, there are 18 official languages accepted by central government for the facility of administration. In every state there has been a problem to declare the regional language either as official language or language of medium of instruction for educational institutions. This problem is pertaining as people have emotional attachments towards their language and its development and conservation. All these issues have always fuelled the voting behaviour in national politics. Regional political parties always try to address such issues through the special policy on the language, in election manifesto and try to gain their votes.

D.Current Events

Voters are always influenced by the present problems than the benefits they have received so far. They might have received enormous benefits for last 2 years but if they had burning problems unaddressed at present, then they are tend to vote against the ruling party. The day to day problems faced by the common people act as the major determinant of voting behaviour. Opposition parties makes uses of such difficult situations faced by common man and new political developments and events takes place which contribute to the voting behaviour in a major way. Such problematic scenarios may be due to rise in price or shortage of important commodities which give rise to economic hardships. These things directly affect the popularity of the ruling party. Opposition parties makes use of such situations by deriving better economic reforms policy or other policies addressing the problems of the voters in their election manifesto. Ruling parties might give explanation for the causes of such problems and might provide alternative solutions for the same in the election manifesto.

E.Local Issues

In national politics local issues always have an upper hand. This is mainly due to the regionalism factor. Last 2014 Lok Shabha elections proved this, in Tamilnadu regional party AIADMK won 37 seats out of 39. This is because, regional parties gives more importance to local issues than the national parties. The success of TDP - Telugu Desam Party in 1999 Lok Shabha elections is also an good example to emphasizes this factor of local issues as major determinant of voting behaviour. How does regional parties influence the voters in local issues, it is only through the election

manifesto. All the promises are made in the election manifesto in form of schemes and policies to be implemented after winning the elections.

F. Election Campaigns

Political parties work vigorously in campaigning as this is their base for influencing the voters. All political parties thrive hard to gain the votes and win maximum seats for forming the government. They organize all sorts of meetings - either addressing a very big mass or going to street by street. Hand bills distribution and processions also takes place simultaneously. They also try to gain the support of film actors to give a speech in their favour and to influence the actor's fans to vote them. Bigger parties also give advertisements in TV/Radio/Newspaper for propaganda. Election manifesto plays an important role in election campaigning. Election manifestos bear the information which tries to influence the voters that this political party and the candidate are the right solution for the citizens and nations development.

G. Election Manifesto

Election manifesto is actually the verbal declaration of the political party promoting the new policies, beneficiary schemes and other welfare programs with the intention to bring remarkable changes in the current situations and development of the nation with citizen's altogether.

Election manifestos are usually prepared by the political parties keeping an eye on the forth coming elections. Political parties are well versed with the electoral politics and the determinants of voting behaviour. Hence, they frame all the policies, beneficiary schemes, welfare programs in such a way they address the people's burning issues and long term desirables. The major voting determinants like caste, religion, language, current events, and local issues determine the way of election campaigning, in which all revolves around the election manifesto.

Election manifesto contains the ideology, policies and programs of the political party for the welfare of the people. Election manifesto acts as the reference document for the election campaigning. It reaches the voters by means of various election campaigning processes. At the time of election voters compares the election manifesto of all the contesting political parties in the forth coming elections and they choose their choice by voting.

V. OVERVIEW OF AIADMK 2011 ELECTION MANIFESTO

Election manifesto released by AIADMK promises the voters to take the state as a whole in the path of development and to safeguard the Tamil language and Tamil culture. It promises the youths about the self employment opportunities and economic development. It gave immense importance to Education, Health,

Agriculture, Industrialization and self sustained electricity. It also promised to double the per capita income of Tamil people. It mainly promised to uplift the poverty stricken people by offering them basic amenities required in a normal home like Mixer Grinder, Wet Grinder and Table Fan. It also promised to support the poor students with free books and bag, cycle for commuting to school, free laptop for senior grade students to develop their IT skills. It also promised to levy the farmer loans with interests to provide them an upliftment as it considered agriculture as the backbone of the economy. It also promised to provide free cattle for domestic usage to support the petty cash issues prevailing in the poverty circle. It also promised the people to get their lands back which were forcefully taken by the previous DMK party men. It also promised to provide 4 grams of gold for the poor brides along with monetary aid of Rs. 25,000. It also promised to stop the monopoly of cable TV service previously developed by DMK party close associates. It also included enormous welfare programs for the SC/ST, Fishermen, and Handloom Weavers. Apart from that it included special pilgrimage aid for Muslims and Christians. A special scheme of green house program for poor people in villages is also part of this election manifesto.

In this election manifesto we can map the current issues directly with the clearly addressed the present problems of Tamilnadu. Especially the burning issue at that time of election was the deficiency of electricity for the needs of domestic and industrial consumption. ADMK promised for a self sustained electricity generation and distribution. This is an example of current events in elections manifesto. Local issues can be mapped with announcements for upliftment of poverty stricken people which was addressed by many welfare schemes and programs by providing free house hold items, free cattles, and free aid for poor brides, free books, cycles and laptops. Religion can be mapped with announcements like pilgrimage aid for Muslims for Hajj Yatara and for Christians to visit Bethlehem were present in the ADMK 2011 election manifesto. Caste and community can be mapped with special empowerment programs for SC/ST, Fishermen community and Handloom weavers. Thus the election manifesto of AIADMK in the 2011 elections have ingredients of all the determinants of voting behaviour which resulted in the enormous victory of that party with 150 seats with its alliance parties winning another 53 seats.

VI. OVERVIEW OF AIADMK 2016 ELECTION MANIFESTO

Election manifesto released by AIADMK for the 2016 election promises the voters to continue with the development path already taken along with the continuance of welfare programs. It provided a fully fledged development program for the field of agriculture and its dependent industries. It formulated special programs for food parks, ban on genetically modified food corps, and free electricity for farmers, and cancellation of permission

granted by previous DMK government for methane gas program in tanjore belt. It also provided a detailed scheme for getting water resources from kerela and karanataka to safeguard the agriculture. It also provided special schemes for the development of fisheries and cattle rearing.

It also gave promises to continue the help of providing quality medicines at low cost through AMMA Medicals, to continue the provision of quality food at low cost through AMMA unavagam, to continue the provision of quality packaged drinking water through AMMA mineral water plants, to continue the provision of quality vegetables through AMMA Green Farm Consumer Markets, to continue the provision of quality groceries through AMMA Amudham Supermarkets. Free laptops, cycles, books and bags schemes were to be continued according to the election manifesto. The financial assistance provided for poor brides is to be continued with increased benefits is also mentioned in the election manifesto.

It also included special maternity package for the new born baby and its mother. It promised to improve the electricity generation and distribution, so that this division can sell the excess current to other states and make more profits. As usual it included special schemes and programs for SC/ST. In addition it concentrated much on the education and self employment of SC/ST. It had special schemes for the minorities to address their issues in terms of financial aid for church repairs, rising of quota for Muslim SC/ST reservations, pilgrimage aid for going to Mecca for Muslims and Bethlehem for Christians.

It also had programs for promoting handloom, pottery, handicrafts, salt industry workers, and differently abled people. Special schemes were designed for the development of sports, temples and tourism. It also has special programs for the development of micro, small and medium enterprises. Establishing non-alcoholic state in a step by step manner. New policies were formulated for handling the natural mineral resources in the state. Other special consideration for laborers, advocates, uniformed employees were given in this election manifesto. Above all as a continuance of upliftment of poverty stricken people free cell phones for eligible families, AMMA Banking card to get financial assistance directly from the government.

In this election manifesto we can map the voting behaviour determinant caste to special empowerment programs for SC/ST, Fishermen, Handloom Weavers and Pottery makers. The other determinant religion can be mapped to special programs designed in the election manifesto for the benefit

of minorities. Local issues of poverty stricken people can be mapped to the special empowerment programs addressed in the election manifesto. Current issues of requirement of fully fledged development of industries and alcohol Free State has been well addressed in this election manifesto. Thus, the election manifesto 2016 of ADMK has got all the determinants of voting behaviour properly addressed which resulted in the victory of the party with 134 seats.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

Voting behaviour is determined by various factors like caste, religion, language, current events, local issues and election campaigning process. There is a direct relationship between various determinants of voting behaviour and election manifesto. This can be explained by the fact that ADMK election manifestos of 2011 and 2016 had all the ingredients of various determinants of voting behaviour, which resulted in the victory of that party to come into power. Thus it is proved that although there are various factors involved in the voting behaviour, the main impact of the voting behaviour and election result would be based on the election manifesto formulated in such a way that all the determinants of voting behaviour are used to address the issues of the people and the nation.

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APPENDIX - 1.1

2011 Tamilnadu Election Results		
Leader	J. Jayalalithaa	M. Karunanidhi
Party	AIADMK	DMK
Alliance	ADMK Alliance	DPA
Leader since	Feb-89	Feb-69
Leader's seat	Srirangam	Thiruvarur
Last election	69 seats	163 seats
Seats before	73	157
Seats won	203	31
Seat change	 130	 126
Popular vote	1,90,85,762	1,45,30,215
Percentage	51.93%	39.53%
Swing	 12.02%	 5.22%

Summary of Tamilnadu 2011 Elections					
Alliance/Party	Seats won	Change	Popular vote	Vote %	Adj. % [‡]
AIADMK+ alliance	203	130	1,90,85,762	51.90%	
AIADMK	150	93	1,41,50,289	38.40%	53.90%
DMDK	29	28	29,03,828	7.90%	44.80%
CPI(M)	10	1	8,88,364	2.40%	50.30%
CPI	9	3	7,27,394	2.00%	48.60%
MNMK	2	2	1,81,180	0.50%	42.40%
PT	2	2	1,46,454	0.40%	54.30%
AIFB	1	1	88,253	0.20%	51.20%
DMK+ alliance	31	-126	1,45,30,215	39.50%	
DMK	23	-77	82,49,991	22.40%	42.10%
INC	5	-32	34,26,432	9.30%	35.60%
PMK	3	-15	19,27,783	5.20%	39.60%
VCK	0	-2	5,55,965	1.50%	34.00%
KMK	0	-	3,70,044	1.00%	32.50%
Others	0	-4	31,37,137	8.50%	
BJP	0	-	8,19,577	2.20%	2.60%
MDMK [†]	-	-3	-	-	-
IND and others	0	-1	21,20,476	5.80%	N/A
Total	234	-	3,67,53,114	100%	-

APPENDIX - 1.2

2016 Tamilnadu Election Results		
Leader	J. Jayalalithaa	M. Karunanidhi
Party	AIADMK	DMK
Alliance		DMK Alliance
Leader since	Feb-89	Feb-69
Leader's seat	Dr. Radhakrishnan Nagar	Tiruvarur
Last election	150 seats	23 seats
Seats before	203	31
Seats won	134	98
Seat change	16	66
Popular vote	1,76,17,060	1,71,75,374
Percentage	41.00%	40.00%
Swing	2.40%	9.20%

Summary of Tamilnadu 2016 Elections							
Party	Abbr	Alliance	Votes	%	Seats		
					Contested	Won	+/-
All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	ADMK		1,76,17,060	41.06%	227	134	16
Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	DMK	DMK	1,36,70,511	31.86%	176	89	66
Indian National Congress	INC	DMK	27,74,075	6.47%	41	8	3
Indian Union Muslim League	IUML	DMK	3,13,808	0.73%	5	1	1
Pattali Makkal Katchi	PMK		23,00,775	5.36%	232	0	3
Bharatiya Janata Party	BJP	NDA	12,28,692	2.86%	232	0	
Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam	DMDK	PWF	10,34,384	2.41%	104	0	29
Independents	IND		6,17,907	1.44%	232	0	
Naam Tamilar Katchi	NTK		4,58,104	1.07%	232	0	
Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	MDMK	PWF	3,73,713	0.87%	28	0	
Communist Party of India	CPI	PWF	3,40,290	0.79%	25	0	9
Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi	VCK	PWF	3,31,849	0.77%	25	0	
Communist Party of India (Marxist)	CPM	PWF	3,07,303	0.72%	25	0	10
Tamil Maanila Congress	TMC(M)	PWF	2,30,711	0.54%	26	0	
Puthiya Tamilagam	PT	DMK	2,19,830	0.51%	4	0	2
Manithaneya Makkal Katchi	MAMAK	DMK	1,97,150	0.46%	4	0	2
Kongunadu Makkal Desia Katchi	KMDK		1,67,560	0.39%	n/a	0	
Bahujan Samaj Party	BSP		97,823	0.23%	n/a	0	
Social Democratic Party of India	SDPI		65,978	0.15%	n/a	0	
None of the above	NOTA		5,61,244	1.31%	232	—	—
			4,29,08,767	100.00%	232	232	2