CHAPTER III
DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Overview

In this chapter an attempt has been made to explain the statement of the problem, objectives of the study and methodology of the study.

Statement of the Problem

Behaviour refers to the actions of a system or organism, usually in relation to its environment, which includes the other systems or organisms around as well as the physical environment. It is the response of the system or organism to various stimuli or inputs, whether internal or external, conscious or subconscious, overt or covert, and voluntary or involuntary. More generally, behavior can be regarded as any action of an organism that changes its relationship to its environment. Behavior provides outputs from the organism to the environment. Behaviour means the manner of behaving or conducting oneself on one's best behaviour. It refers to an aggregate of all the responses made by an organism in any situation. It is a specific response of a certain organism to a specific stimulus or group of stimuli and the action, reaction, or functioning of a system, under normal or specified circumstances. "Perfect behaviour is born of complete indifference".¹

Voting is the main form of political participation in liberal democratic societies and the study of voting behaviour is a highly specialized sub-field within political science. The analysis of voting patterns invariably focuses on the determinants of why people vote as they do and how they arrive at the decisions they make. Sociologists tend to look to the socio-economic determinants of support for

political parties, observing the correlations between class, occupation, ethnicity, sex, age and vote; political scientists have concentrated on the influence of voting behaviour.

It is necessary to know the various influences upon voting behaviour, and their impact. They include parents, social class, occupation and ethnicity. All the electorates do not vote in the Elections due to apathy. There are several causes of apathy. They are disillusionment with politicians, a widespread feeling that politicians do not listen to the people, there is little ideological difference between the two main parties and a feeling that one vote can make little difference.

In a multilingual, multi cultural democratic set up like India, voting behaviour is dictated by a plethora of complex issues. From time and again it has been proved that political parties in India can not rely upon any particular factor to win the trust and confidence of the voters. Such is the complex nature of the voting behavior that even the best of the psychologists or social scientists or even genius politicians failed to read public psychology on numerous occasions. Caste has been an important factor in Indian politics. Though recent trends show that its impact is more prominent in the State level politics, it plays a crucial role in shaping up the policy of the Governments. Wooing a specific caste has been the principal agenda of many a politicians. This has been a retrogressive character of Indian politics and has so far been playing a divisive role. Religion is another pull down factor of Indian electoral politics. Rather than uniting people, religion has mostly divided India into many watertight compartments. Fundamentalists have taken political mileage of the situation by wooing people belonging to a specific religion and infused the poison of communalism in the electoral psychology. Regionalism has been a key determinant of Indian voting behaviour since 1990s. Demanding separate State; promoting region specific interests have
been the strategies of politicians to capture the vote bank. This has bred separatism and endangered internal security of the country. Language is another important factor in this regard. Although its impact is not prominent in state level politics, in the national level it has played a key role. Dividing India into Hindi and non Hindi belts is an unfortunate outcome of this. Heroworshipping is another popular trend in India psychology. On numerous occasions political parties have tried to capture popular sentiment by using charisma of their leaders. Therefore many political parties of India today are leader based rather than being ideology based. Ideology has been a key factor in Indian politics. Communism is a glaring example of this and though recent trends show some changes, Bengal, Tripura, Kerala have long been communist strongholds. Some important or sudden events or incidences can change the voting behavior as well as political equations. The proclamation of emergency was one such incidence which resulted in the then Congress government being toppled by the Janata Party in 1977. Development works in the most silent yet the most effective manner in determining the popular mandate in elections in India. Apart from the above mentioned factors, race, anti incumbency factor, terrorism etc., have been the other determinants. However it must be noted that many a times a number of factors work in tandem to shape up the popular electoral opinion, thus making it further difficult for the politicians to make use of the existing situation and thereby producing unpredictable results as has happened in the national level in 2004. The election system is the pillar of Indian democracy. The system consists of various levels of elections to the Lok Sabha (the House of Representatives of the Union), State Legislative Assemblies, and Panchayati Raj Institutions (local self-governing bodies under State Governments). A review of studies related to the elections of Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies conducted up to the present time are divided into those based on
aggregate data and those based on survey data of the individual electorate. This division has the advantage of providing data that may be used in different analytical areas. So far no attempt has been made to analyze in detail the voting behaviour with reference to particular Parliamentary Constituency. A detailed analysis on voting behaviour of the electorate with reference to particular constituency will bring to light the real causes for political apathy and the factors influenced the voting behaviour of the electorate. Therefore, the researcher thought it appropriate to take up a research study on voting behaviour in Tamil Nadu with reference to Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency.

**Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are:

1. To explain the voting behaviour of the electorate in Tamil Nadu;
2. To review the literatures relating to voting behaviour;
3. To make clear the design of the study;
4. To explain the setting of Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency;
5. To examine the details relating to the political parties and independents contested in Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency and the performance of political parties during the study period 1951 to 2004; and
6. To analyze the personal particulars of the respondents, political, social and other reasons stated by the respondents for their political apathy and political, social and other factors that influenced their voting behaviour of the respondents with reference to Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency.

**Scope of the Study**

The main focus of the study is about the voting behaviour of the electorate in Tamil Nadu with particular reference to Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency. Therefore, the major thrust is about the voting behaviour of the electorate in Tamil Nadu with particular
reference to Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency from the point of view of the responses of the respondents.

**Limitations of Research**

The main focus of the study is about the voting behaviour of the electorate in Tamil Nadu with reference to Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency. In this study an attempt has been made to analyze political, social and other reasons stated by the respondents for their political apathy and political, social and other factors that influenced their voting behaviour of the respondents in the study area. Therefore, the results of the study may not reflect the voting behaviour of the electorate with reference to Tamil Nadu.

**Method of Research**

Social survey method has been made use of in this study as the analysis of this study is mainly based on the data collected from a sample of respondents selected from six Assembly Segments of Tiruneveli Parliamentary Constituency. The six Assembly Segments of Tiruneveli Parliamentary Constituency are Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, Palayamkottai, Vilathikulam, Ottapidaram and Srivaikundam Assembly Segments.

**Sources of Data**

The data for this study have been collected both from primary and secondary sources. The primary sources of data have been collected from the schedules furnished to the respondents selected from six Assembly Segments of Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency. The secondary sources of data have been collected from the Books, Articles, Reports, Acts and Monographs.

**Study Design**

The primary purpose of the study is not the testing of any hypothesis. Being an exploratory-cum-descriptive study, its basic thrust is to gain familiarity and insight into voting behaviour of the
electorate in Tamil Nadu with reference to Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency from the viewpoint of the responses of the respondents selected from six Assembly Segments of Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency.

**Sampling Design**

The researcher has selected systematic sampling design in this research study. The researcher has selected ten respondents from ten wards each from Tirunelveli Municipal Corporation, Palayamkottai Assembly Segment of Tirunelveli Municipal Corporation and Thoothukudi Municipal Corporation and at the rate of ten respondents from ten villages each from Vilathikulam, Ottapidaram and Srivaikundam Assembly Segments. The Researcher has selected six hundred respondents covering thirty villages from Vilathikulam, Ottapidaram and Srivaikundam Assembly Segments and thirty wards from Tirunelveli Municipal Corporation, Palayamkottai Assembly Segment of Tirunelveli Municipal Corporation and Thoothukudi Municipal Corporation to analyze the voting behaviour of the electorate in Tamil Nadu with particular reference to Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency.

**Interview Schedule**

The Interview schedule has been designed to collect the information from the voting behaviour of the electorate respondents of the six Assembly Segments of Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency. The interview schedule consisted of the following items:

1. The personal background of the respondents; and
2. Political, social and other reasons stated by the respondents for their political apathy of the respondents with reference to Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency; and
3. Political, social and other factors that influenced their voting behaviour of the respondents with reference to Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency.
Data Collection

Collection of data is an important and rich experience in the whole of this research process. It took part-time fieldwork for almost one year. Since the villages and the wards were scattered in six Assembly Segments of Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency traveling took quite a lot of time and effort. Once all the respondents had been selected the researcher had sought prior permission from the respondents through letters and telephones. This approach was found to be very useful and practical, as the respondents were well informed of the purpose of the study and well assured of its confidential nature. It took almost about three hours to interview each respondent of the villages and wards of six Assembly Segments of Tirunelveli Parliamentary Constituency. They took more time because very often during the interview they were deviating from the topic while freely sharing their experiences for their political apathy and political involvement.

Method of Data Collection

Personal interview with the help of the structured interview schedule was the main method used for the collection of primary data from the respondents. This approach in data collection helped the researcher in many ways. The researcher got an opportunity to stay with the respondents during data collection. It was a very helpful exposure where he got an ample chance to observe and discuss the various issues relating to their voting behaviour.

Pre Test

Having prepared the interview schedule, pre testing was done in order to ensure against difficulties of comprehension and ambiguities of questions. Responses had been coded and a preliminary analysis had been done to see whether the interview schedule would yield required data. The necessary changes were done in the interview schedule accordingly.
**Data Processing**

The data were processed manually and were reported mostly in the form of percentage. Suitable tables, diagrams and charts have been made use of wherever necessary.

**Data Analysis**

Empirical, descriptive and analytical methods have been made use of to analyze the data. The researcher also has made use of simple statistical tools in the analysis of the data.

**Presentation of the Report**

After processing and analyzing the raw data the report writing work was undertaken. Sufficient care was taken to present the report as per the requirements of the study designed earlier.