AN AGGREGATE ANALYSIS OF THE TRENDS AND PATTERN OF THE KAROL BAGH ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY IN THE 2008 ELECTIONS

ABSTRACT

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ABSTRACT

Geography deals with the spatial distribution of the phenomena and the processes through which such phenomena get generated. Election is one such phenomenon. Electoral Geography thus deals with not only the distribution of votes but also the culture which leads to voting or choosing a political party.

India has a large mostly heterogeneous population, with people from all castes and communities and religions. Democracy has survived in India because of the electoral system prevailing here. Over the years people have developed interest in the electoral processes and system and hence participation.

In a developing country like India with a democratic form of government elections are of utmost importance as it is the only way through which people can interact with Government and participate in its functioning. By studying electoral trends and patterns over the years one can find out about the working of the government and their allocation of various spatial activities. This may affect people’s perception, behavior and hence the participation. This would also help to analyze that why such trends emerged. In India voters have always shown enthusiasm in electoral participation that too when there is no law stating compulsory voting. The participation has especially increased among the marginalized section of the society, like women, lower caste people and economically backward class people. Participating in the election is the only way they can make their presence felt and their voices heard.

Delhi being the capital of India is directly affected by the national politics. The actual division of Delhi into districts was made in 1819. After India became independent the other states got their Legislative Assemblies. However for Delhi various systems of administration were tried from time to time. Under the State reorganization Act, 1956 and the Constitution (seventh amendment) Act 1956, Delhi became a Union Territory. It was only in 1991 after the enactment of the National Territory Act which gave way
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to the constitutional amendment, that Delhi was made twenty sixth state with a Legislative Assembly.

Delimitation Commission for the Capital has made changes in the profile of all seven Lok Sabha constituencies and the 70 Delhi Assembly constituencies. The number of reserved Assembly Constituencies are reduced from 14 to 12. Therefore it would be interesting to study how the recent 2008 Assembly Election has been affected in its trends and patterns after the recent delimitation. Especially interesting is to study the trends and pattern appearing in Karol Bagh Assembly Constituency which is a reserved Assembly Constituency. It was earlier part of Karol Bagh Parliamentary Constituency which was a reserved constituency, but now after the new delimitation it is part of New Delhi Parliamentary Constituency which is unreserved. Also interesting would be identifying that among the political parties, whose performance have been the most impressive and what were their areas of support. Therefore the basic aims of this study are:-

1. To analyze trends and patterns of Karol Bagh Assembly Constituency and to examine how present delimitation of Delhi’s Assembly Constituencies have affected the results,

2. To examine how political parties have performed in reserved constituency and

3. To examine how far the support base of the political parties is spread over the constituency.

Hypothesis taken before the study were:-

1. Support for the political parties is regionally concentrated.

2. Electoral reservation affects political participation.

3. The competition is mainly between two political parties of India

Mostly all the places in Karol Bagh are residential cum shopping places, It is a preferred place for both residential purpose and for business. The Scheduled Caste population in this region is quite high. To have an in depth analysis of the trends and pattern existing in Karol Bagh Assembly Constituency, a small segment –
‘Regarpura’ area within it is taken as the study area. Therefore, to collect primary information, study will be mainly concentrated on the Regarpura segment of Karol Bagh Assembly Constituency.

Regarpura has fourteen sectors and sixteen polling stations within it. The analysis is therefore made either sector wise or polling station wise as and how data is available. The Regarpura study area within Karol Bagh Assembly Constituency, especially show high scheduled caste population, mostly belonging to ‘Regar’ community as the name suggests. Electoral participation within the region therefore shows high participation as the constituency is SC reserved constituency. It has population which is mostly very less educated. Not even 50% of the population has studied more than 5th class. They come from very unprivileged strata of the society. Percentage of women electors is less in the region. There is lack of employment. Most of the residents of the region are doing their own business or have their own shop or are privately employed. Few are in Government services. The living conditions are poor in this region. Condition of basic infrastructural facilities like roads, drinking water is poor where as transport facilities and electricity supply is graded as average. On top of it the price rise of essential commodities is elevating the elector’s woes. The top priority for them is to improve their standard of living and educating their children. This is the reason that that though they participate in elections in high percentage but do not like to participate in any political activities like participating in political rallies, giving donations to political parties being member of some political party etc.

Participating in large number is the only way through which they can make their presence felt. The electors in this region therefore have shown great enthusiasm in 2008 Assembly Elections which is reflected in the electoral results. Karol Bagh Assembly Constituency have shown about 59% voter’s turnout where as Regarpura has more than 60% voter’s turnout. They have proved the age old fact that there is higher possibility that economically weaker section of the society will come out to vote rather than the privileged class. Similarly there is higher possibility that the lower caste persons will vote than upper or elite class. When asked about the preferred political parties in 2003 and 2008 Assembly Elections, the respondents of almost all the sectors in Regarpura preferred BJP over INC.
Electors and Voters in Karol Bagh Assembly constituency have not shown inclination toward one particular party. Caste based voting is not done instead they vote for the development of their constituency. They tend to vote for the candidate rather than the party. The candidates who they relate to and can trust are more popular. Therefore local political leaders who are from the same region are trusted more. This is the reason why during 2008 Assembly Election they have elected a locally popular leader from BJP, Mr. S.P. Ratawal.

Political parties have important functions in a Democracy. The political parties nominate candidate which when elected form link between citizen and the government. Various methods were employed to measure party competition among the political parties and party system existing within the region. The competition among the various political parties in the various polling stations in Regarpura study area has been measured using the ‘Degree of Index of Competition’ given by ‘Ian Robinson’. The values of this Degree of Index is classified as ‘High’, ‘Moderate’, ‘Low’ and ‘Very Low’ Competition. The polling stations have also been measured for the ‘Party System’ they have like ‘one party system ’, ‘ one party dominant system’, ‘two party systems’ and ‘multi party system’. Results indicate that INC and BJP have given tough fight to each other in 2008 election. In almost all the polling stations of Regarpura either BJP’s Mr. S.P. Ratawal or INC’s M. Khorwal have polled maximum percentage of votes. This is also reflected in the fact that in most of the sectors of Regarpura study area mainly ‘two party’ system was observed and the two party in question were again BJP and INC. Apart from these two parties now BSP, which is prominently known to represent ‘Dalits’, has started making dent in the vote banks of both BJP and INC. BSP’s women candidate Ms. V. Singh have scored third highest percentage votes in most polling stations. This also indicates a trend towards multi-party system.

One more method that is Index of Opposition Unity method is also used to measure how difficult or easy it was for the winning party to win the elections. Most of the regions showed strong opposition unity in the study region, which indicate towards undivided opposition. Undivided because in all most all the polling stations of the region votes are polled in favor of mainly two political parties INC and BJP. This
means the winning party had to face tough competition to win the election as the opposition party is also strong and undivided. The margins of victory between them are very less.

The support base for both BJP and INC is uniformly spread over the region. Z-Scores have been calculated to measure the support base for top three political parties. These top three political parties are BJP, INC and BSP. Neither BJP nor INC have shown strong support base in one particular region of the study area. Since the candidates in the region are of scheduled caste the electors do not vote for caste but for performance or for local popularity of the candidate. SC electors support BJP and INC alike. The non SCs, non STs however preferred BJP a little more than INC. Business community also supported BJP more than INC. BSP however, showed strong support base in area with high Scheduled Caste population. But it has only performed in the regions with high scheduled caste population unlike BJP or INC who have performed well in the entire study area.

In the coming elections, all the three parties will face tough competition and will have to work hard to make extra efforts to attract more votes. And for the voters, performance of the government and development will be the prime concern to vote for a particular party and will have more and better choices to represent them.