



Measuring Voting Behaviour in India

By Sanjay Kumar, Praveen Rai

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Measuring Voting Behaviour in India captures the dynamics of multiple methodologies used for measuring voting behavior in India in the past and present.

The authors elaborate on various methods that are used for measuring voters' opinions, attitudes, and perceptions. They discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each method to capture the multiplicity of the electoral experience of diverse voters across different settings in India. This they accomplish utilizing their long experience of conducting national- and state-level election surveys in India and by simultaneous studies using different methodologies.

The authors trace the tradition of measuring voting behavior in India from a historical perspective, beginning with a constituency-level study of the Poona Lok Sabha constituency in 1967. They move on to discuss in great detail the survey method for measuring voting behavior widely used in the 1990s and even after that.

The book introduces to the readers details of conducting election surveys, that is, sampling, questionnaire design, field work and data collection, data entry and analysis, and challenges in estimating vote share based on surveys. It also delves into the various challenges and hurdles in translating vote estimates into seat estimates, with the nature of the political contest varying from one state to another. The book poses the major challenges in measuring the voting behavior of Indian voters and tries to offer possible solutions to meet these challenges.

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Editorial Review

Review

[The book] enhances the understanding of how election surveys are conducted in India... the authors have made sure that the book isn't just a collection of statistics and numbers and have tried to make it "as interesting as possible".

--(Indo-Asian News Service 2013-05-18)

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About the Author

Sanjay Kumar is a Professor at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi, and Codirector, Lokniti, a research program of the CSDS. Trained in survey research at the Summer School in the University of Michigan, he has directed various national and state-level surveys conducted by the CSDS, including the series of National Election Studies (NES) conducted during the Lok Sabha elections of 1996, 1998, 1999, 2004, and 2009. Besides the NES, he has also directed various state-level studies.

His research draws heavily from empirical studies. He is also interested in mapping the changing patterns of democracy. He has been the country coordinator (India) for the State of Democracy in South Asia study conducted by the CSDS and a core team member of the Asian Barometer Study conducted in different countries. He has also been a member of the team of international observers for observing elections in various countries. He is also a member of the drafting committee for the charter on Free and Fair elections in Asia.

His most recent book is *Changing Electoral Politics in Delhi: From Caste to Class* (SAGE Publications 2013). His other books are *Measuring Voting Behaviour in India* (with Praveen Rai; SAGE Publications 2013), *Rise of the Plebeians? The Changing Face of Indian Legislative Assemblies* (coedited with Christophe Jaffrelot 2009), and *Indian Youth in a Transforming World: Attitudes and Perceptions* (with Peter Ronald DeSouza and Sandeep Shastri; SAGE Publications 2009). He also writes regularly for national and regional newspapers, and is a recognized face on electronic media as an election expert.

Praveen Rai is an Academic Secretary at Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi, a premier institute in social science research and humanities in India, funded by Indian Council of Social Science Research. His key areas of research interests are: election studies with a special focus on states of Haryana and Chhattisgarh, participation of Indian women in electoral politics and media monitoring. Before his present assignment, he worked as a Project Manager at Lokniti, where he handled more than 50 election

studies and opinion polls and was actively involved right from the stage of designing the surveys till final dissemination of processed data in the public domain. His writings have been published in Indian academic journals, mostly in the *Economic and Political Weekly* (EPW). His seminal work, *Electoral Participation of Women in India: Key Determinants and Barriers*, was published as a special article in the January 2011 issue of EPW. He used content analysis as a research tool to ascertain and analyze the media coverage of women's issues in mainline newspapers in 2002. Based on this study, he wrote a book called *Women in Press? Still Invisible* in association with the German foundation, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), India office in 2003.

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