A POLITICAL INSTRUMENT: DRAVIDIAN PARTIES COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN TAMIL NADU ELECTION

THIRUPPATHI P[1]

[1]Research Scholar, Centre for Political Institutions, Governance and Development (CPIGD), ISEC- Bengaluru, Karnataka, INDIA

ABSTRACT

The study delves into the complicated interplay between caste identities, political representation, and electoral processes within Dravidian political organizations. All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) employ caste as a potent political instrument to address disadvantaged communities' challenges. The study uses empirical data and field surveys to investigate voting trends, candidate choices, and electoral violence in the Chidambaram Parliamentary Constituency during the 2019 election. It clarifies how caste influences voting habits and political outcomes. The study advances our understanding of how socially excluded people perceive and vote, as well as the ways in which Dravidian parties employ caste relations to their benefit in political discourse.

KEYWORDS: Caste, DMK, AIADMK, Voting behaviour, Representation

According to all other Indian research scholars, Indian voting behaviour factors are political parties, Religion, Caste, Cultural, Region, Gender, Language, Media, Charisma, Ideological commitment, Populist slogans, Money, Factionalism, and so on (Ghai, U. R; 2008, Hasan, Zoya, ed; 2002, Kothari, Rajni; 1970, Johari , J.C; 1988 & 2002, Goyal, O. P; 1985, Bhagat, Anjana kan; 1996, B. B. Jena, J. K. Baral; 1989, Hardeep Kaur; 2018, Sudarsan Padmanabhan; 2021, Dasarathi Bhuyan; 2010 and (Sanjay Kumar, Praveen Raj, 2013). Apart from all other factors influencing voting behavior, the Indian electoral system is bound by the major element in Indian society. It means that the Hindu religion, in particular, has a structure known as a 'Caste' hierarchy society, which reflects citizens' day-to-day lives and is also reflected in a democratic system known as an election to elect representatives for the communities. As a result, this study is based on a case study from the Chidambaram Parliamentary constituency election campaign. This is mostly centered on candidate selection methods from the perspective of political parties, with issues based on election campaign, and polling violence.

In the long run, public trust and confidence decline in the absence of a free, fair, unbiased, or autonomous election machinery, which is detrimental to the overall health of a democratic system. India has a Parliamentary system of government, with periodic elections based on a multiparty system. Election is the process by which we elect our representatives to run the government for a set period. It has most fundamental aspects of a democratic system. It allows the citizens to vote and to choose their own representatives at regular intervals. Undemocratic leaders are always attempting to manipulate elections and present results as legitimate so that they can continue to govern in an undemocratic manner. Election is the significant process in which every Democratic political system, it attempts to legitimize existence by instilling in the general public a sense of involvement. As a results, elections are a critical component of a democratic system, and they must be free, fair, and genuine. Elections that are rigged or unfair are a direct violation of peoples' political/voting rights. In a way it's a type of political corruption that stymies the development of democratic norms and culture, ultimately jeopardizing democracy's consolidation. Under the Indian Constitution's Article 324, the Election Commission of India established.

Indian Election Commission organize periodic elections for Parliament, State legislatures, Local self-government institutions, and the President and Vice President. At the same time providing space to emerge issues such as communalism, castes, regionalism, violence, booth capturing, misuse of government machinery, rigging and so on. The electoral process is a long one in which a candidate must go through states such as nomination, campaigning, voting counting, and declaring the results. However, the electoral process is more than just a technical exercise and cultured system among political parties; voter awareness; independent judiciary; neutral administration; unbiased media; and the candidate vision to serve the people for a successful electoral system.

1: Corresponding Author

People choose their candidates based on leaders' communication such as debates, discussions, and campaigns, for example political parties' debates and campaigns on major sociopolitical and economic issues have been the focal points of mobilization. This electoral process has a direct impact on our social, political, economic, and cultural aspects of life making us more aware of these issues without doubt. Human beings are rational, but during election season, it is common to see people act emotionally; Caste, religion, language, region, tribe, charisma, and other factors influence our electoral behaviour. However, people are influenced to a large extent, which influences election results. Caste is the most important factor that influences voting behaviour. Indian society has hierarchical caste structure and dominates the social structure. After independence, caste-based reservation only deprived and lower caste people more aware of their fundamental rights and privileges. The results of fundamental rights, even illiterates began to become more involved in electoral politics, and the caste equation became a more important determinant in ticket distribution and ministry formation. Non-brahmin communities make up a significant portion of the population in states like Tamil Nadu. Regional political parties thrive solely because of caste politics, which uses caste as a political tool to mobilize people and turn that into votes. In India, entire process of voting or electorate behaviour is far too complex to be defined by a single and multiple factors. This paper looking at the core values of voting behaviour as they existed in the parliamentary democracy, particularly Chidambaram Parliamentary Constituency Elections in 2019, Tamil Nadu. Within India, the politics of Tamil Nadu always stands different from that of the other States. Its due to the Dravidian politics/party's domination over Tamil Nadu, since 1967 and socialist character tool over the Tamil Nadu ground politics. A Chidambaram parliamentary constituency has existing from 1971 as a reserved constituency. Chidambaram is a Lok Sabha / Parliamentary constituency in of Tamil Nadu.

Chidambaram Lok Sabha constituency is reserved for Scheduled Caste and one of 39 constituencies in Tamil Nadu. Chidambaram Parliamentary Constituency - (Reserved) is located in Ariyalur, Cuddalore and Perambalur district. It has six Legislative Assembly segments, including five general segments and one Scheduled Caste segment in Chidambaram reserved constituency includes, Kunnam, Bhuvanagiri, Kattumannarkoil (SC), Chidambaram, Ariyalur, and Jayamkondam. As per census 2011, out of total 18,19,435 populations, 81.5% is rural and 18.5% is urban population. As per the election commission 2019, out of total 1, 47, 9108 electors 77.97% voters' turnout in total 1, 713 polling stations. According to the election commission in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, M Chandrakasi of AIADMK won in this seat by defeating the VCK candidate by a margin of 1, 28, 495 votes which was 11.81% of the total votes polled in the constituency. AIADMK had a vote share of 39.47% in 2014 in the seat. There was a total of 15 contestants in 2014. As stated by election commission in 2009, Thirumavalavan, Thol of VCK emerged victorious in this seat by defeating the PMK candidate by a margin of 99,083 votes which was 11.37% of the total votes polled. VCK had a vote share of 49.23% in 2019, in the constituency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Voting behavior results in the formation of various economic, psychological, and sociological 'schools' of electoral research in the field of electoral studies, which are increasingly institutionalized and intellectually separated from one another. Because the phrase 'behaviourally convinced' is incredibly useful in this process. In the 21st century space for electoral democracies have expand rapidly worldwide. The spread democracy around the world has been particularly noticeable country like India. Scholars on elections and representation has focused on major dimensions of this relationship between those who have the right to elect and those who want to be elected. It is significant to understand why and how different elections and nations have different distributions of candidates or parties. Political parties must choose whether to take part in a pre-election alliance, run on their own, or remain out of the race before an election. Conversely, when parties decide to run, they must decide on their campaign plans, including the problems they will prioritize, the individuals they will run for office, and the policy stances they will take. Voters must select a party, and citizens must determine whether to vote or not. Finally, the collective wills of the populace are channelled into places where the government can be established (Lago, l, 2019). According to Biraj Hazarika in his article "voting behaviour in India and its Determinants" clearly elaborated on voting behaviour in India and highlight the factors that determine the voting behaviour in Indian political system. He analyses some factor of effecting voting behaviour in Indian politics such as money, emotion, language, religion, charisma, caste, sub-nationalism, mass literary, factionalism and public esteem of the candidate (Hazarika, Biraj, 2015). On "Candidate's Perception of Voting Behaviour" by C.P. Bhambri and Pratap Singh Verma. It compares the perspectives of successful and unsuccessful candidates based on the fact that party formation and participatory democracy are still in their infancy, as well as the political evolution of candidates (Bhambhri, C. P., and Verma, P. S., 1971).

M.M.S. Negi's article "Women's Voting Attitudes in Uttarakhand with Special Reference to Garhwal" examines how women in this region bear a greater socioeconomic burden than men and differ from women elsewhere. It discussed how voting

orientation among ordinary citizens in rural areas was positively related to education and political knowledge, as well as age, family income and political education (Negi, M.M.S., 2011). As Professor V.M. Sirsikar notes, the study of the electoral process points to factors other than rationality. India can be said to have achieved a stable government, but mass manipulations, caste influences, fear of minorities and the charismatic dominance of the Prime Minister have not played a significant role in this process. The term electoral behaviour is not new, but recently, it has been used to describes certain areas of research and types of political phenomena that were not previously conceived or considered inappropriate (Samuel S. Eldersveld). The term 'casting a vote' is significant to modern democratic politics, its contribution to institution development is based on several elements, but 'Caste' is a major one. Hardeep Kaur's work "Voting Behaviour in India and its Determinants" examined the drivers and influences on Indian voters and voting behavior using an empirical analysis (Kaur, 2018). Subramaniam Chandran wrote on the Tamil Nadu election in his article "Election in Tamil Nadu: Who Wins, Why, How?" The article analyses Tamil Nadu's voting trends from 1920 to 2016. The foundation of Indian democracy is representation, party alliance, promises, and political issues, and as is customary, money influences voting behavior on a large scale (Chandran, Subramaniam, 2016).

According to K. Saravana Rajasena and A. Thani Kodi's article "Electoral Manifesto as a Key Determinant of Voting Behavior in Tamil Nadu Electoral Politics" examines how the electoral manifesto has been a major and important determinant in Tamil Nadu assembly elections from 2011 to 2016 (K. Saravana Rajasena, A. Thanikodi, 2016). The paper "An Exploratory Study to Identify the Impact of Micro-Targeting on Voting Decisions in Tamil Nadu" by Nirmala Krishnamurthy and Priya Sondhi focuses on the substantive impact of voting behavior or decisions based on micro-targeting messages by political parties (Nirmala Krishnamoorthy, 2022). Sanjay Kumar and Praveen Raj's book "Measuring Voting Behavior in India" highlights the dynamics of different methodologies used to measure voting behavior in previous and current elections. The benefits and drawbacks of each approach are discussed in detail to reflect the diversity of electoral experience at the national and state levels (Sanjay Kumar, Praveen Raj, 2013). According to Grace Carswell and Geert De Neve's article "Why Indians Vote: Reflections on Rights, Citizenship, and Democracy from a Tamil Nadu Village," which is based on voting behavior in a rural constituency during the 2009 national elections, it explores how voting is informed by popular understandings of rights and duties as citizens, programmatic politics and their local implementation, commitment to caste and party loyalties, and the authority of

charismatic leaders. In the study, 'voting behavior' is defined as the decision to elect an acceptable number of persons. To use the phrase 'appropriate,' the Chidambaram parliamentary seat has the most deserved candidate elected by the electorate, Dr. Thol, Thirumavalavan MP, who is the voice of India's Dalit community (Subramanian, 2019).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research examined the effect of voting behaviour and representative through the case study of Chidambaram Parliamentary constituency election-2019. The researcher analysed voting behaviour factors; polling violence and Dalit's representations; based on candidate choosing by party leader, campaign, and election result declaration at midnight. The researcher used a professionally constructed questionnaire to evaluate the Tamil Nadu's voting behaviour is based on Hindu Caste system. For that, the study had sample size 252 responders, the data collection based on personal surveys were performed among voters in Chidambaram Parliamentary constituency, the field survey data from Chidambaram Parliamentary constituency's data was statistically evaluated using the following method: **Community Cross Tabulation** with voting behaviour factors.

THE OBJECTIVES

To discuss Tamil Nadu's electoral pattern

- To describe the Chidambaram Parliamentary Constituency Electorate's voting behavior
- To explain the factors that influence voting behavior and representatives in Tamil Nadu.

REASEARCH FRAMEWORK

Figure 1. Overall Study Design.

Background and Context	Research Objectives	Methodology	Key Variables
Dravidian Parties	Voting Behaviors	Quantitative Analysis	Dependent Variables
DMK, AIADMK	Hindu Caste		Voting Behaviors
	Electoral Violence		Independent Variables
	Analysis and Interpretation		Influence of Dravidian Parties
	Implications and Recommendations		Hindu Caste Dynamics
	Conclusion		Policy Agendas

The study design explains Dravidian parties' political communication methods, caste role and election violence. This framework describes how the intention to vote is influenced

negatively by the image of political parties and positively by the opinion of voters. This framework emphasizes the role of integration into social groups, based on psycho-sociological, sociological, and economic model of voting from the Columbia School (Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet; 1948).

DRAVIDIAN POLITICS

Dravidian movements that were founded on the values of Tamil culture, language, and bravery—regardless of how one feels about them—have helped to shape Tamil Nadu's political environment. However, the transfer of power from the British Empire to an independent India was directly approached by Dravidian political ideology (Justice Party - India). Before India gained its independence, E.V. Ramasamy, the president of the newly created Dravida Kazhagam in Madras, urged the Dravidian population of South India to "guard against a transfer of power from the British to the Aryans." In order to oppose Aryan imperialism, he urged for the creation of a distinct South Indian state called "Dravidasthan" (The Hindu, February 11, 1946). Later, he offered his support to K Kamaraj's newly elected Congress administration. The DMK became the greatest opposition to the well-established Congress Party in Madras during the General Elections of 1962, winning fifty seats in the Legislative Assembly and seven in the Lok Sabha. The DMK ran on populist political platforms, and their electoral platform reflected a pressing economic concern that all but ignored the party's desire for a distinct and autonomous Dravidasthan. Dravidian political party representing a growing degree of specialisation in interests and a nascent embrace of fundamental legislative, democratic, and electoral principles. Due to the impact of the Tamil film industry and the 'Dravidian' parties' complete control, Tamil Nadu politics are distinct (S. Viswanathan, 2008).

The impact of the Tamil film industry and the entire dominance of Dravidian parties are two aspects that make the state's politics distinct. The Dravidian movement began in Tamil Nadu as an ideology based on the concept of progressive societal development. The two major Dravidian parties that currently dominate state politics. Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), Dravidian parties have historically excelled to share the political power and to mobilise voters and bring them into the fold. It is including not only the language campaigns during the DMK's radical phase of anti-Brahminism (M. S. S. Pandian , 2007) since 1960 – 2021 elections, but also MGR founder of AIADMK, he is ingenious use of Tamil cinema to foster an image of himself as a paternalistic hero-saviour of the ordinary Tamil citizen. In this study, we could remember back to 1916, when the South Indian Liberal Federation (SILF), subsequently known as the Justice Party, first appeared (Muralidharan, Kavitha, 2016). By

portraying party as defender of Tamil language and culture, the anti-Hindi movement provided it a new meaning. State autonomy has been a significant concern for the DMK from its inception. Both Dravidian parties' preferred method of combat was the fight against the imposition of Hindi. It demonstrates how Dravidian politics serve as a barrier against centralization. Since its administration was twice removed, in 1976 and 1991, DMK has never hidden its concerns regarding Article 356. The polity of Tamil Nadu is a special example, based on federalism, social fairness, and cultural diversity. It is instructive to begin exploring the voting behaviour of the major Dravidian parties in the present context by examining their ideological based on representation.

The importance of individual leaders (Karunanidhi) in the projection of politics in India is evident from how political parties, mobilization of movements and the media all focus on carefully constructed personalities (A.S. Panneerselvan, 2021) and (Sandhya Ravishankar, 2018). The Dravidian movement is a political movement that started in colonial India in 1916, in Madras Presidency. In keeping with Periyar's social vision Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) drew support mainly from non-Brahmins. Even Dalits intellectuals found autonomous voice only in the journals they ran, like *Oru Paisa Tamizhan (1907 - 1933) by Ayothidasar Pandit*, Dravidian intellectual primarily criticised Hinduism and out other religions, saw itself mainly as movement to reform Hindu society and its vision of community. Dravidianism had the potential to undermine social pluralism. Harriss' claim that it was 'uncompromising [in its] rationalism, secularism and social radicalism' sits uneasily with these aspects of early Dravidianism. Dravidian ideological regression is supposed to have diverted the Dravidian movement from building a more tolerant and democratic society. The DMK and the AIADMK were far better attuned to Tamil society than the DK was and promoted new waves of political mobilisation among the lower and the intermediate strata. Pandian and Harriss claim that the DMK was progressive, unlike the AIADMK, because of its preferential policies, although the preferences introduced by the two parties had similar advantages and shortcomings.

CASTE ROLE IN ELECTORAL POLITICS

The Dravidian movement envisioned a society without castes. Political ambitions, on the other hand, have led both parties to construct caste-based vote banks. Dravidian politics have historically operated on the fundamental premise that caste and religion would lose influence as modernity advanced. And as a result, a society founded on equality would be made possible. In Tamil Nadu, however, its drawbacks have empowered middle castes. A few castes control Tamil Nadu politics. Chettiars, Thevars, Nadars, Mudaliyars, Gounders, and

Vanniyars are the majority. Both parties have vote banking on the Backward Castes (BC), who account for more than fifty percent of the population. Hindu Caste as a social phenomenon attracts much attention during elections and public life in India. A commentary on this view of "caste" is made by the escalating caste crimes and their "anchorage in ideologies" (Singh 1986). The Tamil Nadu Toilers' Party (Pattali Makkal Katchi, or PMK), which was founded in 1989 by Vanniyar politicians to advance their caste, was established around the Kaveri River. Tamil Nadu politics has historically been oriented on caste mobilisation for political advantage. Political action and political rhetoric can be found in artefacts, buildings and town planning, paintings and sculptures, flags, and caste-based costumes (Firth 1973; Turner 1967, 1969). In this study, Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) known as the Dalit Panthers of India, plays a crucial role as the voice of all oppressed people, with a particular emphasis on Dalits. In the 2019 election, the DMK-led alliance (Secular Progressive Alliance) was one of the major active parties. Its leader Thol. Thirumavalavan was contested, for the Parliamentary Member. He is one among with the state activists have vigorously denounced crimes against Dalits. All India Dalit groups like the Republican Party of India have never established a presence in Tamil Nadu, hence the Dalit parties in that state also demand consideration. The leader of the DMK, Karunanidhi, acknowledged the value of reservation laws in fostering social mobility and redressing historical wrongs.

Then, his government fought tenaciously for lower caste rights and pushed for quota regulations to be expanded to include the SC-Arunthathiyar community, which makes about 3% of the population. Some academics have asserted that the 'Adi Dravidars' were a crucial component of the lower caste groups that made up the DK's rainbow alliance that was missing. The organization's fundamental principle, opposing upper-caste hegemony, implies a dedication to the long-term advancement of all lower castes. However, there have been heated discussions over the years about whether Dravidian politics actually helped the Dalits develop politically, particularly in light of the sporadic, terrible violence between Dalits and those from the Mukkulathor or Thevar communities. When employed as a subversive tool, violence affects the social system if not the political system. Some violent protests are overtly motivated by political parties. However, new types of violence have also surfaced, and depending on whether they are classified as political or not, they have generated opposing interpretations. In a time when incivility and deviation from the norm are on the rise, for some, they come from a logic of revolt rather than from actual political difficulties. Others contend that they stem from the political conscience of the performers even though they are not part of institutionalised politics (Karthick Ram Manoharan, 2017).

Table 1.

Responders Community

Community		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	BC, MBC,	78	31	31	31
	SC	90	35.7	35.7	66.7
	SC-A	67	26.6	26.6	93.3
	OTHER	17	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	252	100%	100%	

Source: *field data- Chidambaram Parliamentary Constituency Election- 2019*

Structural (or sociological) approaches focus on the individual's interaction with social structure, position voting in a social context, and investigate the effects of variables such as socioeconomic class, language, nationality, religion, and rural-urban variations on voting. This strategy emphasized party identity and socioeconomic class. Therefore, the table 1, describes the respondents by total respondents and proportion of each community. Everything, including the community, is crucial in the world of politics. The most significant factors in both the gross vote and the development of the state, however, are religion, community, and gender. Religion and community (often known as caste) are contentious subjects in India. The community was separated into BC/MBC, SC, SC-A, and other groups for the purposes of this study, 78 of the 252 respondents came from the BC/MBC community, 90 from the SC community, 67 from the SC-A community, and 17 from other communities, according to the results.

The fact that Dalit communities participated in elections at a higher rate is explicable in light of this outcome. The two Dravidian parties continue to rely on the presence of caste-based parties to assist in the consolidation of voters, along with national parties. In 1952, the C. Rajagopalachari-led Congress government in Madras state began this trend. In 1954, K. Kamaraj's government sought out the support of the Vanniyar community and assisted them in joining the Congress party. Millions of people have experienced prejudice and persecution as a result of the centuries-old caste system in India. As stated by Ambedkar, "Abolition of caste must break the religious concept on which the caste system is built. The caste system is not just a division of labour; it is also a division of labour " (B R Ambedkar 1936). Caste prejudice is pervasive in Indian society and is carried down from generation to generation, with people's chances and social standing determined by the caste into which they were born. This has led to a number of discriminatory behaviours, such as caste-based violence, segregation, and denial of basic rights.

Table 2

Responders campaign method Street Campaign * community cross tabulation

		Community				Total
		BC/MBC	SC	SC-A	OTHER	
Street Campaign	YES	75	87	59	17	238
	NO	3	3	8	0	14
Total		78	90	67	17	252

Source: field data- Chidambaram Parliamentary Constituency Election- 2019

This table illustrates the correlation between campaign modes of political parties and responses of different caste communities in Chidambaram Parliamentary Constituency Election 2019. Responses highly significant towards 'yes' of various caste groups including BC/MBC - 75, SC - 87, SC-A- 59, and other - 17 communities are regarding the effectiveness of street campaigns conducted by political parties. The table provides an insight into how different caste communities perceive and engage in campaign strategies during elections in Tamil Nadu.

Based on outcome specifically demonstrates the "Street Campaign" campaigning strategy adopted by both parties' alliance. As stated by James Stanyer (1974), "the traditional political communication system, with its limited and regulated media channels, Stable patterns of media consumption, and identifiable party of loyalty." In the most recent parliamentary election, both parties ran street campaigns. The researcher discovered that the Chidambaram constituency naturally had a village arrangement while gathering data. The researcher went to a community in the interior where a respondent expressed his opinion in Tamil, saying, "I did not see even one candidate in my village." How do you vote in that case? She claimed that "party members have done their campaign work on behalf of the candidates." Thereafter, the researcher is aware that the candidate was unable to visit all villages throughout the short campaign period. The most ferocious anti-Thirumavalavan campaign in the field tainted him with brutality. He was denied access to the streets of the Chidambaram constituency. Instead, the upper castes in his alliance, the party (DMK), campaigned for him.

DALIT REPRESENTATION

The leaders of the Dravidian parties, M Karunanidhi (DMK) and J Jayalalithaa (AIADMK), quickly realised the secret to their success: maintain the caste-based parties close enough to one another that they do not feel rejected but also preventing them from expanding beyond the two parties' ability

to govern them. These leaders realised they would go out of business if they permitted the caste-based parties to flourish. Because of this, the party organisation itself has a few laws stating that only a few seats or positions, such as the last minister's cabinet and district level roles, are given to the Dalit communities (Stalin Rajangam). These two extremely powerful parties, in particular, discourage friendships between individuals from the same group. It was reflected in the election violence committed by PMK against the VCK party in Ponparappi during the 2019 Chidambaram Parliamentary Election. Ecological (or aggregate statistical) techniques link voting trends to geographical factors (ward, constituency, state, etc.).

Figure 2

Responders polling violence * Community Cross-tabulation
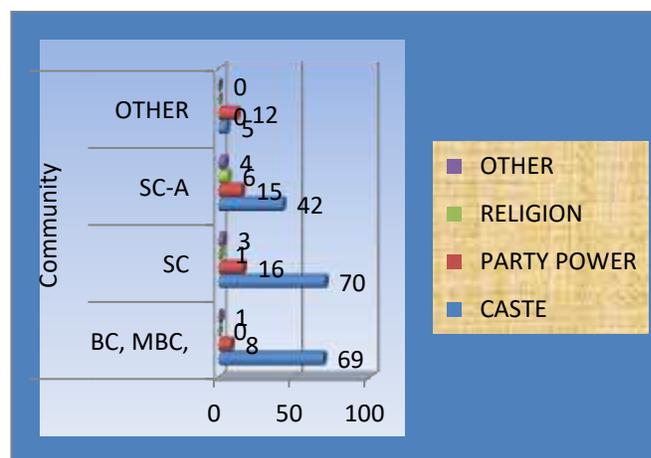
Source: field data-- Chidambaram Parliamentary Constituency Election- 2019

Figure 2 When questioned about polling place violence during an election, the researcher responded as shown. Since the Ponparappi polling violence was brought up by every respondent, the issue also had a role in this decision. Nevertheless, the outcome is based on the majority of replies. Since 186 was the most common response among the respondents, this result is not skewed. According to the survey results from the SC community, 70% of respondents strongly agreed that "caste" was the primary cause of violent incidents. Several respondents who used the Tamil word "*vendum endre*" (translated as "intentionally") when providing survey information stated, "A political party (PMK) deliberately went to Ponparappi village and attacked Dalit community people and their homes. Due to the violence, citizens were unable to vote. We can observe from the bar graph that 69 respondents from the BC/MBC group concurred. In India, election-related violence is nothing new, and Dalits are typically the ones who suffer the most when there are no opposing parties. The study's findings

indicate that Dalits are the only group to endure violence during voting. With these considerations, researchers are certain that "caste role important in political decision" applies to the election for the Chidambaram constituency as well. The outcome indicates that Ponparappi's election violence is not caused by religion. Caste-based violence in Ponparappi elections is a result of the outcome, and party-based violence is a result of the election (C Lakshmanan 2019).

In particularly, Chidambaram constituency political violence happed on April 18, at Ponparappi village in Ariyalur, when Tamil Nadu facing voted in the general election. According to Thad Dunning, "When violent conflict and electoral politics are viewed as strategic complements so that politicians use violence in part to advance electoral aims to the distribution of electoral support can also shape patterns of violence." (Thad Dunning, 2011) the polling day violence by PMK members, belonging to the dominant Vanniyar community, attack homes bearing the 'pot' symbol which is VCK's electoral symbol this poll season. There are at least 20 tiled houses belonging to Dalits and sporting the 'pot' symbol on their home walls, were totally damaged and Dalit's injuries. Were, the candidate Thol. Thirumavalavan is Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) with the DMK-led alliance. Thirumavalavan told that to media after visiting the village that the Hindu Munnani and the PMK were behind the violence. "Since Dalits were prevented from voting, the Election Commission should order a re-poll in Ponparappi village," he demanded. But the re-poll is not contacted. The DMK leader M.K. Stalin "condemned the incident and wondered whether rule of law existed in the State today". He said that election-related violations took place in many places. Violence is not an entirely new concept in Indian elections, and we have always come across instances of violence.

Figure 3 :

Responders Midnight result* community cross tabulation

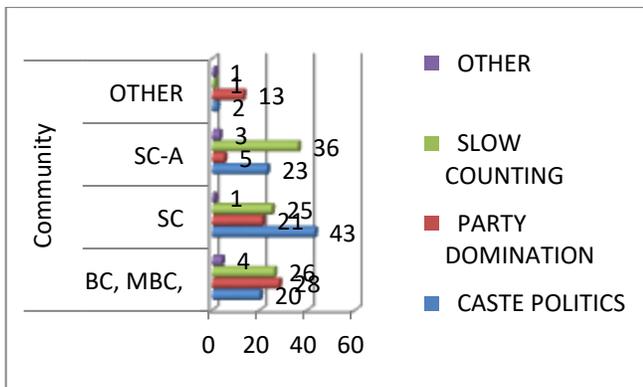*Source: field data-- Chidambaram Parliamentary Constituency Election- 2019*

Figure 3, The researcher is interested in the voters' and residents' perceptions on election credibility in Chidambaram. Voters in the Chidambaram constituency had faith in the election commission, and the research met their expectations. The outcome clearly demonstrates that voters have faith in the electoral commission. Thus, in the Chidambaram constituency, 228 respondents cast ballots out of 252. Then there are four alternatives for the community cross-tabulation and midnight results: Caste Politics, Party Dominance, Slow Counting, and Other. The researcher focused on a few key issues, including caste politics from SC 43 respondents, party dominance BC/MBC 28 respondents, sluggish counting SC-A 36 respondents, and other community 4 respondents. Do you vote? is the first of three interconnected questions in this section. Second, why might the election commission have announced the results at midnight? And last, did you notice how important money was to the election process? According to SC community members, the election commission was forced to announce the results of this study on caste politics at midnight in the Chidambaram constituency. While gathering data, the researcher received the following response from a respondent: "*intha chidambarathla jati neeraya irukuppa athumatum ila pa inthe therthalakuda pakkamudium athuthan result velala veda midnight aachi".* His statement that "there are many castes in Chidambaram constituency, which is playing more on election commission and its primary reason to declare result at midnight" was translated into English.

VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN TAMIL NADU

In India, caste continues to be a driver of voting behavior. It has profound societal origins and serves as the primary foundation for social relations at all levels. Despite the adoption of various statutes outlawing action and discrimination based on caste, caste continues to shape political behavior. Voting is done by caste name. It is a branch of electoral psychology since voting behaviour is so broad and cannot be stated in a few sentences. In addition to class, religion, age, and gender, this study will consider caste in order to influence participants' voting decisions (Steve Barnett, 1977). In India, religion has a significant role in politics. Politics that is based on caste is more prevalent in states like Tamil Nadu. Political psychology covered topics including how popular opinion influences voters' decisions. Studying ideas relating to how attitudes, beliefs, schema, knowledge structures, and information processing are formed will help you better understand this. All of these factors aid in the decision-making process for voters and countrymen. The Election Commission of India lists Dravidian parties as one of its states recognised political parties. Political communication studies, whose main goal is effective communication, include this research of voting behaviour. a
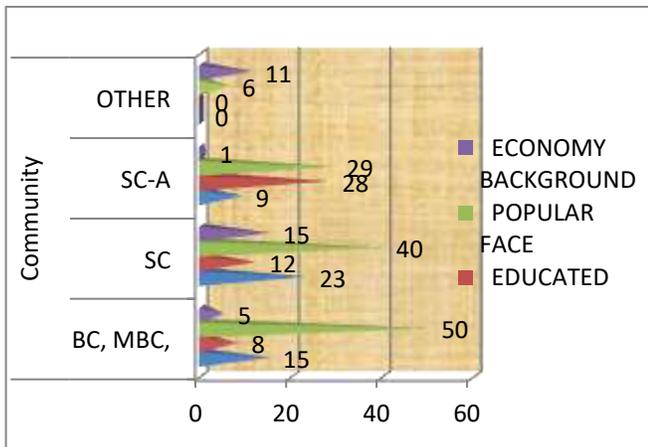
developed state like Tamil Nadu. Information can be used to make living conditions better. Nirmal Jacob claimed that the situation in Tamil Nadu was brought on by 'cultural forces' that were in play and, on the other hand, by the leaders of Dravidian parties having a favourable political reputation. Tamil politics and culture have been significantly influenced by the media and the film industry. Dravidian parties are regional political parties, and their influence is far greater than that of national parties. Multiple variables influence Dravidian politics; in the Chidambaram constituency, 'Caste' had a significant impact on voting behaviour, in terms of election violence, and election symbol allocation. The previous (2019) election saw a stronger cooperation of political parties centred on "social Justice"/Dravidian ideology. Dravidian parties believe in populist mobilisation, manifestos, freebies, and speeches by leaders, as well as welfare programmes.

Figure 4

Responders how the party chose candidates for election * Community Cross-tabulation.

Source: field data -- Chidambaram Parliamentary Constituency Election- 2019

Figure 4, presents an analysis of factors influencing candidate selection in the Chidambaram constituency, focusing on the criteria of "popular face" and "famous face". Of the 252 respondents, 125 individuals chose a candidate based on "popularity," indicating a preference for candidates with high visibility and public recognition. Additionally, 50 people from the BC/MBC community, 40 people from the SC community, 29 people from the SC-A community and 6 people from other communities preferred candidates with "famous face". The table highlights the importance of candidate image and public perception in electoral decision-making processes. DMK's alliance candidate Thol. Thirumavalavan's popularity is significant, in contrast to the prominence given to M.

Chandrakasi, a well-known party figure in the AIADMK alliance. The table underscores the role of candidate appeal, political brand, and ideological affiliation in shaping voter preferences and election outcomes. This interpretation provides a current perspective of the findings presented in Table 5, focusing on the current relevance of candidate selection criteria in Chidambaram constituency.

On basis of the result, found that the election commission did not make a peaceful environment for Schedule Caste community voters to vote in Chidambaram constituency. The researcher strongly said with the study result and the polling violence in Ponparappi under Chidambaram constituency. Accordingly, fewer voters responds that SC communities do not get the chance to vote independently in various ways. While collecting data, responder says that "*parayana porantha engaluku vote poda neeraya kashtam iruku 1 km nadanthu pogunum, anga en panavetu aalu iruparu avaru ithuku vote podunu keparu.*" (*We born as a Parayer community, we face many difficult to vote we have to walk 1 km to reach the booth, where my owner will ask 'vote for this'.*). With these difficult fewer responders chosen other service, they raised a question that "*why the voting booth is not in my colony*? The researcher had a new experience with this question and researcher understood that suppose if they have a voting booth in their colony, there is a chance will increase the polling percentage. According to rational-choice theories, voting is governed less by group loyalty and class position and more by individuals' logical assessments of self-interest. These methods aim to explain voting behavior as the result of a series of instrumental cost-benefit calculations made by the individual. This voting behavior model regards the voter as a thinking individual who can form an opinion on political topics and vote accordingly. It opposes the idea that voting behavior is mostly controlled by class identification or socialization.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the study emphasizes the significant implications of electoral violence, the role of political communication strategies, the influence of social media on voter behavior, political polarization, and the potential for grassroots efforts to foster inclusive governance in Tamil Nadu. Electoral violence not only infringes upon the voting rights of marginalized communities, particularly Dalits, but also erodes the trust of the broader electorate in the democratic process. This erosion of trust poses a substantial challenge to democratic participation and legitimacy, highlighting the urgent need for effective measures to address and prevent such violence. Furthermore, the conclusion underscores the pivotal role of political communication strategies in shaping voter sentiment, especially in the context of caste-based politics in Tamil Nadu.

By examining how Dravidian parties utilize media, messaging, and campaign tactics to mobilize support along caste lines, we gain valuable insights into the construction and reinforcement of political identities in the electoral arena. The impact of social media on electoral dynamics is also highlighted, emphasizing how online platforms influence political discourse (Perloff, 2016) and voter engagement. Understanding the evolving landscape of digital communication and its implications for political mobilization is crucial for analyzing contemporary voting behaviors in Tamil Nadu. Moreover, the conclusion stresses the need to address political polarization and its intersection with caste politics. By examining how divisive rhetoric and identity-based appeals shape political narratives, we can better understand the complexities of electoral dynamics in Tamil Nadu and work towards promoting more inclusive and harmonious governance. In essence, the study underscores the multifaceted nature of political communication strategies, the impact of social media, and the challenges posed by electoral violence and political polarization in Tamil Nadu's electoral landscape. By addressing these issues, and promoting inclusive governance, there is a potential to enhance democratic participation, strengthen trust in electoral institutions, and foster a more equitable and representative political environment in the region.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

REFERENCES

A.S. Panneerselvan. (2021). *Karunanidhi: A Life.* Delhi: Penguin Books on Indian Politics & History.

Bhambhri, C. P., and Verma, P. S. (1971, July-September). Candidate's Perception of Voting Behaviourv. *The Indian Journal of Political Science,, 32*(3), P332-348.

Blumer, J.G., Gurevitch, M. (1981). *Politicians and the Press: An essay on role relationships* (Vol. Handbook of political commuication). (I. D. Sanders, Ed.) Beverly Hills, CA.: Sage.

Chandran, Subramaniam. (2016, June 09). Election in Tamil Nadu: Who Wins, Why and How? *SSRN*, 1-15. doi:10.2139/ssrn.2799083

Damodaran, K. (2018). *Contentious spaces: Caste, commemorations and production of political community in South India.* Retrieved from University of Edinburgh.

Damodharan, K., Rajangam, S., & Gorringe, H. (2012). Dalit political imagination and replication in contemporary Tamil Nadu. *Economic and Political Weekly (EPW), 47*(36), p30-34. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/41720110

Gail Omvedt. (2010, October 04). *The Dravidian movement.* Retrieved from Round Table India: https://www.roundtableindia.co.in/the-dravidian-movement/

Hazarika, Biraj. (2015, October). Voting Behaviour in India and Its Determinants. *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS), Volume 20* (Issue 10), PP 22-25. doi:10.9790/0837-201042225

K. Saravana Rajasena, A. Thanikodi. (2016, July-December). Election Manifesto is the Key Determinant of Voting Behaviour in Tamil Nadu Electoral Politics. *Asian Review of Social Sciences, Vol.5*(No.2), 1-6.

Kalaiyarasan, A., Manoharan, K.R. (2018, August 04). M Karunanidhi: The Dravidian sun sets. *EPW Engage, 53*(31). Retrieved from https://www.epw.in/engage/article/m-karunanidhidravidian-sun-sets

Kalaiyarasan, A.,and Vijaybaskar, M. (2021). *The Dravidian model.* New Delhi: Cambridge University Press.

Karthick Ram Manoharan. (2017). Anti-casteist casteism? Interventions: A Fanonist Critique of Ramasamy's Discourse on Caste. International Journal of Postcolonial Studies, 19(1), pp. 73–90. doi:DOI: 10.1080/1369801X.2016.1142885

Karthikeyan Damodaran and Hugo Gorringe. (2009, May 23). *Panthers in Parliament: Why Thiruma's Win Matters the Most.* Retrieved from The WIRE: https://thewire.in/politics/panthers-in-parliament-why-thirumas-win-matters-the-most

Kaur, H. (2018). VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN INDIA AND ITS DETERMINANTS. *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CURRENT ENGINEERING AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH (IJCESR), VOLUME-5*(ISSUE-2), PP 116-120.

Lago, l. (2019, December 06). A Research Agenda in Elections and Voting Behavior in a Global and Changing World. (F. M. Coma, Ed.) *Front. Polit. Sci. 1:1*, 1-3. doi:doi: 10.3389/fpos.2019.00001

Lazarsfeld, Paul F., Bernard, Berelson., Hazel, Gaudet. (1944). *The People's Choice.* New York: Columbia University Press.

M. S. S. Pandian . (2007). *Brahmin and non-Brahmin: genealogies of the Tamil political present.* Delhi: Permanent Black.

Muralidharan, Kavitha. (2016, November 20). *100 years of Justice Party, a movement which defined Tamil Nadu politics.* Retrieved from The NewsMinute: https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/100-years-justice-party-movement-which-defined-tamil-nadu-politics-53163

Negi, M.M.S. (2011). Voting Attitude of Women in Uttarakhand with Special Reference to Garhwal. *The Indian Journal of Political Science, 72*(3), PP. 803-818.

Nirmala Krishnamoorthy, P. A. (2022). An investigative study to identify the impact of micro-targeting on voting decisions in Tamil Nadu. *Journal of Positive School Psychology, Vol. 6*(No. 4), PP 5127–5134. Retrieved from http://journalppw.com

Perloff, R. M. (2016). *The Dynamics of Persuasion: Communication and Attitudes in the Twenty-First Century.* United States: Taylor & Francis.

Prof. C Lakshmanan. (2019). *Factfinding Report on polling violence in Ponparappi.* Madras Institute of Developmental Studies (MIDS). Chennai : Dalit Intellectual Collection.

Sandhya Ravishankar. (2018). *Karunanidhi: A Life in Politics.* Haryana: HarperCollins India Publishers Pvt Limited.

Sandhya Ravishankar. (2019). *Karunanidhi: A Life in Politics.* Uttar Pradesh: HarperCollins India.

Sanjay Kumar, Praveen Raj. (2013). *Measuring Voting Behaviour in India.* India: SAGE Publication India.

Steve Barnett. (1977). Identity Choice and Caste Ideology in Contemporary South India. In K. David, *The New Wind: Changing Identities in South Asia* (pp. pp. 393-414). New York: De Gruyter Mouton.

Subramanian, A. (2019, May 23). *Panthers in Parliament: Why Thiruma's Win Matters the Mos.* Retrieved from The Wire: https://thewire.in/politics/panthers-in-parliament-why-thirumas-win-matters-the-most

Thad Dunning. (2011). Fighting and Voting: Violent Conflict and Electoral Politics. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. 55*(No. 3), pp. 327-339 .

Viswanathan, S. (2004, April 10–23). *A history of agitational politics.* Retrieved from The frontline: https://frontline.thehindu.com/cover-story/article30222153.ece