



People Studies - St Joseph's Opinion Poll

St Joseph's College of Arts and Sciences, Bangalore, and People Studies, Loyola College, Chennai, undertook a State-wide Study with the following twin objectives: (1) to provide a forum for the people to freely express their concerns and opinions, and (2) to map the varied perceptions of the people regarding the current socio-political scenario of the State.

Methodology

The study was conducted between 11.01.2008 and 20.01.2008 in 24 districts, employing *convenience sampling* technique. A total of 2580 persons, around 40% urban and 60% rural, were interviewed. The *social-psychological approach*, a unique methodology devised by People Studies, was adopted for the interview. Over 30 persons, including four faculty members, were involved at various levels in this study. *Prof. Dr S Rajanayagam*, Director, People Studies, designed and guided the entire study.

Respondents' Background

The sample consists of almost equal number of men and women. Age-wise, a majority of the respondents (34.2%) are from the age-group 26-35, followed by age-group 36-45 (28.1%), age-group 46-60 (20.3%), upto age 25 (12.5%), and the rest are above 60. In terms of education, 27.8% are uneducated or little educated (upto 5th standard), 51.1% range from 6th to junior college, 17.9% college level (arts and sciences), and the rest have done other studies including professional courses. Religion-wise, Hindus - 83.5%, Muslims - 11.1%, and Christians - 1.3% (the rest belong to other religions including Jains / no religion). Of the numerous castes listed, the following are the major ones: SC / ST - 19.7%, Lingayats - 13.8%, Vokkaligas - 12.7%, Brahmins - 7.2%, Okkaligas - 2.9%, and Kurubas - 1.2%. The sample consists of 9.5% 'new voters' [who would be voting for the first time in the forthcoming assembly elections].

FINDINGS

01. Pressing Needs / Issues:

Drinking water tops the list of the most pressing **local needs** [of the village / town] with 36.9%. The other major needs are: toilet / sanitation - 15.2%, road / transport - 10.3%, medical facility - 9.8%, ration supply - 7.0%, and loans to farmers - 5.4%.

At the **State level**, the top-most issue is *unemployment* (46.0%). Other important issues include: corruption at all levels - 14.3%, no support to agriculture - 12.0%, price rise - 10.8%, no preference to our people in employment - 5.4%, and water dispute with Thamizh Nadu - 4.2%.

02. Performance of Parties:

Regarding the performance of various parties over the last three years, BJP is comparatively more favoured than the other two major parties.

<i>Party</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>So-so</i>	<i>Bad</i>
BJP	46.9	25.6	27.5
INC	34.8	29.6	35.6
JD (S)	30.8	31.3	37.9

03. Performance of MLAs:

Regarding the performance of their MLAs in their respective constituencies, while 39.2% express satisfaction, almost an equal number (39.0%) express dissatisfaction.

Similarly, the opinion is also strongly divided when it comes to voting for him/her if he/she contests in the forthcoming elections from the same constituency. While 51.2% answer in the affirmative, the rest respond in the negative.

04. Voting Today...

If they were to vote today, a majority of the voters would prefer BJP, followed by INC and JD (S).

<i>Party</i>	<i>Vote Share</i>
BJP	40.0
INC	25.8
JD (S)	10.7
Others	1.5
<i>Undecided / no response</i>	22.0

During the study, the research team has made the following two observations:

(1) there is a widespread ‘sympathy’ for BJP, and the attitude of ‘why not give BJP a chance?’ is very pronounced.

(2) at the same time, there is an unexpressed ‘hesitation’ - even fear - among considerable sections of the public to openly state which party they would vote for, particularly when it concerns parties other than BJP; that explains the strikingly large size of the undecided voters.

05. Gender-wise Voting:

While the male voters prefer BJP to other parties, the female voters prefer INC.

<i>Sex</i>	<i>BJP</i>	<i>INC</i>	<i>JD(S)</i>
Male	57.1	21.1	14.1
Female	37.0	40.7	11.1

06. Education-wise Voting:

Education does play a role in the way one votes. Among the uneducated or little educated INC leads, whereas among other categories BJP has a clear lead.

<i>Education Level</i>	<i>BJP</i>	<i>INC</i>	<i>JD(S)</i>
uneducated/little educated	30.7	40.0	27.3
from 6th to junior college	55.5	28.5	7.9
degree+	39.1	25.4	13.0

07. Age-wise Voting:

INC enjoys an overwhelming support among the very young voters [age below 25] and a moderate support among the age-group 36-45. BJP, on the other hand, is the most favoured party among other age-groups. The popularity of JD (S) remains low among all the age-groups except age 46-50 category among whom it fares better than INC.

<i>Age Group</i>	<i>BJP</i>	<i>INC</i>	<i>JD(S)</i>
below 25	23.8	73.3	1.9
age 26-35	60.8	11.8	9.9
age 36-45	33.9	43.4	16.9
age 46-60	56.3	18.3	20.4
above 60	50.0	30.0	15.0

08. Occupation-wise Voting:

There is a tough fight between BJP and INC among coolie workers and farmers. Among all other sections BJP is ahead of INC. The support for JD(S) is significant among the salaried classes [both private and government employees].

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>BJP</i>	<i>INC</i>	<i>JD(S)</i>
coolie / agriculture	35.8	35.1	15.2
self-employed	41.9	32.1	12.3
salaried - private	58.3	13.6	22.3
government employee	41.7	25.0	25.0

09. Religion-wise Voting:

The religious minorities, though strongly support INC, are not averse to BJP.

<i>Religion</i>	<i>BJP</i>	<i>INC</i>	<i>JD(S)</i>
Hindu	50.3	30.7	12.6
Muslim	21.7	42.2	15.7
Christian	25.0	50.0	25.0

10. Caste-wise Voting:

Among the castes listed below, JD(S) takes the third place, while the first place shuttles between BJP and INC from caste to caste.

<i>Caste</i>	<i>BJP</i>	<i>INC</i>	<i>JD(S)</i>
SC / ST	40.9	42.4	15.9
OC	43.5	37.7	13.0
Vokkaliga	41.4	39.1	13.8
Lingayat	63.3	29.4	5.5
Kuruba	37.5	50.0	12.5
Okkaliga	33.3	33.3	25.0

11. New Voters:

That a majority of very young voters go for INC is further reinforced by the fact that a majority of the 'new voters' also favour that party.

<i>Voter Type</i>	<i>BJP</i>	<i>INC</i>	<i>JD(S)</i>
'New' voters	18.9	78.4	1.4
'Old' Voters	50.0	25.6	13.8

12. Voting 2004 vis-a-vis 2008:

It is significant that *not all* those who voted for a particular party in 2004 are going to stand by the same party, if they were to vote today. The Table below illustrates that those who voted for BJP in 2004 are much more steadfast and loyal than those who voted for other parties in 2004.

<i>Party voted in 2004</i>	<i>BJP</i>	<i>INC</i>	<i>JD(S)</i>
BJP	78.1	9.3	3.6
INC	24.3	59.4	13.4
JD(S)	33.3	7.1	41.4

13. Type of Government:

Most of the respondents express the guess that a *single party with its own majority* is likely to form the Government following the forthcoming elections.

Single party with own majority	62.0
Coalition Government	25.0
Single party with external support	13.0

Of those who expect a single party with own majority to form the Government, most of them consider *BJP* to be that party [BJP - 67.1, INC - 24.1, JD (S) - 8.8].

14. *Next CM*: The following is the rank order of top five candidates having the *competence* and *chances* of becoming the next Chief Minister.

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Greater Competence</i>	<i>Greater Chances</i>
Yediyurappa	45.1	49.1
Kumaraswamy	25.8	37.6
S M Krishna	13.1	5.7
Dharam Singh	9.7	4.3
Siddaramaiah	3.7	1.1

15. *In sum*, considering the various factors as analysed above, the present political climate is clearly favourable to BJP. The situation is likely to change depending on the strategy to be adopted by INC projecting a more charismatic leader as its chief-ministerial candidate, and the kind of contestants each party is going to actually field in the elections.

Prof. Dr S Rajanayagam & Team
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Note: (1) All the numbers in the Tables denote per centages, unless specified otherwise. (2) Since only the major parties are taken for comparative analysis, the total of per centages may not be 100.

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