

CHAPTER-6

ELECTORAL POLITICS IN THE ERSTWHILE STATE OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

In this Chapter attempt is made to comprehend the electoral process and its nature in Erstwhile State of Jammu & Kashmir since pre-independence. The discussion will include electoral trends and electoral behaviour.

The Electoral process is the life line of modern political societies. Modern day democracy draws its strength and inspiration from electoral processes. A step to electoral processes in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir found its expression in the pre-1947 period with Glancy Commissions Recommendations. It prompted Maharaja Hari Singh to adopt Legislative Assembly (Prajya Sabha) comprising 75 members. The first ever Legislative Assembly of 1934 had limited electoral component with only 33

elected members, out of which 21 seats were reserved for Muslim representation. The regulation reserved 10 seats for Hindus, 2 for Sikhs and 30 seats reserved as special nominations of Maharaja (in which 12 nominations were restricted to state bureaucracy/ official members).



Important Facts

The 1934 election restricted franchise to Village and District Headmen, Priests, Managers of Religious Property, Title Holders, Medical Practitioners, Pensioned Officers/ Veteran Bureaucrats and those who had passed middle school examination or equivalent. Women in general were excluded except for those with required qualification. The election was intended to enfranchise about 10% adult population.

Potent urge for electoral process in the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir surfaced with the resolutions passed by Muslim Conference (Established 4th June 1932). The Party demanded wider franchise to accommodate public demand for representation & accountable Government responsible on the floor of Legislative Assembly. With this agenda Muslim Conference gained popularity and after the completion of 4 years term

of Legislative Assembly (Prajā Sabha) ended on 31st December 1937 Muslim Conference was able to capture 19 seats out of 21 seats reserved for Muslim representation. On 27th March 1938, Muslim Conference was converted into National Conference.

Accession of the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir to the Union of India on 26th October 1947 motivated Sadar-e-Riyasat Dr. Karan Singh (*the then Head of the Jammu and Kashmir State*) on 1st May 1951 to issue a proclamation directing the formation of constituent Assembly cum legislative assembly. Constituent Assembly was to draft constitution of the erstwhile State of J&K. Elections to the Constituent Assembly were fully conducted on the basis of adult suffrage. The Legislative Assembly was initially composed of 100 members and later its number was increased to 111 members by virtue of an amendment to the constitution through Jammu and Kashmir Act of 1988 (Twentieth Amendment). The total contestable and filled seats of the Assembly were 87 and rest were reserved for PoJK. Out of 87 constituencies, 07 Assembly Constituencies were reserved for scheduled Castes (SC). All these 7 seats fall in Jammu region – 3 in Jammu district and one each in Samba, Kathua, Udhampur and Ramban districts till 2019.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES OF ERSTWHILE STATE OF J&K

Assembly Constituency Number	Assembly Constituency Name	Assembly Constituency Number	Assembly Constituency Name	Assembly Constituency Number	Assembly Constituency Name
01	Karnah	31	Tral	61	Chenani
02	Kupwara	32	Pampore	62	Ram Nagar
03	Lolab	33	Pulwama	63	Bani
04	Handwara	34	Rajpora	64	Basohli
05	Langate	35	Wachi	65	Kathua
06	Uri	36	Shopian	66	Billawar
07	Rafiabad	37	Noorabad	67	Hiranagar
08	Sopore	38	Kulgam	68	Samba
09	Gurez	39	Hom Shali Bugh	69	Vijaypur
10	Bandipora	40	Anantnag	70	Nagrota

11	Sonawari	41	Devsar	71	Gandhinagar
12	Sangrama	42	Dooru	72	Jammu East
13	Baramulla	43	Kokernag	73	Jammu West
14	Gulmarg	44	Shangus	74	Bishnah
15	Pattan	45	Bijbehara	75	Ranbir Singh Pura
16	Kangan	46	Pahalgam	76	Suchetgarh
17	Ganderbal	47	Nubra	77	Marh
18	Hazratbal	48	Leh	78	Raipur Domana
19	Zadibal	49	Kargil	79	Akhnoor
20	Eidgah	50	Zanskar	80	Chhamb
21	Khanyar	51	Kishtwar	81	Nowshera
22	Habba Kadal	52	Inderwal	82	Darhal
23	Amira Kadal	53	Doda	83	Rajouri
24	Sonawar	54	Bhaderwah	84	Surankote
25	Batmaloo	55	Ramban	85	Kalakote
26	Chadoora	56	Banihal	86	Mendhar
27	Budgam	57	Gulabgarh	87	Poonch Haveli
28	Beerwah	58	Reasi		
29	Khan Sahib	59	Gool Arnas		
30	Charari Sharief	60	Udhampur		



Electors data summary of Erstwhile State of J&K: Year 2014

1. NO OF CONSTITUENCIES

TYPE OF CONSTITUENCY	GEN	SC	ST	TOTAL
NO OF CONSTITUENCIES	80	7	0	87

2. ELECTORS

	MALE	FEMALE	THIRD GENDER	TOTAL
i. NO. OF ELECTORS (Including Service Electors)	3854791	3462092	63	7316946
ii. NO. OF ELECTORS WHO VOTED AT POLLING STATIONS	2499904	2294469	1	4794374
iii. POLLING PERCENTAGE	64.85 %	66.27 %	2 %	65.52 %

3. NO. OF VALID VOTES (EVM Valid+Postal Valid) :	4768852
4. NO. OF VOTES REJECTED (Postal)	3390
5. NO. OF VOTES NOT RETRIEVED FROM EVM,TEST VOTES, REJECTED VOTES DUE TO OTHER REASON AND NOTA VOTES	50534
6. NO. OF POLLING STATIONS :	10035
7. AVERAGE NO. OF ELECTORS PER POLLING STATION	729

8. PERFORMANCE OF CONTESTING CANDIDATES

	MALE	FEMALE	THIRD GENDER	TOTAL
i. NO. OF CONTESTANTS	803	28	0	831
ii. ELECTED	85	2	0	87
iii. FORFEITED DEPOS- ITS	602	25	0	627

Source: Election Commission of India

ELECTORAL BEHAVIOUR: TRENDS IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

The elections of the Constituent Assembly were held in 1951, National Conference secured all the 75 seats, 73 of its candidates were elected unopposed.

The first Assembly elections were held in 1957 under the new Constitution adopted in 1956. National Conference contested elections under Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad. It won 68 seats with 41 unopposed. Out of the remaining 7 seats, 5 went to Praja Parishad, one to Harijan Mandal and one to an independent candidate.

In the year 1967, Assembly elections were held when Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq was Chief Minister and National Conference at that time had got merged with Indian National Congress. The ruling Congress won 61 seats. The Jan Sangh (transformed from Praja Parishad) won 3 seats and National Conference faction led by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad won 8 seats and remaining 3 went to independent candidates. The total voting percentage recorded was 58.79%

In 1972 Assembly elections were held during the Chief Ministership of Syed Mir Qasim. The ruling Congress won with two-third majority capturing 58 seats (*30 out of 43 in Kashmir and 28 out of 32 in Jammu*). The Jan Sangh won 3 seats and Jamait-i-Islami, a new entrant, won 5 seats (*All from Kashmir valley*) and remaining seats went to independent candidates. The Praja Socialist Party & Communist Party of India got no seat. The total voting percentage in the Assembly elections recorded was 62.17%

In 1977 Assembly elections, Indian National Congress won 10 seats, Janata Party won 13 seats, the independent won 4 seats, Jamait-i-Islami won one seat. All the remaining 47 seats went to National Conference after its revival. The total voting percentage recorded was 67.70%

In the Assembly elections of 1983, National Conference won 47 seats while Congress (I) won 26 seats. The Muslim United Front won 2 seats and one went to Jamait-i-Islami. The total voting percentage of this election was 73.24%.

In the Assembly elections 1987, National Conference had electoral alliance with Congress. In this Assembly election, National Conference captured 40 seats. The total voting Percentage recorded was 74.88%.

The Assembly election of 1996, National Conference again won 57 seats out of 87 total seats. The voting Percentage recorded was 53.92%.

In 2002 Assembly elections, Indian National Congress won 20 seats, PDP won 16 seats, Panthers Party won 04 seats, BJP won 01 seat, and the overall voting percentage was 45%.



In 2008, National Conference won 28 seats, PDP won 21 seats, Congress won 17 seats, BJP won 11 seats and Panthers Party won 03 seats with overall voting percentage of 60.5%.

In 2014 Assembly elections, PDP won 28 seats, BJP won 25 seats, National Conference won 15 seats, Congress won 12 seats and the overall voting percentage was 65.52%.

Voting percentage 1967-2014 Assembly Elections

Year	Voting %age
1967	58.79
1972	62.17
1977	67.70
1983	73.24
1987	74.88
1996	53.92
2002	45.0
2008	60.5
2014	65.52

Source: Election Commission of India

As observed, the electoral process of Jammu and Kashmir has moved from single party dominance to coalition politics thereby widening the political participation of diverse political stakeholders.

Glossary

Universal Adult Suffrage:-	The Right of all adults to vote in the elections.
Amendment:-	A minor change in the Constitution through legislation.
Alliance:-	An alliance is a relationship resorted to among people, groups , political parties or States to join together for mutual benefit or to achieve a common purpose, whether or not explicit agreement has been worked out among them.
Proclamation:-	A public or official announcement dealing with matter of great importance.
Elector:-	A person who has right to vote in an election, especially one for members of a legislature.

1. Collect information about any of the elections held in the erstwhile state of J&K.
2. Match the following:

The first ever (Prajā Sabha) Legislative Assembly through the regulations of Maharaja Hari Singh were conducted	May 1 st , 1951
The proclamation for the formation of Constituent Assembly was issued on	After 1987 elections
Legislative Assembly suspended for Six years	in 1934

3. Your friend was not in the class room when this chapter was taught. When he came next day and repeated what he heard from classmates. Can you tell him what is wrong with these statements.
 - a) Maharaja Hari Singh ruled J&K till accession of the state with India. So there is no need of Praja Sabha (Elected Legislative Assembly) in 1934;
 - b) For Praja Sabha elections, the right to vote was not on the basis of Universal Adult Franchise. Does it mean that practice should continue in present time also?