

ELECTORAL SYSTEMS AND MINORITY REPRESENTATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

In addition to their use at the federal level, electoral methods are also commonly utilised in the process of determining the composition of organisations that are part of the local government. In the many combinations of political parties, organisations, and personalities that may be found in the legislative and executive branches of a country, it is the factor that ultimately determines the outcome. The kind of electoral system that is used in a political system has an impact on the creation of coalitions, the various strategies that political parties employ in order to get seats in the legislature, and the respective election platforms that they utilise. It is essential for panchayati raj institutions to play a significant role in the provision of rural infrastructure, the creation of employment opportunities, the execution of programmes by the federal and state governments, the selection of beneficiaries, and the improvement of the general well-being of people living in rural areas. Panchayat meetings are held on a monthly basis by members of the village panchayat wards and representatives of minority groups. The purpose of these meetings is to assess the rural infrastructural facilities and ensure that wages are distributed to the panchayat secretary and workers. Grama Sabha gatherings are disseminated via the use of dumbura, notices, members of the village panchayat ward, and microphone announcements at places of worship such as mosques and churches. The list of inhabitants in the village panchayats who are considered to be living below the poverty line is compiled by members of the minority group, who also organise meetings of the Grama Sabha. The most marginalised members of society are the ones who get the benefits and services of the government for the first time via the village panchayats. This study on the leadership roles and contributions of minorities to rural development in PRIs found that minority representatives can be found in PRIs in Uttar Pradesh in the following capacities: as members of the district panchayat ward, as members of the panchayat union ward, as presidents of the village panchayat, and as members of the village panchayat ward.

Keywords: Representation, Minority, Electoral, Systems.

Introduction

The term "electoral system" refers to the set of procedures that voters follow in order to choose their representatives or political leaders. The outcome of the election is influenced by the establishment of a mechanism and method for elections that determines the proportion of representatives that are assigned to each of the many political parties in the legislature. In addition to their use at the federal level, electoral methods are also commonly utilised in the process of determining the composition of organisations that are part of the local government. In the many combinations of political parties, organisations, and personalities that may be found in the legislative and executive branches of a country, it is the factor that ultimately determines the outcome. The kind of electoral system that is used in a political system has an impact on the creation of coalitions, the various strategies that political parties employ in order to get seats in the legislature, and the respective election platforms that they utilise. An

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electoral system is a dynamic concept that has been continuously evolving to accommodate the distinct political structure of each nation. It is not a fixed concept at all. In order for democracy to work in its purest form, a voting mechanism that is clearly specified is required.

The ability of minorities to be included and represented in parliament and administration has become more crucial as the number of countries with multiple parties has rapidly increased and as democratic ideas and norms have extended around the world. The combination of minority involvement and sensitivity to the needs of the majority is the most effective method for achieving and communicating the mission of protecting minority rights. Male and female representatives of minority groups are required to have equal access to the political arena, public life, and decision-making procedures that are relevant to their respective groups. These guarantees are also important for multiethnic cooperation and conflict management in cultures where conflicts over communal differences have escalated or have the potential to escalate into violent conflict. This is because such disagreements have developed into violent conflict. When it comes to peace accords, the majority of them devote particular emphasis to the division of administrative and legislative power, as well as the election of representative bodies. One of the prerequisites for the avoidance of conflicts and the management of conflicts over longer periods of time is the representation of minorities in representative bodies, even if this representation is not sufficient in and of itself. There has never been a single case of peaceful, democratic conflict settlement in which the minority population has been denied parliamentary participation.

Election System Classification

In general, the electoral system may be broken down into three primary categories: the Majoritarian system, the Proportional Representative system, and the Mixed system. These categories are established by the processes that are chosen for converting votes into legislative seats at the legislative level. While the Majoritarian technique refers to a system in which larger parties are given the opportunity to represent a higher number of seats, the Proportional Representation (PR) technique demonstrates a system in which seats are selected in proportion to the votes obtained in the election. Mixed systems are created by combining PR and majoritarian systems under a single framework.

On the other hand, under the PR system, seats are allotted to parties according to the percentage of votes they obtained during the elections. When, for example, a party obtains forty percent of the vote and is allotted forty percent of the total number of parliamentary seats, the likelihood of a single party controlling the legislature is reduced. Public relations (PR) processes often result in the formation of coalition governments or multiparty systems, both of which ensure a political system that is both more effective and more representative. These governments are popular governments, and they are better able to carry out the mandate of the people than governments that were founded by the majoritarian system, which mostly comprises of persons who obtained less than half of the total votes. The governments that arose from this procedure are popular governments. Mixed-member plurality systems are designed to combine the benefits of PR and single-member plurality systems in as many different ways as possibly conceivable. There are three different configurations that occur based on the political culture of the country. These configurations include the Majoritarian System, the Proportional Representative System, and the Mixed System among others.

The Advancement and Welfare of India's Religious Minorities

The Indian Constitution has references to the phrases "minority" and "minorities" in Articles 429, 30, 350A, and 350B; however, these terms are not defined in any of these articles. In spite of this, the National Commission for Minorities Act (1992) designated the following religious groups as minority groups in India: Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Zoroastrians (Parsis), and Jains. There are around 220 million individuals that consider themselves to be members of a minority group, and they are considered to be an important asset to the nation. It is impossible to separate the growth and prosperity of the country as a whole from the development and well-being of the nation's minority population. According to Dubey (2013), the nation's unity and cohesion are contingent upon the citizens' active involvement in the political, social, and economic arenas in an equal manner. In spite of this, minority groups were considered to be among the most vulnerable groups in terms of their participation in political processes at both the highest and lowest levels of government. According to Hodzic (2011), the political participation of minorities is often seen in terms of financial demands, budgetary concerns, and ethics of care and protection. This is in contrast to the perception that it is a means for minorities to engage in decision-making within wider political arenas.

As a result of low literacy rates and limited educational opportunities, minority groups in India are still underrepresented in government jobs. The percentage of minorities working in government

sectors, such as the Assam Rifles (16.6%), Border Security Force (11.69%), Central Reserve Police Force (9.24%), Central Industrial Security Force (9.14%), Sashastra Seema Bal (7.02%), and IndoTibetan Border Force (6.18%), clearly shows how underrepresented minorities are in government employment when compared to the minority population. According to The Economic Times (2015), the Indian government issued an order mandating the use of affirmative action strategies in order to eliminate discrimination against members of minority groups in the recruiting process.

STV Stands for Single-Transferable Vote

Due to the fact that Thomas Hare was the one who first proposed this method, it is often referred to as the "Hare System." Due to the fact that both the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland Assembly) have multi-member districts, each of which has a minimum of three and a maximum of eight elected members, it is a practice that is often used in both countries. Nevertheless, this does not imply that voters are permitted to cast more than one ballot during the election. A preferential voting mechanism is used by the advanced voting system, despite the fact that each voter is only permitted to cast one vote. The voting technique known as the "Single-Transferable Vote (STV) system" is a voting method in which voters cast a single vote, which is subsequently transferred several times depending on the preferences that they provide. The elections for the Rajya Sabha in India are conducted using this method, in which each state legislature is designed to serve as a single multi-member constituency, and each Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) is given one vote that may be transferred. This method has been endorsed by the Parliament of Malta, the Senate of Australia, and the Parliament of Ireland.

This approach has been able to reduce the amount of "waste" of votes, in addition to providing a greater number of possibilities for proportional representation than the SMP system does. Since a result, a governance system that is both more robust and more equitable is assured, since all candidates are examined and selected according to the same criteria, and they continue to represent the constituency on an equal basis. In addition to this, it reduces the chance of a single party dominating the political system and provides voters with a wide range of alternatives to rank their candidates and choose representatives from a number of parties.

Objectives of the Study

- To do study on the development and well-being of India's many religious factions
- To investigate the classification of election systems via research

Research Methodology

Design of Research

An examination of the existing body of literature about the participation and representation of minorities in Indian and international contexts shows that there is a dearth of study on the issue. The current study is exploratory in nature and focuses on the direct election of minority representatives to four roles in Uttar Pradesh's rural self-governance: district panchayat ward member, village panchayat president, panchayat union ward member, and village panchayat ward member. This is because of the fact that the current study is based on the direct election of minority representatives.

Analysis Unit

For the purposes of rural self-governance in Lucknow, LuAyodhya, and LuAmroha districts, the elected members of religious minorities, specifically Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, and Jains, who hold positions of direct election, such as village panchayat ward member, village panchayat president, panchayat union ward member, and district panchayat ward member, serve as the unit of analysis.

Sample Quantity

There are 170 village panchayat ward members, village panchayat presidents, panchayat union ward members, and district panchayat ward members that are participating in the research. These locations are located in the rural areas of Uttar Pradesh, namely in the districts of Lucknow, LuAyodhya, and LuAmroha.

Techniques for Gathering Data

In-depth interviews (IDIs), case studies, and focus group discussions (FGDs) were carried out with minority representatives in Panchayati Raj Institutions by means of interview guides. On the other hand, survey data was collected by means of an interview schedule.

Data Sources

Primary data was collected through interview schedules at four positions of panchayati raj, namely village panchayat ward members, village panchayat presidents, panchayat union ward members, and district panchayat ward members. This was accomplished through fieldwork in the rural districts of Lucknow, Amroha, and Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh, as well as through IDIs and case studies with village panchayat presidents. Additionally, focus group discussions were conducted with the majority group. There are a number of instances of secondary sources of information on minority rights. Some examples include the provisions of the Indian Constitution, national policies, the Sachar and Ranganath Mishra Committee Report, the National Commission for Minorities Act of 1992, and the Uttar Pradesh State Minority Commission Report of 2012.

Analytical Statistics

The statistical test known as the Chi-square is used in SPSS in order to ascertain the degree of connection that exists between two nominal category variables. In addition, the statistical experiment known as Cramer's V is used in order to ascertain the level of correlation that exists between the category variables. Analysis of one-way variance, often known as ANOVA, is another method that may be used to ascertain whether or not there are any significant differences between the members of panchayat union wards, village panchayat presidents, and ward members.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Minority Representatives in Panchayati Raj Institutions

Positions	Lucknow				Amroha				Ayodhya				Total
	Christian		Muslim		Christian		Muslim		Christian		Muslim		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Village Panchayat President	04	06	17	09	03	04	0	01	04	03	04	05	60
Village Panchayat Ward Member	15	06	15	21	5	12	03	0	04	08	03	02	94
Panchayat Union Ward Member	0	01	03	02	01	0	01	0	01	01	04	01	15
District Panchayat Ward Member	0	0	0	01	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	01
Total	19	13	35	33	09	16	04	01	09	12	11	08	170

It is observed from the table that Christians and Muslims are found in the positions of village panchayat presidents, village panchayat ward members, panchayat 18 union ward members and district panchayat ward member whereas the other religious minorities such as Sikhs, Buddhists, Zoroastrians (Parsis) and Jains were not found in the positions of panchayat raj.

Table 2: Minority Representatives Capabilities to Discharge their Duties in PRIs

Duties	Position				Total
	Village Panchayat Ward Member	Village Panchayat President	Panchayat Union Ward Member	District Panchayat Ward Member	
Able to perform	54 (57.4%)	45 (75%)	06 (40%)	0 (.0%)	105 (61.8%)
Unable to perform	40 (42.6%)	15 (25%)	09 (60%)	01 (100%)	65 (38.2%)
Total	94 (100%)	60 (100%)	15 (100%)	1 (100%)	170 (100%)

The above table explains the minority representatives' capacity to discharge their duties in PRIs. With regard to position, majority (57.4 per cent) of village panchayat ward members are able to perform their duties in PRIs. This shows that majority of village panchayat ward members' approvals are necessary for passing resolution in panchayat and grama sabha meetings in village panchayats. In contrast, 42.6 per cent of village panchayat ward members reported that they could not perform their duties in PRIs due to less devolution of power to them compared to village panchayat president and panchayat union ward member. Whereas, majority (75 per cent) of village panchayat presidents are able to perform their duties as village panchayat president in PRIs. This is due to the co-operation and co-ordination of different sections of people in the village panchayats. Conversely, 25 per cent of village

panchayat president regret that they are unable to perform their duties because the resolutions that are passed in the grama sabha meetings are not fulfilled by the higher authorities due to inadequate funds in village panchayats. With regard to panchayat union ward members and district panchayat ward member position, a significant proportion of minorities are not able to perform their duties due to less numbers of representatives from their political party in higher level governance. The ruling party panchayat union ward members and district panchayat ward members have greater say in the policy resolutions and decision-making in higher level governances. Therefore, the independent candidate and the opposition party candidates have less say in decision-making in higher level governance.

Class Affects Minorities' Election to PRIs

In order to determine the extent to which social class plays a role in the selection of minority representatives, the quantity of landholdings and the monthly family income of members in village panchayats are taken into consideration.

Furthermore, the following graph makes it abundantly evident that the majority of minority members in village panchayats do not own land. This is followed by marginal farmers, who own property at a rate of 23.53%, and small and semi-medium farmers, who own land at a rate of 19.41%. In addition, 1.8% of farmers in PRIs are considered to be large farmers, while 2.35 percent are considered to be medium farmers.

Table 3: ANOVA on Minority Representatives' Landholding Size in Panchayati Raj Institutions

Position	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F. Value	df	Sig.
Village Panchayat ward member	94	1.41	3.578			
Village Panchayat.001 President	60	6.37	6.777	18.754***	2	.001
Panchayat union ward member	15	4.87	3.907			
Total	169*	3.48	5.479			

Source: Field Survey.

Note: * Due to the fact that there is only one member of the district panchayat ward present, it is not included in the analysis of variance (ANOVA). In all, there are 170 samples available.

Note: *** $p < 0.01$

The outcome of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistical test was obtained on the amount of landholdings and the representation of minorities in a variety of positions within PRIs.

($F_{(2, 166)} = 18.75, p < 0.01$). The results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) show that there are very significant differences between the different places in PRIs when the p value is less than 0.01 levels. As a direct result of this, the average landholdings of the president of the village panchayat are 6.37, while the members of the panchayat union ward have 4.87 and the members of the village panchayat ward have 1.41. According to the information shown below, the president of the village panchayat is the owner of a greater proportion of the land than the members of the ward and the members of the union ward. Candidates who have landholdings that are relatively small have a greater chance of being appointed as members of the village panchayat ward in the panchayat raj organisation. This is based on the mean value of landholdings. An important fact to take into consideration is that the majority of minority members of parliament in PRIs who have small landholdings are selected to serve as members of the village panchayat ward. When compared to the positions of village panchayat president and panchayat union ward member, the village panchayat ward member is the lowest position in the hierarchy of PRIs. Additionally, the village panchayat ward member has a far lower degree of devolution of power.

In the framework of rural self-governance, candidates who have considerable landholdings have a greater chance of being elected to the position of president of the village panchayat. A greater degree of devolution of power is associated with the role of village panchayat president in PRIs as compared to other positions in these organisations. In addition, a candidate who is a member of a political party and has a sizeable landholding is among the most probable candidates to be elected as a member of the panchayat union ward. As a consequence of this, the election of members of minority groups to different posts in PRIs is based on class, which is measured by the amount of landholdings. As a consequence of this, candidates who control a greater proportion of land are granted a greater degree of power devolution in PRIs.

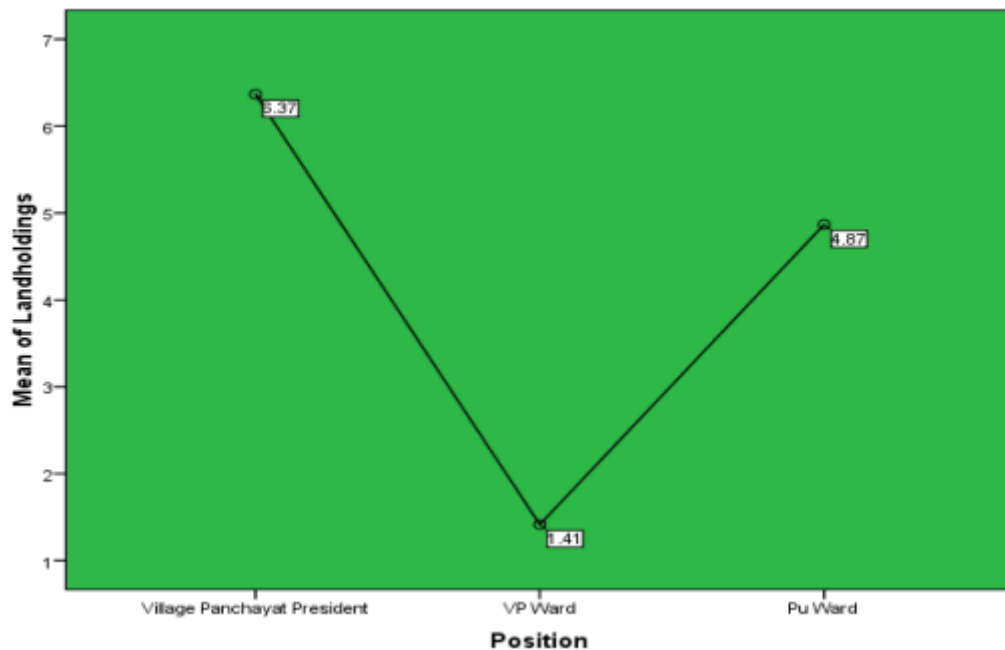


Figure 1: Average discrepancies in minority representatives' landholdings within panchayati raj institutions

Source: Field Survey

The data shown in the figure above illustrates the average differences in landholdings that exist between the president of the village panchayat, members of the village panchayat ward, and members of the panchayat union ward. The average mean value for the president of the village panchayat is 6.37, while the average mean value for members of the village panchayat ward is 1.41, and the average mean value for members of the panchayat union ward is 4.87. This result illustrates the differences in landholdings that exist between the president of the village panchayat, members of the ward, and members of the panchayat union ward. However, when it comes to the landholdings of minority members in PRIs, the Post Hoc test is used to determine whether or not there are any significant differences between the different points of view on the matter.

Table 4: Schaffer Post Hoc Test on Minority Representatives' Landholdings in Panchayati Raj Organizations

Position (i)	Position Comparison (j)	Mean Difference (i-j)	Sig.
Village Panchayat President	Village Panchayat Ward	4.952***	.001
	Panchayat union ward	1.500	.581
Village Panchayat ward	Village Panchayat President	-4.952***	.001
	Panchayat Union ward	-3.452*	.047
Panchayat Union Ward	Village Panchayat President	-1.500	.581
	Village Panchayat Ward	3.452*	.047

***The mean difference is highly significant as $p < 0.01$.

*The mean difference is significant as $p < 0.05$.

Source: Field Survey.

The findings of the Scheffe Post Hoc test on the landholdings of minority lawmakers in PRIs, which were conducted, indicate that ($MD = 4.95, p < 0.01$). The p value of less than 0.01 levels demonstrates the highly substantial differences in landholdings that exist between the president of the village panchayat and the members of the village panchayat ward in PRIs. As a consequence of this, the findings of our research indicate that there are substantial disparities in the ownership of land between the president of the village panchayat and the members of the ward in PRIs. Nevertheless, the landholdings of the members of the panchayat union ward and the president of the village panchayat demonstrate that ($MD = 1.50, p > 0.05$). Due to the fact that the p value is greater than 0.05, the statistical

findings suggest that the landholdings of the members of the panchayat union ward and the president of the village panchayat are, for all intents and purposes, identical. A further factor that contributed to the decision was the distribution of landholdings between the president and the ward of the village panchayat. It is confirmed by a p value that is less than 0.01, which indicates that there is a highly significant difference in the landholdings of the president of the village panchayat and the members of the ward in PRIs. In the same vein, there is a significant disparity between the landholdings of members of the panchayat union ward and those of the village panchayat ward. (MD = -3.45, $p < 0.05$) Because the p value is lower than 0.05, the members of the panchayat union ward and the members of the village panchayat ward have distinct landholdings.

Furthermore, the Scheffe Post Hoc test, which pertains to the landholdings between the president of the village panchayat and a member of the panchayat union ward, indicates that (MD = -1.50, $p > 0.05$). At the p value levels that are more than 0.05, this reveals that there is no substantial variation in their landholdings whatsoever. On the other hand, the landholdings that are shared between the member of the village panchayat ward and the member of the panchayat union ward provide evidence that (MD = -3.45, $p < 0.05$) within the system of panchayat raj institutions. The p value values that are less than 0.05 demonstrate the significant disparities that exist between the landholdings of members of the village panchayat ward and those of members of the panchayat union ward in PRIs. The data that was shown before highlights the fact that the president of the village panchayat has a greater proportion of land in PRIs compared to other offices. One intriguing thing to take into consideration is that land made it simpler for members of minority groups to be elected to PRIs, regardless of the precise beliefs they had. According to the findings of the study that came before, it is evident that the size of landholdings is a factor that plays a role in the election of members of minority groups to the position of PRIs.

Conclusion

When it comes to the provision of clean drinking water, lighting, and road infrastructure, minority politicians play a leading role. They are also responsible for the planning of monthly panchayat meetings and four grama sabha meetings, the collection of taxes, the provision of employment opportunities through MGNREGA schemes for a total of one hundred days per year, the assistance in applying for old age pensions (OAP), the generation of income for the panchayat, the assistance in applying for patta (land ownership), ration cards, voter identity cards, and the opening of savings accounts in village panchayats. Panchayat meetings are held on a monthly basis by members of the village panchayat wards and representatives of minority groups. The purpose of these meetings is to assess the rural infrastructural facilities and ensure that wages are distributed to the panchayat secretary and workers. Grama Sabha gatherings are disseminated via the use of dumbura, notices, members of the village panchayat ward, and microphone announcements at places of worship such as mosques and churches. The list of inhabitants in the village panchayats who are considered to be living below the poverty line is compiled by members of the minority group, who also organise meetings of the Grama Sabha. The most marginalised members of society are the ones who get the benefits and services of the government for the first time via the village panchayats. The events of the Grama Sabha are attended by individuals of a wide range of castes, including the elderly, women, members of Self-Help Groups, and others. Reading through the minutes of the meetings of the Grama Sabha, on the other hand, indicates that there is insufficient participation from the general public and that there are a greater number of Christian women than there are Muslim women. As a further point of interest, the minority lawmakers express their regret over the fact that the motions that were adopted by the Gramme Sabha did not pass since the administration did not provide sufficient cash for them. Because of this, people are less likely to show up to meetings of the Gramme Sabha. Taxes on items like water, housing, libraries, and professional fees are one of the things that representatives from minority groups are responsible for collecting. According to reports, the minority delegates in the Lucknow area get an annual salary of around nine lakhs of rupees (Rs. 9,000,000). Furthermore, Lucknow is sticking to the criteria for tax collection in a stringent manner, but minority leaders in the districts of Amroha and Ayodhya are complaining about their restricted capacity to collect taxes. The local panchayats get financial support and a means of livelihood from fish hatcheries that are located in ponds. These fish hatcheries include Christian women delegates. In addition, women who are disadvantaged are taught how to sew and tailor so that they may provide for themselves and their families. Male representatives from Muslim and Christian communities conduct grama sabha and panchayat meetings in their respective village panchayats. These meetings are held with the aid of ward members and the participation of the general public. On the other hand, it has been

found that representatives of Christian women collaborate with self-help groups (SHGs) in order to organise meetings of the Grama Sabha and to make decisions on the panchayat. It is as a result of this that proxy representation is less widespread among Christian women who are participating in panchayat raj. In spite of this, sessions of the Grama Sabha are presided over by Muslim women delegates and a male family member, with the male members playing an essential role in the decision-making process. In the instance of Muslim women who are represented in PRIs, the culmination of this male supremacy is the proxy representation of those women. Additionally, the focus group discussions suggest that Muslim women are mostly confined to the domestic sphere, with male family members taking care of the business of rural self-governance on their behalf at the majority of times. Consequently, the orthodoxy and patriarchal customs that are associated with a particular religious organization may sometimes be a barrier to the representation of women in rural self-governance.

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