

A Study on the Voting Behaviour and Attitude of Voters

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Abstract

To the deliberative process, that is, the process by which various possible options for action are proposed, discussed and their strength and weaknesses evaluated to the actual decision making mechanism by which a group chooses a course of action, and to the execution or implementation of the decisions. Usually systems with high degree of direct action by population as a whole along all three dimensions are called systems of 'direct democracy' system of indirect control are usually called 'representative', or 'indirect'. There are various mechanisms of indirect filtering devices of various kinds to determine which agents are to fill which positions of power. Elections are one such widely used devices, purportedly giving the populace some indirect control over decisions by allowing it to chose who will make and implement those decisions. The Indian democracy is also a replica of indirect form of democracy relying solely on elections. It has remained she in its commitment to electoral democracy

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The word Democracy means that the people as a whole. The whole population has the power or rules, the general will is supreme, the society is autonomous. Democracy that means 'peoples power', so presumably a political system is a democracy if in that political system the people holds exercises the political power. Who 'though' are 'the people'? Although it is neither completely clear what this means nor completely uncontroversial, whereas 'the people' means to me something like 'the mass of the (adult) population'. Democracy thus means that the mass of population has political power in a certain regime. As an empirical concept - 'democracy' can refer to any of at least three dimensions that are relevant to the way in which power is organized and exercised—

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for action are proposed, discussed and their strength and weaknesses evaluated.

2. To the actual decision making mechanism by which a group chooses a course of action, and to the execution or implementation of the decisions. Usually systems with high degree of direct action by population as a whole along all three dimensions are called systems of 'direct democracy' system of indirect control are usually called 'representative', or 'indirect'. There are various mechanisms of indirect filtering devices of various kinds to determine which agents are to fill which positions of power. Elections are one such widely used devices, purportedly giving the

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populace some indirect control over decisions by allowing it to those who will make and implement those decisions. The Indian democracy is also a replica of indirect form of democracy relying solely on elections. It has remained the same in its commitment to electoral democracy.

3. Attitude change is constantly occurring as a result of learning and the individual and situational influences. To achieve some deliberate changes it appears possible to communicate directly with individuals by talks, classes of propaganda, or to manipulate the situation, the social group, group norms and structure.
4. Thus, an attitude, according to Allport, has 5 essential psychological aspects: (I) it is a mental and neural state (II) of readiness to respond, (III) organized (IV) through experience (V) exerting a directive and or dynamic influence on behaviour. Each of the five defining characteristics need a brief discussion over here.

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study is to answer some basic questions that would provide information not only to serve the immediate purpose of identification of attitudinal orientation towards voting behaviour but also to promote empirical facts and data on which the attitudinal orientation could be studied. The present investigation is concerned with the survey of voting behaviour of respondents belonging to different demographic variables in Patna District. The present piece of research is planned with a view to study the following objectives—

1. To study the impact of Age and sex variables on attitudinal orientation of respondents towards voting behaviour.
2. To explore the influence of respondents caste on their attitude towards voting behaviour.
3. To investigate the impact of religion on attitude of respondents towards voting behaviour.
4. To investigate the impact of cultural background on attitudinal orientation towards voting behaviour.

HYPOTHESES

In order to clarify the issues and to pursue the specific problems in an organized systematic and empirical manner, it is desirable to formulate tentative probable solutions of the problems relating to voting behaviour. Therefore the following hypothesis were formulated.

1. The phenomenon of voting behaviour is a function of multiple factor.?
2. Responses categorized on the basis of their sex would exhibit significant difference on voting behaviour.?
3. Respondents belonging to different castes would exhibit significant difference on voting behaviour.?
4. Variation in religion of respondents would exhibit significant difference on voting behaviour.?
5. Culture (Rural/Urban) would have prominent role in voting behaviour.?

VARIABLE

Independent Variables

1. Age
2. Sex
3. Caste
4. Religion
5. Culture

Dependent Variable

Scores on Attitude Towards Voting Behaviour Scale. The present study due to its nature had certain delimitations. Since the study was focused on the respondents ranging between 25 - 45 years of age from of Patna district to study their attitudinal orientation towards voting behaviour. The respondents were categorized on the basis of their demographic characteristics - caste, sex religion and culture. After categorizing the respondents in to different groups and subgroups, they were administered Attitude towards Voting Behaviour Scale to study the undertaken research problem.

DISCUSSION

Mental and neural state: It is obvious that most

theories have chosen to employ attitude not as a directly defined entity but as a mediating concept, an abstraction partially defined in terms of various antecedent conditions and consequent behaviour. There is a natural temptation to convert meditational constructs from “intervening variable” to “hypothetical constructs”, Therefore, in case of attitude, which serves as an abstraction in social situations, we tend to assess the abstraction directly by certain operations in the areas of behavioural-science discussion, the phenomenological and the physiological, wherein, Allport’s phrase, “mental and neural state” may be assigned substance.

Physiological and phenomenological indices do not thwart the effort to look for a direct index of attitude. These procedures usually involve assigning the respondent a behavioural task having materials relevant to the object towards which his response is being measured. His attitude towards the object is defined in terms of distortion of his performance at the task at hand from some baseline that estimates his performance were indifferent to the object. These indirect measures of attitudes have been extensively surveyed by Campbell (1950), Weschler and Bernberg (1950) and Webb *et al.* (1966). Least obtrusive of all the techniques to assess behaviour in natural situations by such means as discussed by Webb *et al.* (1966) or those reviewed by Weick (1966).

Readiness to respond: There has been a debate among theorists as to whether attitude is best defined as a response or readiness to respond. Closer to the response pole are theorist such as Bain (1928), Horowitz (1944) and De Fleur and Westie (1963) are oriented towards radical positivistic pole because they prefer a direct operational definition “in terms of response”. On the other hand Allport (1935), Doob (1947), Chien (1948), Campbell (1947, 1963) etc. are more oriented towards “readiness to respond” pole. They prefer to define attitude as theoretical construct only indirectly related to overt responses. Allport took stand along with those who prefer readiness to respond, i.e. Attitude is a readiness to respond. A closer look at the debate reveals at least five gradations between the two poles. All the five approaches employ attitudes to account for the totality of relationships between a set of antecedent condition and a set of behavioural consequences. They include (I) the positivistic approach (II) the paradigmatic approach (III) meditationalist

approach, (IV) the class-inclusions approach, (V) and interactionist approach.

Organization through experience: Attitudes are organized. Two distinct questions arise out of this contention. The first one is whether the single attitude comprises of components with a certain characteristic structure. The second one is whether there is a characteristic structure within a set of several different attitudes. There is a general agreement among the theorists with Allports contention that attitudes are learned through experience (Doob, 1947 & Chein, 1948). It would not be out of place to quote a good maxim for the scientist that any proposition that everyone agrees with cannot be all true.

Exerting a directive and / or dynamic influence on behaviour: Yet another issue here is whether attitudes are to be considered dynamic as well as directives. In psychoanalytic conceptualization attitudes would have mainly a directive function. If attitudes are dynamic also, they affect the absolute level of energy as well as determine its channel of expression. They are dynamically organized; that is they articulate with each other in individual’s cognitive system. Like Allport, Doob (1947) conceptualized attitudes as having dynamic as well as directive properties, energizing the producing energy on basis of the energizing power, attitudes may be distinguished from habits as a special class of mediating stimulus proceeding responses. The directive -plus dynamic view of attitudes seems to have earned wide acceptance than the view, which regards attitudes as directive only.

Majority of theorists seems to believe that altitudinal selectivity is imposed on perceptual side. This conceptualization is implied in terminology used in defining attitudes: frame of references (H. Cantril and M. Sherif) acquired distinctiveness of cue (N.E Miller & Dollard) Schema (F. Bartlett’s) pattern of meaning (D.T Campbell) stereotype etc. (Lippman). The two competing theories of attitude change the perceptual espoused by Asch, and the learning advocated by Hovland. The perceptual theory advocates that attitude change consists not only in making new response to the old stimulus but also redefines the stimulus to which the response is being made. The learning theories, the more response oriented conceptualization of attitude, paint attitude change as occurring when new information includes

the individual to change his evaluative response to the old stimulus (Campbell, 1961).

Now that the concept of attitude has been defined, the question can be asked, why are attitudes important? Gordon W. Allport (1968) noted that the attitude concept, "is probably the most distinctive and indispensable concept in contemporary social psychology" (P.59). The fact that attitudes are of greater interest to social psychologists than other varieties of social motives is due to their key role in directing and channelling social behaviour. Attitudes from a means by which we can structure our world, our experience and behaviour. In order to cope with the continual influx of new information provided by our senses, we need some means of ordering and clarifying that information. We need to know what to accept and what to digest, what to believe and what not to believe. Attitudes act as a sort of sieve or filter which cuts down the amount of new information we are faced with and allows us to relate new information to the information we already possess.

Understanding the various attributes of attitude it is a prerequisite to understand the attitude in totality. On the basis of hundreds of researches, Psychologists have established a few facts about attitude: Attitude is learned and not inborn. It is formed out of experiences. Attitude can be inferred from the observed antecedents, attitude has got objective reference. This means that attitude is always in reference to some Psychological object like matters, place, ideas or persons. Attitude may determine one's positive or negative concept of life. It could be favourable or unfavourable, either optimistic or pessimistic. Attitude directs the individual towards the attitude object and channelizes the energy at the disposal of the individual.

It is comparatively permanent in nature. It is not formed overnight and accordingly takes time to change. It is an enduring behaviour pattern. Attitude is manifested in the consistency of responses. (Mohsin, 1990). Psychologists are divided on the concept of attitude. Some theorists (Rokeach, 1990) are of opinion that attitude is a matter of cognitive

domain. That means it is linked with opinion and belief of the individual on group of individuals, other relate attitude to the affective domain (Thurstone, 1931; Fishbein, 1965).

CONCLUSION

Those who directly or indirectly accept the directive-only conceptualization includes. Freud and others of his ilk who accept the reservoir view of human motivation. Theorist who agree that attitudes do have directive properties, propose two different conceptualization of how this derivativeness is exercised are allowed by the logical status of attitude as a meditational process between the eliciting events in their environment and individual's response. Direction means the selection of one among a set of attractions. Now the question may arise whether attitude operate selectively on encoded or on the response-side i.e. determining the decoding or on both the sides.

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