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MEDIA RESEARCH

TOPIC: ELECTION POLL COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

KARNATAKA ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2023

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The Legislative Assembly Elections of Karnataka which was scheduled to be held on the 10th of May, 2023, is a much-anticipated election of the South. It is the first big poll of the year and the first of many ahead of the Lok Sabha election. Karnataka, which is one of the BJP's only southern fort saw massive election campaigns including a Road Show with Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself. The old national party of Congress also campaigned in many ways, both of which electrified the atmosphere of the state for weeks, ahead of The Legislative Assembly Elections. Additionally with the entry of the Aam Aadmi Party and the strong presence of the local party of Janata Dal (Secular)- JD(S), the forecast of the election differed from poll to poll. Most polls predicted a comeback of the Congress, while some showed a hung assembly.

ABP C Voter VS South First People's Pulse

There were several polls run by local TV news channels and other organisations, but let us look at the results of these two polls in contrast with each other- one being the ABP C-Voter Poll and the other being the South First's People Pulse Poll.

ABP C Voter's polls got coverage in many newspapers, particularly in the Hindustan Times. Whereas the South First People's Pulse poll was given coverage in the local newspaper Deccan Herald.

C Voter which tied up with ABP News, when expanded is known as the 'Centre for Voting Opinion & Trends in Election Research'. It is an Indian international polling agency that is headquartered in New Delhi. C Voter India states that it has covered 15 union budgets, more than 100 state elections and more than 30 international events. Since 2000 it has worked with Times Now, ANN7, United Press International, Reuters, Bloomberg News, BBC News, Aaj Tak, ABP News, Zee News, Zee Business, the Development and Educational Communication Unit of the Indian Space Research Organisation, India TV, Lok Sabha TV, UTVi business news channel (owned by UTV Software Communications), Sahara Samay (owned by Sahara India Pariwar), Jain TV, Asianet, ETV, CNEB and other news and information providers. Studies have included market research, conflict resolution research, and opinion polls.

People's Pulse is an independent research organisation based out of Hyderabad. It is an organisation that comprises social scientists, political activists and journalists with years of experience. They often conduct research and surveys on different matters and were commissioned by the South Front publication to do the polls of the Karnataka Elections 2023.

Now that the background of both agencies has been established, let us look at the methodology that has been used in both surveys.

Methodology and Process

The **methodology** used by C Voter is CATI (computer-assisted telephonic interview) with random numbers drawn from the standard RDD. This is a type of **random sampling**. C Voter has also conducted face-to-face personal interviews with adults state-wide.

People's Pulse utilizes the **Probability Proportional to Size Methodology (PPS)**. PPS considers varying sample sizes to prevent the underrepresentation of specific subgroups and generate more accurate findings. When different-sized subgroups are involved and sampling is done with equal probability, selecting a member from a larger group becomes less likely compared to a smaller group. To address this, **a weighting factor** can be applied to equalize the importance of each member in the study when sample sizes cannot be made equal. For instance, if there are samples with 10,000 and 20,000 members, a member from the 10,000 sample can be multiplied by a factor of 1X, while a member from the 20,000 sample can be multiplied by 2X. This ensures that each member holds equal value or weight, despite differing selection probabilities. Additionally, even with the use of PPS, it is necessary to have a method for dividing the target population into subgroups. **Cluster sampling**, where members are selected based on pre-existing conditions like group membership, is one approach for accomplishing this.

Therefore, both agencies have used random sampling methods of research.

The sample size for the C Voter pre-poll (March) is 17,772. Whereas the combined sample size from 29th April to 5th May (opinion poll) is 73,774 across Karnataka. The same is also expected to have a **margin of error of ±3 to ±5%** and may not necessarily have factored in all criteria.

For the **pre-poll, People's Pulse** employed the Probability Proportional Methodology (PPS) to select 56 Assembly segments for data collection. Within each segment, five polling stations were chosen, resulting in a total of 280 polling stations. From each polling station, 20 samples were collected, amounting to a total of **5,600 samples.**

The sampling process aimed to accurately represent the ground reality in terms of caste, religion, age, and gender. Equal representation was given to gender, with 51 percent male and 49 percent female respondents included in the sample. The sample profile also accounted for the distribution of urban and rural dwellers, with 40 percent being urban and 60 percent rural. Additionally, the profile incorporated specific percentages for different demographic groups, such as 12 percent Muslims, 16 percent Scheduled Castes (SCs), and eight percent Scheduled Tribes (STs). The survey considered a **margin of error of +/- 3 percent.**

For the **opinion poll of People's Pulse, the margin of error was +/-2 percent**. The survey did not factor in the last two days of campaign and therefore could not assess any last-minute swing in favour of or against any of the main parties.

The survey was carried out in 56 Assembly segments selected based on the Probability Proportional Methodology (PPS). Three polling stations were selected in each Assembly segment. In each polling station, 20 samples were collected.

A total of 3,360 samples were chosen such that the sample reflects the situation on the ground in terms of caste, religion and age. Gender was given equal representation.

The sample size of C Voter is bigger compared to People's Pulse, and the margin of error is also slightly more than that of People's Pulse.

ABP C VOTER VS SOUTH FIRST PEOPLE'S PULSE

ABP C VOTER PRE-POLL (MARCH 29th)	
BJP	68-80
CONGRESS	115-127
JDS	23-35
OTHERS	0-2

SOUTH FIRST PEOPLE'S PULSE PRE-POLL (MARCH 25TH TO 10TH APRIL)	
BJP	90-100
CONGRESS	95-105
JDS	25-30
OTHERS	1-2

ABP C VOTER OPINION POLL (1-5TH MAY)	
BJP	73-85
CONGRESS	110-122
JDS	21-29
OTHERS	1-6

SOUTH FIRST PEOPLE'S PULSE OPINION POLL (1-5TH MAY)	
BJP	81-93
CONGRESS	105-117
JDS	24-29
OTHERS	1-3

Analysis

In the pre-poll survey by C Voter, the Congress seems to have a larger majority and chances of making a grand comeback, by crossing the majority mark of 113. Whereas the BJP seems to be second in the lead with a decent majority, followed by JDS and the others.

However, in the pre-poll survey of People's Pulse, the BJP and Congress seem to have tied for seats. Whereas JDS seems to have more or less the same range in both, and the other parties have minimal seats.

Following the 2018 scenario, the polls predicted that JDS would become the kingmaker, after a sorted coalition government that may have given either of the parties (BJP or Congress) a majority.

Coming to the Opinion polls between 1st and 5th May, after significant campaigning had already taken place, the C Voter numbers show a difference. The numbers of the BJP have gone from a range of 68-80 to 73-85. This could be attributed to the popular Road Show that the Prime Minister conducted in the capital city of Bengaluru. Naturally, the numbers of the Congress reduced to 110-122 from 115-127. The JDS' number reduced from 23-35 to 21-29

and the 'Others' category went from a very insignificant range of 0-2 to a maximum of 6 seats. The difference in ranges is significant because what the range tells us is that, the BJP which was previously projected to get a minimum of 68 seats, now in the new opinion poll could get a minimum of 73 seats. That is a difference of +5 seats. The difference calculated for each range would project the gains or losses respectively.

The People's Pulse Opinion Poll also showed a significant difference. Unlike what C Voter projected, the numbers of the BJP decreased from a range of 90-100 to a range of 81-93. The numbers of the Congress increased from a range of 95-105 to a range of 105-117; the bigger number in the pre-poll range became the smaller number in the opinion poll. The seat share of the JDS and Others did not have much of a difference.

The reason for these differences can be attributed to several factors, particularly; the last-minute campaigning, the announcing of tickets and the release of party manifestos.

Vote Share

ABP C VOTER PRE-POLL:

STATE : KARNATAKA	Party Alliance : Votes		
Party / Alliance Votes	Last Election	Current Projection	Swing
INC	38.0	40.2	2.2
BJP	36.0	36.0	0.0
JDS	18.0	16.1	-1.9
Others	8.0	7.8	-0.2
Total	100.0	100.0	0.0

SOUTH FIRST PEOPLE'S PULSE PRE-POLL:

Parties	2018	Projected 2023	Swing (+/-)
Congress	38.14	41.4	+3.26
BJP	36.35	36	-0.35
JD(S)	18.3	16	-2.3
Others	7.21	6.6	-0.61

It is interesting to note that the vote share of the BJP has had little to no difference from the previous election to now. The Congress is shown to have a +2.2 swing in C Voter and a +3.26 swing in People's Pulse. The JDS is seen to have a -1.9 swing in C Voter and a -2.3 swing in People's Pulse. The 'Other' category has a minute difference of swing, -0.2 from the last election in C Voter, and -0.61 according to People's Pulse.

Now let us take a look at the actual results before evaluating the exit polls:

ELECTION RESULTS 2023		
PARTIES	SEATS WON	GAIN/LOSS
BJP	66	-38
CONGRESS	135	+55
JDS	19	-18
OTHERS	4	+1

The counting of votes was held on May 13th, 2023, two days after the votes had been cast. Karnataka has retained its 38-year-old trend of never re-electing the same government for two consecutive terms. The BJP lost its sole stronghold in the South, and the Congress made a historic win in its first-ever, biggest majority of seats.

This is what the Exit Polls of ABP C Voter and South First People's Pulse looked like:

ABP C VOTER EXIT POLL (10TH MAY)	
BJP	83-95
CONGRESS	100-112
JDS	21-29
OTHERS	1-6

SOUTH FIRST PEOPLE'S PULSE EXIT POLL (10TH MAY)	
BJP	79-90
CONGRESS	107-119
JDS	23-29
OTHERS	1-3

As Exit Polls are just projections of what could be, they have a margin of error. C Voter claimed to have a margin of error of +/-3% to +/-5% whereas People's Pulse claimed to have a margin of error of +/-2. Both polls have a significant difference in the literal number of seats the Congress was expected to win, to what they have won. Nevertheless, C Voter projected that the Congress would just be outside the majority mark of 113 whereas People's Pulse has shown that they will cross the majority mark. The BJP which was projected to win a minimum of 83 seats in C Voter's poll and a minimum of 79 in People Pulse's poll has won 66 seats in the Assembly. The JDS which was projected to win a minimum of 21 seats in C Voter and a minimum of 23 seats in People's Pulse has won 19 seats, making C Voter closer to the actual number. The 'Other' category has won 4 seats which makes C Voter's projection accurate compared to People Pulse's.

Although the Exit Polls are closer in numbers to JDS and the Other category, the landslide victory of the Congress has made an interesting revelation for the nation.

Conclusion

The C Voter projections in the opinion polls have been closer to the actual results when compared to People Pulse. Even with the Exit Polls, apart from the unseen landslide victory of the Congress, C Voter was closer to the numbers with JDS and the 'Other' category than People Pulse was.

C Voter had a margin of error of +/-3 percent to +/-5 percent with a much larger sample size in contrast to People Pulse; which had a margin of error of +/-2 percent for a sample size that was almost 13 times smaller. Thus, the margin of error can somehow be justified with C Voter as it was able to yield slightly more accurate results.

Additionally, this shows that the random sampling/probability method is effective and unbiased, and is suitable for such surveys.

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