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Spatial Patterns of Electoral Choice in Bundi Municipal Elections

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ABSTRACT: The study of geographical factors affecting how elections are organised, conducted, and decided is known as electoral geography. In other words, it is the study of the spatial distribution of political events such as voting or the study of the spatial patterns of voting behaviour. The election campaign is the first phase in the process of gaining power in all democratic nations with multiparty political systems. According to this viewpoint, the study of electoral geography would begin with the geography of elections in all contemporary democracies. In order to understand how politicians at all levels of authority—local, state, and federal—acquire, exercise, and preserve power, geographic studies of elections are primarily focused on the research and analysis of spatial features. In a democracy, voting is still the most important basic right. The foundation of a democracy is a reliable electoral process. Elections are the only recognised method of obtaining representation in modern times. In this sense, representation is effective and government accountability has improved. Therefore, the nature and health of the nation's politics depend greatly on electoral engineering. It is in the above perspectives the present research problem high-lights trend of voting, voting behaviour and their areal intensity in different wards of Bundi municipal council.

KEYWORDS: Electoral Geography, Voting, Election, Municipal and Wards

I. INTRODUCTION

Even though political geography's subject of election geography is quickly evolving. Political scientists, sociologists, and geographers have continuously debated over the study of elections. The primary goal of the geographers is to use a geographic bias to show the depth of the multidisciplinary study of voting. Political geography is studied in the context of human geography because it is a subject that encompasses all research on the spatial organisations of society that are either directly or indirectly connected to the state. The primary means through which society chooses its preferred form of government is through elections. They open a line of contact between "rulers" and "ruled,". The study of ecology in politics examines how political process and territory interact. Every region has a long history of politics. Some regions may have historically supported one political party, while others may have historically supported a different political party. Political tradition establishes the trend, and trends produce a pattern. Regular and fair elections ensure that the administration is responsive and accountable to the electorate after a gap of about 5 years. Only a few studies performed by Indian electoral geographers have dealt with the country's varied state electoral politics, making the geography of elections a neglected field of study in India. Being a geography student, my interest has therefore been more focused on municipal elections because these election segments are portions of administrative entities like wards for which socio-economic data are not readily accessible. Second, since ward boundaries are frequently altered.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A thorough examination of the literature is a crucial component of any systematic study when creating the context for any Social Science research project. It is true that by studying the relevant literature, the need for the current investigation can be made clear. The primary goals of the review of the literature have been to ascertain what past theoretical and empirical work has been done, to help define the problem areas, and to offer insight into the various facets of understanding about the literature that is already available. Most Indian political geographers' studies have focused on this overarching subject. Election studies were first introduced to Indian geography by K.Z. Amani in 1970. In the years 1970, 1972, 1973, and 1974, he released four articles. Amani attempted to investigate the element that affects the voting pattern in Haryana in his 1970 work, "Elections in Haryana, India: - A Study in Electoral Geography," which was published in the Geographers, vol. 17 (1970) p-27-40. In their study on municipal government and politics, Bhagwan (1974) has demonstrated the detrimental impact political parties had on the lack of leadership and non-governance of municipal government. In their study of politics and urban leadership in municipal government, Mishra (1979) has looked at how the socioeconomic and political backgrounds of councillors affect their ability to function in the State of Bihar. J.C. Sharma studied electoral behaviour in "Assembly elections in Punjab" for his Ph. D. thesis, which was presented to the Punjabi University in Patiala in 1980. (1952 to 1977). This study, which was based on aggregate data, was the first state-level ecological analysis of all elections conducted during a 25-year span. For this investigation, contemporary statistical methods were employed. Sharma investigated how certain socioeconomic characteristics and political factors interacted.

The diverse financial patterns of Kerala's municipal corporations were analysed by Kumari (1995), who found that a lack of autonomy impeded the municipal corporations from meeting the demands of the concerned city. The leadership component of Kerala's Municipal Corporation was disregarded in the study. Panday (2001) concluded that although women's political participation in India was not particularly encouraging, at a higher level they appeared to be quite aware of their rights and responsibilities. The work provided helpful material for understanding women's problems to find appropriate solutions for the upliftment of the women community but neglected their leadership aspects. In his research on "Urban Local Bodies in India: Quest for Making Them Self-Reliant," Chaubey (2003) concluded that the main tenet of democracy was the wisdom of the public in choosing the proper candidates. The effectiveness of the constitutional amendments depended on the ability of democratically elected representatives to govern successfully. All around the world, local governments have struggled with financial issues that can make it difficult for them to carry out their duties. Due to the imbalance between rights and obligations, it has been difficult for urban citizens to fully meet their requests because of their restricted rights. When the State governments filled this gap, they did so through grants and loans, which increased the financial load.

In his study on the Municipal Corporation of Chandigarh, Sharma (2011) concluded that the city lacked excellent governance and that institutional and other issues needed to be resolved. The report recommended removing obstacles to effective service delivery. In his research on women and urban governance, Singhal (2014) found that a significant portion of women were not represented in decision-making bodies. Due to several obstacles, women's engagement in public life has been weak. It has been urged that the position be strengthened so that women can reach their full potential. In her research on the administrative structure of Municipal Corporations, Chandrakala (2017) found that local arrangements worked best when social and technological readings about the implementation

variables were present. The study showed that the lack of a standardised structure caused a variety of deficiencies to arise in local governing organisations, which in turn caused widespread variability in how these municipal institutions operated.

Recently some studies on elections have been undertaken in the University of Punjab, University of Delhi, Jawaharlal Lal Nehru University, Aligarh Muslim University, Gorakhpur University, Rajasthan University, H.P.U. Shimla and M.D.U. Rohtak.

III.OBJECTIVES

Ward constituencies will be attempted to be categorised based on party affiliation, seats held, age and educational background of elected representatives, and performance of women's and SC/ST candidates across various political parties. For comparative analysis, the above aspects have been considered.

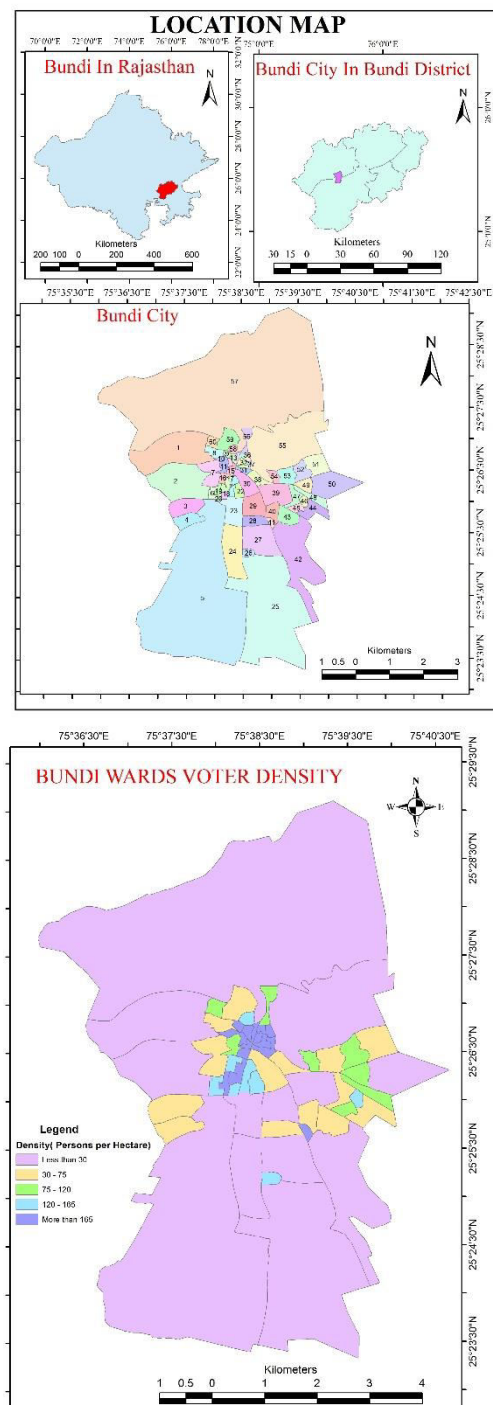
IV. METHODOLOGY

The volumes of the Indian census as well as other pertinent official publications from the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Rajasthan, served as the primary sources for the secondary data needed for the current study to cover the study region. Secondary information about electoral geography for the 2020 election, such as the total number of voters, the proportion of male and female voters, the percentage of voters by party, the margin of victory for the winning candidates, etc., is taken

from the State Election Commission Report, Rajasthan, and other trustworthy sources. A variety of studies and pertinent literature have been explored for additional basis materials. After analysing data statistically, it is represented on the maps with the help of choropleth method.

V.STUDY AREA

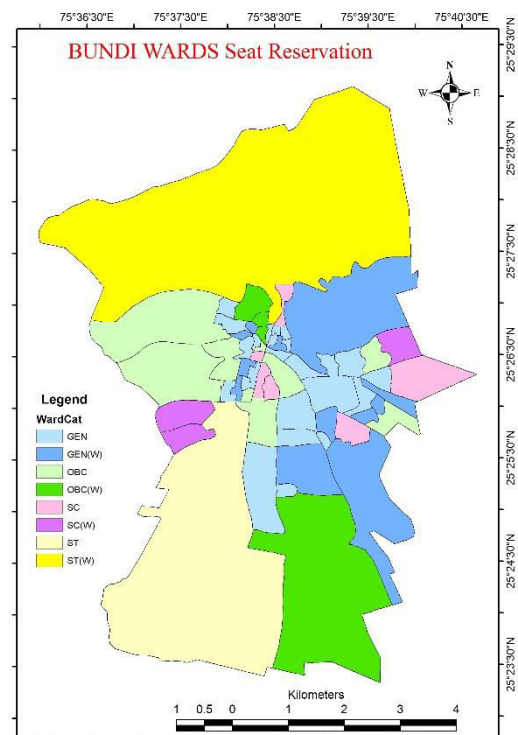
The capital of the former princely state of Rajputana agency, Bundi is located in the Hadauti area of Rajasthan state in northwest India. The previous princely state inspired the district's name. Bundi had 103,286 residents as of the 2011 Indian census. In comparison to women, who made up 48% of the population, men made up 52%. The picturesque town of Bundi is about 36 kilometres away from Kota. The area, which is dotted with palaces and forts, has a fairy-tale feel to it. Palaces, forts, step wells, and chhatris with carved pillars are some of Bundi's most well-known



architectural features. The monuments, forts, and palaces with mural decorations narrate tales of the city's illustrious past. Bundi takes pride in its lengthy past, which is replete with accounts of bravery and selflessness. This city is in a gorgeous location with hills around it on three sides. The city is a significant element of the state's tourism map due to its position and historical architecture. The city had 40 wards till 2015 but after demarcation the current number of wards in the municipal council area is sixty.

VI. RESULTS

Bundi city had 40 wards in 2010, which increased to 45 in 2015 and further increased to 60 in 2020 elections. There are 75857 voters in 2020 voter list. 17 wards in the city have female voters outnumbering the male voters. Bundi is an ancient city as mentioned earlier and much of the population resided in the walled city below the palace and fort till eighties. It was only in eighties onwards the city saw its expansion beyond the parapets. The map on the side shows the voter density in the city. Much of the city is marked with light pink shade showing density of less than 30 voters per hectare of area. These are mainly newly inhabited areas with larger ward boundaries and are mainly on the periphery of the city. The wards with slightly higher density of 30 to 75 voters per hectare area are adjacent to these newly inhabited colonies. The wards with thick voter density are mainly the wards of walled city, the areas as old as city. Slightly thick voter density is seen in the eastern wards where sizable amounts of labour and low-income families reside.



Various socioeconomic, political, and other reasons have made it difficult for women to participate in political processes. Women-inclusive decentralised local government systems have been established to empower women politically through equal opportunity. One-third of the seats in India in these systems have been reserved for women, ensuring their participation in local governance, and giving them a voice in politics. The many background factors of women affect both the political engagement and effectiveness of women. The socioeconomic and political status of the women is determined by these underlying factors.

The one-third reservation for women in municipal corporations has created new opportunities for female leadership to develop in local municipal politics. It has been a positive step toward the political emancipation of women in local municipal settings. It was anticipated that women would enter the political arena alongside their male counterparts and actively participate in municipal elections and institutional politics. The government of Rajasthan has provided thirty three percent of reservation for women in municipal elections.

Table 1: Reservation of seats for women in Bundi Municipal Elections

Year	Males				Females			
	Gen	OBC	SC	ST	Gen	OBC	SC	ST
2015	16	8	5	1	9	3	2	1
2020	24	9	6	1	12	4	3	1

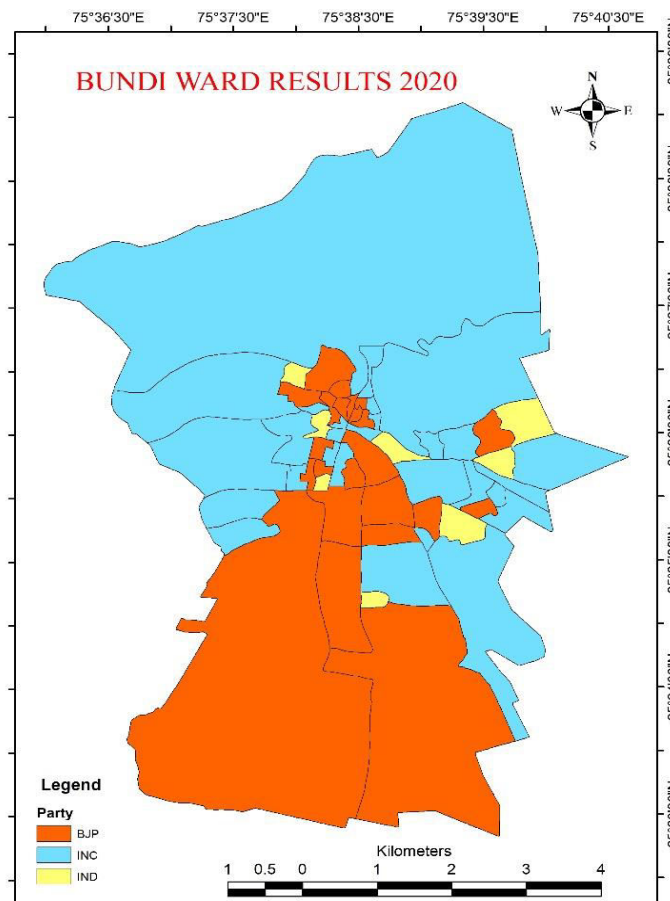
Source: State Election Commission Reports, Rajasthan

Bundi city has been a stronghold of Bhartiya Janta Party and it votes in its favour in both assembly and parliament elections. The voting behaviour changes during the municipal elections due to various factors, the dominant being the image and individual behaviour of the candidate in fray. The polling percentage in 2015 elections was 74.79 which slightly increased to 76.10 percentage in 2020 elections.

Table 2: Vote Share in Percentage

Year	BJP	INC	Ind.	BSP	NOTA
2010	36.89	36.47	25.01	1.63	
2015	38.58	39.14	21.01		1.27
2020	34.99	40.17	23.9	0.14	0.8

Source: State Election Commission Reports, Rajasthan





If we look at table 2, we see that BJP has improved its vote share in 2015 but it again dropped to 34.99 percentage in 2015 even lower than what they secured in 2010. The vote share of Indian national congress has been on rise since 2010 elections. The above vote share of 2015 converted to 47.5 percent seats that is 19 each for BJP and INC, 5 percent seats that is 7 went in favour of independent candidates.

The vote share jump in INC also reflected in the seats party won in 2020 urban body elections. The INC secured 28 seats out of 60 that is 47 percent of the total, while BJP managed to win in 24 seats that is 40 percent of the total seats and the independent candidates won 8 seats (13 percent of total). However, INC managed to form its board with the support of the independent candidates.

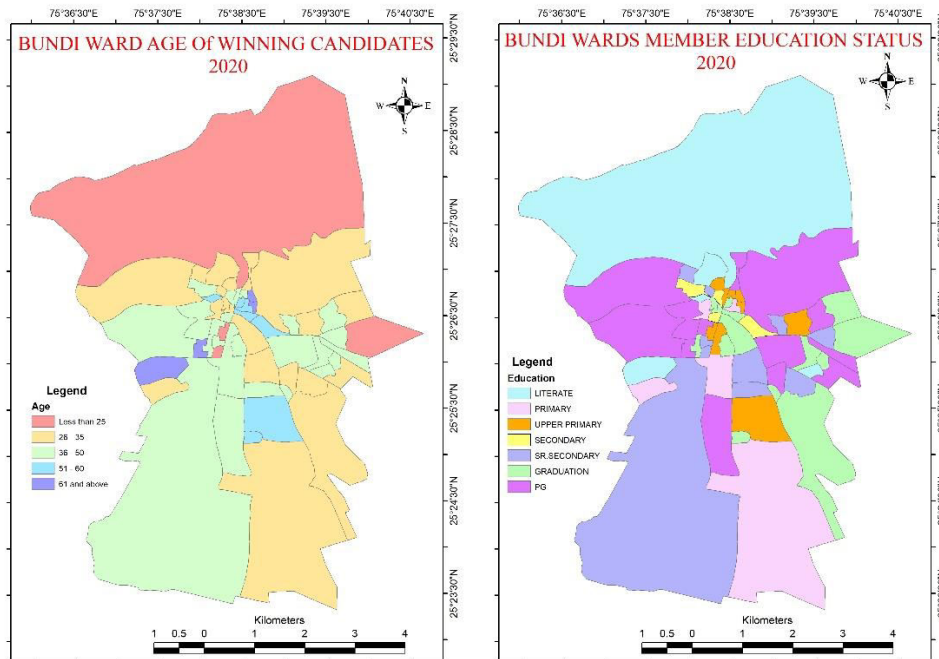
The background of the candidates does matter in such elections as they are the ones who become the part of the policy implementation of the government both at the state and at the centre. Leave aside their ideological inclination, their understanding of the local problems with a sense of maturity and reasoning matters a lot in policy making. Table 3 shows the age of winning candidates in the Bundi municipal elections in 2015 and 2020. The age of 26 to 50 years is considered a mature age where the candidates understand the ground realities and can suggest measures to overcome the problems.

Year	Age in Years				
	Up to 25	26 - 35	36 - 50	51 - 60	61 & above
2015	7	12	24	1	1
2020	4	21	24	7	4

Table 3: Age of Winning Candidates

Source: State Election Commission Reports, Rajasthan

In 2015 elections 7 candidates that is nearly 16 percent of total were very young candidates which could tilt anywhere as they lacked maturity, while in 2020 elections only 4 such candidates that is merely 7 percent candidates of this age group won. Majority of candidates in both the elections were of the age group of 26 to 50 years. Apart from the age of the winning candidate their educational qualification also matters in the implementation of policies as educated persons have better aptitude for understanding the decision-making process. The newly elected ward members have varied educational qualifications. 5 ward members are just literate that is they can read and write their names, while 5 ward members have primary education, 8 have upper primary education. 4 members have secondary education and 10 have education up to senior secondary that is 12th standard. 23 members are graduates and post graduates which is a good sign as these are the persons who can shoulder the responsibility of their respective wards with great efficiency.



VII. CONCLUSIONS

The local government institutions have been acknowledged as the most significant tool for socioeconomic development in many developing nations. Only when these institutions are managed with strong leadership can they serve as useful all-around development partners. Local leadership has been regarded as the most important component since it plays a critical role in both the conception and implementation of socio-economic development programmes.

Good government, whether it be at the national or local level, involves organisational skills, the ability to create goals, and a feeling of urgency to reach those goals. Therefore, a vision, competence, and participation are necessary for local government to be effective. The efficient operation of the local government's many departments is the primary indicator of its effectiveness. Making the political process workable for the effective resolution of current and upcoming difficulties is another sign of managerial success.

It has been discovered that factors including finances, IT knowledge, bribery, communication skills, public support, citizen collaboration, and local voter confidence have an impact on victories and setbacks.

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