

## Political Empowerment in Barnoti and Kathua Blocks in Kathua District

Jasbir Singh<sup>1</sup> and Rahul Kundal<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Professor, Department of Economics, University of Jammu

<sup>2</sup>Senior Research Fellow, Department of Economics, University of Jammu

Corresponding Author: Rahul Kundal

---

**Abstract:** This paper attempted to study political empowerment in Barnoti and Kathua blocks in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir. It dealt with different factors influencing political empowerment in rural areas. Aspects like total electors, electors who casted votes and who did not cast votes in the last election, reasons cited by voters for casting votes in favour of a particular candidate/political party in the last election, reason-wise number of the sampled households some of whose members did not cast votes in the last election, number of the sampled households some of whose members had political affiliations, number of the sampled households whose members attended meetings of panchayat and participated in political campaigns, and number of the sampled households reporting if the elected representatives redressed their grievances were studied.

**Keywords:** political empowerment, Barnoti, Kathua, rural areas, election, political affiliations.

---

Date of Submission: 20-09-2018

Date of acceptance: 08-10-2018

---

### I. Context

Political empowerment is mostly subjected to people lacking political rights and powers. It is not limited to one caste, class, gender, group, or religion. It allows for a rise in self-esteem. It becomes a power to attain certain goals which enable a person to grow with varied opportunities to live a decent life. It does not imply gaining power to win control over others. As per Mahbub ul Haq Research Centre (2012), political empowerment can bring upon a rise in equity of representation in the political institutions. It can amplify the voice of marginalised people and other social communities in order to allow such communities to take part in the decision-making process which leaves an impact upon their lives. All this depends upon well-functioning political institutions of the state, viz., legislature, executive, and judiciary.

The concluding phase of the twentieth century becomes quite important with respect to the process of decentralisation in India. Talking about the democratic set-up at the basic level, Mathew (2003) has analysed that the panchayati raj institution is capable of speeding up the process of decentralisation. It strongly impacts the circumstances of human rights in rural India. In the absence of the process of decentralisation in rural areas, villages will continue to be in isolation and stagnation. Here, free mobility, media, and technology can play a vital role in allowing this institution to expand and grow, and pull villages out of their miseries. Local governments can assist the residents of such areas to live and grow in a broader social system. This institution may help the process of democratisation to flourish and make provisions for people to actively take part in the democratic process of decision making and protect their human rights to a higher degree.

The level of women's participation in political affairs in rural areas holds much importance as it plays a crucial role in the process of decentralisation and democratisation. On this note, Vissandjee, Abdool, Apale, and Dupere (2006) attempt to apprehend that gender plays a leading role with respect to mobility of women in the social sphere that gets affected by age, education, household dynamics, socio-economic status, et cetera. While making a gender-based qualitative enquiry, they come to know about the inconsistencies between female and male opinion concerning the low levels of females' participation in political affairs. Women's participation in political affairs has been quite low in these areas. Furthermore, Lindberg, Athreya, Vidyasagar, Djurfeldt, and Rajagopal (2011) discuss about reservation for women in local bodies and talk about political empowerment of women in rural areas. They reveal that in the last two decades, a vital social transformation has been observed as women have begun to enter the dimensions of local governance. They have been given reservation in local bodies. As women are politically empowered, the local Self-Help Groups can play a leading role in empowering women in other fields also.

### II. Methodology

Two sampled blocks, namely Barnoti and Kathua blocks, in Kathua district were selected by making use of the purposive sampling. Twelve sampled villages namely Janglote, Patyari, Changran, Sherpur,

Basantpur, and Mehtabpur in Kathua block, and Barwal, Jandore, Palli, Nihalpur, Sumwan, and Nangal in Barnoti block were also selected by making use of the purposive sampling. Twenty-five sampled households from each sampled village were selected by making use of the simple random sampling (lottery method). A total of three hundred sampled households from the sampled villages in the sampled blocks (one hundred and fifty sampled households from each sampled block) were selected by making use of the simple random sampling (lottery method) and were surveyed by making use of an interview schedule. Data were collected from August, 2016 to July, 2017. After collection of data, these were tabulated and analysed.

### III. Political Empowerment in Barnoti and Kathua blocks in Kathua district

Number of electors in the sampled households has been reported in table 1. Out of four hundred and twenty-six electors in the sampled households in Barnoti block, 46.0 per cent were females and 53.9 per cent were males. Out of three hundred and eighty-nine electors in the sampled households in Kathua block, 45.7 per cent were females and 54.2 per cent were males. Out of eight hundred and fifteen electors in the sampled households in the study area, 45.8 per cent were females and 54.1 per cent were males.

**Table 1: Number of Electors in the Sampled Households**

Block	Female	Male	Total Electors
Barnoti	196 (46.0)	230 (53.9)	426
Kathua	178 (45.7)	211 (54.2)	389
Total	374 (45.8)	441 (54.1)	815

**Notes:** Figures in parentheses indicate %.

Figures in parentheses may not add up to 100 due to rounding off.

**Source:** Field survey.

Number of electors in the sampled households who casted votes in the last election has been reported in table 2. Out of three hundred and seventy-eight electors in the sampled households in Barnoti block who casted votes in the last election, 48.4 per cent were females and 51.5 per cent were males. Out of three hundred and fifty-six electors in the sampled households in Kathua block who casted votes in the last election, 47.1 per cent were females and 52.8 per cent were males. Out of seven hundred and thirty-four electors in the sampled households in the study area who casted votes in the last election, 47.8 per cent were females and 52.1 per cent were males.

**Table 2: Number of Electors in the Sampled Households who Casted Votes in the Last Election \***

Block	Female	Male	Total Electors
Barnoti	183 (48.4)	195 (51.5)	378
Kathua	168 (47.1)	188 (52.8)	356
Total	351 (47.8)	383 (52.1)	734

**Notes:** \* Lok Sabha Election-2014.

Figures in parentheses indicate %.

Figures in parentheses may not add up to 100 due to rounding off.

**Source:** Field survey.

Number of electors in the sampled households who did not cast votes in the last election has been reported in table 3. Out of thirty-five electors in the sampled households in Barnoti block who did not cast votes in the last election, 42.8 per cent were females and 57.1 per cent were males. Out of twenty-six electors in the sampled households in Kathua block who did not cast votes in the last election, 46.1 per cent were females and 53.8 per cent were males. Out of sixty-one electors in the sampled households in the study area who did not cast votes in the last election, 44.2 per cent were females and 55.7 per cent were males.

**Table 3: Number of Electors in the Sampled Households who did not Cast Votes in the Last Election**

Block	Female	Male	Total Electors
Barnoti	15 (42.8)	20 (57.1)	35
Kathua	12 (46.1)	14 (53.8)	26
Total	27 (44.2)	34 (55.7)	61

**Notes:** Figures in parentheses indicate %.

Figures in parentheses may not add up to 100 due to rounding off.

**Source:** Field survey.

Reasons cited by voters in the sampled households for casting votes in favour of a particular candidate/political party in the last election have been reported in table 4. Out of three hundred and seventy-eight voters in the sampled households in Barnoti block, 45.5 per cent cited ‘family influence’ as a reason for casting votes in favour of a particular candidate/political party in the last election, 5.5 per cent cited ‘political affiliation’ as a reason for casting votes in favour of a particular candidate/political party in the last election, 36.2 per cent cited ‘development and good governance’ as a reason for casting votes in favour of a particular candidate/political party in the last election, and 12.6 per cent cited ‘other’ reasons for casting votes in favour of a particular candidate/political party in the last election. Out of three hundred and fifty-six voters in the sampled households in Kathua block, 48.0 per cent cited ‘family influence’ as a reason for casting votes in favour of a particular candidate/political party in the last election, 6.4 per cent cited ‘political affiliation’ as a reason for casting votes in favour of a particular candidate/political party in the last election, 34.8 per cent cited ‘development and good governance’ as a reason for casting votes in favour of a particular candidate/political party in the last election, and 10.6 per cent cited ‘other’ reasons for casting votes in favour of a particular candidate/political party in the last election. Out of seven hundred and thirty-four voters in the sampled households in the study area, 46.7 per cent cited ‘family influence’ as a reason for casting votes in favour of a particular candidate/political party in the last election, 5.9 per cent cited ‘political affiliation’ as a reason for casting votes in favour of a particular candidate/political party in the last election, 35.5 per cent cited ‘development and good governance’ as a reason for casting votes in favour of a particular candidate/political party in the last election, and 11.7 per cent cited ‘other’ reasons for casting votes in favour of a particular candidate/political party in the last election.

**Table 4: Reasons cited by Voters in the Sampled Households for Casting Votes in favour of a particular Candidate/Political Party in the Last Election**

Block	Reason				Total Voters
	FI*	PA**	DGG***	Other	
Barnoti	172 (45.5)	21 (5.5)	137 (36.2)	48 (12.6)	378
Kathua	171 (48.0)	23 (6.4)	124 (34.8)	38 (10.6)	356
Total	343 (46.7)	44 (5.9)	261 (35.5)	86 (11.7)	734

**Notes:** \*, \*\*, and \*\*\* imply family influence, political affiliations, and development and good governance, respectively.

Figures in parentheses indicate %.

Figures in parentheses may not add up to 100 due to rounding off.

**Source:** Field survey.

Reason-wise number of the sampled households some of whose members did not cast votes in the last election has been reported in table 5. Out of one hundred and thirty-nine sampled households in Barnoti block, 92.0 per cent included some members who were under-age at the time of last election, 2.1 per cent included some members who had health issues, 3.5 per cent included some members who had other engagements, and 2.1 per cent included some members who were not interested in casting their votes. Out of one hundred and thirty-nine sampled households in Kathua block, 94.6 per cent included some members who were under-age at the time of last election, 1.4 per cent included some members who had health issues, 0.7 per cent included some members who had other engagements, and 2.8 per cent included some members who were not interested in casting their votes. Out of two hundred and seventy-eight sampled households in the study area, 93.5 per cent included some members who were under-age at the time of last election, 1.7 per cent included some members who had health issues, 2.1 per cent included some members who had other engagements, and 2.5 per cent included some members who were not interested in casting their votes.

**Table 5: Reason-Wise Number of the Sampled Households some of whose Members did not Cast Votes in the Last Election**

Block	Reason				Total Households
	UA*	HI**	OE***	NI****	
Barnoti	128 (92.0)	3 (2.1)	5 (3.5)	3 (2.1)	139
Kathua	132 (94.6)	2 (1.4)	1 (0.7)	4 (2.8)	139
Total	260	5	6	7	278

	(93.5)	(1.7)	(2.1)	(2.5)	
--	--------	-------	-------	-------	--

Notes: \*, \*\*, \*\*\*, and \*\*\*\* imply under-age at the time of last election, health issue, other engagement, and not interested, respectively.

Figures in parentheses indicate %.

Figures in parentheses may not add up to 100 due to rounding off.

Source: Field survey.

Number of the sampled households some of whose members had political affiliations has been recorded in table 6. Out of twenty-one sampled households in Barnoti block, 23.8 per cent included some members who were affiliated to panchayat, 52.3 per cent included some members who were affiliated to political parties, and 23.8 per cent included some members who were affiliated to both panchayat and political parties. Out of twenty-three sampled households in Kathua block, 26.0 per cent included some members who were affiliated to panchayat, 56.5 per cent included some members who were affiliated to political parties, and 17.3 per cent included some members who were affiliated to both panchayat and political parties. Out of forty-four sampled households in the study area, 25.0 per cent included some members who were affiliated to panchayat, 54.5 per cent included some members who were affiliated to political parties, and 20.4 per cent included some members who were affiliated to both panchayat and political parties.

**Table 6: Number of the Sampled Households some of whose Members had Political Affiliations**

Block	Affiliation			Total Households
	Panchayat	Political Party	Both Panchayat and Political Party	
Barnoti	5 (23.8)	11 (52.3)	5 (23.8)	21
Kathua	6 (26.0)	13 (56.5)	4 (17.3)	23
Total	11 (25.0)	24 (54.5)	9 (20.4)	44

Notes: Figures in parentheses indicate %.

Figures in parentheses may not add up to 100 due to rounding off.

Source: Field survey.

Number of the sampled households whose members attended meetings of panchayat has been recorded in table 7. Out of one hundred and fifty sampled households in Barnoti block, 61.3 per cent attended meetings of panchayat and 38.6 per cent did not attend meetings of panchayat. Out of one hundred and fifty sampled households in Kathua block, 64.0 per cent attended meetings of panchayat and 36.0 per cent did not attend meetings of panchayat. Out of three hundred sampled households in the study area, 62.6 per cent attended meetings of panchayat and 37.3 per cent did not attend meetings of panchayat.

**Table 7: Number of the Sampled Households whose Members attended Meetings of Panchayat**

Block	Meetings of Panchayat		Total Households
	Attended	Did not attend	
Barnoti	92 (61.3)	58 (38.6)	150
Kathua	96 (64.0)	54 (36.0)	150
Total	188 (62.6)	112 (37.3)	300

Notes: Figures in parentheses indicate %.

Figures in parentheses may not add up to 100 due to rounding off.

Source: Field survey.

Number of the sampled households whose members participated in political campaigns has been recorded in table 8. Out of one hundred and fifty sampled households in Barnoti block, 20.0 per cent participated in political campaigns and 80.0 per cent did not participate in political campaigns. Out of one hundred and fifty sampled households in Kathua block, 17.3 per cent participated in political campaigns and 82.6 per cent did not participate in political campaigns. Out of three hundred sampled households in the study area, 17.6 per cent participated in political campaigns and 82.3 per cent did not participate in political campaigns.

**Table 8: Number of the Sampled Households whose Members participated in Political Campaigns**

Block	Political Campaigns		Total Households
	Participated	Did not participate	

*Political Empowerment in Barnoti and Kathua Blocks in Kathua District*

Barnoti	5 (20.0)	20 (80.0)	150
Kathua	26 (17.3)	124 (82.6)	150
Total	53 (17.6)	247 (82.3)	300

**Notes:** Figures in parentheses indicate %.

Figures in parentheses may not add up to 100 due to rounding off.

**Source:** Field survey.

Number of the sampled households reporting if the elected representatives redressed their grievances has been recorded in table 9. Out of one hundred and fifty sampled households in Barnoti block, 53.3 per cent reported that the elected representatives redressed their grievances and 46.6 per cent reported that the elected representatives did not redress their grievances. Out of one hundred and fifty sampled households in Kathua block, 55.3 per cent reported that the elected representatives redressed their grievances and 44.6 per cent reported that the elected representatives did not redress their grievances. Out of three hundred sampled households in the study area, 54.3 per cent reported that the elected representatives redressed their grievances and 45.6 per cent reported that the elected representatives did not redress their grievances.

**Table 9: Number of the Sampled Households reporting if the Elected Representatives redressed their Grievances**

Block	Number of the Sampled Households reporting if the Elected Representatives redressed their Grievances		Total Households
	Yes	No	
Barnoti	80 (53.3)	70 (46.6)	150
Kathua	83 (55.3)	67 (44.6)	150
Total	163 (54.3)	137 (45.6)	300

**Notes:** Figures in parentheses indicate %.

Figures in parentheses may not add up to 100 due to rounding off.

**Source:** Field survey.

#### IV. Conclusion

This paper analysed data in context with political empowerment in Barnoti and Kathua blocks in Kathua district. It was discovered that the number of male electors in the sampled households was substantially higher than their female counterparts. Similarly, it was found that number of male electors in the sampled households who casted votes in the last elections were higher than their female counterparts. Number of electors in the sampled households who did not cast votes in the last elections was higher for male electors as compared to their female counterparts. These outcomes could be attributed to demographic factors. Voters in the sampled households cited different reasons for casting votes in favour of a particular candidate/political party in the last election. Most cited reason was ‘family influence’ followed by ‘development and good governance’, ‘other’ reasons, and ‘political affiliations’. It could be observed that ‘family influence’ played a leading role in determining the choice for casting vote in favour of a particular candidate/political party. Reason-wise number of the sampled households some of whose members did not cast votes in the last elections was also studied. It was revealed that the most cited reason for not casting votes in the last election was that these members were under-age at the time of last election, other reasons being that these members were not interested in casting votes, had other engagements, and had health issues. Number of the sampled households some of whose members had political affiliations was also taken into consideration. It was traced that out of all those who were politically affiliated, most of them were affiliated to political parties followed by affiliations to panchayat alone and both panchayat and political parties. A small number of the sampled households included members who had political affiliations and mostly these members were associated with panchayat. Members of a good number of the sampled households attended meetings of panchayat. Members of a large number of the sampled households did not participate in political campaigns. It was found that the sampled households were more particularly interested in the affairs of panchayat than the affairs of political parties. A little more than half of the sampled households reported that the elected representatives redressed their grievances.

#### Bibliography

- [1]. Buch, N. (2009). Reservation for women in panchayats: A sop in disguise?. *Economic & Political Weekly*, 44(40), 8-10.
- [2]. Domingo, P. (2013). Property rights and development: Property rights and social, political and economic empowerment. Blackfriers, London: Overseas Development Institute.

- [3]. Ghosh, D. K. (2008). Governance at local level: The case of panchayats in West Bengal. *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 69(1), 71-88.
- [4]. Lindberg, S., Athreya, V. B., Vidyasagar, R., Djurfeldt, G., & Rajagopal, A. (2011). A silent 'revolution'?: Women's empowerment in rural Tamil Nadu. *Economic & Political Weekly*, 46(13), 111-120.
- [5]. Mahbub ul Haq Research Centre. (2012). Human development in South Asia 2012: Governance for people's empowerment. Lahore, Punjab: Lahore University of Management Sciences.
- [6]. Mahbub ul Haq Research Centre. (2016). Human development in South Asia 2016: Empowering women in South Asia. Lahore, Punjab: Lahore University of Management Sciences.
- [7]. Mathew, G. (2003). Panchayati raj institutions and human rights in India. *Economic & Political Weekly*, 38(2), 155-162.
- [8]. Samman, E., & Santos, M. E. (2009). Agency and empowerment: A review of concepts, indicators and empirical evidence. Oxfordshire, Oxford: Department of International Development.
- [9]. United Nations Development Programme. (1995). Human development report 1995: Gender and human development. UN Plaza, New York: Oxford University Press.
- [10]. Verma, A. K. (2005). Ninth panchayat polls in Uttar Pradesh. *Economic & Political Weekly*, 40(50), 5231-5233.
- [11]. Vissandjee, B., Abdool, S., Apale, A., & Dupere, S. (2006). Women's political participation in rural India: Discerning discrepancies through a gender lens. *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, 13(3), 426-450.

Rahul Kundal." Political Empowerment in Barnoti and Kathua Blocks in Kathua District. " IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM) 20.9 (2018): 72-77.