

## Key Findings of the Report- Society and Politics between Elections

### *Social Network*

- This section looked at the social assimilation of people from various caste groups and religious communities. People were asked whether they have a close friend from various castes and religious groups to see the inter-group relations.
- Overall, Upper castes and OBCs have most frequently been mentioned as close friends across all states respondents.
- Least number of respondents reported an Adivasi to be their close friend. However, highest number of respondents from Odisha said that they did have an Adivasi as a friend.
- What stands out here is that how in a state like Gujarat with a relatively sizable Adivasi population (15%), the levels of inter-caste networks between Adivasis and other castes are exceptionally low. The proportion of Gujarat respondents who cite an Adivasi as close friend is lower than those who report a Dalit as a friend, despite the fact that the Adivasi population is more than double of the Dalits in the state.
- There is a correlation between respective castes and friendships. Across castes and states, most number of respondents reported that they are close friends with people from their own caste.
- Adivasis here show the propensity of being the community with extremely thick intra-community links with very high number of Adivasi respondents saying that they have close friendships with other Adivasis.
- When we look at inter-religious friendship, it was observed Hindus were reported as close friends across all communities owing to their dominant status.
- When it comes to Muslims as close friends, it shows that around one-third of the respondents in Gujarat, Haryana and Odisha mention Muslims as close friends. In Karnataka a little more than half of the respondents reported to have a Muslim as a close friend.
- Interestingly, while almost three-fourth of the Muslim respondents have acknowledged having Hindus as close friends, only roughly one-third of the Hindu respondents have acknowledged vice versa.
- The study also explored inter-gender friendship. Consistently across all four states, the numbers are significantly low across states. Men in Gujarat showed the largest number of inter-gender friendships.
- In Haryana only 12% of women acknowledged that they were friends with men while Odisha was the state with highest number of women saying the same.
- Location of the respondents has a little impact on inter-gender friendship. From rural to urban, the numbers went higher in terms of inter-gender friendships.

### *Political Network*

- The report has also tried to look at the political network that people prefer to get their work done and here also caste and religion played an important role while approaching a political actor.

- The preference to approach leaders from their own caste seems to be dominant across all the states. The overall data across states shows that more than half of the respondents favour leaders of their own community.
- However, a little more than one-third of the respondents said that the leaders' community did not matter to them.
- The numbers were particularly high across the states with Karnataka being an exception which expressed very frugal interest in approaching a leader from different religion than their own.
- Hindu respondents felt the greater need for working with other Hindu leaders.
- The numbers were lower for Muslims and further lower for Christians, both of which are minority religions.

### *Stereotypes*

- To understand the extent of prejudice that exists, respondents were given two statements which they had to pick based on their own opinion about the reasons for backwardness persisting among Dalits and Adivasis.
- One statement stated that unfair treatment has made it difficult for members of these communities to improve their economic condition, other statement proposed that members of these social group themselves are to be blamed as they do not try as hard as they should. Respondents were presented with both these claims and asked to indicate their preferred statement separately in the context of both Dalits and Adivasis.
- Overall in the four states under study, we found a similar trend in perception about both Dalits and Adivasis; there was an almost equal proportion of respondents who agreed with both claims; however slightly higher preference was given to unfair treatment on the basis of caste.
- The trend was not similar across states as we found the inter-state variations. In both Gujarat and Odisha, respondents were relatively more likely to attribute economic deprivation to unfair treatment across generations. Reversely, in Haryana a higher proportion of respondents considered lack of effort as the primary reason.
- Predictably, high number of respondents from dominant caste and upper caste seem to have a perception that Dalits and Adivasis are in a worse condition because of their own lack of hard work and enterprise.
- People were also asked to express their opinion whether dominant castes should get state assistance. Overall, we found that respondents were marginally more likely to support an extension of state assistance to the weaker sections within the dominant castes.
- Gujarat is the only state where we found that a substantially lower proportion of respondents (20%) seem to believe that there is a need for providing special assistance to Patels, a dominant caste. However, there is a relatively higher level of no opinion in Gujarat, one should be cautious in interpreting this as an overall rejection of demands raised by the Patels. This could possibly be because of apparent economic status and wealth (at least in terms of perception) that the Patels seem to enjoy.
- Also, in Haryana and Odisha, close to half of the respondents believe that only a few have benefited from these dominant castes and state assistance must be provided.
- Even on this issue, there is no outright sentiment in Karnataka as almost an equal proportion of respondents supported both statements, perhaps the dominant castes,

Vokkaligas and Lingayats are availing the benefits of OBCs quota in the state.

- More than half of the upper castes and dominant castes supported the idea for providing more privilege to dominant castes.
- Specifically, respondents from dominant castes were overwhelming in support for extending state assistance. Close to six out of ten respondents from these caste groups supported state assistance.
- Stereotyping is not only for a few caste groups; rather prejudices exist against some religious communities - Muslims and Christians. The report shows that Muslims were considered as less patriotic compared to other religious communities.
- The belief that Muslims are not more patriotic is present among all religious groups except Muslims themselves.
- The trust deficit among Hindus for Muslims seems to be widest in Haryana.
- In society like India, there are some role stratifications on the basis of gender. Men are supposed to do 'outer' work and women 'in-house' work. The report tried to touch upon people's opinion on gender related issues.
- There is at least explicit consensus on the principle of gender equality, But the expectation is that the women should prioritize home over outside work.
- People in Haryana and Gujarat seem to hold almost identical views on most dimensions except reservation in job and responsibility for taking care of children. Haryanvis are marginally more in support of gender equality.

#### ***Question of Identity: National or regional?***

- Odisha has clear leanings towards a regional identity and at the other end of the spectrum, a very high number of respondents see themselves as more national in Haryana.
- Overall a significantly high number of respondents felt state language should be spoken in public spaces.

#### ***Contrasting liberal and majoritarian ideas of nationalism***

- In this section we have examined responses to a set of questions that aim to map perceptions of nationalism across the four states. The questions used to explore the differential perceptions of nationalism are as follows: Government should punish those who (a) do not respect the cow (b) do not say Bharat Mata ki Jai at public functions, (c) eat beef or cow meat (d) do not stand while the national anthem is being sung and (e) engage in religious conversions. Using these five, the study projects whether citizens are liberal or majoritarian in their understanding of nationalism.
- When comparing proportions across the four states, we find that large numbers, more than three-quarters, of respondents in three states (Haryana, Karnataka, and Odisha) adopt majoritarian position<sup>1</sup> on nationalism.
- Gujarat has the lowest proportion of respondents who represent the above view. This is

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<sup>1</sup> Note on method: The responses to this set of questions range from 'fully agree' to 'fully disagree,' and indicate whether a respondent's position on nationalism is majoritarian or liberal. So respondents who agree to these questions support a more majoritarian nationalism relative to those who disagree. We construct a liberal-majoritarian nationalism index that measures the degree of agreement for a respondent across these five questions. A respondent who agrees to three or more of these questions expresses a majoritarian nationalism, while one disagreeing with all five espouses a liberal nationalism. Those who agree with one or two of these questions espouse a weak majoritarian or weak liberal nationalism.

surprising since we expect greater polarization among respondents given Gujarat's violent recent history.

- While there are differences among these social groups, with the exception of Adivasis, more than two-thirds of respondents in all groups adopt a majoritarian position.

### ***What issues bother the citizens?***

- This section has thrown-up different patterns on citizen preferences and public priorities that are worthy of close attention. We found that when asked to identify the most important national issue, most people responded and revealed a clear choice.
- Less than a quarter of respondents cited the more proximate issue of demonetisation but a large number of respondents were worried about the chronic issues of unemployment, infrastructure and poverty.
- We found considerable variation in preferences across states, with respondents of Haryana showing high preference for unemployment, while people in Karnataka and Odisha were more concern about poverty.
- The preference variation across socio-economic categories is also instructive. This is particularly visible in the case of class, where the lower class revealed an issue preference for infrastructure and poverty, while the upper class respondents talked more about unemployment, demonetisation and corruption.
- A contrast was also observed between the responses of Dalits/ Adivasis and the upper castes. With regard to religion, we found that minority communities such as Muslims and Christians considered demonetisation to be the most important issue.
- We found similar patterns in the public priorities reported by respondents, although the number of 'no responses' was high (one-third responses).
- Unemployment, social infrastructure and physical infrastructure topped the list in that order. It is, however, revealing that two issues, demonetisation and poverty, that are high on the preference list are cited by fewer respondents as the most important public priority.

### ***Access to public services***

- It was found that amongst various castes and communities, Muslims are the least beneficiaries of all these schemes.
- Marginal caste groups – Dalit, Adivasis and lower OBCs getting the benefits of basic amenities policies but not getting benefits of economic policies.
- Overall, getting admission for a child in government school was the easiest task in all states
- People shared different experience in availing services like getting medical treatment in government hospitals, sanitation, electricity and water connection.
- In Haryana, availing medical treatment in government hospitals was more difficult whereas in Odisha and Karnataka availing this service was comparatively easier.
- Disposing garbage in Odisha was the difficult task. Only 37% of the respondents from Odisha said it was easy, whereas in Haryana 65 % and in Karnataka 61% said it was easy.
- Overall, 60% of the respondents said that getting electricity connection was easy and responses were somehow similar in each state except Haryana where 47 % said it was

easy.

- Getting water connection was reported to be a difficult task in Odisha, only two of five Oriya said it was easy whereas for every third person availing water connection was difficult.
- Data indicate that getting public services is more difficult for people belonging to tribal communities. It was even more difficult for tribal communities of Gujarat. Only 25% of Adivasis said it was easy to avail public service.
- Similar feeling was shared by Adivasis of Odisha as most of them said their experience was not very positive.
- However, Adivasis from Karnataka did not face much difficulty while obtaining public services.
- Even for Muslims in Gujarat and Haryana availing public services is not easy compared to other two states.

### *Institutions and trust*

This section tried to map people's trust and procedural fairness of the public institutions.

- A quick look at the effective trust<sup>2</sup> enjoyed by institutions confirms that the Army enjoys the highest levels of trust among all the institutions. compared
- The executive government actors led by the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister enjoy high trust by a little more than half the respondents and a little more than a third of respondents respectively.
- Gram Panchayats and Nagar Palikas, which exercise executive powers and function as a deliberative assembly, enjoy higher levels of trust than the Parliament and State Assembly.
- On average the lowest levels of trust is seen among Government Officials, Police and Political Parties.
- However, remarkably, the District Commissioner and the Tehsildar enjoy much higher levels of trust than the other executive functionaries.
- Significantly, trust in the court system extended almost uniformly across the levels starting with the Supreme Court down to the District Court.
- In contrast to general levels of positive perceptions<sup>3</sup> among the bureaucracy, courts and police, the results are more nuanced when we look at the historically disadvantaged populations of Dalit, Adivasi and Muslim.
- The survey shows that the courts fare much better than the police or government officials consistently, except for Dalits in Karnataka and Adivasis of Gujarat.
- The survey finds that on an average, Dalits are more positively disposed to all three institutions, compared to the other communities.

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<sup>2</sup> Note on **effective trust**: 'Effective trust' was constructed by subtracting the number of respondents who claimed to have 'No trust at all' from those who claimed to have a 'Great deal of trust'. This seeks to understand the degree of absolute trust that these political institutions enjoy.

<sup>3</sup> Method Note: The responses of the effectiveness and procedural fairness statements for Police, Courts and Government Officials were aggregated for each institution in order to create an index of institutional effectiveness and procedural fairness (IEP). The responses were aggregated in terms of positive and negative affirmations and indexed into three perception groups: Negative, Somewhat Positive and Positive. The findings show the proportion of the respondents that held largely positive perception of various institutions.

- Dalit and Muslims in Haryana in particular have higher levels of confidence in the courts, compared to the same populations in other states.
- Odisha which has the highest number of Adivasi compared to other states, showed a more positive disposition to the institutions.
- Curiously, Gujarat consistently had the least positive perceptions across institutions and has the highest proportion of No Opinion responses for Adivasis (65%) and Muslims (44%).