Methodology of Lokniti, CSDS National Election Study 2014 (Post Poll Survey)

Lokniti Team

National Election Study 2014 (NES 2014) is a post poll survey conducted during the recently held Lok Sabha elections by a team of scholars from all over India and coordinated by Lokniti, Programme for Comparative Democracy at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS). The NES 2014 is a large and comprehensive social scientific study of India's national elections and continues the series begun in 1967 by the CSDS (with a break between 1971 and 1996). It must be noted that the Post Poll survey conducted by CSDS is very different from an exit poll in which voters are approached outside the polling booth on voting day. Instead voters randomly selected from the electoral rolls were approached by the field investigators for an interview at their place of residence after votes had been cast in theirrespective constituencies, but before the results were known.The purpose of the post poll survey was not just to try to understand voting behaviour, but more importantly to understand the reasons why voters chose the parties and candidates they did.

For this survey, we selected samples from 26 States (the survey was not conducted in Goa, Nagaland and Sikkim): first we chose 306 of the 543 Lok Sabha constituencies. Within the parliamentary constituencies, 347 Assembly segments were selected, and then a further 1388 individual polling station areas were selected for conducting interviews. Selection at each of these stages was by a random procedure. The constituencies were selected using the Probability Proportionate to Size Method (adjusting the probability of choosing a particular constituency according to the size of its electorate). Four polling stations within each of the sampled assembly constituencies were selected using the Systematic Random Sampling (SRS) technique. The respondents were also selected using the SRS method from the most updated electoral rolls. From each rural polling station 25 persons were selected from the electoral rolls and from each urban polling station 30 persons were drawn. Around 37,000 voters randomly selected from the most updated electoral rolls were approached for the interview, of which 22,295 voters could be successfully interviewed *(see Table 1).*

Once we identified our sample of the electorate, trained investigators were sent to meet them. They were asked to interview only those whose names were given to them. Our investigators sat down in the homes of people whose names were selected from the electoral roll, and asked them a detailed set of questions, which could take up to 30-35 minutes. While asking the question on who they voted for, we gave them a dummy ballot paper on which they could mark their choice. They were then asked to place the ballot paper in a dummy ballot box. The process was designed to ensure that the people interviewed knew they would remain anonymous. This enabled us to collect detailed information about the respondents' work and background, and allowed us to place voting decisions and political opinions within the context of broader social and economic factors.

The questionnaire we presented to our sample of voters was carefully designed and was in the language mainly spoken in the respondents' State. The translation process was carefully monitored, so that a question in one State did not have a different meaning in another.

Table 1: Distribution of the Sample

States	PCs surveyed	ACs surveyed	Polling stations	Achieved sample (raw)
Andhra Pradesh	23	25	100	1232
Arunachal Pradesh	1	2	8	138
Assam	11	13	52	716
Bihar	23	24	96	1532
Chhattisgarh	9	11	44	577
Delhi	7	15	60	895
Gujarat	12	14	56	876
Haryana	10	11	44	673
Himachal Pradesh	4	4	16	309
Jammu and Kashmir	4	4	16	222
Jharkhand	11	13	52	1102
Karnataka	14	15	60	1193
Kerala	13	14	56	682
Madhya Pradesh	13	14	56	1129
Maharashtra	28	30	120	1798
Manipur	1	2	8	122
Meghalaya	1	2	8	105
Mizoram	1	2	8	118
Odisha	14	15	60	805
Punjab	11	13	52	1026
Rajasthan	14	14	56	1222
Tamil Nadu	20	20	80	1300
Tripura	1	2	8	140
Uttar Pradesh	38	41	164	2569
Uttarakhand	5	5	20	317
West Bengal	17	22	88	1497
TOTAL	**306**	**347**	**1388**	**22295***

*Weighted sample is 22299

Our aim was to provide a sample of the electorate across the States of India which was as representative of the whole of Indian electorate as was practicably possible. In order to minimize the risk of sampling error, we interviewed a very large number of people: 22,295. We are confident that we used the best possible methodology to achieve this task. The sample was broadly representative of the Indian population, in terms of the country's general demographic profile *(see Table 2)*.

Table 2: Post Poll Survey - Profile of the achieved national sample

States	Survey	Census 2011
Women	46.8	48.6
Urban	26.8	31.2
SC	20.0	16.7
ST	9.7	8.6
Muslim	11.8	14.2

When grouping all the States together, for our all-India analysis, we adjusted the figures using a statistical technique known as weighting, which means that each State was proportionately represented in the analysis. This means that we were able to produce an accurate assessment of regional and State level situations, as well as having a balanced and authoritative over-view at the national level.