



*Asesorías y Tutorías para la Investigación Científica en la Educación Puig-Salabarría S.C.
José María Pino Suárez 400-2 esq a Lerdo de Tejada, Toluca, Estado de México. 7223898476*

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TÍTULO: Modelo retrospectivo en las elecciones indias 1945-46.

AUTORES:

1. Ph.D. Rizwan Ullah Kokab.
2. Lect. Muhammad Hassan.
3. Ph.D. Ali Shan.

RESUMEN: Este document revela los efectos positivos o negativos del desempeño de los gobiernos anteriores, así como la interferencia de los gobiernos existentes en los resultados de las elecciones en la India colonial durante 1945-46; por un lado, arrojando luz sobre los impactos de los gobiernos en diferentes provincias. Las elecciones se han examinado con un enfoque retrospectivo; por otro lado, se ha estudiado el impacto de la interferencia oficial en los resultados electorales; utilizándose los datos recopilados a través de las técnicas históricas, el análisis de contenido del registro de archivos y la extracción de la evidencia. Se ha llegado a la conclusión que la retórica electoral se mantuvo llena de reclamos y culpa al desempeño de los gobiernos anteriores.

PALABRAS CLAVES: colonialismo, elecciones, desempeño del gobierno, injerencia oficial, elección de los votantes.

TITLE: Retrospective model in Indian Elections 1945-46.

AUTHORS:

1. Ph.D. Rizwan Ullah Kokab.
2. Lect. Muhammad Hassan.
3. Ph.D. Ali Shan.

ABSTRACT: This paper unearths positive or negative effects of the issues related with performance of past governments as well as the interference of the existent governments on the outcomes of elections in colonial India during 1945-46. On one hand, shedding light on the impacts of the governments in different provinces the elections have been surveyed with the spectacle of retrospective approach. On the other hand, the impact of official interference on election results has also been studied. Having used the data collected through the historical techniques, content analysis of archival record and extracting of the evidence, the conclusion has been drawn that the electoral rhetoric remained filled with the claims and blames on the performance of previous governments.

KEY WORDS: colonialism, elections, government's performance, official interference, voters' choice.

INTRODUCTION.

The general elections in India were announced on 21 August 1945 and scheduled for winter 1945-46. The elected Constituent Assembly would be tasked with framing a new constitution for British India (1, p389) with the prospects of local rule independent of the British.

On September 19, the viceroy of India Lord Wavell, in his broadcast message from New Delhi declared that 'to convene a Constitution-making body,' the Government 'must hold elections so that the will of the Indian electorate might be known'. He proposed that after elections the government would 'hold discussions with representatives of those elected . . . to determine the form which the Constitution-making Body should take' (2, p93).

Notwithstanding All India Congress' dissention for early elections, these elections took on critical significance for all Indian political parties concerned to play a role in the negotiations leading to the British departure from India. They gave the parties hope to divert their energies from driving protests in the streets (3 p350) to the formation of Indian government. All India Muslim League responded to announcement of elections by declaring that these elections would be a referendum on Pakistan (1, p389).

Retrospectively looking, in the elections of 1937 Congress had won 758 of some 1,500 seats in various provincial legislatures and formed governments in seven provinces, including Madras, Bombay, the Central Provinces, Bihar, and UP. (4, p196) The functioning of these Congress ministries evoked the dissention from Muslim League. Its leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah proclaimed the resignation of the Congress ministries in 1939 as a 'day of deliverance'.

World War II (1939-1945) prevailed over all developments in the globe as well as in India. On its end, the Labour Party in Britain won the British elections and Tories, the party of war-time British Prime Minister Winston Churchill was ousted from office (3, p349).

Labour leader Clement Atlee, the new Prime Minister, being much more sympathetic towards Indian independence, (5, p16) decided for Indian elections. When elections approached Bengal was under Governor's rule that continued from March 1945 to April 1946. Functions of Provincial Assembly had been halted by the Speaker Nausher Ali. Governor Casey remained in office up to February 1946. The new Governor George Burrows was sworn in on February 20. Since the 1937 elections province had been under the control of Muslim dominated coalition ministry under A.K. FazlulHaq. In that coalition ministry Muslim League was the most significant partner. In NWFP, no party got a clear majority in 1937 elections.

In the absence of any single group, on 16 March 1937, Sir George Cunningham, the NWFP Governor, invited Sir. Abdul Qaiyum, leader of newly formed United Muslim Nationalist Party of elected Khans to form a ministry that was sworn in on 1 April 1937. On 3 September, just after five months this ministry was removed after successful no-confidence motion moved by Dr Khan Sahib, the leader of the Congress party in the Assembly. He was invited to form his own cabinet on 6 September. This ministry resigned on 7 November 1939 when Congress decided to resign in all provinces on the World War II issue.

After four years of Governor's rule, the Muslim League's ministry led by Sardar Aurangzeb was installed in May 1943 that managed to stay for two years. Aurangzeb and his colleagues formally tendered their resignation on 16 March 1945 to avoid the humiliation of success of a no-confidence motion moved by Dr Khan Sahib who was once again sworn in as Chief Minister (6, pp4-5). He was in office during 1945-46 elections.

At the time of 1945 elections Punjab was governed by the Ministry led by Unionist Party, a party of Punjabi Muslim landlords and Hindu agriculturist that succeeded in 1937 election. While Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan led the Unionist ministry, (7 p420) he had entered in an uneasy alliance with Muslim League. The death of Sikandar in late 1942 ascended Malik Khizar Hayat Khan Tiwana to the Punjab ministry. (8 p 258) Unionist Party, while governing Punjab, was major contestant to Muslim League in 1945. This paper highlights the impacts of these governments on the elections 1945-46. The examination is to test the presumption that people are more concerned with policy outcomes than policy instruments.

DEVELOPMENT.

Materials and methods.

Retrospective model of voting behavior considers the government performance as main factor of voting. It that people are more concerned with policy outcomes than policy instruments. The good

performance of previous government can attract the people to vote for the former ruling party in order to bring back the retrospective rule. Even the effects of the past policies of existing government can also motivate the voters to vote for the existing government for the continuity of its retrospective decisions. The steps of current government which might be called the interference in the elections do not fall in the definitions of retrospective model.

Interference of present government does not fall in the fold of retrospective model. Cunningham (9) observed to Wavell about the reason of Congress victory in NWFP, 'It has been said that if Congress had not been in office, very difficult for Congress to get a dozen Muslim seats, because of favour to people by giving them cloth, sugar etc'. Muhammad Shakeel Ahmad, Amanullah Memon and Fazal Rabbi (6, p8) believe that this observation reflected the retrospective model of electoral politics because they think that in this model popularity of the current government is apparently important. On the contrary, it denotes the interference of current government.

Discussion.

Retrospective model was reflected in the opposition of Muslim League to Congress due to its anti-Muslim League steps during its ministries from 1937 to 1939 (10, p202).

Muslims concluded that the Congress was not their representative party and that they needed Pakistan only after they experienced the Congress ministries. Verifying this notion, Khaliqzaman, leader of UPML, noted that Pakistan had been forced on the Muslims by the Congress as a result of the atrocities that had been committed upon them during its government in 1937–39 (1, p440).

As in NWFP Dr. Khan Sahib and his associate Muslims were main leaders of Congress, it could gain the Muslim votes because the Muslims of the Frontier had a little idea of the meaning of Hindu rule under Congress Governments, which their less fortunate brothers in the Hindu-majority Provinces undoubtedly experienced (11 p168).

While Muslim League exploited the performance of Congress Ministries and other anti-League governments, but it did not target British raj, Congress, in its election campaign, made British raj the main target of their attack (12, p132). This was the use of retrospective model in the case of Congress.

As World War II (1939-1945) was one of the main reasons of early elections wartime socio-economic grievances could be exploited in election campaign to win ballots by laying responsibility on existing or previous provincial governments of mismanagement in handling the war-effects.

Bengal and Punjab were the provinces where war had affected the most. In Bengal burden of war was multiplied by natural disasters like cyclone of 1942 and disease. Denial policies owing to danger of Japanese advance to India, air strikes on Calcutta in December 1942, price chaos due to policy failures, and shortage of cloth owing to its use for military purposes were major causes of famine in Bengal that was by nature a 'man-made disaster'.

In Punjab a famine like situation had erupted by December 1945. The grain virtually disappeared from the open market. Even when various towns in Punjab experienced famine, some large landlords of the West Punjab were able to bring part of their grain to market but in East Punjab the situation was worse, and the Unionist Government had to requisition grain from the villages. Exactly in the middle of elections the disturbances broke out in Ludhiana, Hoshiarpur and Ferozpur districts owing to the grain requisitioning. This was unfortunate for the Unionists' elections. The Muslim League exploited this and wartime economic discontent (13, p74).

Ruling Unionist Party of Punjab, main opponent of Muslim League in that province, had to bear the brunt of the economic impact of the war, unpopular food measures and forced recruiting in some districts.

The popularity of Unionist Government that Sikander Hayat's successor, Khizr Hayat Khan Tiwana, inherited was undermined (14, p297). To allure the voters the Muslim League made extensive use of economic grievances that had developed during World War II, including rationing, shortages, bureaucratic high-handedness, and a government food policy that controlled prices that rural producers could get for their grain. The grievances of soldiers demobilized in 1945 also provided the League with arguments. These were used especially in Punjab to mobilize the opposition to the Unionists and the performance of Unionist Ministry that had been in power throughout the war (7, p.420).

Muslim League exploited the wartime economic grievances. League propagandists took medical supplies, which had become increasingly expensive and difficult to obtain during the war, with them to the villages. They also distributed cloth there and endeavored to obtain increased ration allowances for the villagers. Wherever possible they gained control of the rationing machinery. They enjoined Pakistan to the peasants not only as a religious imperative but as a panacea for their social and economic problems. Propagandists were directed when they visited a village to: 'Find out its social problems and difficulties to tell them [i.e. the villagers] that the main cause of their problems was the Unionists [and] give them the solution—Pakistan'. The League workers attempted to win support by solving the economic problems of the villagers (13, pp74-75).

As soon as the war ended the trials of treason against Indian National Army (I.N.A.) officers started. In November 1945, the public in Calcutta started to demand the release of the three on trial - Shah Nawaz, Dhillon and Sehgal. On November 21, during a protest march of students a score were killed by police fire. In February 1946 again the unrest in the country started when trial of Captain Rashid Ali of the I.N.A. started (15, p198). Military firing over the protesters' meetings erupted the protest all over Bengal. On 13 and 14 February complete strike was observed in Bengal and huge

Hindu-Muslim united rallies were held. Muhammad All Jinnah commented on the trial that it was “legally wrong, logically untenable and morally indefensible” (16).

The UP Muslim League also tried to cash in on the wave of sympathy for the Muslim heroes of the Indian National Army (INA) who were on trial for treason by forming a committee of lawyers for defending them in court (1, pp.443-44).

Muslim ministries in Bengal predictably and deliberately, sought to pull down the props and pillars of Hindu privilege in Bengal (17, p.12). Not only religious question but difference on political, economic and social interests had created bitterness among Hindus and Muslims.

The Muslim ministry in Bengal was problematic for majority Hindus in Calcutta. League itself had to face the criticism on its performance during WWI. In Bengal League ministries during the war were condemned as the stronghold of the British. Nationalist Muslims laid the responsibility of the famine of 1943 on the bad performance of League ministry. To avoid the bad effects of this allegation Muslim League noted that Hindu majority members of the Viceroy’s executive council refused to send food to Bangal and instead of Benagl ministry they were responsible for famine (31).

The rebuttal of various allegations leveled in the pamphlets of Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani was also the part of League’s election rhetoric. On the allegation of responsibility of Bengal famine on League Ministry there Khaliq waived off the blame from provincial ministry alone since Sir J. P. Srivastava, Hindu Mahasabha leader and Food Minister at the federal level also shared this responsibility.

Khaliq also pointed out that the Woodhead Commission set up to enquire into the matter too had not been able to pin any responsibility on League ministry. Besides, even if these charges were true, Khaliq insisted that it was hardly fair to punish the whole party for the actions of a few individuals. Another charge regarding un-Islamic nature of the state of Pakistan Khaliq argued that it would be

Islamic as he also had read Holy Quran. (1, p444) Not to mention of the impact of these allegations on the result of elections they formed major part of the electoral rhetoric of the parties in elections.

Official Interference.

Government of India relaxed its bans on public meetings in view of securing the best possible atmosphere for the elections and making them as free as possible. In July 1945, bans on holding of meetings or processions were in force in the province of Bombay and in parts of the provinces of Madras, Punjab, Bihar, UP, CP, Assam and Delhi.

In October 1945, bans of holding of meetings and processions without prior approval of local officer were in force in towns of Calcutta and Dacca, and in subdivision of Asansol and district of Minapore. On October 12, 1945 Central Government advised the provinces not to apply bans under Defence of India Rules to meetings and processions connected with elections.

Bengal government issued orders for greatest possible freedom to be given to hold election meetings or processions. Punjab Government decided to maintain existing bans on procession in towns, municipalities, cantonments and other populous areas as political leaders were said to be satisfied with the position. Bihar Government while removing general bans considered it essential to retain power under Defence of India Rule 56 to require prior notice of meetings to be given. Remaining provinces did not object to suggested policy. Temporary bans were imposed under ordinary law in certain areas for specific reasons such as disturbances in connection with Indian National Army in provinces of Madras and UP and communal trouble in Bengal (18).

Except the ban on 'terrorist' associations like RashtriyaSeak Dal, Hisdustan red army and Santi Senas (19) there was ban on only semi political party, the Congress Socialist Party. This party, according to the Viceroy, would not affect the election in any way as persons belonging to that party ordinarily stood as Congressmen, but in fact were an organization within Congress. The ban

exited in the Punjab, UP and Bihar, under the Criminal Law Amendment Act and not under wartime legislation or ordinance. Despite concerns of several governors at the deterioration of the law and order position due to violent speeches of Congress leaders, the Viceroy, was anxious, to avoid repressive action as long as he could. The Viceroy wanted to continue the remaining bans, but he was willing that members of Congress Socialist Party would not be prevented from standing for the election in the Congress interest (20).

The number of political prisoners in India decreased owing to elections. In the session of the All-India Congress Committee in 1945, it was told that the number of political prisoners detained in jails without trial was in thousands (21).

In answer to a question in the British Parliament about the desirability of releasing political detainees in India, the Under Secretary of State for India told that the number of political detainees in August 1945 stood at nearly 2000 that steadily reduced to a figure of 279 on the first of March 1946 (22). This figure of prisoners without trial was officially reported 621 on 15 December 1945(23). Applications for removal of disqualification form candidates for Central legislature who were convicted of political offences were allowed except only one where disqualification was on account of corrupt practices. General policy followed for both Central and Provincial legislatures was that disqualifications were removed on application where offenders did not involve violence (24).

The correspondence of viceroy and other government dignitaries verifies the charges of official intervention. "There have been", Viceroy Lord Wavell (1883-1950) reported to Secretary of State that "a lot of allegations against the Unionist Ministry... to the effect that they are abusing their, position to gain advantage in the elections" (25, p5-6).

Lord Pethick Lawrence, Secretary of State for India, told Lord Wavell, the viceroy, that it was alleged in the Commons that the election time-table in the Punjab was so arranged that those included in the electoral rolls for the first time were unable to stand as candidates.

Wavell explained that there had been a lot of allegations against the Unionist Ministry in the Punjab to the effect that they were abusing their position to gain advantage in the election. Wavell dismissed a great many of the allegations as false, and he thought that in any province where there was a Ministry in power such criticisms were bound to occur. He noted that there was nothing to show that there were any mala fides in the decision of the Punjab Government to fix the nomination dates before the end of the revision of the electoral rolls. He told that Punjab Government had replied that unless there was some overlap, they could not possibly get the elections finished in time to pass the budget before the end of the financial year. Wavell thought to accept the position of the government and he deemed that it was incorrect that Sir Firoz Khan Noon was affected due to this decision because he had been put up as a candidate for the landholders' constituency (25).

In Punjab the growing communalism of Hindu and Sikh district officials strengthened this belief. As did the League's own threats against its opponents and the agitations it aroused in some of the villages of Unionist supporters (13, p71).

The Unionist Party relied much on the machinery of government especially in the districts where its traditional allies had deserted it. This gave inverse results and it made the Unionist Party unpopular because it thus became closely identified with the district officials, whom the villagers disliked because of the officials' increasing intrusion into the villagers' lives as they endeavoured to ensure obedience to the multitude of wartime ordinances. During the election campaign in such districts as Lyallpur, the Unionist Party went so far as to put pressure on the voters. It was not good policy. Village communities resented such treatment which did much to destroy the Unionist's surviving popularity (13, p72).

League complained about official interference in the conduct of elections to harm its candidates especially in the Punjab and NWFP. Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah addressed to the students of Islamia College, Lahore on 13 January 1946 and pointed out the interference by Governor Glancy and Premier Khizar Hayat. Salahuddin, one candidate of League from Gujranwala reported to Jinnah in January that police were threatening, torturing and wrongfully detaining his supporters while openly canvassing for his opponent, (Raja Abdullah Khan), contravening Government Servants Conduct Rules and committing offences under Section 171 IPC (12, p132).

The official interference in election activities and the use of governmental influence against Leaguers was alleged extensively. In Punjab, the Unionists were in power. The Chief Minister Khizr Hayat Tiwana had liaison with the British Governor Bertrand Glancy that was titled by Jinnah as Glancy-Khizr axis. Bureaucracy allegedly was used to get a verdict in favour of the Unionists. “The entire bureaucracy – Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and the British – was against us”, recalled Daulatana years later (25, p5).

On 3 December 1945, the League Working Committee eventually decided to approach the Punjab Governor and Viceroy to report the officers’ interference. On 8 December, the League deputation met the Governor and demanded enquiry by the British MPs and demanded “parliamentary supervision over the elections” (30). Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan, a League leader of Punjab, issued a statement that the Deputy Commissioners and Superintendents of Police were struggling hard through different inducements and threats to secure the candidates for the Unionist Party against the Leaguers. He further said that they had appealed to the Governor to issue orders for the impartial working of the district administration but Glancy turned down the request (26, p216).

Jinnah more than once had to take cognizance of the gravity of Punjab government’s interference. “voters and ... workers... are being coerced, threatened, intimidated and persecuted”, he charged. And since both the Viceroy and the Governor had turned a “deaf ear” to all “shameful and criminal

tactics”, he told his beleaguered followers that there was “no door” to knock at and no alternative left but “to fight” to the bitter end (25, p.6). He again in his speech to the Muslim women on 17 January 1946 said that the bureaucracy was interfering with the elections (28). He consoled his followers by saying that if Gandhi, Patel and Nehru could not damage the League what the Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners, and Tehsildars of the Punjab could do; they could do nothing to damage the prestige of the League. He considered the nationalist Muslims, Ahrars and Khaksars as henchmen of the government (29, pp114-19).

Baba Kharak Singh and Gopal Singh Qaumire marked on the interference of Punjab Governor that SardarUjjal Singh and Baldev Singh were his ‘nominees’. The use of print media to project the government activities promoted the image of those candidates who were part of Unionist government. The Punjab government planned to project their services and activities through the print media. The Paisa Akhbar (Lahore) published a news story citing some prominent Indian newspapers that the Punjab government had purchased the local newspapers including Hindu, Ajit, Inqelab, Ihsan and Al-Shehbaz for its political propaganda. The government had been granting Rs. 3,000 annually to these papers in the name of war propaganda and this amount was raised to Rs. 17,000 till February 1945 (26, p.211).

While mentioning a few, Sandhu (26) has pointed out numerous cases from different constituencies that were reported to the League leadership regarding bureaucratic and official interference. Sandhu quotes report that Chaudhry Ram Singh, Superintendent of Police district Shahpur, toured the area of Midh Ranjha, and tried to pressurize the local eminent people and supporters of the League’s candidate to side with Unionist candidate. In Bhalwal Tehsil, Sheikh Manzur Ali, Revenue Assistant and District Election Officer, tried to influence the voters against the League. The League meetings were held to deal with the complaints of official interference (26, p215).

Premier Khizr Tiwana, Ch. Chhotu Ram, Governor Glancy and the Ministers along with the officers openly collected funds for Unionist Party. The senior British officers sometimes supported the undemocratic and illegal activities of the Unionists who pressurized the subordinates to do all to defeat the League.

The Punjab Premier disclosed about the Governor's interference in the canvassing. According to DC, Ludhiana, he conveyed his message that Sardar Shaukat Hayat in particular and the Leaguers in general should not win the elections at any cost. The pro-League newspapers were dead certain that if the official machinery had not been used on the side of Unionists no member would have been returned on the Unionist ticket (26, p.216). In Bengal Muslim League, the victim of official interference in Punjab, was target of allegations of interference. Here Congress blamed the League of official interference and corruption. The Congress President Moulana Azad alleged that election was "sordid story of corruption and official interference of the worst type" (27).

CONCLUSIONS.

The interference of the existing and official governments affected on the outcomes of the elections. The election results were not completely free of the impact of the governments. The retrospective affect is not only one of major issues of the campaign in elections but also important factor in the decision of voting for or against a political party.

War and famine along with their effects were not only major motives of holding the elections but also provided new direction to the outcomes of the elections as they became major part of electoral campaign.

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DATOS DE LOS AUTORES.

1. **Rizwan Ullah Kokab.** Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of History & Pakistan Studies, Government College University, Faisalabad, Pakistan. Corresponding author: rizwankokab@hotmail.com
2. **Muhammad Hassan.** M.Phil, Lecturer in History, Department of History & Pakistan Studies, Government College University, Faisalabad, Pakistan.
3. **Ali Shan.** Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science & IR, Government College University, Faisalabad, Pakistan.

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