

**ANALYSIS OF THE PERFORMANCE OF POLLING PERSONNEL'S
DURING THE 17TH LOK SABHA ELECTION 2019 IN THE CONTEXT OF
CHURACHANDPUR DISTRICT OF MANIPUR, INDIA**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to find out the voting performance of voters in all the Pink Polling Booths Male Polling Booths in Churachandpur District during 17th Lok Sabha Election 2019. The study also aimed to compare and study the performance of female and male polling staffs during 17th Lok Sabha Election 2019 in Churachandpur District. It also attempted to study the success of Pink Polling Booths. The population of the study consisted of 275 polling booths which included 100 pink polling booths and 175 male polling booths in Churachandpur District of Manipur. The sample of the study consisted of all the polling booths in the district, The tool of the study consisted of primary documents (official documents) about the statistics of 17th Lok Sabha Election 2019 collected from the DC office, Churachandpur. Suitable statistical methods were used for analysis. Major findings of the investigation revealed that the voter turnout was below all India average in comparison to 2014, for the pink booths. While, voter turnout at the male polling booths were much higher than all India average. The study also found out that there was a monumental difference in the voting pattern in the male polling booths and pink booths. Pink booths in Churachandpur District which did not served its purposes.

Keywords: Pink Booths, Voting Percentage, Churachandpur District, 17th Lok Sabha Election, Polling Booths.

1. INTRODUCTION

S. Y. Quraishi, India's former chief election commissioner from 2010 to 2012, had explained how elections are run in India. According to him the 17th general election in India will be held in seven phases over 38 days. Nine hundred million Indians are registered to vote! Around 70 percent are expected to vote. The voting age in India is 18, and 15 million are voting for the first time.

India's elections are conducted by the Election Commission of India, an autonomous body set up by the Indian Constitution in 1950. The chief election commissioner and two election commissioners are appointed by the federal government for a term of six years or till they are 65 years of age. They are generally senior civil servants from the Indian Administrative Service.

For conducting India's election the commission borrows about 12 million employees from various federal and state government departments for the period of elections which included senior civil servants and police officers, schoolteachers, engineers, clerks, health care workers, security forces and all kinds of support staff.

It has been more than seven decades after independence, the commission has conducted 16 elections for the lower house of the Parliament and over 360 elections for legislative assemblies of Indian states. The commission has, at times, worked in the most trying circumstances. In 1982, it had to conduct elections for the State Assembly in the northeastern state of Assam at the height of a violent agitation that had roiled the region for years. Similarly, the commission conducted several elections in Jammu and Kashmir despite long-running violent conflict in the region.

As mentioned earlier, the commission deployed more than 2,000 election observers, who travel through various constituencies inspecting whether the elections are transparent, free and fair. They are assisted by about 140,000 polling officials, known as micro-observers, each assigned to monitor one polling station. Beyond that, the commission also deploys about 75,000 videographers and almost as many photographers, who record any wrongdoing at the polling booths during voting. Polling booths were set up in such a way that no citizen should to travel more than a kilometer to vote, whether they live on the world's highest mountains or on a desolate island.

The electoral system in India has been a work in progress from the beginning. During the first general elections in 1952, separate ballot boxes were used for every candidate. In 1962, common paper ballot for all candidates in a constituency was introduced and voters marked their preference. Since 1998, electronic voting machines were introduced in all state elections and since 2004 in the parliamentary elections. In 2013, the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail was added. The electronic voting machines are simple, cost-effective, fast and accurate.

The Hindu Business Line (11 March, 2018), article entitled "Lok Sabha elections: Five reasons India's election is unique," as explained five reasons that India's election is unique:

1. **Unpredictable:** India's elections unpredictable due to endless possibilities of coalitions. India's political system witnessed the rise of strong party (BJP) but failed in many fronts,

and there is a age old strong party the INC and equally the regional parties which has the potential to “U” turn the government.

2. **World’s largest election:** India’s elections represent 543 members at the lower house of parliament, or Lok Sabha. In 2014, the Election Commission of India deployed 3.7 million polling staff, 5,50,000 security personnel, 56 helicopters and 570 special trains to conduct a five-week-long exercise in close to a million polling stations. In a multi-party democratic system, India had 1,709 registered political parties, of which 464 fielded their candidates in 2014. In the last election, the central government spent Rs 3870 crores so that 834 million electorates could choose their parliamentary representative from 8,251 candidates.
3. **Complex exercise:** Millions of poll workers, police and security personnel are deployed in cities, towns, villages and hamlets. They use planes, boats, trains, helicopters, elephants and camels and travel by foot to reach far flung voters, from the snow-capped Himalayan mountains in the north to tiny islands in the Arabian Sea to the south, the desert in the west and the deep forests in the east. In 2019, the commission will mobilise 11 million officials to conduct the election at 1.04 million polling stations which will use over 2 million electronic voting machines.
4. **Woman power:** Women outnumbered men at polling booths in half of the states in 2014 in an election that created history with the highest ever female voter turnout of 65.63 per cent.
5. **New battlefield:** There will be 15 million voters aged 18-19 years voting in this years poll and millions more first time voters. As they’re better informed, more educated and tech-savvy than older constituents and more willing to take a different direction from their family’s established political leanings — they could swing the outcome.

1.1. Two Types of Polling Station or Booth:

In 2019 Lok Sabha election the Election Commission of India (ECI) had introduced a new types of polling booth called “Pink Booth” which aimed to increase women’s turnout as a respond to drastic increase in women participation in election process in the past few years, and the trend suggests they may be the majority of voters this years, ([Annalisa Merelli, 2019](#)). Besides this, the traditional polling booths is the second type where only staffs are deployed.

The “Pink Polling Booths” are electoral booths managed entirely by women staff including police and security personnel, which is meant to be female in order to encourage women to vote. In such booths special arrangements are done at these booths for pregnant women, Persons with Disabilities (PwD), among others.

Pink Polling Booth is also known by different names in different states “*sakhi* election center”— *sakhi* is a Hindi word meaning “female friend,” ‘Sakhi Matdan Kendras’

The “**Male Polling Booths**” are electoral booths managed entirely by male staff including police and security personnel.

An article in Business Today (11 April, 2019) entitled “Lok Sabha Elections 2019: What are pink polling booths?” defined pink polling booths. Pink polling booths are electoral booths managed entirely by women. From women security personnel’s to women polling parties, pink color is commonplace at these booths. Special arrangements are done at these booths for pregnant women, Persons with Disabilities (PwD), among others. Such attempt was meant to encourage women voters' participation in the upcoming Lok Sabha Elections, Election Commission has set up Pink polling booths across states. Majority of these booths have been set up in the North-eastern states. However, other parts of the country are not lagging behind.

According to Shri R Telang, Chief Electoral Officer of Sikkim, the hill state has set up 30 polling booths, which are exclusively manned by women security personnel and women polling parties, tweeted the Press Information Bureau in Sikkim quoting Telang.

For the first time, Sikkim will have 30 'pink booths' to be manned exclusively by women security personnel and women polling parties- Shri R. Telang, Chief Electoral Officer, Sikkim.

An article in Business Insider India (12 March, 2019), “This election, India’s national capital will have polling booths staffed only by women,” described the following;

- India’s national capital will have pink polling booths set up for Lok Sabha elections that will be staffed only by women.
- The move is aimed at promoting women empowerment and their abilities.
- As per the data by Election Commission of India, women account for less than 50% of the total voters in India.

Similarly, News18 also reported through an article “**All-Women Polling Booths For Delhi Voters in 2019 Lok Sabha Elections**” that All-Women Polling Booths For Delhi Voters in 2019 Lok Sabha Elections.

Business Standard (28th March, 2019) in the article “All-women polling booths in every LS constituency of Maharashtra” reported that pink polling stations had been set up in all 40 Lok Sabha seats of the Maharashtra. (*Similar condition was reported by Poorvi Gupta, 28 March, 2019*). "All those deployed at such polling stations - police, election officers and other employees - were women. These booths, an initiative towards gender equality and involving women's participation in the electoral process, will be called as 'Sakhi Matdan Kendras'." Sensitive polling stations will be kept out of this experiment while those near tehsil office or police stations will be considered to be managed by women. And, the remaining polling had been managed by Male Polling Booths. In the same way, 288 Pink polling station were set up in

288 Assembly constituencies. And, the remaining were meant for Male staffs (Hindustantimes, 28 March, 2019). Similarly, 600 pink polling booths out of the 58,186 voting stations to be set up for the Lok Sabha elections in Karnataka and the rest 57586 had been runned by male staffs (The News Minute, 12 March, 2019). Likewise, 117 polling stations were designated as Pink Booths in Mizoram (The Daily Star, 07 April, 2019). Similarly, 8 pink polling stations were set up in Kashmir and the remaining polling had been managed by Male Polling Booths (Greater Kashmir News Network, 14 April, 2019). Likewise, the election officials had set up 119 women polling stations with all women polling staff in 17 Parliament constituencies that had concluded on 11th April, 2019 in Assembly elections held in Punjab, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka and some North Eastern States (The Hans India, 10 April 2019)

Election Commission of India, online report on state wise voter turnout revealed that there was 66.44% all India average voter turnout in the 16th Lok Sabha Election 2019.

Election Commission of Manipur, Final Result Sheet for 16th Lok Sabha, Election, 2014, online report on Assembly Constituency wise revealed that there were 65 polling booths and the average voting polled was 515.05

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1) To find out the voting performance of voters in all the Pink Polling Booths in Churachandpur District during 17th Lok Sabha Election 2019.
- 2) To find out the voting performance of voters in all the Male Polling Booths in Churachandpur District during 17th Lok Sabha Election 2019.
- 3) To compare and study the performance of female and male polling staffs during 17th Lok Sabha Election 2019 in Churachandpur District.
- 4) To study the success of Pink Polling Booths in the appropriate booths.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) What was the voting performance of voters in all the Pink Polling Booths in Churachandpur District during 17th Lok Sabha Election 2019?
- 2) What was the voting performance of voters in all the Male Polling Booths in Churachandpur District during 17th Lok Sabha Election 2019?
- 3) Was there any difference in the performance of female and male polling staffs during 17th Lok Sabha Election 2019 in Churachandpur District?
- 4) Was there any improvement in voter turnout in the Pink Polling booths during the 17th Lok Sabha Election 2019 against 2014 only within the Churachandpur Assembly Constituency?

4. DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY.

4.1 Method of the Study

The researcher used descriptive and analytical method in the present study as they are the most suitable ones.

4.2 Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of 275 polling booths which included 100 pink polling booths and 175 male polling booths in Churachandpur District of Manipur. However, out of 175 male polling booths data for 17 male polling booths in 55 Henglep Assembly Constituency were missing and 2 male polling booths in the same Assembly Constituency crossed more than 100% voting percentage. These 19 male polling booths were not taken into account during analysis and thus the population of the study have 256 polling booths.

4.3 Sample of the Study

The sample of the study consisted of all the polling booths in the district, i.e., 256 booths, except the 19 polling booths were data were incorrect or missing.

4.4 Study Tool

The tool of the study consisted of primary documents (official documents) about the statistics of 17th Lok Sabha Election 2019 collected from the DC office, Churachandpur.

4.5 Analysis:

Based on the 17th Lok Sabha Election 2019 statistics which was collected from the DC office, Churachandpur, all pertinent data were entered in the MS-Excel and statistical computation were done to find out Nos. of Polling Booths, voting percentage in different male and pink polling booths and the Mean and Standard Deviation for male and female polling booths.

5. PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

This study has been conducted according to the following steps:

- 1) Determination of the research problem.
- 2) Determination of the objectives of the study and research questions.
- 3) Survey and Review of the related literature was conducted.
- 4) Preparation and implementation of research design.
- 5) Collection of relevant election documents and statistics.

- 6) Data entry in MS-Excel and statistical computation and analysing of the data was done and it was interpreted and discussed.
- 7) Compilation of the full paper including references.

6. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The following are the results of the study according to the sequence of questions:

6.1 Results of the first question: *What was the voting performance of voters in all the Pink Polling Booths in Churachandpur District during 17th Lok Sabha Election 2019?*

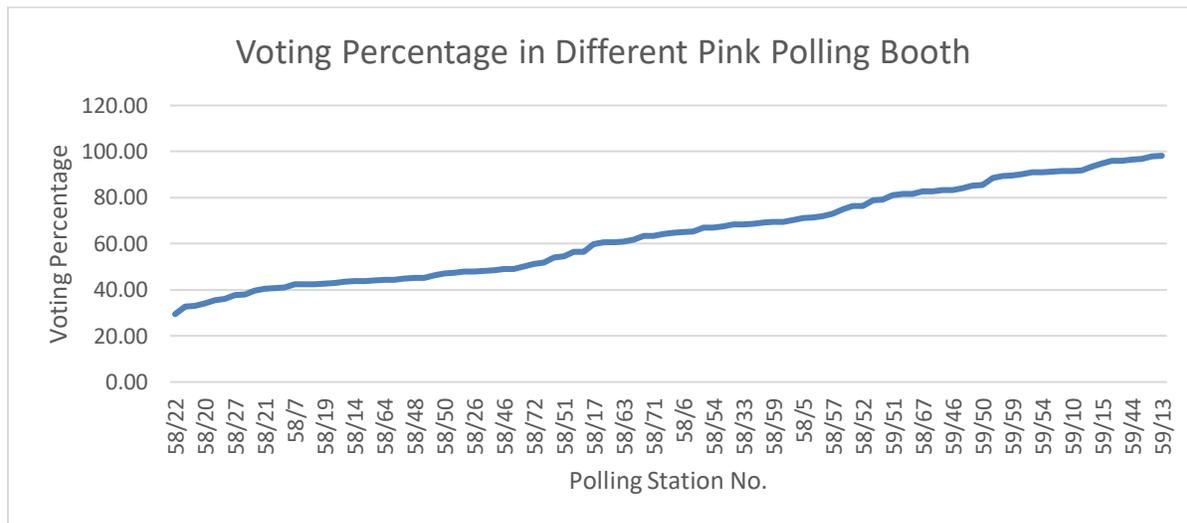
To answer this question, a line graph was constructed and the Mean, and Standard Deviation of the Voting Percentages of all the Pink Polling Booths was computed and the result is shown in Table 1 and Figure 1.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Voting Percentages of Pink Polling Booths in the 17th Lok Sabha Election 2019

Statistical Method	Values
M	64.12
SD	19.74

Analysis of Table 1 clearly showed that the voter turnout was below all India average in comparison to 2014, for the Pink Polling Booths which has come at an Average Voting Percentage of (64.12%) against 66.44% in 2014, and Standard Deviation of (19.74). This may be attributed to their stringent approach in managing the polling processes.

Figure 1: Voting Performance of Voters in Different Pink Polling Booths 17th Lok Sabha Election 2019



Analysis of Figure 1 clearly showed that majority of the polling booths managed by the female staff (i.e. 53% of pink polling booths) had a lower voting percentage against all India average (66.44%).

6.2 Results of the second question: What was the voting performance of voters in all the Male Polling Booths in Churachandpur District during 17th Lok Sabha Election 2019?

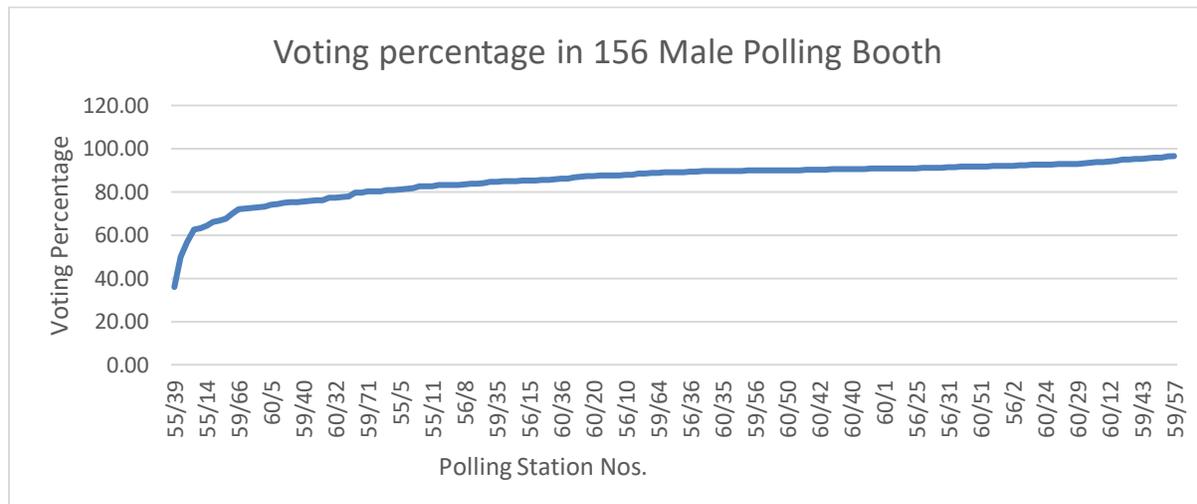
To answer this question, a line graph was constructed and the Mean, and Standard Deviation of the Voting Percentages of all the Pink Polling Booths was computed and the result is shown in Table 2 and Figure 2.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Voting Percentages of Male Polling Booths in the 17th Lok Sabha Election 2019

Statistical Method	Values
M	85.54
SD	9.16

Analysis of Table 2 clearly showed that the voter turnout was much higher than all India average which has come at an Average Voting Percentage of (85.54%) against 66.44% (all India average) in 2014, and Standard Deviation of (9.16). This may be attributed to leniency in managing the polling processes.

Figure 2: Voting Performance of Voters in Different Male Polling Booths During the 17th Lok Sabha Election 2019

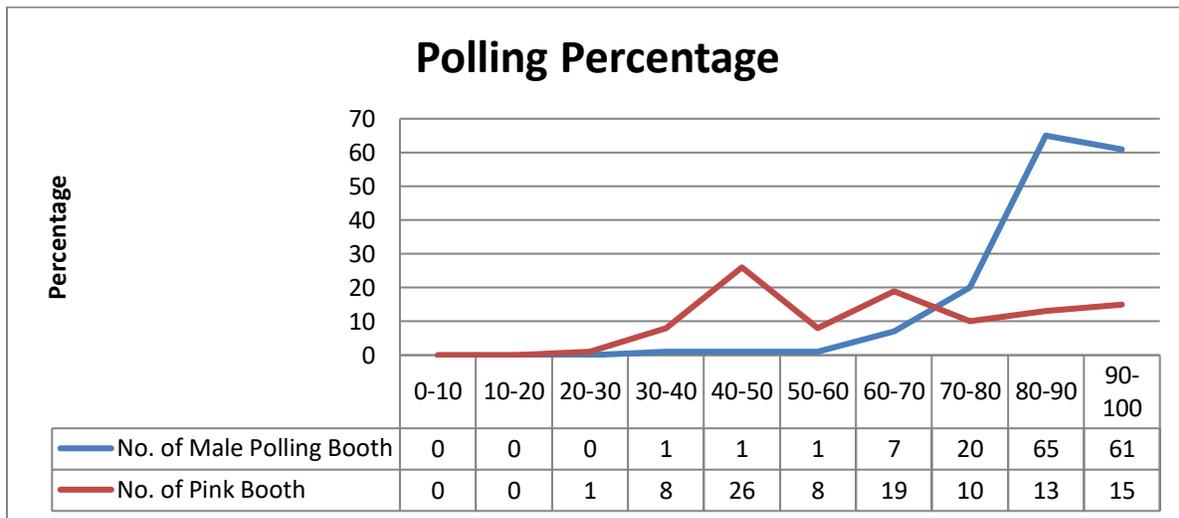


Analysis of Figure 2 clearly showed that huge majority of the polling booths managed by the male staff (i.e. 95.51% of male polling booths) had a higher voting percentage against all India average (66.44%).

6.3 Results of the third question: *Was there any difference in the performance of female and male polling staffs during 17th Lok Sabha Election 2019 in Churachandpur District?*

To answer this question, a line graph was constructed and the Mean, and Standard Deviation of the Voting Percentages of all the Pink Polling Booths was computed and the result is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Pattern of Voting percentage in Male Polling Booths and Pink Booths During the 17th Lok Sabha Election 2019 in Churachandpur District of Manipur



Analysis of Figure 3 clearly showed a fanatic difference in the voting pattern in the male polling booths and pink booths. The line curve represented the voting percentage in pink booths showed that the highest voting percentage at the pink booths was between 40% to 50% whereas huge percentage (65%) of the male polling booths polled between 80% to 90% and similarly 61% male polling booths polled between 90% to 96.57%. This difference raised a substantial doubt against the vote casted at the male polling booths. Further, this equally triggered a hypothesis that female polling staffs had conducted the 17th Lok Sabha Election 2019 polling processes with, if not fully, but substantively according to the guidelines of the Election Commission of India.

6.4 Results of the fourth question: *Was there any improvement in voter turnout in the Pink Polling booths during the 17th Lok Sabha Election 2019 against 2014 only within the Churachandpur Assembly Constituency?*

To answer this question, a summary of the total vote polled in the two election and the number of polling booths were in Table 3.

Table 3: Total Vote Polled in the Two Election And the Number of Polling Booths

	2014	2019	Difference	Percentage
Total Vote Polled	33478	29699	-3779	-11.29
No of polling booths	65	74	9	13.85

Analysis of Table 3 clearly showed that the voter turnout in 2019 had fallen 11.29% contrary to the purpose of attracting more voter to turnout. As far as Churachandpur Assembly Constituency is concerned the deployment of female polling staffs had reduced the voting percentage in spite of increase in 9 polling booths.

7. CONCLUSION

To sum up, the investigation revealed that the voter turnout at the pink booths was below all India average in comparison to 2014. On the contrary, the voter turnout at the male polling booths was much higher than all India average. A huge majority (95.51%) of the polling booths managed by the male staff had a higher average voting percentage against 2014 (i.e. 66.44%). The study also found out that there was a monumental difference in the voting pattern in the male polling booths and pink booths. The highest voting percentage at the pink booths was between 40% to 50% whereas huge percentage (65%) of the male polling booths polled between 80% to 90% and similarly 61% male polling booths polled between 90% to 96.57%. This difference raised a substantial doubt against the vote casted at the male polling booths. Further, this equally triggered a hypothesis that the 17th Lok Sabha Election 2019 conducted by female polling staffs in Churachandpur Assembly Constituency was much free and fair. Contrary to the thrust to attract more voter at pink booth, the voter turnout in pink booths has decreased to 11.20% in 2019 from 2014. This calls for a review of the polling processes in all the election held in India.

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