Understanding Caste as an Influencing Factor in the Voting Behaviour in Goa's Electoral Politics: A Case Study of the Ponda Assembly Constituency

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DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that the data presented in this Dissertation reported entitled, "Understanding Caste as an Influencing Factor in the Voting Behaviour in the Goa's Electoral Politics: A Case Study of Ponda Assembly Constituency" is based on the results of investigations carried out by me in the Political Science Programme, at the D.D Kosambi School of Social Sciences and Behavioural Studies, Goa University under the Supervision of Dr. Rahul Tripathi and the same has not been submitted elsewhere for the award of a degree or diploma by me. Further, I understand that Goa University or its authorities will be not be responsible for the correctness of observations / experimental or other findings given the dissertation.

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Date: 19 April 2024

Place: Goa University

COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation report "**Understanding Caste as an Influencing Factor in the Voting Behaviour in the Goa's Electoral Politics: A Case Study of Ponda Assembly Constituency**" is a bonafide work carried out by Mr. **Yogesh Babu Varak** Under my supervision in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Master of the Arts in the Political Science Discipline at the D.D. Kosambi School of Social Science and Behavioural Studies, Goa University.

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FIGURES

ABBREVIATIONS USED

Entity	Abbreviation
AAP	Aam Aadmi Party
BJP	Bharatiya Janta Party
INC	Indian National Congress
MGP	Maharashtrawadi Gomantak party
PDF	People Democratic Front
CDF	Congress Democratic Front
UGS	United Goans Superia Groups
BSP	Bahujan Samaj Party
SC	Schedule Caste
ST	Schedule Tribe
OBC	Other Backward Classes
BKD	Bharatiya Kranti Dal
BLD	Bharatiya Lok Dal
MBC	Most Backward Classes
CPI	Communist Party of India
BAMCEF	Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation

CONTENT

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Goa is the smallest and the most beautiful state of India, established between the emerald Sahyadri's or the western ghats in the east and the Arabian sea on the west. The area of Goa is around 3702 sq km and it has around 12 Talukas. Since ancient times there were several names to Goa like GOI, Goembab in Konkani, Govem and Gomantak in Marathi. The name Goa represents the 'Go' means a cow. The reason for these places having such names can be attributed to their etymological origins, which often reflect the agricultural abundance or wealth of the early inhabitants. Goa has a beautiful natural heritage of the golden sands, fish, shellfish, rivers, trees, lakes, beaches, waterfall, forest covers wildlife sanctuary and butterflies. Goa has been divided into 2 districts that is the North Goa and South Goa. Panjim is the capital city of Goa while, Margao or Madgaon is the commercial city of Goa. Goa is most famous for being a tourist state.

As per the 2011 census, the goa has around 14.59 Lakhs of Population which has increased from 13.48 lakhs in 2001 census. The Population of male and female consist of 739,140 and 719,410. Whereas the literacy rate of the Goa is 88.70% of that Male literacy rate stands at 92.65% while the female literacy rate is 84.66 percent. The sex ratio of Goa is 973 for each 1000 male. When we talk about the Ponda Taluka, we tend to hear this every time that the Ponda Taluka is at the center of the Goa, while some says it is north district whereas some say it is in the south district of Goa. The government of Goa in 2015 has approved the Bill saying that the Ponda Taluka will come under South Goa District and the reason was to provide better administration and government services to the people of Ponda Taluka.

Another reason was the "Population Imbalances" where there was more population in the North Goa, and less to the south Goa. According to census India 2011 Ponda Taluka has around 38349 Households, consisting around 165830 population from which 85492 are males and 80338 are

female. The population of children between age 0-6 is 15785 which is 9.52% of total Population. The total area of Ponda is 292.78 sq km with Population density of 566 sq km. if we see the rural urban disparity in Ponda Taluka 37.5% lives in Urban areas whereas the 62.5% lives in Rural areas. If we see the religion percentage in the Ponda Taluka Hindu being a majority consist of 83% Population whereas Christians, being an 8.75% of Population, Muslims is of 7.6% and Jain, Sikhs, Buddhist consist of 08%, 08%, and 0.6% respectively.

Caste or Jati's plays a very important role in the electoral politics across India. The caste system has profound influence both on society as well as on the elections. Even the state like Goa which has a very small number of population and consist of 40 seats in assembly election has the impact of caste and politics. While this research is mainly investigating the politics of Ponda Constituency assembly in South Goa wherein this research tries to understand the caste as a factor influencing the voting behavior in the Ponda Constituency assembly.

The essence of the caste system lies in the inclination to view those who are dissimilar to us with disdain and animosity, and to degrade and exclude them. "There is no precise definition of caste and there are no single definitive theoretical perspectives on the caste system In India. Those who look from above, from the vantage point of brahmin, view caste-based social order differently from those who look from below, from the vantage point of Dalits. Differing perspectives not only influence different understandings of the system, but also the prescriptions and strategies for maintaining or changing it. This outlines a few major perspectives which have influenced the course of Indian Politics". (Shah, 2002, p. 35)

My research deals with a political area of identity politics. Identity politics plays a very important role in the political science. The nexus between caste and politics, integral components of identity, assumes paramount significance in comprehending the democratic politics of India. Caste, deeply embedded in the country's social fabric, exerts a profound

influence on political dynamics. As a salient identity marker, it plays a pivotal role in electoral strategies, candidate selection, and voting patterns. This intersection underscores the complexities of India's democracy, where issues of social justice, representation, and inclusivity intersect with the political realm. Acknowledging the intricate relationship between caste and politics is essential for a nuanced understanding of how identity factors shape and impact the democratic processes within this diverse and dynamic nation.

While understanding the Political scenario of Goa. Goa being a small state in the country, but the political enthusiasm is much more than any other state. While the current government of Goa is under the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) Under the leadership of Dr. Pramod Sawant. There are 40 assembly seats in the Goa legislative assembly. When we see the Politics of Goa, we tend to see a blend of defections in Goa's Politics. Again, understanding caste and political defections also have some relation with Goa's Politics. "Caste has aroused more controversy than perhaps any other aspects of Indian life". (Parobo, 2015)

In India, Caste is a social group where its membership is decided by the Birth. Even After 76 years of Independence the electoral Politics of India are Synonymous with the Caste Politics. Caste have been an influential factor in the electoral Politics Where one caste has dominance or access to the political power, Political parties also uses the caste factor for their own benefits where the parties also have a rough algorithm or Understanding about the Majority Caste people and Minority Caste People. In other words, Political Parties uses caste as a factor in the electoral politics of India as well as Goa.

Whereas the Politics of Ponda has been very much interesting as well as fascinating. The current Member of legislative assembly from Ponda is the Ravi Naik from BJP ticket. During the 2022 elections there was a good competition between the Ravi Naik and his opponents. Ravi Naik is the candidate who secured victory with the smallest number of votes in the 2022

elections. He is the minister of Agriculture, Handicrafts, Civil Supplies in current tenure. He was the chief minister of Goa from January 1991 to May 1993 and from 2 April 1994 to April 1994.

Understanding caste Politics from the people of Ponda will help to understand their thoughts and their critical thinking on this study. Understanding caste politics is necessary to every section of the society and to be cautious about this issue. Despite several socio-cultural and economic changes that India has undergone after the Post Independence era. The Stratification based on caste and Jati still prevails.

With the Social stratification of castes and having the Political and economic oppression and with dominance lead to have a major cause of Caste or Jati Conflicts. In the Countries Like India Historical caste discrimination was a significant problem, leading to several forms of prejudices and biases against the one-person caste.

"Caste is not a physical object like a wall of bricks or a line of barbed wire which prevents the Hindus from commingling, and which has, therefore, to be pulled down. Caste is a notion; it is a state of the mind. The destruction of caste does not therefore mean the destruction of a physical barrier. It means a notional change. Caste may be bad. Caste may lead to conduct so gross as to be called Man's inhumanity to Man". (Shah, 2002 p. 102)

1.2 Review of Literature

The article "Unfolding 60 Years of Political Process in Goa by Dr. Nawoo Varak and Prachi Naik", Provides a comprehensive overview of the political landscape in Goa following its liberation. "The foundation of Goa's electoral politics stems from the politics of liberation championed by the first Chief Minister of Goa, Dayanand Bandodkar. (Varak & Naik, 2022 p. 23). After the liberation of the Goa the first election which took place in October 1962 thus extending political rights to the Bahujan's. This election synchronized the will for social and

economic emancipation across Goa. Bandodkar's leadership prioritized social and economic equality over identity Politics as a result he encountered a vote of no- confidence motion from dissenting members such as Krishnanath Naik within the MGP whereas the Regional Congress leaderships repositioned their constituencies along caste and community lines following the Congress's 1967 split to political future.

It was After the liberation, in 1989 when the first legislative assembly elections took place in Goa. The authors argues that how the congress tried to appease the Bahujan masses through Ravi Naik since he was belonging to the Numerically large Bahujan Community, that is the Bhandari's in Goa. Ravi Naik was the only chief minister from the Bhandari Caste, serving from January 1991 to May 1993 and from 2 April 1994 to 8 April 1994.The chief minister's post came to him through the defection he managed from the MGP to the INC. The article concludes with the note that every community. Since the success of the elections depends on every community, regardless of caste or religion, every political party would attempt to appeal to their interests.

The Book titled "Caste and Democratic Politics in India" written by Ghanshyam Shah discusses about many things which are related to the caste. The book Caste and democratic politics in India gives an understanding about the caste and also about the features of the caste. It also discusses about the relationship between caste and class and what is the social reality and political representations of both. Political parties consider various castes when distributing party tickets. During candidate nominations, the caste of aspirant candidates and the numerical strength of different castes within a constituency are considered. Further the book explains that in the 1950s, in instances where caste associations-maintained unity without formally aligning with any party. They encouraged their members to vote for candidates from their own caste, regardless of party affiliation. For example, in Rajasthan, Meena's were advised, 'Do not give your daughter or your vote to anyone but a Meena. Similar slogans were employed in Tamil

Nadu, such as, Caste to lean towards a particular party, and bloc caste voting is not universal. Some castes traditionally align themselves with a specific party based on factors such as shared caste leadership and common concerns, as seen with the Jat's in Uttar Pradesh favoring the Lok Dal due to its Jat leaders and advocacy for peasant issues. Democratic politics and a growing capitalist economy have expanded political participation, empowered traditionally deprived groups and brought latent caste consciousness into the open. Caste takes on different meanings in various contexts, demanding empirical studies to understand its evolving dynamics across social, economic, and political spheres.

The article "Caste and Politics by I.P Desai" examines how the caste dominates the distribution and use of political power. The article further examines how the caste influences political parties, as well as the government and administration whereas politics also influences caste with consequences that undermines caste solidarity and stratification. While this article defines how the social stratification take place on birth membership and high and low birth. The political system, while modern and democratic, is not entirely caste oriented. People's political behavior, attitudes, and values are influenced by caste culture or traditional society, affecting the functioning and content of the political system. Political institutions influence caste, negatively impacting caste solidarity and hierarchy, and their impact on the old social structure varies. Well, it is believed that if the candidates happen to be of same caste as the majority of the voter's caste in a constituency, it is presumed that he is selected because he belongs to the same caste as the majority caste. The view that caste dominates politics needs scrutiny, as neither solidarity nor hierarchy play a decisive role. Further the article explains that caste unity is achieved when all members share common interests, and voting for the group's candidate is in the interest of everyone, as long as the interests of different caste groups are accepted and respected.

The book Caste, Class and Society" By V.K Sharma provides an insight into the history of the caste system and how the caste system evolved in India. The book gives clear distinction between the caste and class in India and what are the problems in India which is associated with the caste. Again, it also discusses the several aspects of caste for e.g., casteism, caste and marriage, caste discrimination and caste in transition. The primary subject addressed in this book is the contemporary dynamics of caste and class in Indian politics. In recent years, the mobilization of caste has significantly shaped the landscape of Indian politics. Without a clear understanding and proactive approach to this phenomenon, the potentially divisive role of caste mobilization on the unity of the working class cannot be overcome. Moreover, the parliamentary democracy system adopted was founded on an electoral system that tended to bolster caste consciousness. Despite the CPI(M)'s recommendation to introduce proportional representation, the ruling classes have consistently rejected it. Besides its other merits, such a system, where people would vote for parties rather than individuals, could have minimized appeals based on caste, religion, community, and the like. The current dual nature of caste assertion appears to manifest itself as a duality in social consciousness among the oppressed. However, when it comes to electoral preferences and voting, they seem to be influenced by their social kinship and caste affinity. The apparent duality of social consciousness is what the vested interests of caste leadership strive to maintain, primarily for electoral advantages.

The article titled "Caste Panchayat" authored by Pankaj Kumar explains us about the scandalous success of democratic government in post-independence India and the acceptance of caste in democratic processes have puzzled social scientists. Caste and democracy, based on antithetical principles of hierarchy and equality, challenge the unilinear and universal conception of modernity. The article explores the reasons behind their importance and whether the mandate has revitalized the caste system. The article examines on caste panchayats in post-independence India, substantiating the distinction between social and political reality of caste,

highlighting conservative practices like social ostracization and caste endogamy, and asserting that the mandalisation of politics has given a new lease of life to conservative bodies. This perspective overlooks political functions, leading to a caste association replacing panchayat as a valid explanation for post-Independence Indian politics. The article further explores the assumption that the caste panchayat can only perform regulative functions has led to their marginalization in academic discussion. Political functions are exclusive to caste associations, making them a valid explanation for caste and politics in post-Independence India. Caste panchayats play a crucial role in preserving identities and justifying benefits like jobs and reservations.

The article "Caste and Electoral Politics", by Bashiruddin Ahmed discusses about the state of empirical studies on the role of caste in Indian Politics. It highlights that many studies focus on the village, town, and constituency level, with some generalization extending to the national level. The author suggests that despite covering different aspects of the caste-politics relationship, many studies lack an integrated view within the context of the overall political system. Furthermore, they relate caste-politics interactions to other processes of social mobilization and political development in Indian society. The article discusses the limitation of existing theories on the role of the caste in Indian politics, particularly when based on earlier descriptive studies that focused on political and social collectivities rather than the individual actors. The author argues that understanding individual behavior is crucial for a comprehensive analysis of caste-politics interaction. To address this, the author proposes an examination of general propositions and formulations within the existing theories considering accumulating survey data about India.

The article concludes by stating that one of the current tasks facing students of Indian society and politics is to reformulate existing theories about caste in politics. This reformulation should consider a broader perspective based on quantitative data that captures a wider cross- section

of society and it also emphasizes on the importance of revisiting and refining theories about caste in politics by addressing the potential biases and limitations in earlier descriptive studies.

The article "The Myth of Identity Politics in India: Identity Constructs Over Political Realities?" by Srimayee Dam discusses about the complex tapestry of identity politics in India, considering it would be incorrect to assume that each identity marker operates autonomously. Instead, these markers often overlap and influence each other, creating a nuanced and layered understanding of identity in the country. The article implies that identity markers, such as linguistic groups, caste affiliations, religious orientations and broader ethnic claims, are not isolated from each other. The article highlights the intricate and multifaceted nature of identity politics in India. The article acknowledges that caste-based discrimination and oppression have been longstanding issues in Indian society. This has been a pernicious feature, indicating the deeply entrenched nature of caste-related challenges. It also highlights the intertwining of caste and politics in the post-independence era. The article delves into further themes related to identity politics, such as religion, ethnicity, and language. The article provides an overview of the historical oppression within the caste system and the subsequent emergence of caste-based identity politics. The Article concludes by asserting that caste-based identity politics has played a dual role in Indian society and polity. On one side, it is suggested to have relatively democratized the caste-based Indian society. On the other side, it is argued to have undermined the evolution of class-based organizations.

The article "Backward Caste Politics In Uttar Pradesh" By Ak Verma explains the backward caste politics of Uttar Pradesh and how the politics Of Samajwadi Party (SP) which at one point on time was the backward caste party has diluted his identity by adopting more inclusive stance, aligning itself with urban and capitalist interest. In the process it has moved away from precious cleavage-based, ruralist and socialist character. It also tells us about the tradition of backward caste politics in UP since 1950s and how the leaders like Ram Manohar Lohia, Kansi Ram and

Chaudhury Charan Singh has mobilized the Minorities into Politics. Additionally, the article also describes the politics of Rajasthan and of Bihar.

The book titled "Ajeeb Goa's Gajab Politics, Goa Elections: A Perspectives" by Sandesh Prabhudessai, gives an understanding about how the electoral politics in India are synonymous with caste politics. Further he tells us about the parties which contest elections not based on ideology or not even a religion but on the basis of caste. Additionally, he informs us about the caste prejudices that exist not just in Hinduism but also in Christianity. The inequality based on caste discrimination continues to prevail among Hindus as well as the Christians even after five centuries in the social and cultural sphere of Goa. But strangely, it does not figure in electoral politics. The author mentions about the Sudir community that began actively participating in elections from the '80s, yet caste failed to establish itself as a predominant factor among Christians in electoral politics in Goa. In contrast, caste considerations significantly influence Hindu voters, persisting as a noteworthy aspect in elections. Presently, attempts to leverage caste affiliations persist, with Hindu politicians subtly playing caste and community cards to sway voters. Author talks about several incidents in which caste politics doesn't exist like for e.g. The author mentions about the Sudin Davlikar that the largest population in his constituency almost 70 per cent is of the Bhandari community, alongside a sizeable Gauda population but neither a Bhandari leader like Shripad naik, Ramachandra mule, Ravi Naik's son Ritesh, nor a tribal leader like Govind Gaude has defeated him till date.

The article "Competing Equality: Caste in the Indian Politics by Shilpa Tripathi illustrates us about Caste being significant factor in the electoral politics, reflecting the historical encounter between the India and western colonial rule. Colonialism played a role in the politicizing of caste influencing the division and rule strategy in India. After over century of social reforms, political pronouncements and legislation has undermined the ideological basis of caste in India. No political parties, leaders or Intellectual support the ideas that caste is natural and moral

order, occupationally linked, hereditary, or a consequence of past transgressions. The ideology of caste remains alive as a social reality, with lower caste still being poorly treated by higher castes. The movement for change in India is not about ending caste but using it as an instrument for social change. Caste is not disappearing or 'casteism' but is institutionalizing and transforming but not abolishing it. The critics argues that caste was never a wholly dominant but only some Individuals and families from a particular caste could be a dominant. Caste-politics relations can be interpreted in two ways. one sees casteism in modern-day democracy, while the other believes electoral politics and universal adult suffrage have traditional caste systems. The article further highlights that the caste has been used at the time of filing the nominations, campaigns, party formations, and portfolio distribution. Caste sentiments and loyalties are also utilized during elections. A perfect example of it was during the elections of the Rajasthan where in the Jat dominated area there was a slogan which was heard: Vote aur Beti Jat ko do (votes and girls should be handed over only to caste man.) Article further explains that the electoral politics has led to the establishment of 'Caste Leaders' at various societal levels, often urged by political parties to secure electoral support.

The article "A New Politics of Caste" by Praskanva Sinaharay discusses about the politics of the west Bengal. The politics of the West Bengal as compared to other states has truly been unique with regards to the Caste question. Caste was deemed antagonistic to modern politics and had never been a significant factor in provincial electoral politics for various reasons. The caste question in Bengal's modern liberal image has been suppressed, leading to the rise of lower caste Matuas as a significant vote aggregator in the state's electoral scene, fracturing the hegemonic dominance of the modern liberal bhadralok.

In the article "The Dynamics of Lower-Caste Politics" by Gopal Guru the authors explain us about the how the Politicization of caste in Indian democracy has evolved over time. Historically, those subjected to caste oppression used caste-specific forms or vocabulary to

mobilize oppressed masses, while the content was universal. This was due to skepticism about universal vocabulary and the need to understand the masses' experiences. Dalit and Bahujan thinkers used caste to push for justice, equality, freedom, and dignity for those condemned to social degradation and political insignificance. Caste is a significant factor in electoral politics, with parties seeking support from the Other Backward Classes and non-Chamar/Jatav Scheduled Castes to win in previous elections. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) exploited this by giving ministerial positions to lower caste leaders, highlighting the perceived unfairness of opportunities. This has led to a shift in political inclination towards right-wing political parties. The parties' formation was not driven by the majority's religious attraction but by a sense of injustice stemming from the unfair distribution of state resources. The article further explains about caste dynamics in lower-caste politics can undermine the claim that religious majority helps a party maintain electoral hold. Lower castes need to be aware of the problems with instrumentalist politics and move towards a larger inclusive identity, overcoming narrow identities. The Bahujan should disabuse their politics of instrumentalism, which perpetuates personal individual interests.

Rajni Kothari's book title "Caste in Indian Politics" gives a lot more understanding about the caste and politics in India. Rajni Kothari has written extensively on caste and politics. In this book, Kothari suggests that politics functions as a system aiming to leverage pre-existing organizational structures in society, and undoubtedly, Caste has been a significant social framework throughout India. Furthermore, for political change to attain legitimacy in a democratic society. Rajni Kothari has made a lot of contribution to the empirical study conducted in a several part of India. Several other authors have given sequential advancement in the relationship of caste and politics. Rajni Kothari delineates a three-stage process initiated when the caste structure undergoes polarization upon encountering new secular sources of power. The book presents a valuable addition to the growing body of detailed empirical studies

on Indian politics, with research conducted across various regions and levels of the political process. Consequently, in situations where the caste structure serves as one of the primary organizational frameworks for a significant portion of the population, politics must endeavor to establish itself through this structure. The alleged phenomenon of 'casteism in politics' is essentially the politicization of caste, a process that brings both the structures of caste and politics into closer alignment, thereby influencing and transforming both. The book further explains about the politics that assimilates the caste system into its organizational framework, it discovers raw material for its articulation, shaping it according to its own design. Conversely, when caste and kin groups engage in political activities, they seize an opportunity to assert their identity and compete for positions. Politicians strategically mobilize caste groupings and identities to consolidate their power. Additionally, he asserts a statement in his book saying, "Caste itself becomes a political category it is futile to argue as to whether castes use politics or politics uses caste". (Kothari, 1970, p.5)

The article "Caste Politics: An Imprecation to Democracy" by Sushmita Choudhary highlights the pervasive influence of caste in various aspects of Indian society and politics. It points out that provocative rumors contribute to inter-caste and intra-caste animosities, fostering false statements that fuel sub-caste jealousy. The political arena is not exempt from these dynamics, with dominant castes attempting to impose their political preferences on depressed sections through threats and in extreme cases violence, if the election results don't align with their choices. Local newspapers play a role in perpetuating caste-based information. Politicians engage in vote-bargaining based on caste lines, highlighting the centrality of caste in the electoral process. The article presents a comprehensive picture of how caste permeates different facets of Indian society and politics. The Article delves into the relationship between caste and politics in India, raising concerns about the potential implications of caste-based voting on the democratic process. It argues that while India is a democratic country, the entrenched caste

system, which categorizes people based on birth, can pose challenges to the democratic ideals of meritocracy and governance based on performance. The article expresses concerns about caste politics, framing it as a potential imprecation to democracy. It suggests that the practice of voting solely on caste lines can be detrimental to democratic principles. It also raises concerns about people voting solely based on caste rather than considering a candidate's actual work or potential contributions. This is seen as a threat to the essence of democracy. The author further explains that if work is not appreciated due to caste-based voting, it could lead to a backward society, indicating potential negative consequences for societal progress.

The authors of the article "|How the caste factor helped the BJP" by Alaknanda Shringare and Shreyash Sardesai mainly discusses about how the caste politics helped the BJP to win the 2022 assembly election of Goa legislative assembly. The significance of caste in voting behavior, as indicated by the Lokniti-CSDS post-poll survey data in Goa, underscores the complexity of political dynamics in the region. The fact that nearly one-third of the voters in Goa considered their caste identity as a very important issue when deciding their vote suggests that caste plays a crucial role in shaping electoral preferences whereas the data reveals that the importance accorded to caste by Goa's voters is slightly higher than in states like Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Uttarakhand. This implies that caste consideration has a notable impact on the electoral landscape in Goa, and understanding voting behavior requires a thorough examination of how different castes and communities in the state align with political choices. To gain a comprehensive understanding of voting patterns in Goa, it becomes imperative to delve into the specific preferences and tendencies of various castes and communities. Additionally, the author examines whether the caste considerations intersect with other key issues, such as governance, development, and identity politics, can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between various factors influencing voter decisions. This holistic approach is crucial for policymakers, political analysts, and researchers seeking to

comprehend the intricate web of influences that shape electoral outcomes in Goa. The author elucidates how various communities expressed their support for the BJP and other political parties in the elections in 2022.

The book titled "Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern Era" by Nicholas B. Dirks holds very much importance when we talk about the caste system in India. "Caste has been seen as omnipresent in Indian history and as one of the major reasons why India has no history, or at least no sense of history that defines the core Indian Tradition, and it is seen today as the major threat to Indian modernity". (Dirks, 2002, p.3)

Nicholas B. Dirks' "Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India" is a meticulously researched examination of the political structures and historical formation of the "caste system" in India. The book goes beyond a straight forward argument about the solidification of caste under British colonialism and the ethnographic imagination. The book presents a comprehensive archaeology of caste consciousness and its modern co-option by nationalist Hindutva politics. "Castes of Mind" serves as a valuable archival contribution to contemporary post-colonial explorations within the field of the anthropology of caste. Despite the widespread use of the caste concept for various social purposes, He explores how India, shaped by its intellectual elites and social movements like the Dalit movement, navigates its own caste politics influenced by the legacy of the British Empire. This approach adds depth to familiar personalities. Importantly, it aligns with other post-colonial literature by creating a space to interrogate caste politics and reimagine the archives in ways that challenge the influence of colonial perspectives.

The Book "Contextualizing Caste: Post- Dumontian Approaches" by Mary Searle Chatterjee and Ursula Sharma gives a detailed understanding about the caste politics. The essence of book resolves around the caste system and caste politics. It also gives a gist about the politics of

minority of Rajasthan. The book effectively conveys the legacy of competitive electoral politics in India, highlighting the transformative impact on local caste hierarchies. The mention of political entities like the Republican Party, the Bahujan Samaj Party, and movements like the Lok Dal adds depth to the discussion. It highlights how these entities emerged because of horizontal mobilization, championing sectional interests through the electoral arena. The analysis convincingly argues that competitive electoral politics rendered all inherited power relations contestable. The explanation of how the logic of political participation has diminished the prevalence of "vote banks" based on vertical obligation is insightful. The book further emphasizes that, despite apparent progress, caste remains a significant factor in electoral mobilization. This book contributes significantly to the understanding of the complex interplay between caste, politics, and societal transformation in the Indian context. Whether one looks at the role of the caste in elections, or its involvement with social and economic life in contemporary India, it becomes quite clear that the empirical complexity of caste is out with sync.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

1) How do Caste dynamics influence electoral choices and Political Behavior in Ponda Constituency assembly.

2) To What extent do voters Prioritize caste affiliations in their decision-making process during elections?

3) How the caste plays a significant role in the Electoral Politics of Goa.

1.4 HYPOTHESIS

1) Caste has played a very important role in the Politics of the Ponda Constituent Assembly.

2) The electoral success of Ravi Naik in the Ponda constituent assembly is a reflective importance of caste in the assembly sequence.

1.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1) To investigate and examine the presence of caste politics in the Ponda constituent assembly and to assess the impact of caste politics on the Ponda Constituent assembly, there is a need to investigate whether caste affiliations influence political dynamics, voter behavior, and electoral outcomes.

2) To understand the socio-economic factors that intersect with caste identities, influencing voting behavior and political choices in elections.

3) To understand and to examine caste-based voting patterns persist in urban centers, and how does this differ from rural areas in the context of electoral politics.

4) To investigate and comprehend the determinants or factors that contributed to the winning the election of Ravi Naik as a member of the legislative assembly representing the Ponda constituent assembly. This inquiry aims to identify the key elements that played a significant role in his successful candidacy and subsequent electoral victory.

5) To understand and to examine the role of the caste in shaping electoral strategies, candidate selection, and party platforms during elections in state.

1.6 METHODOLOGY

This study includes a blend of theoretical as well as the empirical methodology to conduct the Research. Empirically the Opinions and views of the people is a central part of this research.

Empiricism we can say forms the primary source of this research. For this, a survey method is used to collect the opinion of people and to understand casteism in politics. The Survey will be conducted in physical mode. For this a questionnaire is circulated physically.

To understand the nature of the caste politics and its impact on revolutionary world and to understand how it plays the important role in the politics, a theoretical framework employed by scholars is adopted. For this, a survey of secondary literature is conducted both in digital

and in physical mode through visit in the library and accessing the books, articles which are available on the topic.

To Understand more about the Caste Politics some interviews have been taken based on Random sampling method.

It entails a comprehensive examination and analysis of the existing literature concerning caste politics in India overall and with a specific focus on the state of Goa, utilizing a review of secondary data sources.

o **1.7 CHAPTERIZATION (TENTATIVE)**
o
o **CHAPTER 1:**
o Introduction to the Research Topic
o Literature Review
o Research Question and Hypothesis
o Aims and Objectives
o Methodology
o Scope and Significance of the Study
o Rationale for Selecting the Topic
o Limitations of the study
o **CHAPTER 2**
o Historical Background and Theoretical Framework
o Identity Politics in India
o The Reformist and Radical View on Caste: Gandhi and Ambedkar
o Caste and Social Class in Indian Politics
o Caste Politics in India
o Caste as an Ideology in Indian Politics
o Case study of Caste Politics in Uttar Pradesh
o The dynamics of Caste Politics in Bihar

o **CHAPTER 3**
o Electoral Politics of Ponda Constituency
o Understanding the identity Politics of Goa
o Profile Of Ponda Constituency Assembly
o Electoral Trends in Ponda Constituency Assembly
o Analysing Ravi Naik's Political career and Leadership in Political Arena
o **CHAPTER 4**
o Data Analyses and Interpretation
o Introduction
o Background details of the Study Area
o Ponda Constituency Assembly
o Data findings and insights from the Survey
o **CHAPTER 5**
o The study concludes by summarizing key findings, insights and reflections.

1.8 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This Research will enable scholars as well as readers to understand the Caste politics scenario in the electoral politics of Goa. This research will allow people to deeply understand about the how caste voting pattern affecting the voters in their respective constituencies as well as to Ponda Constituency assembly. The Study will also enhance people's understanding of political awareness and consciousness with regards to politics as well with the caste politics. This research will try to explore how caste influences voting behavior, whether voter prioritize the caste-based preferences and what are the reasons and the factor which motivate their choices. Again, the study will help us to understand the interconnection between the caste and socio-economic indicator, including access to education, employment and other resources and the Role of the Caste Politics.

1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study plays a very important role in understanding the concept of caste and politics and how people are affected by it. Studying the relationship between caste and politics is crucial for comprehending how caste-based political dynamics impact individuals. Through such analysis, one can gain insights into how caste politics influences the lives and perspectives of people, shaping their social identities, access to opportunities, and overall well-being. It will help us to understand how caste-based politics often leads to the formation of vote banks, where the political parties focus on winning the support of castes. This research will be instrumental in gauging the extent to which individuals possess awareness and consciousness regarding the nuances of caste politics. This research aims to empower the youth by providing insights on how to avoid falling victim to caste politics. It seeks to guide them in making informed voting choices based on merit rather than supporting candidates who engage in caste-based Rhetoric.

1.10 RATIONALE FOR SELECTING THE TOPIC

Caste stands out as the predominant factor influencing voting behavior when compared to other factors. It's impact on electoral choices is notably significant, highlighting the overarching influence of caste considerations in shaping the voting preferences of individuals in the political landscape. Caste plays a crucial role in shaping political landscapes, influencing voter behavior, candidate selection, and policy formulation. Investigating the relationship between caste and politics provides insights into the functioning of political systems.

Caste operates as an Invisible factor. voters may not overtly disclose whether they have chosen a candidate based on caste affiliations. The influence of caste remains implicit, making it challenging to ascertain definitively whether individuals have voted in consideration of caste dynamics during elections. Understanding the role of caste in politics is essential for activists

and organizations working toward social change. It provides insights into strategies for addressing caste-based discrimination and promoting inclusivity.

Therefore, the study was conducted to obtain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and to obtain insights into how caste politics functions. The study aims to enhance awareness among people regarding the dynamics and implications of caste-based political phenomena. The research aimed to discourage the influence of caste politics in candidate selection, advocating for candidates chosen based on their competence to contribute to the welfare of the state and country. It seeks to deter the selection of candidates who exploit their caste identity for political advantages.

1.11 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Caste is an important issue in the electoral politics which everybody needs to be aware of where it is necessary to understand how the leaders use it and try to gain votes during the elections but Caste being a sensitive topic, with it there are certain limitations which are associated with it.

One of the limitations with this Research is the collection of data. Collecting a reliable data on Caste based Politics is very much a difficult task because of the sensitivity of this subject.

Another limitation which are associated with this Research is the respondents. Respondents may give the false information, or he/she will be hesitated to talk on this issue and there may be a lot of reasons because of which they don't want to talk, but one reason which can be listed out is the Upcoming Lok Sabha Elections.

Several individuals refrain from disclosing their caste affiliation, potentially resulting in discrepancies in the data and the data can be misled.

One more limitation can be Understanding the caste as a factor in politics won't allow us to understand this research because Caste doesn't operate itself, for that we have to understand

the concept which are associated with it such as class, Religion and Gender. Focusing and understanding the concept of Caste won't allow us to complete our research.

The Data which will be collected for the purpose of the study will be from small population consisting of 120 respondents because of time constraints thereby understanding the politics of the Majoritarian population of Ponda will not be possible.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Identity Politics in India

On one hand identity holds a symbol of privilege and purity and on other hand it upholds the symbol of Pollution and Indignity. Thus, both of these forms lead to construct the notion of the identity Politics. Particularly in India, the idea of Identity Politics has presence in its historical roots because of its Partition and the requirement of Separate electorate on the basis of Religion and Caste identities. Identity Politics is necessary in the democratic country because it gives marginalized section an opportunity to involve in power or in power sharing.

Identity politics has emerged as a powerful force in contemporary discourse, shaping conversations around social justice, diversity, and representation. It revolves around the assertion of individual and collective identities based on race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, and other markers. This Chapter explores the origins, evolution, complexities, and implications of identity politics, examining how it impacts society, politics, and the quest for inclusivity.

Over time, identity politics has evolved beyond its original contexts to encompass a wide array of social identities. It has become a tool for marginalized communities to demand justice, representation, and a reevaluation of power dynamics. Identity politics is not confined to specific regions but manifests globally, with each society grappling with its unique set of identity-related challenges. From debates around immigration and multiculturalism in the West to caste-based politics in South Asia, the nuances and manifestations vary across different cultural and historical contexts.

The debate here was why the Caste Mobilization has given utmost important. Kancha Ilaiah points out that during the postcolonial India democracy was mostly confined into the hand of Upper Caste. Dalit Political assertion have always been accused of identity politics. Earlier times Caste as a factor only used in the distribution of tickets to the and getting reservation benefits for SC, ST, and OBC. But now there is great feeling of debate that whether Caste Itself can become its own ideology.

In the 1990s, there was a belief that capital, markets, and democracies would erode the framework of identity politics. However, it was not recognized that they not only undermine the inherent foundations of identity but also give rise to new identities linked to both reactionary and emancipatory political assertions.

Identity politics, on one hand, empowers specific communities or segments within them democratically, but on the other hand, it disempowers individuals within those communities who may struggle to comprehend democratic discourse, resulting in their marginalized visibility within the group. In a democratic context, identity politics involves the inclusion of a few and the exclusion of others, driven by tendencies of inclusive exclusion.

In democracies, politically powerful groups often seize a significant portion of resources and developmental benefits, leaving little for the politically disempowered and marginalized. Socially subordinate or marginalized groups must actively cultivate a group identity to assert their rights to these resources and a share in the development. Yet, as global democratic experiences indicate, as each newly empowered marginalized group engages in identity politics, additional castes and communities emerge in the democratic arena, each seeking a share in the power structure. Consequently, in postcolonial societies, the realm for performative democracy, where caste identities wield influence, continues to broaden continually. (democracy and identity politics in India)

Identity politics has become a dynamic force reshaping societal norms and structures. Its evolution reflects a collective demand for recognition, justice, and inclusivity. While navigating the complexities of identity politics is essential, it offers an opportunity to build a more equitable world that embraces diversity and dismantles systemic inequalities. As societies continue to grapple with these complexities, the ongoing dialogue around identity politics remains crucial for fostering understanding and forging a path towards a more inclusive future.

2.2 Indian View of Caste

The well-known and dominant aspect of social organization in India is the Caste System. It is the most ascriptive system of Status and hierarchy. It has been of the oldest system of social organization in India. It is very much clear that one can know a much about of an individual or person with his occupation, education, his political and civic privileges, and other ritual behaviour by just knowing his Caste. "All important choices of an individual are determined by birth in a particular Caste or rather he has no choices". (Bhatt, 1975 p.2)

India adopted a democracy after India got independence in 1947 but there was doubt which was there in the minds of leaders, social reformers and intellectuals as to how democracy is going to work in a traditional, caste- ridden society. The leader contended that the Caste System had no relevance in democratic India and needed to be eliminated. Prime minister Nehru wrote: "In the social organization of today, Caste has no place left". (Bhatt, 1975 p.9)

Caste has a deeply entrenched institution, continues to promote endogamy among its members. It is being an organized entity, it steadfastly upholds and protects the occupational, economic, social and religious interests of its constituents. Despite being an evolving landscape for contemporary social- political philosophy, characterized by humanism and egalitarianism, the Caste system still prevails in Indian society as the foundation for the social stratification. While we talk about equality, when we talk about the caste system but the Caste system may appear

regressive, yet it operates as a uniquely crafted form of social hierarchy. It challenges the principle of equality based on birth, limiting opportunities for upwards or downward social mobility.

According to the leach he regarded the dominant Caste is an integral and universal element of the Rural India. In his view, the dominant caste's members not only had land but also outnumbered the rest in number. Leach also believed that in Pre-British India, landowners engaged in competition with one another for the labour and services of other castes. Given that caste was inseparably linked to, if not inconceivable without, a system of hereditary division of labour, the division of people into various castes compelled them to cooperate in order to carry out fundamental social and economic tasks.

The Caste in India has four routes. a) Racial b) occupational and economic c) migration d) religious. Prehistoric India witnessed a succession of diverse populations, starting with the Negritos, followed by the Proto Austroloids, Dravidians, Mongoloids, and ultimately the 'Vedic Aryans,' often considered Nordic in race. The Proto Austroloids are believed to have migrated from Palestine. Present-day representatives of the Negritos include the Kadars, Pulayans, Irulas, and Jarawas inhabiting the Deccan and Andaman hills. The Austroloids find representation in the Mundas, Santhals, Kols, and Bhils residing in the hills of Central India. The Mongoloid family is notably present among the hill tribes in the northeastern regions.

In terms of both size and population, the Dravidians emerged as the predominant race in prehistoric India, except in the northeast. They inhabited a vast stretch from Sind to Cheranadu. Scholars such as Munshi, Nehru, Nigam, and Sagar emphasize the advanced Dravidian civilization, language, and culture that flourished in Northern India during this era.

Around 1400 B.C., the Vedic Aryans undertook a migration from Eranvej (present-day Russian Turkestan) through Iran and Afghanistan, eventually reaching Punjab. Scholars such as Goetz,

Nehru, Watts, Burnouw, and Munshi propose that the Vedic Aryans, akin to the Achaeans and Dorians and sharing a racial lineage with the Germanic population in northern Europe, exterminated or enslaved the Dravidians. The Rig Veda serves as a historical account of this conquest.

According to numerous experts on the Indus civilization, the Light-colored Aryans eradicated the black Dravidians, who were practitioners of phallic worship. The Indus civilization, characterized by its comprehensive 'pūram' (whole) structure, was dismantled, and surviving Dravidians were either killed or enslaved.

As the Aryans expanded eastward and southward from Punjab, their thin spread made the complete annihilation of the Dasyus impractical. Consequently, a shift in policy occurred, leading to the domestication and enslavement of the conquered Dasyus within villages. This pivotal moment marked the initiation of caste gradation in India, where the invading Aryans not only subdued the Dasyu clans but also established a hierarchical structure among them.

The initial phase in the evolution of the Indian caste system is characterized by the stratification based on conquered races and distinctions in color. As per the Zend Avestha, Pre-Vedic Aryans in Iran initially structured themselves into a three-fold clan division based on occupation, resembling global clan and trade groupings. It's important to avoid confusing this arrangement with India's caste gradation system, recognizing distinct historical developments in societal organization across different regions. The Indian caste gradation system originated from the division between the conquered slave (Dasa) race and the Aryan race. The black Dravidians were labeled Dasa Varna, the slave caste, while the conquerors were part of the Arya Varna, the master class, as recorded in contemporary Aryan scriptures, acknowledged by scholars like Ranade, Sagar, Fedoseyev, Nehru, Ambedkar, and Burnouw.

Caste's second foundation lies in occupational and economic factors, a common element in ancient civilizations worldwide, spanning from Egypt to China. The dominant ethnic group compels the weaker, conquered, or enslaved group to embrace lower and menial occupations. The notion of pollution exists to varying extents in civilizations globally. The dominant ethnic group often associates occupational pollution, taboos, and cleanliness concepts with the legitimization of segregation and caste, clan, or tribe grading. Occupations like cleaning in Punjab, tanning in Central India, and toddy tapping in Pandya land led to segregation due to perceived pollution.

Caste gradation's third origin in India lies in migration, spurred by significant socio-political and religious transformations over the past three millennia. These upheavals triggered the movement of various ethnic and subethnic groups, creating a complex web of migrations that spanned the entire country. Dandekar cites examples like Ambastha, Vaidehaka, and Magadha, where territorial names transformed into caste or clan designations post-migration. In Tamil Nadu, the Sourashtras, in Andhra, the Mathuras, and in Kerala, the Elavas and Syrians represent numerous migrational groups that integrated into the subsequent Aryan caste hierarchy.

2.3 The Reformist and Radical Views on Caste: Gandhi and Ambedkar

 Throughout the centuries, caste rigidities and discrimination intensified, leading to a corresponding increase in resentment against such practices in modern India. The socio-religious reform movement, also known as the Indian renaissance, addressed this issue through the efforts of dedicated social reformers of the time. Gandhi and Ambedkar, had pointed out how they differed in their approach despite having similar concern for harijan.

While Gandhi aimed to rectify the flaws in the Varna system, addressing discrimination based on ancestral occupations, Ambedkar advocated for the elimination of castes by rejecting the shashtras and their divine origin concept. Gandhi acknowledged the shastra's interpolations

and aberrations but believed in their eternal message of goodness. He accepted the timeless spiritual essence of the Vedas and other scriptures, emphasizing the need for the message to resonate with conscience and reason.

In contrast, Ambedkar, driven by political considerations, sought to bring untouchables into the political mainstream. Gandhi appeared more traditional and moderate in his approach toward untouchability, while Ambedkar leaned toward a radical stance. His vision aimed at integrating untouchables into Indian society in a modern manner.

Gandhi maintained that the value of a religion should be assessed based on its positive practices and core ideologies, rather than its deviations. He viewed Varna as a relevant concept, as long as it wasn't associated with the sin of untouchability. Gandhi asserted that untouchability was not a tenet of the Varna system. Essentially, through the concept of Varna, Gandhi aimed to emphasize the importance of dignifying labour, a quality he believed was absent in Hindu society, exacerbated by the caste system.

Gandhi's detractors often accuse him of not vehemently opposing caste and Varna. However, questioning his sincerity and compassion for the upliftment of the untouchables would be a serious error. In contrast, Ambedkar emphasized equality of opportunity, economic, social, and political status, diverging from Gandhi's vision of equality among all Varnas. In the post-independence era, modern India has politically aligned more with Ambedkar's vision than Gandhi's.

Given the varied theoretical assumptions and interpretations surrounding the origin of caste, it proves more feasible to explain caste and the caste system than to define them conclusively. Contrary to common belief, caste appears to be a dynamic social phenomenon rather than a static social group. The discussions in the following chapters on the socio-political and economic dimensions of caste, leading to caste conflicts, clearly highlight this dynamism.

A notable difference between Indian and Western approaches to caste lies in the former's emphasis on analyzing caste and the caste system in a socio-religious context, while the latter examines caste through the Western lens of a class structure based on hierarchy and status. However, the source of their confusion stems from the fact that while class status is acquired, caste status is entirely ascribed. Based on an informed extrapolation of historical facts and circumstances, it can be reasonably presumed that caste is an offshoot of the Vedic system of Varna Vyavastha, likely beginning its evolution during the Vedic and Later Vedic periods.

2.4 Caste and Social Class in the Indian Politics

Society naturally consists of different social groups and so there has been not a moment in history of history kind when different classes did not constitute the socio-political reality of Indian society. classes are distinguished on various accounts like economic, social and cultural or on other ethnic lines.

Anthropologist Harold A. Gould, in his examination of class formation in India, highlights the emergence of a three-tiered stratification system in rural areas. He categorizes these tiers as the forward classes (comprising higher castes), backward classes (encompassing middle and lower castes), and Harijans (representing the very low caste).

According to anthropologist Miriam Sharma, "Large landholders who employ hired labour are overwhelmingly from the upper Castes, while the agricultural workers themselves come from the ranks of the lowest- predominantly untouchable- Castes."

In recent years, the mobilization of caste has significantly influenced Indian politics, particularly since the Mandal Commission's introduction of reservations for OBCs in government jobs in 1989. This development has left a lasting impact on the trajectory of national politics. For a Marxist and a Communist, it becomes imperative not only to analyze the increasing role of caste assertion in Indian political life but also to outline strategies for

strengthening the unity of the working class in pursuit of the People's Democratic Revolution. A clear understanding of this crucial phenomenon is essential to mitigate the potential disruptive impact of caste mobilization on the unity of the working class. It is with these considerations in mind that this issue must be addressed with utmost seriousness.

It is crucial, from the outset, to dispel a common fallacy that seeks to create a dichotomy between caste and class. Some vested interests often advise Communists that, given their belief in class divisions, they should not concern themselves with caste-related issues. However, such a simplistic distinction between caste and class not only oversimplifies the matter but is also divorced from the present-day reality in India.

The ongoing process of developing modern capitalist classes in India occurs within the existing caste stratification. Therefore, the dilemma is not a matter of class versus caste but rather the coexistence of modern capitalist classes within the inherited caste framework.

Within our society, the most exploited classes often coincide with the most socially oppressed castes. The struggle against class exploitation and the fight against social oppression are interconnected and mutually reinforcing, as these sections face dual oppression. Recognizing this complementarity is crucial, and based on this acknowledgment, the Communist movement in our country must integrate the struggle against class exploitation with the battle against social oppression. This integration is essential for forging and strengthening the firm unity of the toilers to advance towards People's Democracy.

Before delving into understanding the nature and characteristics of caste mobilization in present-day political life, it's necessary to briefly examine why caste divisions and social oppression persist despite the claims made by ruling classes in the post-independence decades to overcome them.

Numerous works discuss the evolution and sustenance of the caste system in India, offering diverse conclusions. While some scholars connect it with a discussion of Marx's Asiatic Mode of Production, our discussion does not delve into the origins or tenacity of the caste system. For our purposes, we recognize the caste system, in Marxist terms, as the superstructure of an economic base. Caste and Class are interrelated when it comes to the politics of Caste.

With the onset of modernization during British rule, including advancements like railways, the anticipation of the old societal order disintegrating into modern class divisions, as theorized by Karl Marx, did not unfold as expected. The colonial administration aimed to exploit India's people and economy based on their backwardness, necessitating the preservation of rural land relations, with modifications for revenue collection, without disrupting economic or social structures.

The British also sought to prevent the emergence of a strong indigenous Indian capitalist class, leading to an alliance with feudal landlords to ensure political survival. This alliance resulted in the imposition of minimal modern capitalist relations on existing feudal land relations, sustaining the caste system.

Another critical aspect in comprehending the persistent caste stratification is the Social Reform Movement, marked by several anti-caste movements with political significance. Jyotiba Phule, a key figure in this movement, fervently championed justice for the untouchables. His Satyashodhak movement fiercely opposed the untruth, injustice, and hypocrisy of the Brahmin-dominated Hindu social order.

While Jyotiba's movement ideologically attacked the ancient and feudal superstructure, its impact did not extend to the essential agrarian relations based on feudal land structures supporting this superstructure. Despite significantly raising awareness against caste

exploitation, it fell short of achieving elimination due to its inability to mobilize the peasantry for an agrarian revolution.

A parallel narrative characterizes Ambedkar's endeavors. This relentless fighter, exposing upper-caste hypocrisies on behalf of the Dalits and critiquing Congress policies, ultimately advocated his followers to embrace Buddhism.

One of the most important factors of the traditional Indian society was the relation between the political power of royalty and the order of productivity on the basis of Caste. Due to the advancement in technology and other factor it affects the world of work and occupations in several ways. "Modern social theorists like Durkheim and Marx believed, on different grounds, that class identity tended to be a large in scale and gradually broke down and dissolved more localized and segmented traditional identities with which people worked in Politics." (Kaviraj, 1997, p.172)

The fundamental principle of traditional stratification centered on Caste, while the modern industrial system revolves around Class. One of the prominent groups in Indian politics is undoubtedly the peasantry. Let's examine how the peasant community in Uttar Pradesh has engaged with electoral politics in the state. Marxist expectations included the gradual differentiation of peasants into distinct classes—rich, middle, and poor peasants, along with a lower class of agricultural labourers lacking landed property.

The anticipation was that their politics would reflect these divisions. However, across large regions of the country, peasants did not conform to the anticipated processes of class differentiation in their political conduct. This challenges two straightforward generalizations: first, assuming economic differentiations translate into political actions, and second, asserting that the absence of political differences indicates a lack of economic differentiation. Despite

not breaking into distinct class fractions, the peasantry has also struggled to unite on a national scale.

Caste and Class dynamics permeate both rural and urban settings, extending beyond mere ritual hierarchies and economic affiliations. Caste involves more than ritual ranking, while Class is not solely defined by shared economic and occupational interests. Both Caste and Class exhibit collective and individual characteristics, demonstrating aspects of stability and adaptability. It's crucial to note that caste is not being supplanted by Class; instead, Caste continues to undergo significant transformations, carving a niche for itself in unconventional and secular aspects of social, political, and economic spheres.

Historically, Indian society has been recognized for its association with the concept of "status summation," where an individual's Caste, determined by birth, encapsulates their standing in various other domains. This perspective implies that someone with a lower position in the Caste hierarchy is likely to hold lower status in other societal hierarchies, including economic and political realms.

Class distinctions, based on economic factors, contribute to political stratification. The interests of various economic classes, including the rich, middle class, and poor, often align or conflict, shaping the political landscape. Economic policies, welfare measures, and development agendas are influenced by these Class dynamics.

In recent years, Caste mobilization has significantly influenced Indian politics, especially since the Mandal Commission's introduction of reservations for OBCs in 1989. For Marxists and Communists, understanding and addressing the growing role of Caste assertion is crucial for achieving People's Democratic Revolution. It's essential to dispel the fallacy pitting caste against Class.

The Caste system's persistence is rooted in the inadequacy of the ruling classes during the freedom struggle, compromising with feudal interests and failing to address Caste differentiation at its roots. The bourgeoisie's compromise with imperialism and landlordism further perpetuated social oppression. The social reform movement, led by figures like Jyotiba Phule and Ambedkar, failed to achieve its objectives due to its inability to target agrarian revolution.

The post-independence era witnessed a failure to complete the tasks of the democratic revolution, perpetuating semi-feudal relations and reinforcing Caste consciousness through the electoral system. The ruling classes' refusal to introduce proportional representation maintained the Caste-based appeal in politics. While reservations offer some relief, they are not a comprehensive solution.

The emergence of a modern state led to different sections demanding equality, but as economic disparities increased, a scramble for resources among various groups ensued. The present Caste assertion has a positive aspect of growing consciousness against social oppression, but there's also an attempt to confine it within Caste parameters by some leaders.

The dual nature of caste assertion reflects a duality of social consciousness among the oppressed. Communists aim to integrate the struggles against social oppression and Class exploitation for a wider class struggle to transform the socio-economic system and initiate agrarian revolution. Despite supporting reservations, Communists emphasize that it's not the final solution, and meaningful emancipation requires a sweeping agrarian revolution.

Castes and Class inherently constitute interconnected dimensions of the prevailing social fabric. Notably, a wealthy class of peasants has arisen, primarily comprising former tenants (ex-rayots) from the upper echelons of intermediate agricultural castes. Additionally, individuals from formerly landowning upper Castes have transitioned to self-cultivation in

agriculture. The politicization of Caste identity, even as it weakens in social and ritual spheres, has taken the shape of a convenient means to seek political favors. It must be also be recognized at the same time that class doesn't exist in vacuum rather it asserts more strongly when see in relation to dynamics of Caste.

2.5 Caste Politics in India

India has maintained an open democratic political system founded on universal adult franchise, conducting regular elections with active participation of political parties. The functioning of the democratic process in India has illuminated the intricate connection between politics and society. Politics in democratic societies, both generally and specifically, involves influencing and reflecting the social structure.

India is endeavoring to reconcile a modern democratic political system with a social structure deeply rooted in ancient culture. Despite the imposition of a contemporary democratic political system, many ancient social structures persist, leading to a dynamic in Indian society characterized by a conflict between emerging democratic politics and the enduring loyalties to the country's past. Additionally, there is a significant shift in the material foundations of contemporary Indian society, marked by the country's transition towards a capitalist economy. The growth of capitalism is evident in the commercialization of the rural economy, market-oriented production of commodities, and the emergence of capitalist farming in various regions. Although the pace of capitalist development varies across regions, the overall direction is towards the establishment of a rural capitalist economy integrated into India's broader capitalist development.

Crucially, the transformation of contemporary Indian society is primarily instigated by the Indian State. Acting as the agent of change, the State derives its legitimacy from the democratic mandate of the people. Politics plays a paramount role in driving societal changes, contributing

to the intricate interactions between politics and society. A large segment of the population, grappling with social and economic discrimination, turns to the State for protection and survival. Simultaneously, vulnerable groups seek safeguarding, while the privileged and powerful aim to influence state institutions and resources to protect and advance their material interests. The central struggle in India revolves around controlling state power through the democratic will of the people, making political parties and elections pivotal aspects of this complex societal dynamic.

However, this interactive and reflective nature of politics is not guaranteed, and empirical observations suggest that politics can sometimes adopt a passive role, mirroring social forces. The dynamic between politics and society can lead to conflicts, especially in transitional societies where social structures, institutions, relationships, roles, and identities are in flux. The complexities of this relationship are more pronounced in transitional societies compared to polarized ones. In transitional societies like India, grappling with various levels of relationships and the ongoing struggle between old and new norms, the analysis framework must consider the stage of transition and the intricate relationship dynamics between society and politics amid change.

The term "Caste" can mean three different things:"varna,""jati" and "jati cluster." Every time when we hear when the elections are concluded or after the results of election comes out scholars, voters and even sometimes politicians asserts that this election signals the demise of Caste- based Politics. "The influence of the caste (as we shall see) remained substantial enough that is unlikely to have diminished over time. (Kothari, 2016, p.28)

In a democracy, this narrative is greeted positively, emphasizing the idea that citizens should transcend their inherent sentiments and select public representatives based on individual merit, track record, and the potential to serve their constituency. Caste has been a major factor which

has been linked to the parties, the Government and the elections. One's Caste became a ladder one can rose to the heights of power in Politics.

Instead of merely choosing candidates based on Caste or religion, the focus is on realizing the democratic ideal and promoting ethical citizenship. In the pursuit of these principles, it is customary to assess the role of categories like caste after each election. "Where Caste itself becomes a political category, it is futile to argue as to whether Caste uses politics or politics uses Caste." (Kothari, 2010, p. 5)

It is also necessary to remember that the Caste System is not dead and it is not buried in history. As Gupta acknowledges that "The Caste System is Dead, long live Caste identity". (Gurjar, 2019, p.26) Although Gupta may not outright deny that the Caste system might be long obsolete, he acknowledges that politics centered on Caste identity remains vibrant. Interestingly, it has been favorable, especially for the traditional upper Castes, during the tenure of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

To illustrate this assertion, one can simply examine the number of chief ministers, ministers, and other significant public representatives originating from the upper castes. Furthermore, both the state machinery and local bureaucracy in BJP-governed states like Uttar Pradesh (UP) predominantly consist of individuals from traditional upper Castes. Another indicator highlighting the persistence of Caste in politics is the fact that only two Members of Parliament from the Scheduled Caste (SC) category won from unreserved constituencies on a BJP ticket, while the Bahujan Samaj Party fielded 15 SC candidates in unreserved seats.

These instances strongly indicate the enduring influence of Caste in our electoral system. In contemporary politics, Caste has become a channel through which individuals of the same Caste gain entry to various benefits such as education, local employment opportunities,

affordable healthcare, legal assistance during crises, and support from social activists in times of trouble, among other privileges.

While they connect through the internet and social media where the meet each other Caste people. Again, the people of the same Caste use the Money power and also muscle power in favor of their own candidate by using the Caste as a medium. Once again, the impact of religious divisions on consolidating the votes of different Castes needs to be examined. "The death of the Caste System has itself given rise to a new politics of Caste identities that may seem castless but actually draws on the legacy of the Caste system" (Gurjar, 2019, p. 78).

During election campaigns, votes are sought on the basis of Caste, despite being prohibited by existing election laws in India. Caste considerations heavily influence the selection of candidates and play a significant role in appealing to voters throughout the election campaigns. Candidates, whether directly or indirectly, solicit votes by invoking caste-based slogans.

2.6 Caste as an Ideology in Politics

Various justifications have been put forth to rationalize the utilization of caste by political parties for political mobilization and electoral purposes. Advocates argue that political parties must operate within a specific social milieu, and the loyalties of the people are rooted in social identities and categories, forming the basis for political operations. In the context of India, where the social structure is Caste-based, political parties cannot afford to overlook this social reality. This perspective, often endorsed by functionalists who lean towards maintaining the status quo, contends that caste is an intrinsic factor in Indian society, and politics cannot be shielded from its influence.

The modern political system, with its foundation in universal adult franchise and competitive politics, aspires to secularize traditional social loyalties and categories. While this

secularization is deemed possible, it encounters challenges within the entrenched Caste-based social structure of India.

The functionalist perspective posits that the transformation of the old caste roles into new roles of participation through castes will occur in the democratic process. It assumes that as political participation intensifies, the form of the Caste system may persist, but its essence will undergo a transformation, leading to the emergence of a secularized political landscape.

Marxists draw a distinction between surface appearances and underlying realities, emphasizing that social relations are shaped in the production process, grounded in a material base. In India's journey toward capitalism, where pre-capitalist relations persist, Caste is utilized as an ideological tool in politics to legitimize capitalist exploitation. The democratic political process is intricately linked with capitalist development, and the conflicts arising from this path are redirected into Caste confrontations. Capitalist ideologues present caste as an inherent reality of Indian society, fostering divisions among exploited peasants and workers through caste conflicts.

An illustrative instance of caste mobilization by the ruling class's political machinery occurred when the Congress Party, perturbed by the Communist Party's success in the 1957 Kerala State Assembly elections, rallied various castes and communities. Within two years, the Congress Party orchestrated opposition leading to the dismissal of the legitimately elected Communist Government. This exemplifies how ruling classes manipulate caste as an ideological tool in political battles against forces challenging the exploitative capitalist system.

The oppression of landless agricultural workers by affluent peasants is rationalized as a caste phenomenon. Landowners from 'high' and 'middle' castes leverage the State apparatus to extract surplus value, defending exploitative land relations with State support. The Caste factor becomes a pivotal element in politics for the rural elite to perpetuate social exploitation.

This utilization of the Caste factor is not limited to the rural wealthy; even the political representatives of the ruling classes employ it to safeguard their economic and social interests in the governance of the country.

However, the functionalist predictions have been proven incorrect, as over the past thirty-eight years, castes have not only retained their strength in politics but have also become more pronounced. Intense Caste competition and confrontation have become stark realities of Indian politics. The ongoing struggle for political power based on caste has resulted in the fragmentation and division of Indian society along caste lines. Consequently, the involvement of castes in politics has hindered the realization of a truly secular political environment in India.

1.6 A Case study of Caste Politics in Uttar Pradesh

In Uttar Pradesh (UP), Dalits, positioned at the lowest echelon of the Hindu caste hierarchy, have historically faced marginalization and subordination from the upper castes. This study examines if broader identities like Dalits, Bahujan, and specific caste identities such as Chamar, have played a crucial role as markers in developing a robust identity and advancing political empowerment through the avenue of identity politics. The Bahujan Samaj Party which was founded by Kanshi Ram in 1984 with the aim of politically empowering the Dalits as well as Bahujan people. Thus, the party was successful in its target. Mayawati became the chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh for the four times. It has helped the vast sections of the Dalits and other marginalized groups in the state of Uttar Pradesh.

The BSP originates from a social action movement initiated by Kanshi Ram, namely the Backward and Minority Community Employees' Federation (BAMCEF) and the Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti (DS-4) in 1982, with a stronger presence in rural areas. Characterized as an Ambedkarite rather than a Gandhian party, it advocates confrontation with upper Castes to secure a fair share of power. Kanshi Ram contends that the oppressed sections and minorities

have been denied economic and political influence controlled by an elite Brahmin minority. The BSP aims to mobilize support from Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Backward Castes (BCs) in Uttar Pradesh, and it gained significant traction by contributing to the defeat of the BJP in the November 1993 Assembly elections. The two Communist parties, primarily concentrated in East Uttar Pradesh, have not held significant electoral importance. The Bahujan Samaj Party stands out as a distinctive political innovation in the Indian political landscape, asserting its mission to unite all Dalits across the nation under a single banner.

The Politics of Caste was not only limited to the Bahujan Samaj party. Kanshi Ram used to believe that "unless and until the consciousness and oppressed was put forward visibly in public debate and was prepare to clash with culture and consciousness of the enemy in public, a society of equals would remain an illusion". (Narayan, 2015, p. 62). However, in this democratic assertion, only a few castes within a highly heterogeneous population have gained visibility, resulting in not only socio-economic but also political inequality. The political empowerment process initiated by the BSP in the 1980s and 1990s benefited only a select group of Dalit Castes, such as Chamar, Pasi, Valmiki, and Kori, leaving a large number of castes marginalized. Despite the empowerment of certain castes, many within the Dalit community remain voiceless and invisible. Kanshi Ram's slogans, such as "Brahman, Bania, Thakur chor, baki sab DS-4," had a significant impact on politics. (Sharma, 1994, p, 153)

The dominant section among the empowered castes, unwilling to share power, has created a divide within the Dalit community. Even within this dominant caste, an elite segment has leveraged identity politics to control identity resources, preventing them from reaching the marginalized sections of their own community. Consequently, a class hierarchy has emerged within the same Caste, where the upper class dictates the community's narrative, risking misrepresentation and disjointed symbolic identities.

The Bhartiya Kranti Dal (BKD) and Bhartiya Lok Dal (BLD) established by Charan Singh in 1967, underwent transformations. A faction of it contributed to the formation of the Janata Party in 1977 and later evolved into the SJP/JD in 1991. Dismissed by Baxter as a "flash" phenomenon, this group's significance lies in its representation of both small and large landowners in class terms and backward castes (BCs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in Caste terms. It effectively combined horizontal and vertical mobilization over time.

The Samajwadi Party, once synonymous with secularism and social justice, has transformed into a Caste-centric, dynastic entity. The inevitable progression of Mandalisation has led to growing fragmentation among Other Backward Classes (OBCs). Previously benefiting from OBC consolidation in the 1990s, the Samajwadi Party now primarily represents Yadavs.

While upper OBCs like Yadavs and Kurmis flourished under Mandal, the Most Backward Classes (MBCs) pursue their independent agenda, contributing to their migration to other political parties. The shift from ideology to identity politics has led to a discernible decay, with the Samajwadi Party now embodying political criminalization and patronage of opportunistic business figures.

In the 2007 UP elections, the BSP surprised everyone by openly forming an alliance with the Brahmins. Having already secured the support of poor Muslims, it achieved a full majority in the UP Vidhan Sabha, a feat not seen in two decades. This strategic move echoed the Congress winning formula from the 1952, 1957, and 1962 elections. Contrary to expectations, the BSP now asserts that this coalition will ensure victory in future elections. Each party conducts "Jati Sammelana" to consolidate votes from specific Castes and gain an advantage over others.

2.7 The dynamics of caste politics in Bihar

A state that is economically less affluent in India. The total electorate strength in Bihar was 3,49,30,842 in 1977, which increased to 3,97,13,485 in 1980, 4,33,31,010 in 1984, and nearly 5.40 crore in the 1989 parliamentary elections when the voting age was reduced to 18. While the electorate can be categorized based on factors such as caste, religion, and class, caste considerations hold paramount importance. Since 1977, when the Janata government introduced caste-based reservations in Bihar, three primary caste groups have emerged: forward castes, backward castes, and scheduled castes and tribes.

The forward castes, including Brahmins, Bhumihars, Rajputs, and Kayasthas, historically enjoyed privileges like land, official positions, literacy, economic prosperity, and social respect, leading to political dominance. Despite changes, they still wield disproportionate political significance. Kayasthas, constituting only 1% of Bihar's population, gained historical importance during the Mughal period due to their proficiency in Urdu and English. Influential in politics, leaders like Sachchidanand Sinha, Rajendra Prasad, and Jai Prakash Narain belonged to this Caste. Despite a decline since the 1972 elections, they played a significant role until then.

The marginalization of Kayasthas in Bihar's politics is attributed to their numerical insignificance, lack of muscle power, and a service-oriented, politically unorganized majority. The evolving political landscape, marked by violence and changed dynamics, renders them less competitive. Despite constituting 5.5% of Bihar's representatives in the ninth Lok Sabha, they face challenges adapting to the altered political scenario. Brahmins, comprising nearly 7% of the population, are politically categorized into Maithils and non-Maithils. While Maithils are concentrated in northern districts, non-Maithils reside in other parts of the state, particularly in middle Bihar. Even though figures like Sachchidanand Sinha and Lai Muni Choube entered

politics, they failed to establish Brahminical dominance in Bihar's political landscape. Instead, they were limited to specific Brahmin pockets. The Caste's political influence in Bihar becomes evident from the 1960s.

While Brahmins hold significant roles in Bihar's bureaucracy, judiciary, and politics, there is a clear divide within the caste between Maithils and non-Maithils. Despite this, 5.5% of Bihar's representatives in the ninth Lok Sabha are from the Brahmin caste. Notably, in the 1989 Lok Sabha elections, the elected MPs from this caste, Raj Mangal Mishra (Gopalganj), Janardan Tewari (Siwan), and Bhogendra Jha (Madhubani), were affiliated with different political parties - Janata Dal, Bharatiya Janata Party, and Communist Party of India, respectively.

Until the early 1970s, the backward castes, constituting nearly 60% of the total voters, lacked political significance. In the late 1930s, the formation of Triveni Sangh, comprising Yadavas, Kurmies, and Koeries, marked a pivotal moment. Politically influential backward castes include Yadavas, Kurmies, Koeries, Baniyas, Kahars, Dhanuks, Nonias, Telis, Suris, Kanus, Lohars, Binds, Hajam, among which Yadavas, Kurmies, and Koeries stand out. Karpuri Thakur, a Hajam, played a crucial role in uniting these castes, especially after introducing reservations for them in government services in 1977.

This move triggered a significant shift in Bihar's politics, delineating a fourfold division: forward castes, backward castes, Harijan, and regional (tribal) politics. The Congress Party leaned on forward castes, as evidenced by allocating over 70% of its 1989 Lok Sabha election tickets to them. In contrast, the Janata Dal allocated more than 80% of its tickets to non-forward castes under Laloo Prasad Yadav's influence.

The distribution of Lok Sabha tickets by various political parties underscored the considerable political influence of Yadavas, Koeries, Kurmis, and Banias, owing to their numerical strength and growing assertiveness. Among these, Yadavas emerged as the political elite among the

backward castes, with leaders like Ram Lakhan Singh Yadav gaining prominence in the 1960s under Chief Minister K.B. Sahay's patronage. However, the rise of Brahmins in Bihar politics has altered this landscape.

The rise of backward caste politics spearheaded by Karpoori Thakur weakened his political influence. With Karpuri Thakur's demise creating a void in Bihar's backward caste politics, new leaders such as Laloo Prasad Yadav, Nitish Kumar, and Jai Prakash Yadav emerged to fill the vacuum.

According to the 1981 census, the scheduled castes in Bihar make up 14.45 percent of the total population, and their population ratio has consistently increased from one census to the next. In 1951, the percentage was 12.67, rising to 14.07 in 1961, 14.11 in 1971, and reaching 14.45 in 1981. The numerical strength of the scheduled castes is 101.42 lakh, and their district-wise population percentage ranges from 9.8 percent to 24.4 percent, with Palamau district as an example.

In Bihar, the district with the highest concentration of scheduled caste population is Palamau, totaling 4,78,225. Conversely, districts with sparse scheduled caste population include Singhbhum, Ranchi, Santhai Pargana, and Bhagalpur. The major constituents of the scheduled castes are Chamar, Dusadh, Dhobi, Dom, Pasi, and Musahar, with the top five castes making up 71 percent numerically. The political consciousness of scheduled castes has increased with general elections, evidenced by a rise in contestants: 35 in 1967, 52 in 1971, 40 in 1977, 56 in 1980, 66 in 1984, and 70 in 1989. Notably, national parties haven't fielded scheduled caste candidates from the 41 general seats in the state for the past 40 years. Key scheduled caste leaders from Bihar include Ram Bilas Paswan, Meera Kumar, Mahabir Paswan, Dumar Lai Beitha, and others.

In the 1989 Lok Sabha general elections, national parties like Janata Dal, BJP, Congress(I), CPI, etc., fielded candidates from Pasi, Dhobi, Dusadh, and Chamar castes. The Congress(I) fielded eight candidates, Janata Dal six, Bharatiya Janata Party three, and CPI and CPI(M) one each. Notable losers among scheduled caste contestants on the Congress(I) ticket were Mahavir Paswan, Ram Bhagat Paswan, B L Baitha, Meera Kumar, Kuer Ram, Ram Swaroop Ram, and Kamala Kumari. BJP's scheduled caste candidates who lost included Kameshwar Paswan and Ramdeo Ram, and the only CPI loser was Janaki Paswan. These candidates belonged to Dhobi, Chamar, Pasi, and Dusadh castes.

Ranchi, Singbhum, and Santhai Pargana in Bihar have the highest concentration of scheduled tribes, comprising 54.4 percent, 44.1 percent, and 36.5 percent, respectively, according to the 1981 census. The scheduled tribe population in Bihar totals 58,10,867, making up 8.3 percent of the total population.

During the 1967 Lok Sabha elections, there were a total of 32 contestants from tribal constituencies, with the Congress fielding five, Swatantra Party three, Bharatiya Jana Sangh five, SSP one, CPI one, and PSP one, while the remaining 16 were independents. The scenario changed in 1977, with only 28 contestants, of which 18 were independents. In 1980, there were 51 contestants from the Jharkhand area, compared to 55 in 1984. Initially, six constituencies were reserved for scheduled tribes in Bihar in 1952, which decreased to five from 1957 onwards, namely Rajmahal, Dumka, Singbhum, Khunti, and Lohardagga. In the 1989 Lok Sabha elections, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha and Congress each won two seats, and BJP won one. The JMM and Congress candidates who won were Simon Marandi from Rajmahal, Shibu Soren from Dumka, Bagun Sumbrui from Singbhum, Sumati Oraon from Lohardagga, and Karia Munda from Khunti (BJP). In 1989, the JMM contested in non-reserved constituencies, winning one seat (Jamshedpur), and BJP showed significant interest in tribal politics, securing one reserved seat with the slogan of a separate Vananchal state.

The democratic experiment in India has faltered in its aim to secularize politics due to the insufficient proactive intervention by political leadership against entrenched traditional social categories. Politics has become a reflection of caste and religious affiliations, hindering the secularization process. Caste's influence extends beyond elections to permeate the functioning of the State apparatus, creating bias in favor of dominant castes. In essence, the role of caste in Indian politics has disrupted the processes of secularization, fostering State apparatus favoritism towards socially dominant castes.

CHAPTER III

ELECTORAL POLITICS OF PONDA CONSTITUENCY

3.1 Understanding the Identity Politics of Goa

Though the debate of identity won't be discussed extensively in the Goan politics but it is one of the important aspects in the politics of Goa. Goa being the smallest state with many features related to its history and its culture is usually regarded as the favourite destination for leisure-seeking tourists. But the issue is like any other state the politics of Goa is much more complex, having several issues.

In a region where identity politics takes precedence over political ideology, caste has subtly emerged as the decisive factor influencing election results in Goa. The debate over Goan identity has surfaced prominently during key political milestones in the state's history, such as the liberation of Goa in 1961, the significant opinion poll of 1967, and the achievement of statehood in 1987. Nevertheless, whenever Goan culture and identity were brought up, numerous individuals endeavored to define and describe them.

The prominence of identity as a political issue in Goa is not unique, as debates regarding the identity of individual states in India, regionalism, and similar themes are common throughout the country. However, the identity question in Goa can be viewed as distinctive, given the state's peculiar historical background.

The unique historical trajectory has given rise to a somewhat distinct culture, which not only plays a significant role in identity debates but also forms the focal point of the entire discussion. Therefore, exploring the intersections of identity and culture becomes crucial. There has been a continual effort among Goans to discern the essence of Goan identity.

In a state where identity politics takes precedence over political ideology, caste has consistently been the preeminent factor in shaping the political landscape of Goa. Recognizing the potency of caste identity politics in elections, political parties have subtly and over the years been adeptly navigating the intricacies of the caste matrix.

Goa is home to People of diverse religions and Caste. Given the relatively small population, it becomes imperative for political parties to consider and address the concerns of the people. It is also the responsibility of the party to attentively listen to and redress the grievances of minority groups. In the last assembly election, the total number of voters was approximately 1,164,224 lakhs. However, the voter turnout was only 79.61%.

3.2 Profile of Ponda Constituency Assembly

This topic Presents the demographic profile of the Ponda Constituency Assembly in terms of its size population, total voters, Gender dimensions, etc. Again, the changes in demographic profile are also highlighted. Ponda is one of the 12 talukas in Goa. Ponda taluka is comprised of four constituencies that is Priol, Shiroda, Ponda, and Marcaim.

Govind Gaude serves as the legislator for the Priol constituency and holds ministerial positions in the fields of Art and Culture, Sports, and Rural Development Agency. Ramakrishna, also known as Sudin Davalikar, represents the Marcaim constituency and serves as the minister for Power, New and Renewable Energy, and Housing.

Subhash Shirodkar is the legislator for Shiroda and holds the ministerial portfolio for Water Resource Development, Co-Operation, and Provedoria. Ravi Naik, the legislator of Ponda, is the minister for Agriculture, Handicrafts, and Civil Supplies. Moreover, there are approximately 18 panchayats within the Ponda taluka along with one municipal council. During the previous Assembly elections of Goa, the total voting was 78.385%. In the previous

Assembly elections, a total of 32,157 voted in the elections. Of these, 16,271 were from male voters, while 15,886 were from female voters.

Ponda, a Municipal Council city located in Ponda taluka of North Goa district, is divided into 13 wards, with elections held every 5 years. According to the Population Census of 2011, there are a total of 5,818 families residing in Ponda, with a population of 22,664 individuals, comprising 11,729 males and 10,935 females, resulting in an Average Sex Ratio of 932.

In Ponda, the population of children aged 0-6 years amounts to 2,238, constituting 10% of the total population, with 1,124 male children and 1,114 female children in this age group. Hence, the Child Sex Ratio of Ponda, as per the Census 2011, stands at 991, surpassing the Average Sex Ratio (932).

The literacy rate in Ponda, reported as 94.5% in the Census 2011, surpasses that of North Goa district, which stands at 89.6%. The male literacy rate is 95.91%, while the female literacy rate is 92.97% in Ponda.

The Ponda Municipal Council exercises full administrative control over 5,818 households, providing essential services like water and sewerage. Additionally, it has the authority to construct roads within its municipal limits and levy taxes on properties falling under its jurisdiction.

A large-scale chemical project involving the production of Nylon 6,6 was slated to be established by the multinational company DuPont in collaboration with the Thapars. The chosen site for this project was Bhutkamb-Keri in the Ponda taluka.

However, local villagers vehemently opposed the construction of this plant. Various villagers, organizations, and NGOs joined forces to protest against the project. During these protests, a young man named Nilesh Naik was fatally shot by the police at Bhutkamb-Keri. Nilesh Naik thus became Goa's inaugural martyr for environmental causes on January 23, 1995.

According to the 2011 census data, the Ponda assembly constituency has approximately 2,238 children, with 1,124 being male and 1,114 Female. Additionally, the literacy rate in the Ponda assembly constituency stands at 94.5%, with 86.7% being male and 83.5% female. The Hindu population in the Ponda assembly constituency totals around 17,905, with 9,352 males and 8,555 females. In contrast, the Muslim population stands at 2,145, comprising 1,121 males and 1,024 females. Furthermore, there are 2,517 Christians in the Ponda Assembly constituency, with 1,202 males and 1,315 females, according to census data.

Additionally, there are 67 individuals following the Jain religion, 15 adherents of Buddhism, and 10 practicing Sikhism. Two individuals identified with other religions, while three people did not specify any religious affiliation.

The Ponda constituency assembly comprises approximately 13 wards. There are approximately 19 panchayats within the Ponda Taluka. The Panchayats in Ponda Taluka include: Bandora Betora-Nirankal-Conxem-Codar, Betki-Candola Bhoma-Adcoln Borim Cundaim Curti-Khandepar Durbhat Marcaim Panchawadi Queula Querim Shiroda Tivre-Orgao Usgao-Ganjem, Verem-Vaghurme, Veling-Priol-Cuncoliem Volvoi Wadi-Talaulim.

Ponda Taluka itself is famous for its temples. There are several mesmerizing temples that can be seen in the Ponda Taluka. The Bethora Industrial Estate significantly contributes to the economic activities of the people in Ponda Taluka. Moreover, many migrants have settled there over the years and have been employed in the industrial sector for decades.

Generally speaking, the Ponda assembly is been in the hands of Ravi naik for a decade now. The Only election he lost after the 2000's is the 2012 election where he was defeated from his own Caste Candidate, the Lavoo Mamletdar. He contested elections from the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party and got elected from the Ponda assembly itself.

Caste politics isn't confined solely to the Ponda constituency assembly; it permeates throughout Goa's political landscape. Goa's political landscape is characterized by a mix of defection and caste politics. Additionally, the state comprises 40 assembly seats spanning from Pernem to Canacona where several members has been getting elected for decades. Does this suggest the presence of caste politics given that there are long-standing elected members representing various assembly seats from Pernem to Canacona?

Let's take an example of the constituency of Margao. Margao is the commercial capital of Goa, Digambar Kamat has been representing as MLA for decades. Margao is also a city with a greater number of Gaud Saraswat Brahmin Community people. Digambar Kamat belongs to the Gaud Saraswat Brahmin (GSB) caste, which is a prominent Brahmin community in Goa. It is essential to examine the factors that contributed to Digambar Kamat's prolonged success in winning elections.

Moreover, the Rane family, represented by Pratapsingh Rane, who has retired from politics, and Vishwajeet Rane, the current Minister for Health, TCP, Women and Child Development, is notable. Pratapsingh Rane held the distinction of being the longest-serving Chief Minister as well as the MLA of the Poriem constituency. Furthermore, the duo has played a significant role in the politics of Goa, particularly in Sattari Taluka. Additionally, despite not constituting a majority of the population, the Rane family remains influential. There are numerous factors contributing to the electoral success of both the Rane family members. They enjoy support from the Bahujan Samaj as well as the minority community.

Examining the dynamics of Goa's political landscape, it becomes evident that even in its smaller size, it becomes difficult to understand whether the Caste as a factor contributed in the winning in election in figures like Monserrate and the Lobo's. Delving deeper into this milieu,

the presence of caste politics is a pertinent subject, further highlighted by the role of Vijay Sardessai, the Goa Forward Party chief.

However, the debate persists on whether caste politics truly permeate the state's political fabric or not. Goa's unique political tapestry warrants meticulous analysis to comprehend the interplay of various factors shaping its socio-political landscape. "It is true that the elections In Goa are always fought on the basis of Caste which is divided into two groups Namely Saraswats and Bahujans." (Naik, 2016, p. 521) The former refers to a minority of high-caste individuals, while the latter denotes a larger group encompassing OBCs, STs, SCs, and the Gomantak Maratha Samaj, who have historically faced exploitation or deprivation based on caste or class.

3.3 Electoral trends in Ponda Constituency Assembly 1992- onwards

Before comprehending the overall electoral patterns in the Ponda constituency assembly, it's essential to grasp the significance of Ravi Naik. The Ravi Naik ministry came into being when the Progressive Democratic Front cabinet fell and there was a brief period of President's Rule from December 1990 to January 24, 1991, during which the Goa legislature was not convened. Following the formation of the Congress Democratic Front (CDF) by a group of seven MLAs from the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP) under the leadership of Ravi Naik, with outside backing from the Congress (I), the current administration was established. After 48 days, the Congress (I) and the seven MLAs from the Ravi Naik group united to create a government headed by the Congress.

"After an intense, intricate, and long drawn exercise and the 42 days spent of president's rule, Ravi Naik, the leader of the Ravi Naik faction of the MGP was sworn in as Goa's sixth chief minister since Liberations". (Fernandes, 1997, P. 140)

The electoral history of Ponda assembly constituency dates back to 1967, marking the inception of assembly elections in Goa. K.S Gurudatt, representing the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak

Party, clinched victory in the inaugural elections with a total of 7144 votes, while the runner-up, K.S Dattatray of the United Goans Superia Group (UGS), secured 1567 votes.

Further we will analyse the trajectory of the Ponda constituency assembly starting from 1994. In 1994, the Ponda legislative assembly constituency comprised 25,279 eligible voters, with a total of 16,355 valid votes cast. Verekar Shivdas Atmaram, the candidate from the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak party, emerged victorious, securing a total of 6,931 votes and assuming the role of MLA for this seat. In second place was independent candidate Aguiar Joildo Joao, who garnered a total of 4,953 votes, trailing behind by a margin of 1,978 votes. Other candidates included Sulochana Ramakant Katkar, representing the Indian National Congress, who secured 3,751 votes. Additionally, Umesh Pandurang Tilve, representing the Bahujan Samaj Party, obtained approximately 339 votes. Two independent candidates, Prakash Vishnu Naik and Tulshidas Krishna Kudalkar, received 257 and 85 votes respectively. The final candidate, Mulla Dashkir Mulla, garnered around 39 votes.

In the 1999 elections, Ravi Naik made a successful comeback. A total of nine candidates contested the elections at that time. Ravi Naik, representing the Indian National Congress, emerged victorious with 9,349 votes, constituting approximately 48.72% of the total votes cast. Yashwant Uttam Khedekar, from the Bharatiya Janata Party, secured around 5,313 votes, accounting for 27.69% of the total vote share. Verekar Shivadas Shet, fielded by the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party, received approximately 2,905 votes, equivalent to 15.14% of the total votes. Independent candidate Aguiar Joildo Joao garnered around 1,063 votes, representing 5.54% of the total vote share. Ankush Babuli Naik, contesting from the Shiv Sena, received approximately 162 votes, making up 0.84% of the total votes. Sitaram Balkrishna Kamat, Rane Uday Ishwar, Talekar Baburao Niloba, and Kurtikar Subhas Datta, all contesting as independents, received 149, 114, 96, and 39 votes respectively. As a result, Ravi Naik emerged as the winner of the elections.

In the 2002 Assembly elections, Ravi Naik, running on the Indian National Congress ticket, secured approximately 10,745 votes, accounting for roughly 50.29% of the total votes cast. Shripad Yasso Naik, contesting from the Bharatiya Janata Party, received around 9,425 votes, constituting about 44.11% of the total votes. Another candidate, Rohidas Harischandra Naik, representing the Shiv Sena, garnered 611 votes. Deelipkumar Vishwanath Naik, contesting from the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party, obtained 251 votes, equivalent to 1.17% of the total votes. Independent candidates Prabhu Vinayak Vaikunth, Dattu Atmaram Prabhu, Shantaram Sukdo Desai, and Chandrakant Pundalik Galayekar received 122, 110, 65, and 39 votes respectively.

In the 2007 Ponda Legislative Assembly elections, the Indian National Congress candidate emerged victorious, securing the position of MLA for this seat. Ravi Sitaram Naik, representing the Indian National Congress, received approximately 9,972 votes. Lavoo Mamledar, contesting from the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party, obtained around 8,316 votes. Sandeep Khandeparkar, representing the Bharatiya Janata Party, garnered approximately 5,940 votes, while Santan Dias, contesting from the Janata Dal (Secular) party, received around 329 votes.

In 2012, the Ponda legislative assembly constituency comprised 28,594 eligible electors, with a total of 23,230 valid votes cast. Lavoo Mamledar, representing the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak party, emerged victorious and assumed the role of MLA for this seat, securing a total of 12,662 votes that is 54.51%. Ravi Naik, the Indian National Congress candidate, came in second place with a total of 9,472 votes which is 40.77%, trailing behind by a margin of 3,190 votes. This marked Lavoo Mamledar's inaugural victory in the elections. Sayad Imtiyaz, representing the All-India Trinamool Congress, secured approximately 502 votes, constituting 2.16% of the total vote share. Gitesh Gokuldas Naik, representing the United Goans Democratic Party, received 223 votes, accounting for about 0.96%. Independent candidates Mohan Govind Naik and John Mascarenhas garnered around 189 and 91 votes respectively,

representing 0.81% and 0.39% of the total vote share. Vaibhav P Marathe, contesting from the Samajwadi Party, received approximately 91 votes, equivalent to 0.39% of the total vote share.

In 2017, the Ponda legislative assembly constituency comprised 30,568 eligible electors, with a total of 25,095 valid votes cast. Ravi Sitaram Naik, the Indian National Congress candidate, emerged victorious and assumed the role of MLA for this seat, securing a total of 9,502 votes. Sunil Desai, the Bharatiya Janata Party candidate, came in second place with a total of 6,492 votes, trailing behind by a margin of 3,010 votes. In the 2017 elections, Ravi Naik made a successful comeback, reclaiming victory in the Ponda assembly constituency. Sunil Desai, a newcomer to politics, emerged as the runner-up in the race. Rajesh Verekar, contesting independently, garnered approximately 4,529 votes, constituting about 18.23% of the total vote share and securing the third position. Lavoo Mamledar, representing the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party, received 3,796 votes, holding a vote share of 15.28%. Another candidate, Mulla Mansur Muzawar, contesting from the Aam Aadmi Party, secured 522 votes, amounting to a vote share of 2.1%. Additionally, "None of the Above" received approximately 254 votes, representing a vote share of 1.02%.

In the 2022 elections, Ravi Naik, who had defected from the Congress to join the BJP party, secured approximately 7,514 votes. His closest rival was Ketan Bhatikar, who garnered around 7,437 votes, trailing Ravi Naik by a narrow margin of 77 votes. Rajesh Verenkar, contesting from the Congress seat, secured approximately 6,839 votes. Sanish Tilve, representing the Revolutionary Goans Party, received around 1,770 votes, while Suresh Tilve, the candidate from the Aam Aadmi Party, secured 620 votes. Independent candidate Naresh Padwalkar obtained around 92 votes, while "Nota" received approximately 292 votes in the 2022 Ponda Constituency assembly elections.

As time progresses, the upcoming candidate selections and representatives for the Ponda Constituency assembly will unfold. It's noteworthy that Ravi Naik has long been a prominent and influential figure in the assembly, experiencing both successes and setbacks over the years. In the 2022 Goa legislative assembly election, he clinched victory with a narrow margin of just 77 votes against his opponent. Looking ahead, the future will determine whether Ravi Naik will continue as the representative for Ponda assembly constituency, or if his son Ritesh will take up the mantle. Alternatively, there's the possibility of a formidable contender like Ketan Bhatikar, who has also demonstrated significant influence in the Ponda Constituency, emerging as the representative.

3.4 Analysing Ravi Naik's political career and leadership in the political arena

Ravi Naik's Political journey has been characterized by fluctuations, including multiple defections to different parties. Ravi Naik, born into a humble family without any political or business lineage, rose to become a highly successful and astute politician at both state and national levels, alongside achieving prosperity in business and gaining widespread leadership among the people solely due to his inherent potential and capabilities.

Born into a humble family in Ponda to Kashi and Sitaram Naik, Ravi Naik's journey to prominence, popularity, prosperity, and political influence in Ponda and across Goa is attributed solely to his diligence, perseverance, sincerity, hard work, uphill struggle, conscientiousness, dedication, and unwavering determination to turn dreams into reality.

Ravi Naik's political career began with his involvement in the Opinion Poll, where he strongly opposed the merger of Goa into Maharashtra. This pivotal moment led him to enter politics. In 1975, he joined the MGP youth wing, marking the start of his political journey. A year later, in 1976, he was elected as a councillor of the Ponda Municipality. In the same year, he founded the Goa Daman and Diu Mundkar (Tenant) Associations.

Despite an unsuccessful attempt in 1979 when he contested from the MGP ticket, he persisted. By 1980, he assumed the role of the working president of the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party. In 1984, he contested again from the MGP and emerged victorious, becoming the MLA of the Ponda Constituency assembly. During his tenure, he advocated for both Marathi and Konkani as the state languages. In the 1989 elections, he was fielded by the MGP for the Marciam Constituency, facing a challenging contest. However, he secured a resounding victory with a significant majority.

Later, Ravi Naik joined the 'Purogami Lokshahi Aaghadi' (Peoples Democratic Front) and served as a minister under the leadership of former Chief Minister Dr. Luis Proto Barbosa. During a period of political instability in Goa, Ravi Naik assumed the role of Chief Minister. His team during his tenure included Dr. Wilfred De Souza as Deputy CM, along with Fransisco Sardinha, Ashok T. Naik Salgaonkar, Luizinho Faleiro, Pandurang Raut, Shankar Salgaonkar, Subash Ankush Shirodkar, Vinaykumar Usgaonakar, Dr. Carmo Pegado, Ratnakar Chopadekar, Vasu Paik Gaonakr, Suresh Parulekar, and Sanjay Bandekar.

In the 1999 Goa legislative elections, Ravi Naik of the Congress party faced prominent candidates such as sitting MLA Shivdas Verenkar of the MGP and Mr. Yeshwant Khedekar of the BJP. As anticipated, Ravi Naik emerged victorious and assumed the position of a cabinet minister. However, the Congress government lost power when a few Congress MLAs, led by Francisco Sardinha, rebelled. Ravi Naik was then chosen as the leader of the opposition. Later, he served as a minister in the Manohar Parrikar government. The 2002 elections posed a challenge for Ravi Naik, with Shripad Naik as his main opponent. Despite the tough competition, Ravi Naik secured victory with a margin of 1300 votes. When the Congress party came into power in Goa in 2005, Ravi Naik assumed the role of chairman of the Economic Development Agencies and was appointed as the chairman of the Congress party in Goa.

Under Ravi Naik's leadership, significant development initiatives were undertaken, including enhancements in animal husbandry and veterinary services in the state, the construction of the Ponda Municipal Market, the establishment of the Sub-District Hospital in Ponda, and the creation of the Rajiv Gandhi Kala Mandir and many more.

As an independent-minded and self-respecting individual, he made the decision at a young age that he would not work under anyone, including the government. Instead, he aimed to establish and thrive in business, providing employment opportunities to the needy and underprivileged in society. His journey began in 1966 when he opened a small restaurant in Tisk, Ponda. Concurrently, he engaged in buying and selling small properties. It is through his determination, perseverance, and sincerity in these endeavors that he has attained his current position in business.

Participating in the Opinion Poll sparked his interest in politics. From then on, he resolved to enter politics to advocate for the common people of Goa. He aspired to become an influential leader, envisioning himself as the Chief Minister of Goa and a successful politician whose legacy would endure for generations to come.

Alongside friends, he co-founded the Jawahar Club and actively participated in sports, representing both Goa and India in volleyball. He also became involved in community service organizations like the Jaycees and Lions Club, and joined the youth wing of the MGP. His political journey saw him elected as a councillor of the Ponda Municipality, followed by successive terms as MLA for Ponda and Marciam constituencies, as well as Member of Parliament. Serving three consecutive terms as MLA for Ponda, he ascended to the roles of Cabinet Minister and Chief Minister of Goa. His tenure in these positions was marked by remarkable success and memorable achievements.

Ravi Naik was a staunch advocate for gender equality. During his tenure as Deputy Chief Minister, he organized a large-scale Mahila Melava in Panaji on March 10, 2002. Additionally, he established the "Yashodamini" award to recognize outstanding women across various fields. He also implemented the Kanyadan Yojna scheme, providing financial assistance to parents for their daughters' marriage. Under this initiative, parents with an annual income of Rs. 100,000 or less were eligible to receive Rs. 25,000 per daughter, up to a maximum of two daughters. Furthermore, he introduced the Shiksha Shikwa Kamawa scheme, which empowered women by providing opportunities for both learning and earning.

Numerous initiatives aimed at enhancing community welfare were implemented during his tenure as both minister and chief minister. These included the Dayanand Niradhar Yojana, an insurance scheme for toddy tappers, establishment of community halls, expansion of OBC status to include Dhangar, Velip, Kunbi, and Gawda communities, introduction of the Yashodamini Puraskar, establishment of an art and culture department to promote cultural activities in Goa, provision of incentives for milk producers and Anganwadi workers, among others.

Ravi Naik played a pivotal role in the advancement of volleyball and kho kho associations, having been a national-level player himself in volleyball. "He Considers himself to be more a social worker than a politician." (Mhadgut, 2016, P. 133) He advocated for the creation of a third district comprising Ponda, Sattari, and Dharbandora, along with parts of Bicholim Taluka. Ponda would serve as the district headquarters, with Valpoi designated as a sub-headquarters, aiming to alleviate the burden of long-distance travel for the residents of these talukas. "Participation in sports helped me a lot by keeping me physically fir and helped in strengthening sportsmanship qualities in me along with development of team spirit and importance of team work. How to handle success and failure I learned in sports". (Mhadgut, 2016, P. 105, 106)

During his tenure, he undertook various initiatives including the construction of Kala Mandir, providing enhanced educational facilities to the residents of Ponda, implementing programs aimed at women's empowerment, and numerous other endeavors. Ravi Naik consistently enjoys engaging with students and youth, offering advice, motivation, and inspiration to help them succeed in life and become exemplary citizens of the nation.

Ravi Naik, representing the Congress party, contested the 12th Lok Sabha elections from North Goa in 1998 and emerged victorious with 68,224 votes. His opponent, Raut Pandurang Dattaram, secured approximately 67,807 votes, trailing by a narrow margin of 417 votes.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSES AND INTERPRETATIONS

4.1 Introduction

The Politics of the caste or caste Politics has always been an important factor in influencing the Voting Behaviour of the Voters. Voters sometimes don't realize that their votes are been driven by the Caste Factor. Religion also to some extent plays an important role in influencing voting behaviour. It is difficult to separate the two aspects of Religion and Caste whereas both are connected.

Political parties have made efforts to mobilize lower caste individuals to uplift them from social deprivation, which is a positive initiative. However, for certain parties, caste is merely seen as a means to secure easy votes. They strategically select candidates from dominant castes and conduct targeted campaigns to ensure electoral victories.

Caste is not the sole thing that influences voting behavior its Class also plays an important role. Over time, class and caste have become intertwined in Indian society. Reservation policies have assisted certain castes in narrowing the gap with dominant castes. However, this has also resulted in socio-economic disparities emerging within caste groups.

The study was conducted in South Goa within the Ponda Taluka, specifically in the Ponda Assembly Constituency. Primary Data was Collected through the Interview method and by circulating Questionnaires, through google forms. However, the study area is limited exclusively to the residents of the Ponda Assembly Constituency. The Random sampling method was used for collecting the data from the Respondents.

In the First stage through Google Forms, the researcher tried to reach the respondents. Later the respondent visited the people of the Ponda assembly constituency and gained some inputs on the topic "Understanding caste as an influencing factor in the voting behavior in the Goa's electoral politics: A case study of Ponda assembly constituency.

About 120 People were interviewed from the physical Survey as well as through the Google Questionnaire forms. The Sample of the Population was Selected after considering time and budget constraints.

For the study, both the primary and secondary data were collected. Primary data was collected through the structured questionnaire administered to the Respondents. The questionnaire was used to collect primary information about the objectives of the study. secondary data was collected through books, official reports, records, and various websites. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected to understand the study objectives. Quantitative data were tabulated and statistically analysed whereas Qualitative data were interpretated were interpreted based on the information collected from the research field.

4.2 Background Details of the Study Area

4.2.1 Ponda Constituency Assembly

Ponda, situated in the South Goa district of Goa, India, is a city with a municipal council. It is positioned centrally within Goa, approximately 28 km (17 miles) southeast of Panaji, the state capital, and 17 km (10.6 miles) northeast of Margao, the district headquarters. Ponda is often referred to as "Antruz Mahal" due to its abundance of renowned temples and its deep-rooted cultural heritage.

Based on the 2011 census of India, Ponda had a population of 22,664 individuals, with males making up 51.8% and females 48.2% of the total. The city boasted an average literacy rate of 85.2%, surpassing the national average of 74.0%. Male literacy stood at 86.7% and female

literacy at 83.5%. Additionally, 9.9% of Ponda's population was under the age of 6 years.Ponda and its surrounding areas are home to numerous Hindu temples, including Shri Manguesh (dedicated to Shiva), Shri Nagesh, Shri Ganapati, Shri Ramnath, and the goddess temples of Shri Shantadurga, Shri Mahalasa, and Shri Mahalaxmi.

Ponda is a Part of the South Goa district in the Indian state of Goa. It is a Part of the 21th assembly constituency and South Goa Lok Sabha Constituency. Ponda Constituency itself falls under the Ponda Taluka. The Representative of the Ponda Constituency is Ravi Naik whereas the chairperson of the Ponda Municipality is Ritesh Naik. Further, the only Panchayat they have is Curti-Khandepar. The Sarpanch of the Curti-Khandepar is Haresh Naik. The Deputy Sarpanch of the Curti – Khandepar is Wilma John Pereira.

The village of Curti is an integral part of the Curti Khandepar village Panchayat. It is experiencing rapid urbanization and expansion. Khandepar Village is located in the Ponda Tehsil of South Goa District, Goa. Situated along the banks of the Khandepar River, this village has a deep and fascinating history. Over 80% of its area is covered in lush greenery. The village spans 1111 hectares and represents a significant revenue source for the Curti Khandepar Village Panchayat. Khandepar Village is renowned for its fertile paddy fields and extensive areca nut gardens. The village comprises approximately 6,307 households with a total male population of around 8,278 and a female population of 8,107. There are around 9 Panchc members which are representing different wards. Ahijeet Gaude represents Ward No. 1, Manish Naique represents Ward No. 2, Nilkanth Naik represents Ward No. 5, Parvinbano Tahsildar represents Ward No. 6, Babu Chari represents Ward No. 7, Naveed Tahasildar represents Ward No. 8, Sajidabi Sayed represents Ward No. 9, Sanjana Naik represents Ward No. 10, and Bhiku Kerkar represents Ward No. 11.

Ponda is often referred to as the Hindu heart of Goa, celebrated for its five prominent temples surrounding the town and the largest mosque in Goa. Many of these temples appear recently renovated, having been restored following destruction during the Portuguese era.

It has an average elevation of the place is 22 m and 72 feet. Many farmers engage in agriculture within Ponda Taluka, contributing to the region's agrarian landscape. Agriculture is a significant occupation in Ponda, with farmers cultivating various crops and practicing diverse farming techniques to sustain livelihoods and support the local economy. The other Occupations of the villagers also include agriculture, dairy, farming, labour, work, etc.

Ponda is regarded as the cultural hub of Goa, renowned for hosting numerous Hindu festivals and celebrations. Its distinct character sets it apart from the coastal regions of the state, showcasing a vibrant cultural landscape shaped by traditional festivities and religious practices.

Ponda is known for its diverse demographic and cultural profile, with a significant population engaged in agriculture, commerce, and other livelihood activities. The constituency encompasses a mix of urban and rural areas, reflecting Goa's unique socio-economic fabric.

4.3 Data Analyses and Interpretation

Data Analyses and interpretation of the study are presented in three sections, they are

- Section I - Personal Information of Respondents

- Section II - Close-ended Research Questions

- Section III- Open-ended Research Questions

Section I - Personal Information of Respondents
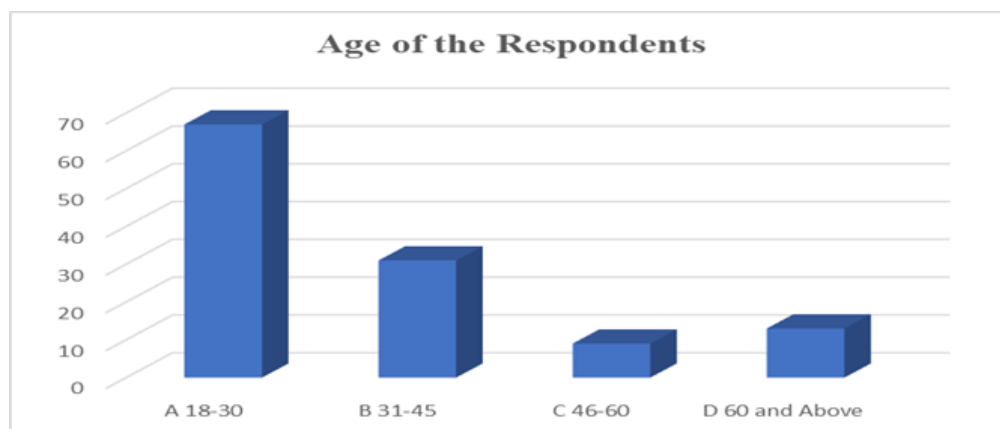
Fig 4.1: Age of the Respondents

In a sample of 120 individuals, the age distribution reveals significant trends. The largest proportion, comprising 55.5% of the sample, falls within the 18-30 age group, suggesting a youthful demographic. Approximately 25% of respondents are aged 31-45, indicating a substantial representation of middle-aged individuals. The 46-60 age group constitutes around 8% of the sample, reflecting a smaller but notable presence of older adults. Additionally, approximately 11.5% of respondents are aged 60 and above, highlighting a minority yet significant portion of senior individuals within the sample
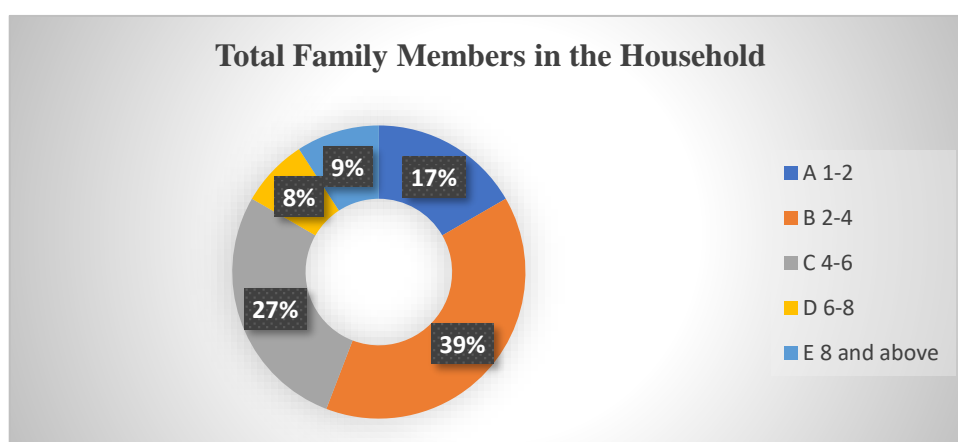
Fig 4.2: Total Family Members in the Household

Out of 120 respondents, the Majority that is 39% reported having 2-4 people in their households. Around 27% fall into the category of having 4-6 people (C), while 17% have 1-2 individuals in their households. Approximately 8 %% indicated having 6-8 people, and lastly, around 9 % reported having 9 or more individuals in their households
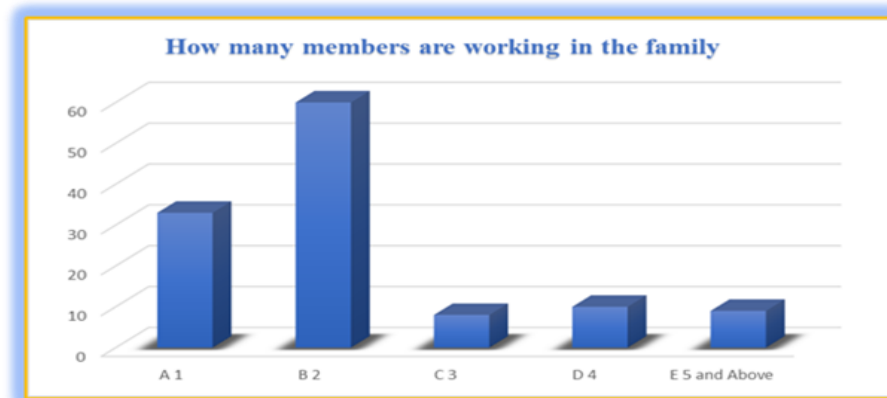
Fig 4.3: Total Members Working in the Family

Out of 120 respondents the Majority (50%) of respondents indicated that there are two working members in their family. Around 27.5% of the respondents reported having one person working in their family. 8.3% of the respondents mentioned that three family members are employed whereas the remaining 7.5% and 6.7% of Respondents mentioned having four and three working family members respectively.
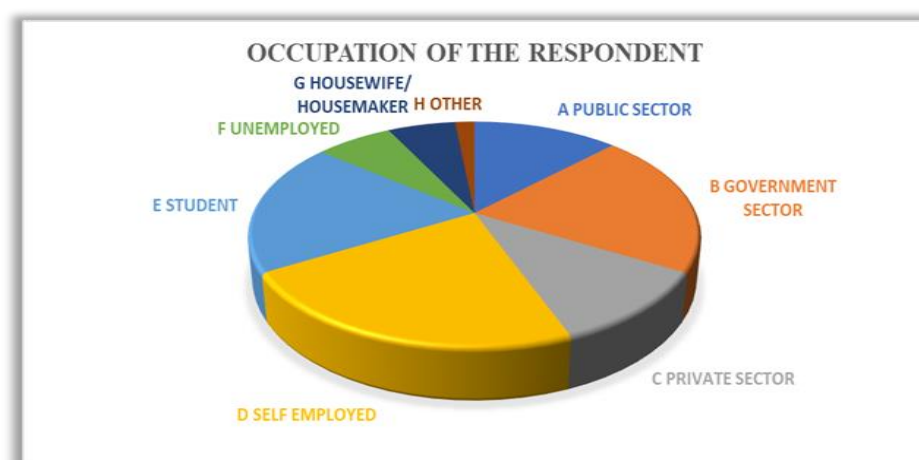
Fig 4.4: Occupation of the Respondents

Out of the total 120 respondents, the majority identified themselves as self-employed. Approximately 20.8% reported working in the government sector, while around 19.2% identified as students. About 10.8% of respondents mentioned employment in the private sector, and 12.5% indicated working in the public sector. Additionally, around 6.7% reported being unemployed, 5.8% identified as housewives/homemakers, and 1.7% mentioned other occupations. This data highlights the varied employment statuses and occupations within the surveyed population.
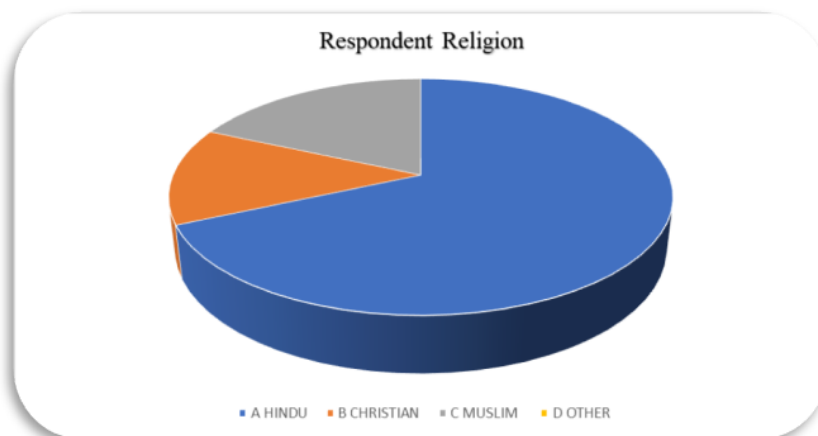
Fig 4.5: Respondents Religion

Among the 120 respondents, approximately 73.3% identified as Hindu, 13.5% identified as Christian, and 13% identified as Muslim. No respondents selected the "other" option. This breakdown illustrates the religious distribution within the surveyed group of respondents.
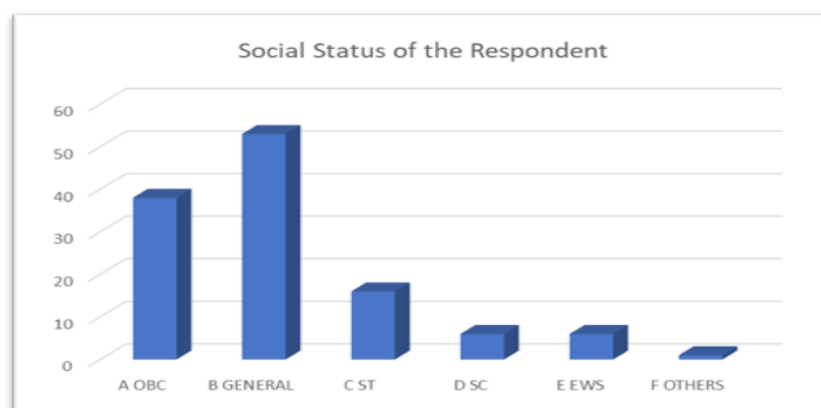
Fig. 4.6: Social Status of the Respondent

In discussions about the social status of the respondents, approximately 30.8% identified as belonging to the OBC category, while around 44.2% identified as part of the General category. Additionally, about 14.2% identified as ST (Scheduled Tribe), 5% identified as SC (Scheduled Caste), and 5% identified as EWS (Economically Weaker Section). A small percentage (0.8%) identified with other caste categories
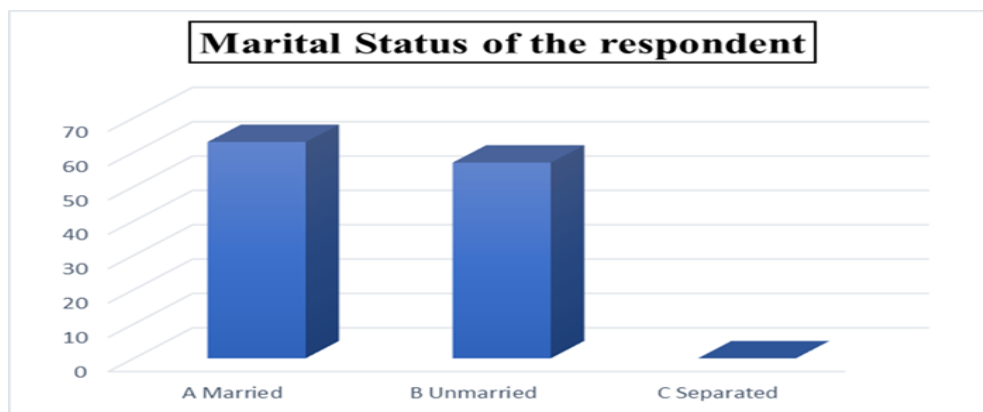
Fig.4.7: Marital Status of the Respondents

Out of 120 respondents, approximately 63 Respondents mentioned that they are married, while around 57 Respondents said that they are unmarried. There were no responses from respondents who are separated or in other relationship statuses.
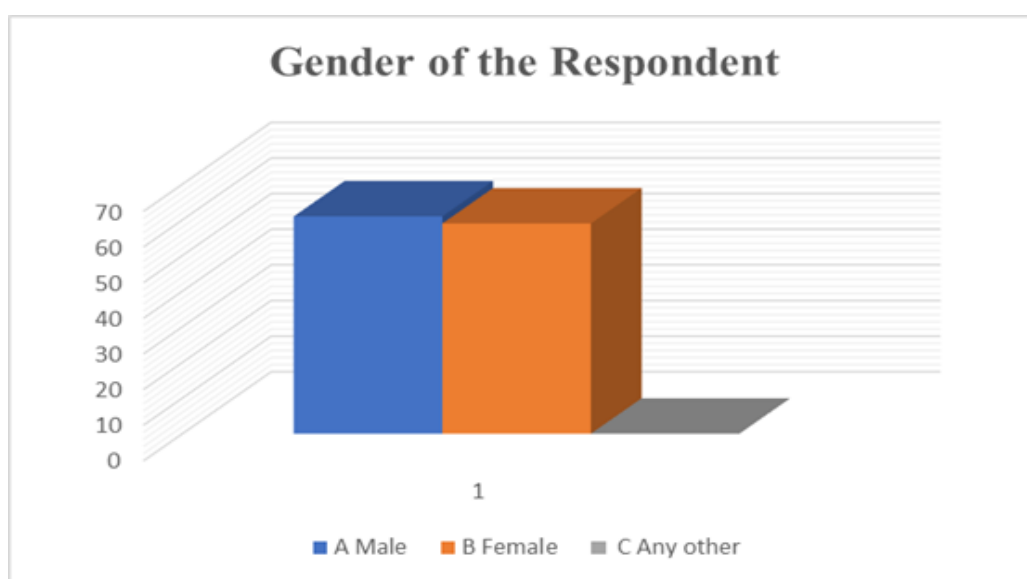
Fig 4.8: Gender of the Respondent

Out of a total of 120 respondents, approximately 61 Respondents identified as male, while around 59 identified as female. No respondents opted the "Any other" option
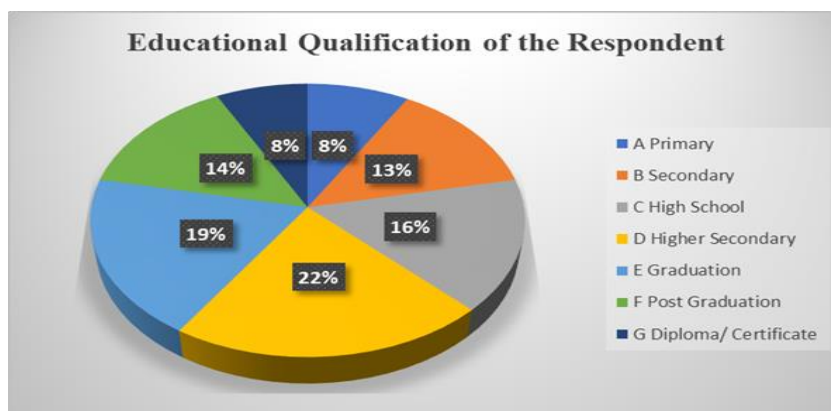
Fig. 4.9 Educational Qualification of the Respondents

Out of 120 respondents, the majority mentioned having attended higher secondary education. Approximately 19% of the population reported graduating, while 16% attended high school. Additionally, 14% of respondents completed post-graduation, 13% attended secondary school, and 8% obtained a diploma/certificate. Around 8% of respondents indicated education up to the primary level.
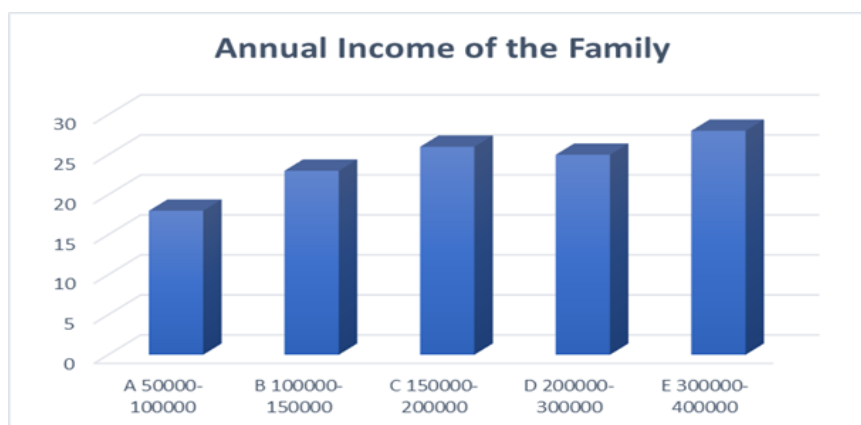
Fig 4.10: Annual Income of the Family

Out of 120 respondents, the majority (23.3%) indicated having an income in the range of 300,000 to 400,000. Additionally, 20.8% of respondents reported an income between 200,000 to 300,000 lakhs, while 21.7% mentioned earnings between 150,000 to 200,000. Around 19.2%

reported an income of 100,000 to 150,000 lakhs, and approximately 15% stated earning between 50,000 to 100,000.
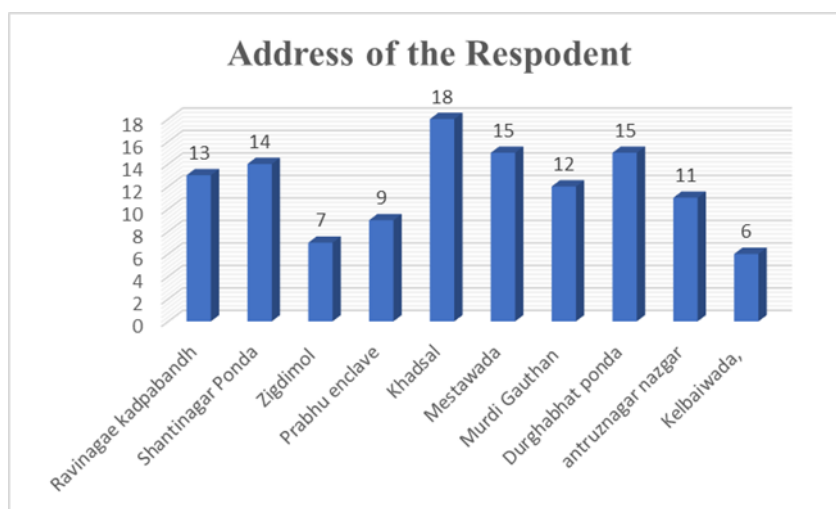
Fig. 4.11: Address of the Respondents

Out of 120 respondents, the majority of interviewees came from the Khadsal ward. Mestawada and Durghabhat both places had 15 respondents. Kadpabandh had approximately 13 respondents, while Shantinagar Ponda had around 14 respondents. Zigdimol and Prabhu Enclave had 7 and 9 respondents, respectively. Murdi Gauthan had about 12 respondents, Antrunzagar Nagzar had around 11, and Kelbaiwada had approximately 6 respondents.
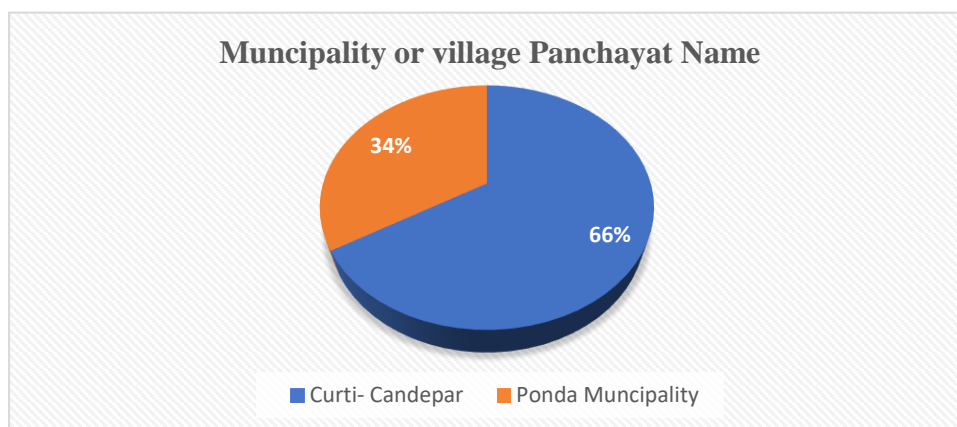
Fig. 4.12: Municipality or village Panchayat name

The majority of respondents (51.7%) reside in urban areas, while 45% reside in rural areas. A minority (3.3%) of the population lives in other locations. Out of 120 Respondents 60 reside in Urban area and 54 Reside in the rural area. whereas other 6 resides in a different location

Section II - Close-Ended Research Questions
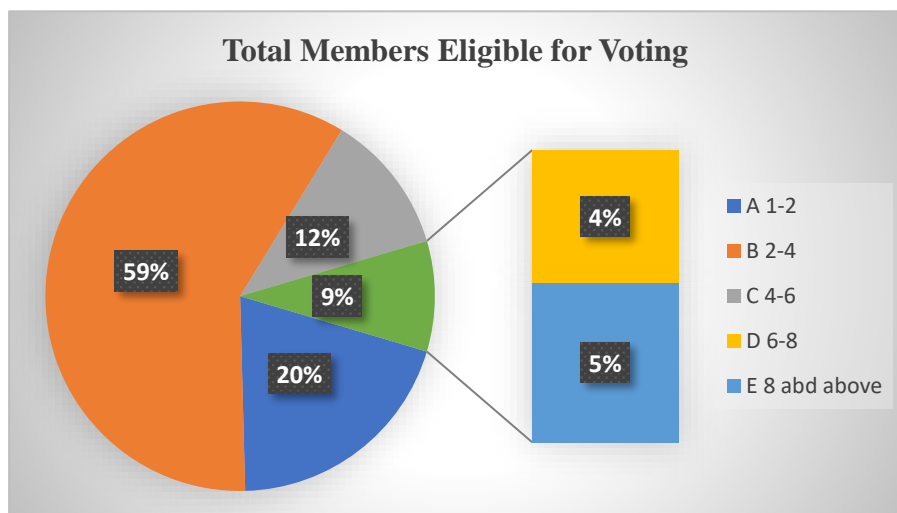
Fig. 4.14: Total members eligible for Voting

Out of 120 respondents, approximately 20% of voters fall into the 1-2 category. The majority, constituting around 59%, belong to the 2-4 category. About 12% of respondents fall into the 4-6 category (C). Additionally, roughly 4% are categorized under 6-8 (D), while around 5% fall into the 8 and above category (E).
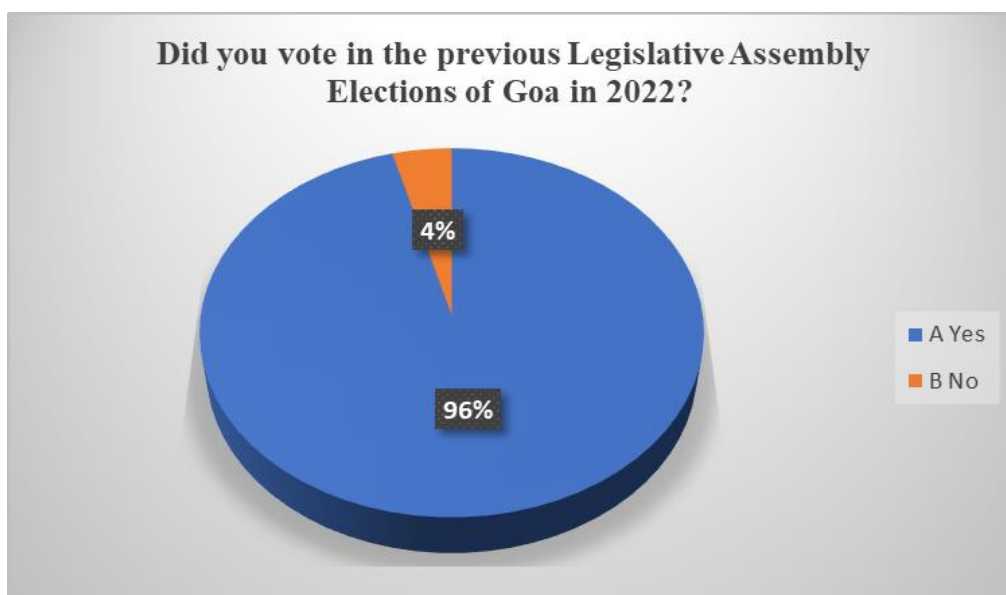
Fig 4.15: Voted in Previous Legislative Assembly Elections of Goa 2022

Out of 120 respondents, approximately 96% confirmed participating in the 2022 assembly elections. Conversely, 4% of respondents stated they did not vote in this electoral event.
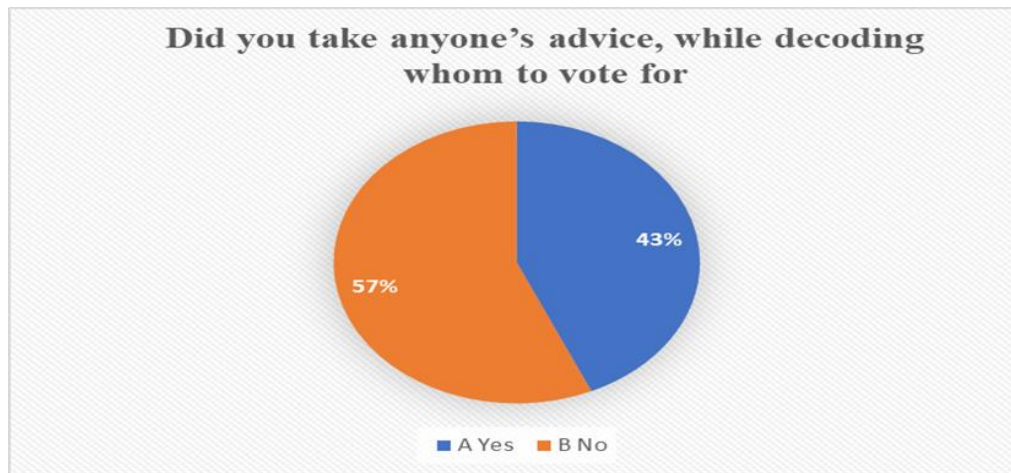
Fig. 4.16: Did you take anyone's advice, while decoding whom to Vote for

Out of 120 respondents surveyed, approximately 57% stated that they did not seek or obtain permission from anyone before voting, while 43% mentioned that they did consult others for advice when casting their vote.
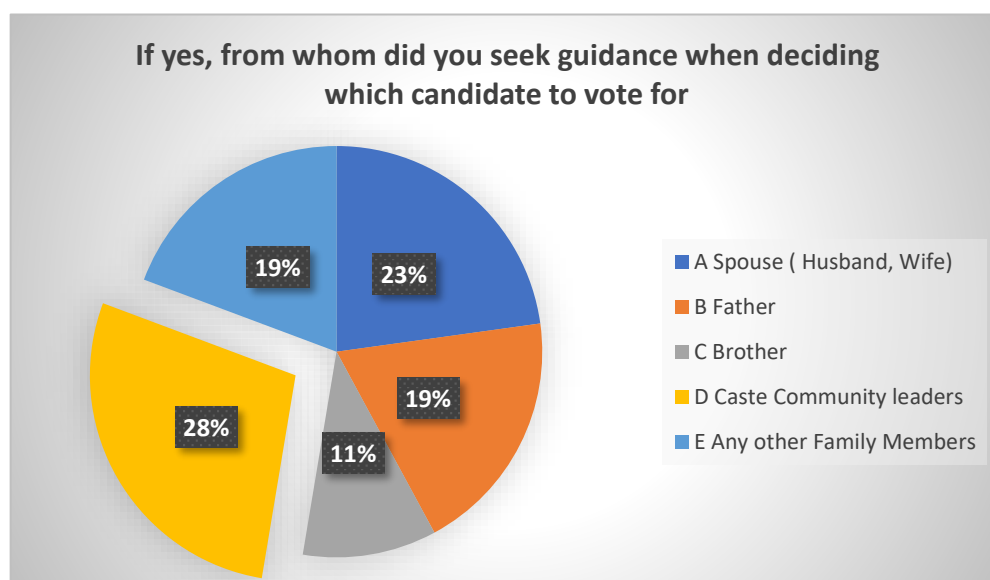

Fig. 4.17: If yes, from whom did You take the advice to Vote

Out of a Total of 57 Respondents, 23% of the Respondents mentioned that they have sought the advice of spouses (Husband, Wife). The majority (28%) of the Respondents indicated that

they have taken the advice of the Caste community leaders. A minority (11%) of the respondents said that they have the advice of their brother whereas 19% of Respondents reported that they have taken advice from the Father and the remaining mentioned that they have taken advice from any other family Member.
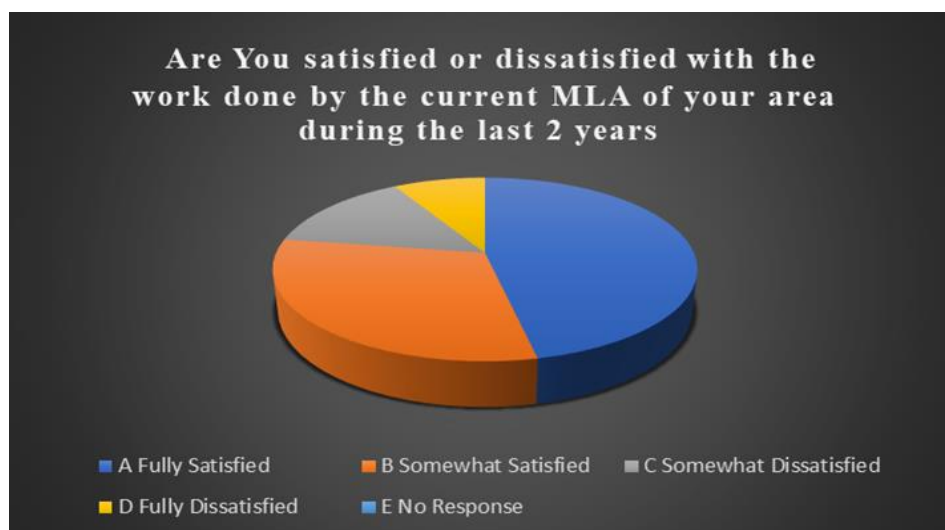

Fig.4.18: Satisfied or dissatisfied with work done by Current MLA Work

Out of the total 120 Respondents who have answered this question majority (46.7%) of the Respondents have reported that they are fully satisfied with the work done by the work done by Current MLA. whereas 30.8% of the Respondents mentioned that they were somewhat satisfied with the work done by their current MLA. further 14.2% and 5.3% of the respondent mentioned that they are somewhat Satisfied and Fully Dissatisfied with the work done by the Current MLA in their constituency.
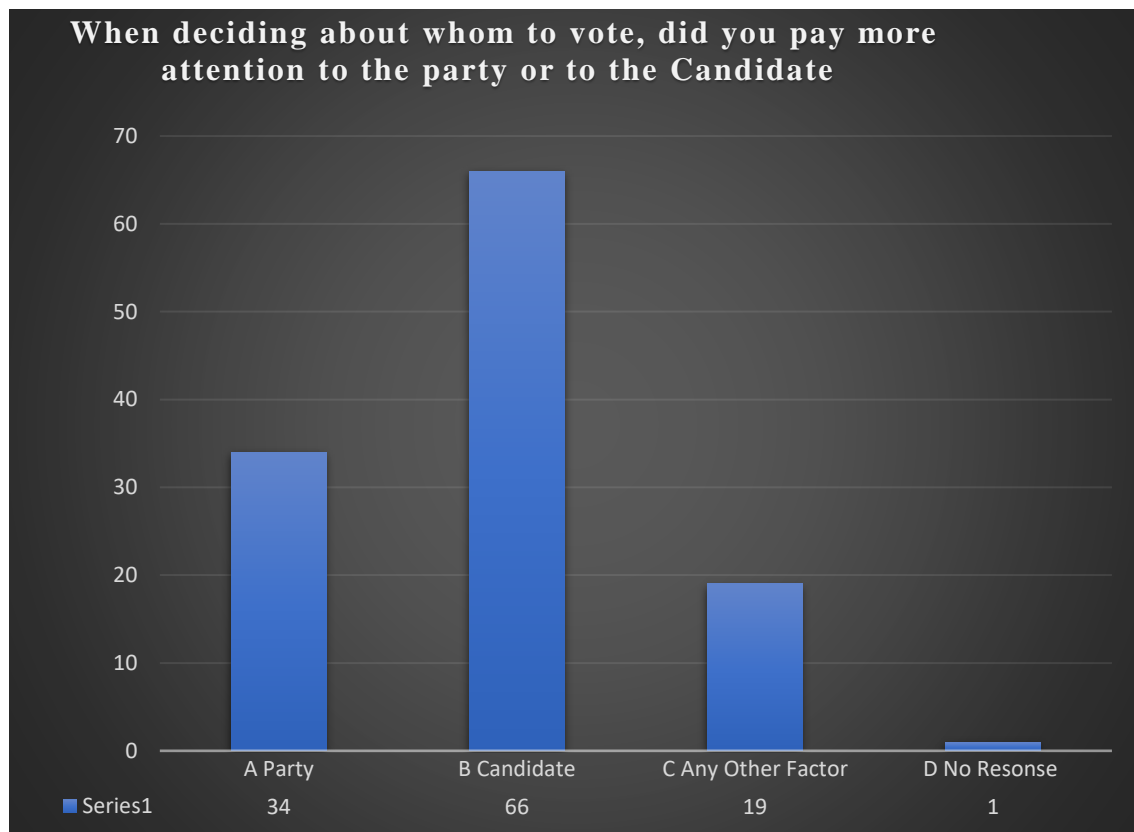
Fig 4.19: When deciding whom to vote for, whom do you give preference to?

Out of the Total 120 Respondents who answered this Question around 28.3% of the Respondents mentioned that they do look the party while voting in the elections. The majority of the Respondents (55%) mentioned they looked at the candidate while casting a vote in the elections. Whereas a minority (15.8%) of the respondents indicated that they look any other Factors while voting in the elections. whereas 1 Respondent has answered no Response to this Question.
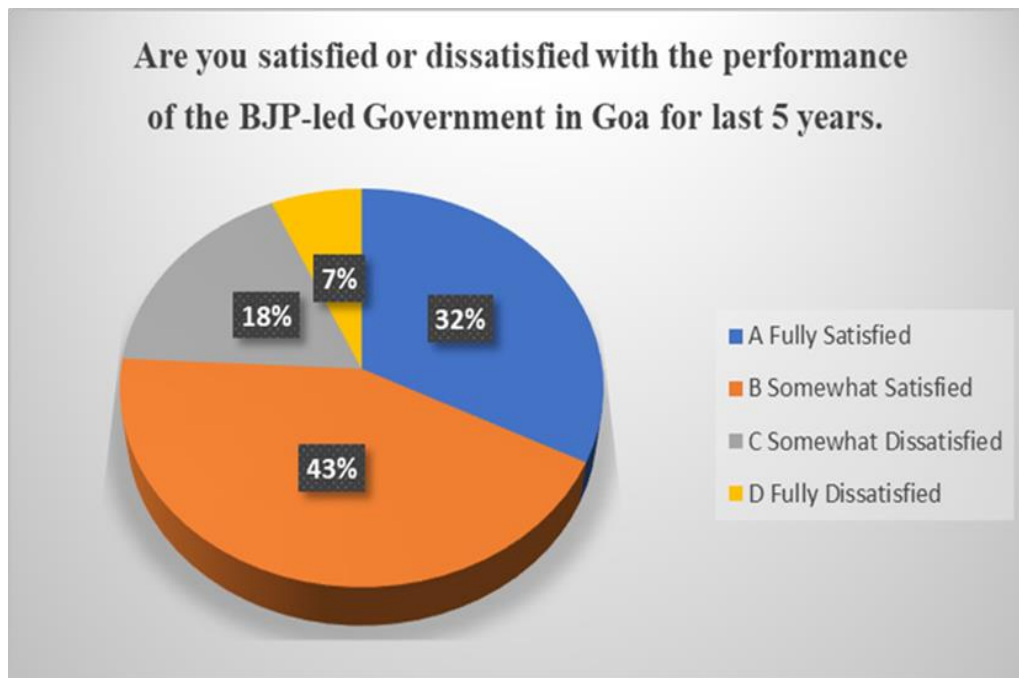
Fig 4.20: Satisfied or Dissatisfied

Among the total of 120 respondents who provided an answer to this question. Around the Majority (43%) of the Respondents Reported that they are Somewhat Satisfied with the performance of the BJP-led government in the last five years. Whereas 32% of the Respondents mentioned that they are Fully satisfied with the Performance of the BJP Government. 18% of the Respondents indicated that they are Somewhat Dissatisfied with the Performance of the BJP-led Government and 7% of the people said they are Fully Dissatisfied with the Performance of the BJP in the Last five Years.
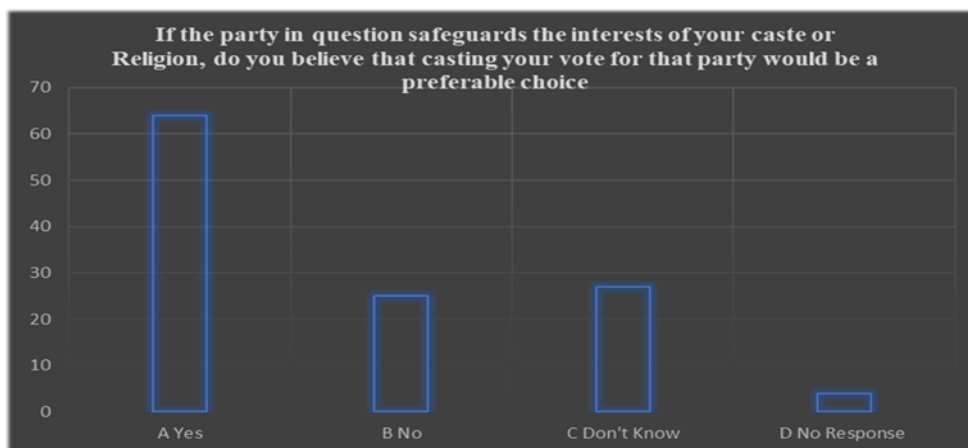
Fig. 4.21: Safeguards the interest

Out of a total of 120 Respondents Majority (64 Respondents) answered Yes. Whereas 25 of the respondents said that No. 27 Respondents further reported that they Didn't Know about it. Whereas 4 Respondents have indicated No Response.
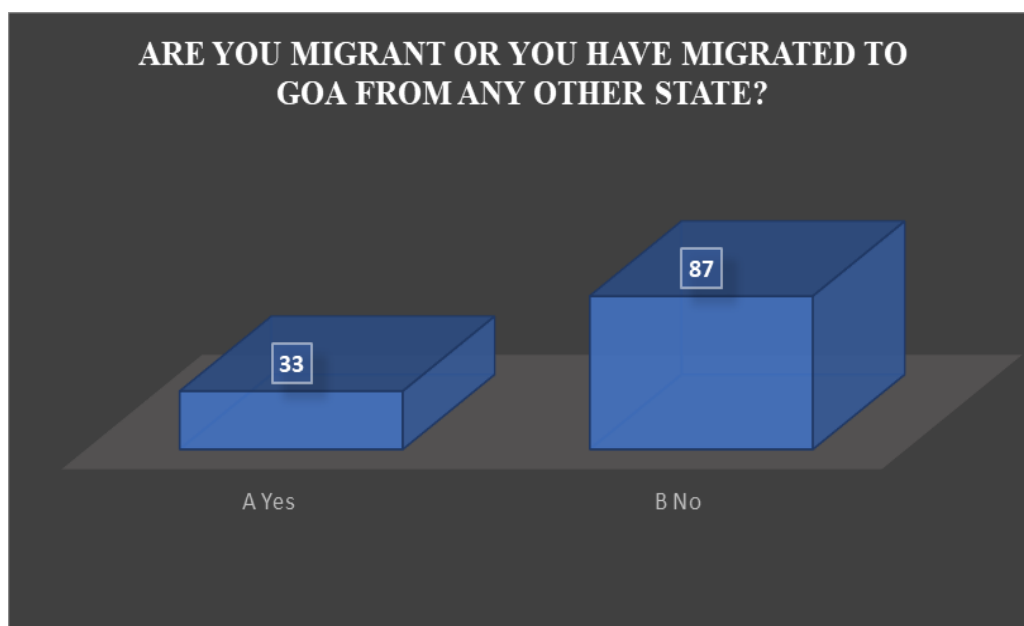

Fig. 4.22: Are you a Migrant or You have Migrated to Goa from any other state

A total of 120 Respondents answered this question and around 87 Respondents mentioned that they are not migrants. Whereas 33 Respondents mentioned that they migrated to Goa from another state.
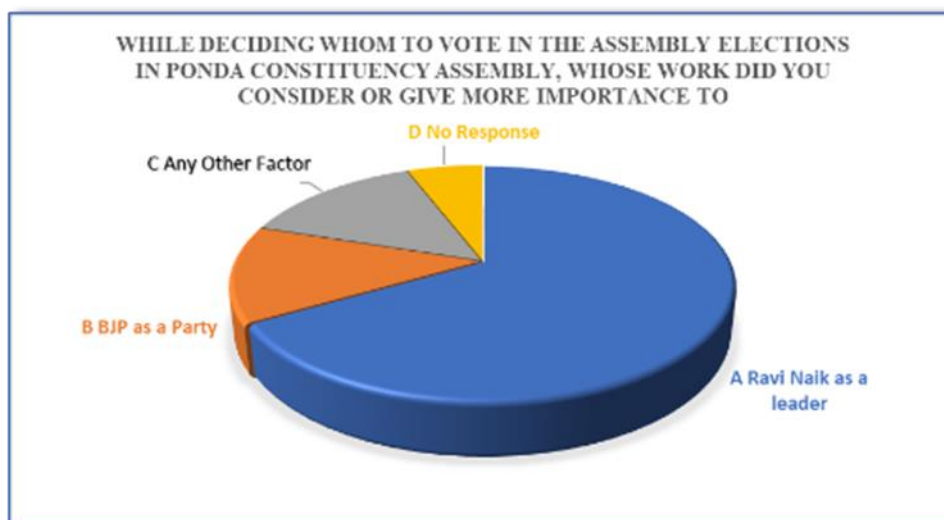
Fig. 4.23: Deciding Whom to Vote

Out of a Total of 120 Respondents who have answered this question around the Majority (66.7%) of the respondents mentioned that they give preference to Ravi Naik as a leader. Whereas as 13.3% of the Population Reported that they give preference to BJP as a Party while casting their votes in the elections. Further around 14.2% of the respondents indicated that they look at any other factor while casting votes in their respective constituency. Additionally, 5.8% of respondents opted not to respond.
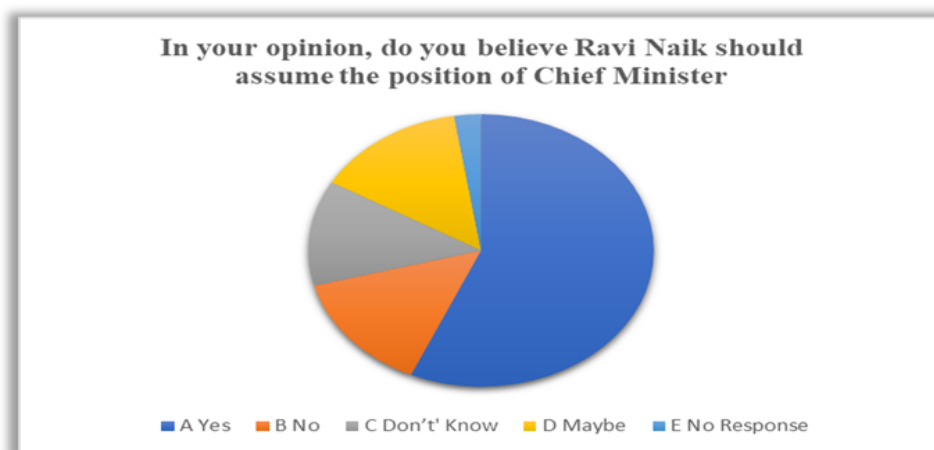

Fig 4.24: Do you believe Ravi Naik should assume the Position of the Chief Minister.

Out of a total 120 Responses. Around the majority (56.7%) of the Respondents answered "Yes' that they want Ravi Naik to assume the position of CM in the Future. Further 14.2% of the Total respondents answered "No" to the Question, which means they don't want Ravi Naik to become CM of Goa. Whereas a Minority (12.5%) of the Respondents said that they" Don't Know" about it. Further 14.2% of the total Respondents mentioned that "maybe" he should be CM of Goa. Whereas around 2.5% of the Total respondents opted for the No response.
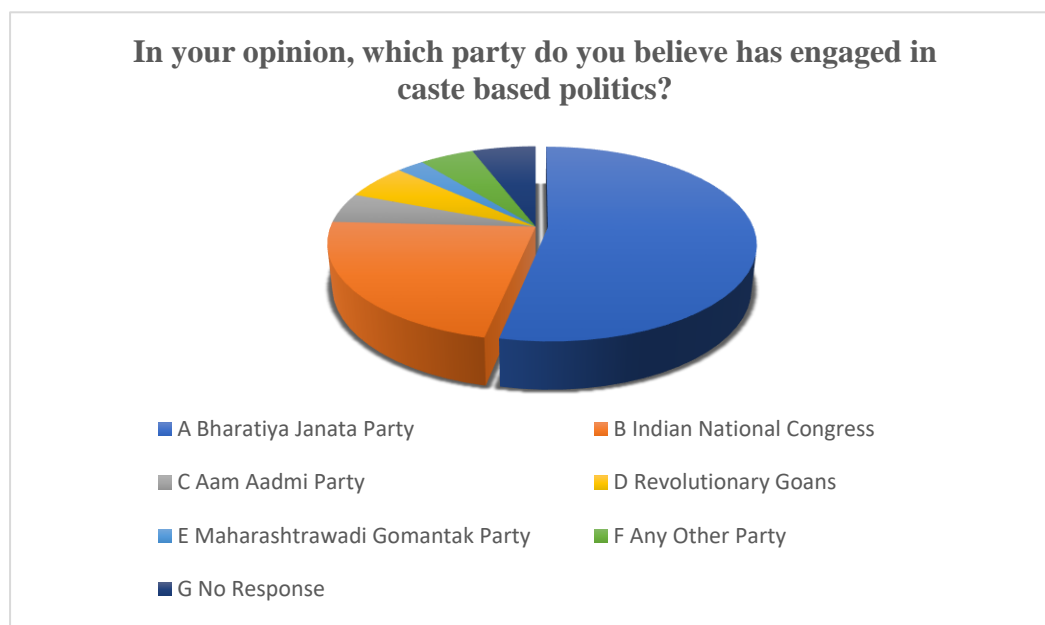

Fig 4. 25: According to you which Party engaged in Caste based Politics

Among the total of 120 respondents who provided an answer to this question. Majority of the Respondents have said that the Bharatiya Janata Party has engaged in Caste Based Politics. Further 22.5% of the Total respondents have indicated that the Indian National Congress has engaged in Caste based Politics. Further 5% of the Total Respondents has indicated that the Aam Aadmi party has engaged in Caste Politics. Around 6% of the Respondents said that the Revolutionary Goans has engaged in Caste based Politics. 2.5% of the Respondents mentioned that the Maharashtrawadi Gomanatak Party has engaged in Caste Politics. Remaining 5% and 5.8% of the Total Respondents have mentioned "Any other party" and "No Response" respectively.
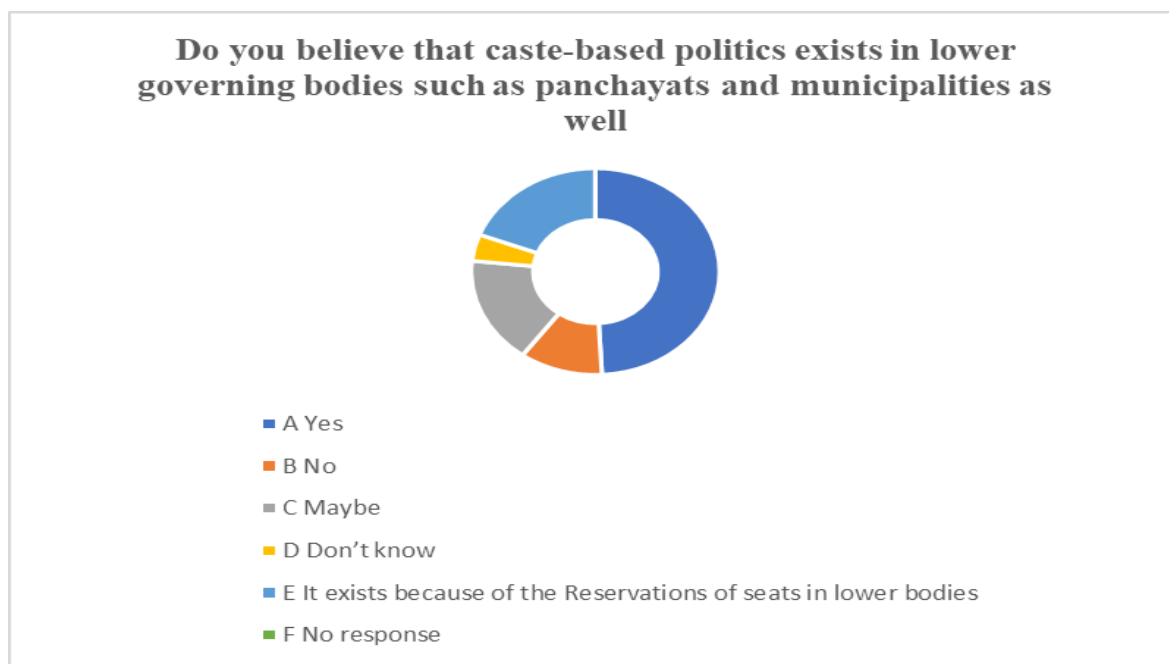
Fig. 4.26: Do you believe Caste based Politics exist in lower governing bodies

Out of a Total of 120 Respondents, the Majority of the Respondents said that "Yes" there is a Caste Politics in the Lower Governing Bodies. Around 10.8% Of the Total Respondents believe that No Caste politics exists in Lower Governing Bodies. Around 16.7%of the Respondents Responded that "There may be''. Around 19.2% of the Respondents mentioned that Caste Politics exist because of the reservation of Seats in the lower bodies.
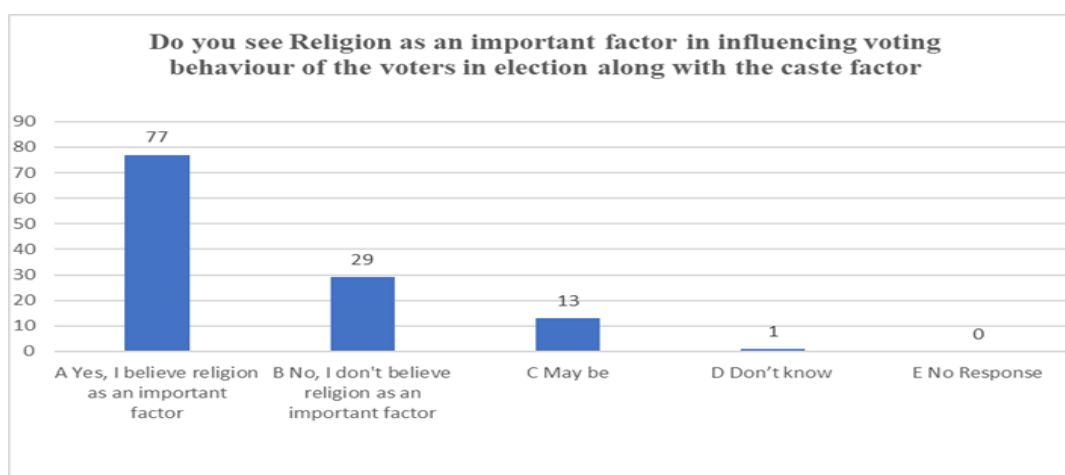

Fig. 4.27: Do you see Religion as an important factor that influences Voting Behaviour

Among the Total 120 Respondents who have answered this question. Around 64.2% have mentioned that "Yes" According to them religion plays an important role in politics. Further 24.2% of the Respondents said that "No" they don't believe in that religion plays an important

role in the politics. Around 10.8% of the Total Respondents indicate that option "Maybe" That means they are not sure about it. Around 0.8% of the respondents said that Don't Know.
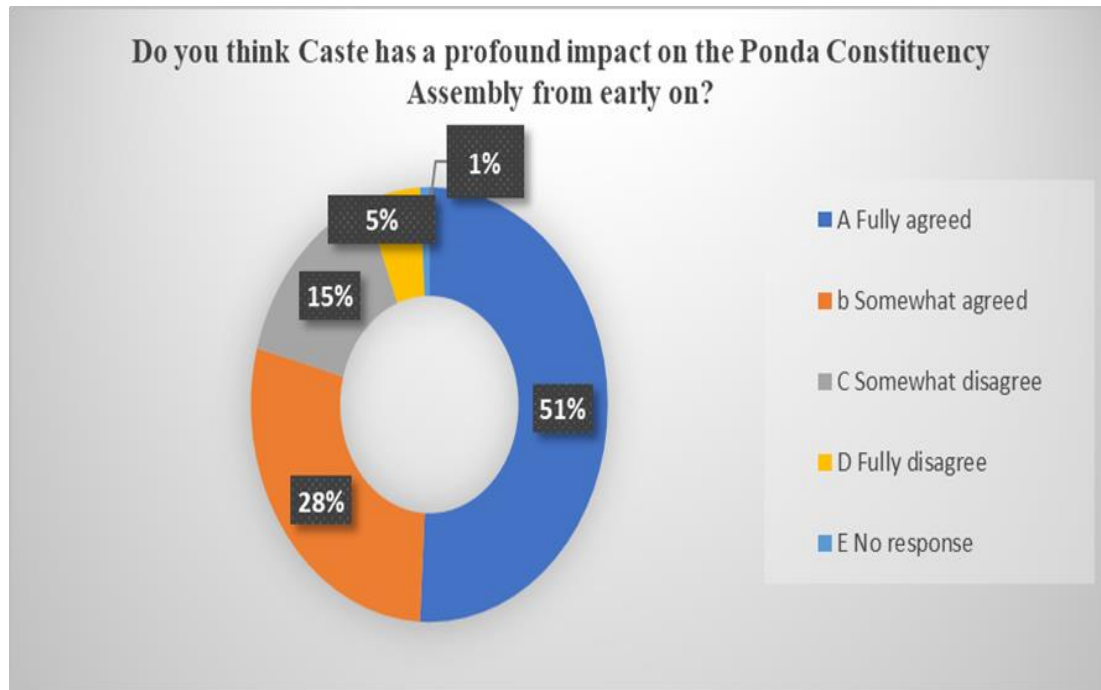

Fig. 4.28 Do you think Caste has a Profound impact on the Ponda Constituency

Out of a total 120 Respondents who have answered this Survey. Around the Majority (51%) of the Total Respondents mentioned that they Fully agreed that Caste Politics has an impact on the Ponda assembly constituency from early on. Further Around 28% of the Total Respondents indicated that they somewhat agree that Caste politics has an impact on the Ponda assembly constituency. Around 15% of the Total respondents said that they Somewhat disagree with it that Caste Politics has an impact on the Ponda Assembly Constituency. Around 5% of the total respondents said that they Fully Disagree with it. That means they don't believe that Caste Politics has an impact on Ponda Assembly Constituency.
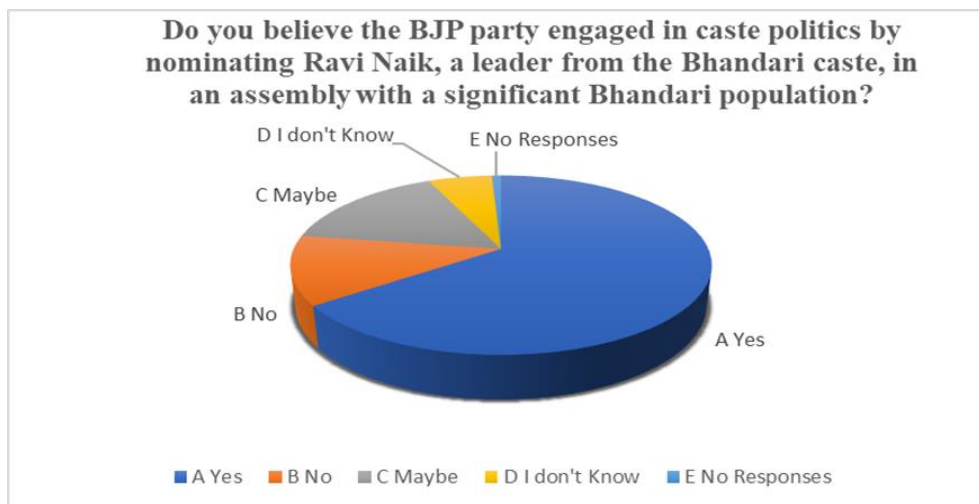
Fig. 4.29: Do you believe that the BJP party has engaged in Caste Politics

Out of a total of 120 Respondents around 65% of the total respondents said "Yes" which means they believe that the BJP Party has engaged in Caste by Nominating Ravi Naik in the Ponda assembly constituency. Around 12.5% of the total population mentioned" No" That means that they don't believe that the BJP Party has engaged in Caste Politics by giving a ticket to Ravi Naik. Around 15.85 of the total population have answered "Maybe" to it. That means they are not sure about it. whereas 5.8% of the total Respondents have said that they "Don't know about it" Further one respondent responded with "No Option
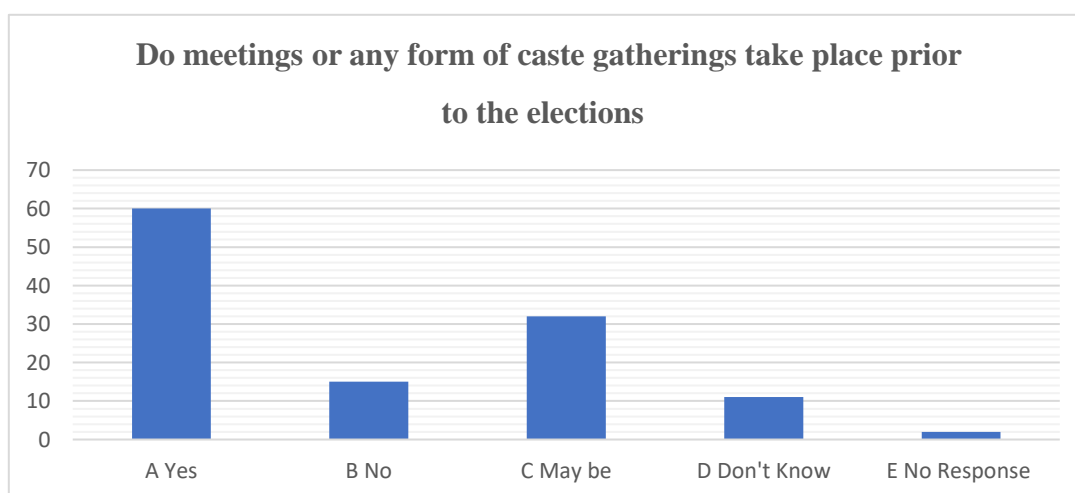

Fig. 4.30: Do meetings or any form of Caste gatherings take place before the elections

Out of a Total of 120 Respondents, the Majority of the Respondents said that "Yes" Caste gatherings do take place before elections. whereas around 15 Respondents that the Caste

gathering doesn't take place before the elections. further 32 Respondents mentioned "maybe" which means they are not sure about it. Around 11 Respondents don't know about it. further 2 Respondents have opted for "No Response
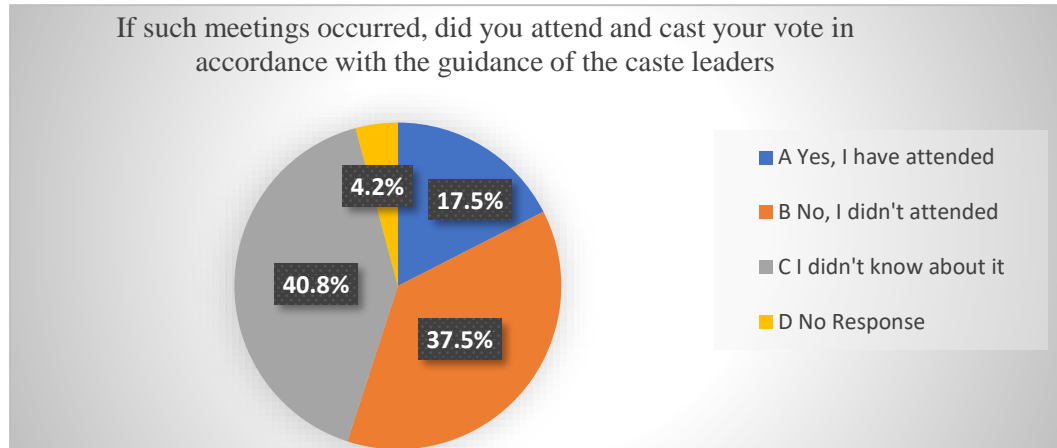
Fig. 4.31: If such meetings occurred did you attend and cast your vote

Among a total of 120 respondents who have answered this question. Around 17.5% of the total Respondents have said that they have attended and cast the vote according to the Guidance of the Caste leaders. Whereas 37.5% of the total respondents said that they didn't attend as well as they didn't cast a vote with the guidance of the Caste leaders. Further 40.8% of the Total Respondents they were unaware about it. Further 4.2% of the total respondents opted for "No Respondent".

Fig. 4.32: Is caste Politics Good for the country or is it bad for the Country's

development

Out of a total of 120 Respondents Majority (46%) of the respondents said that Caste Politics is Bad for the Country's development. Further 18% of the Total respondents indicated that it is good for the Country's development. whereas 10% of the total resp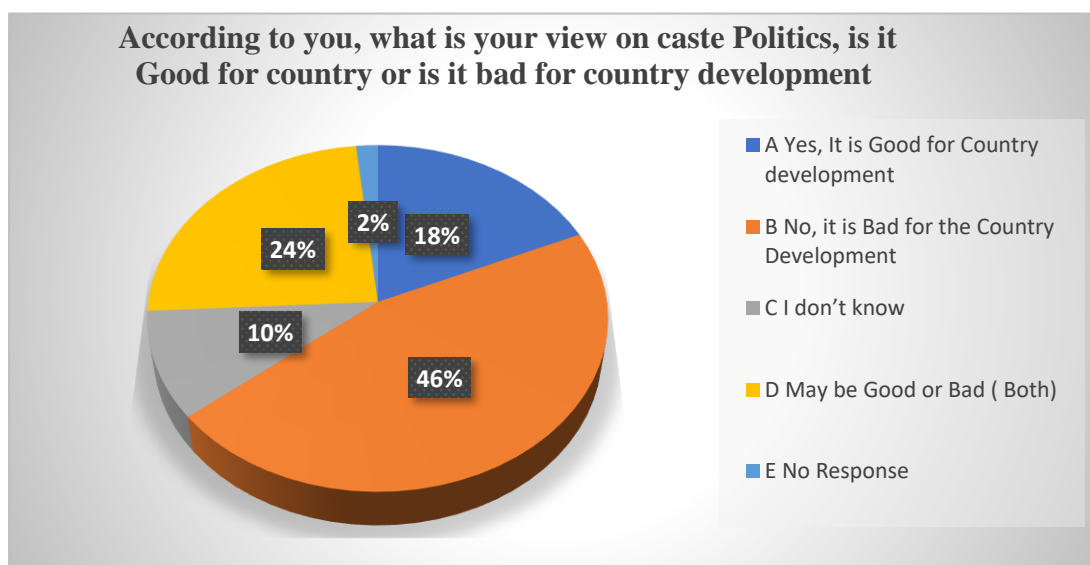ondents said that they don't know about it properly. 24% of the total respondents mentioned that its Good as well as Bad for the the country's development. Around 2% of the Respondents opted for "No Response".
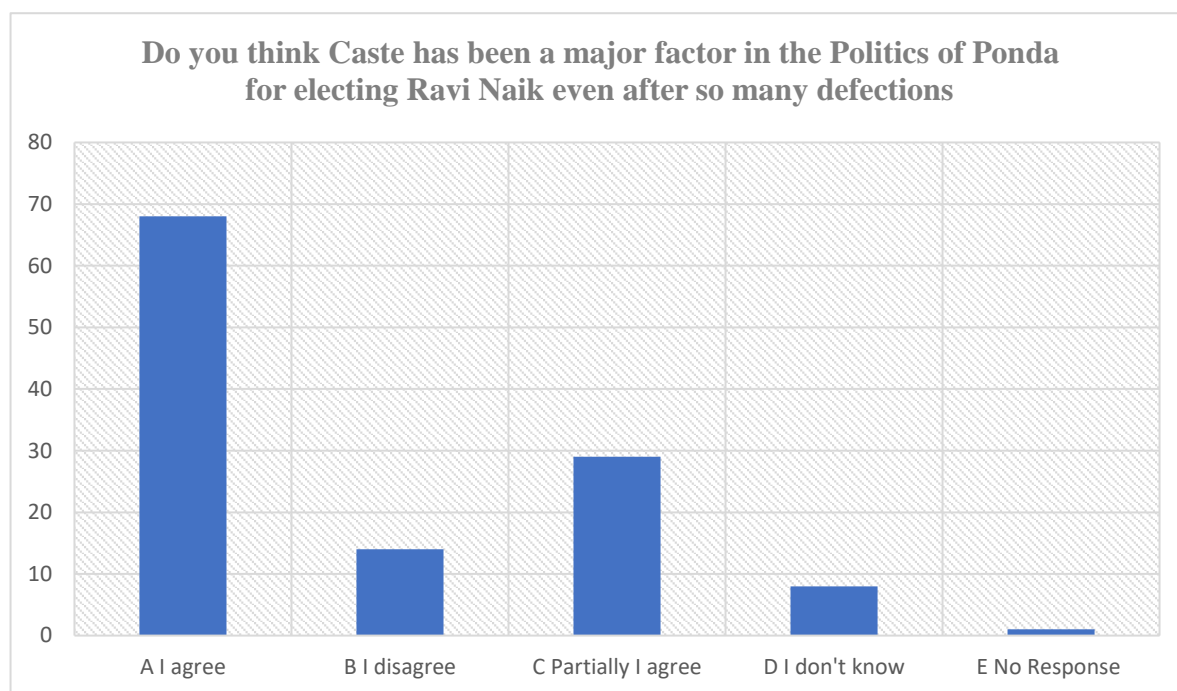
Fig. 4. 33: Do you think Caste has been a major factor in the Politics of Ponda for electing Ravi Naik even after so many defections

From the Total 120 Respondents who have answered this Question. Around 56.7% of the Total respondents that is 68 Respondents agreed that Caste has been a factor in the Politics of Ponda for electing Ravi Naik even after so many defections. Around 11.7% of the total respondents that is 14 Respondents said that Caste has not been a Factor in the Politics of Ponda for the election of Ravi Naik. Around 24.2% of the total Respondents that is 29 Respondents partially agreed that Caste has been a major factor in the Politics of Ponda. 6.7% of the total respondents said that they don't know about it. Whereas 1 respondent opted for "No Response"
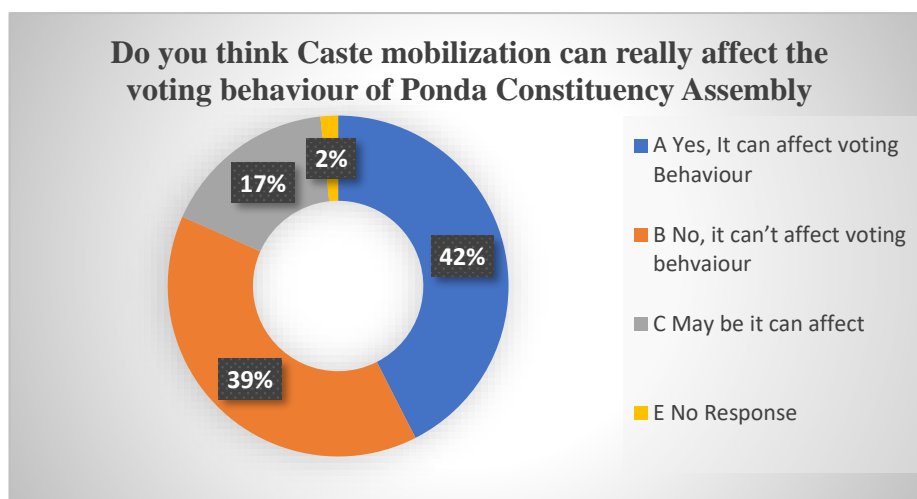
Fig. 4.34: Do you think Caste Mobilization can affect the voting behaviour of Ponda Assembly Constituency

Among the total of 120 Respondents who have answered this survey. The majority (42%) of the Respondents mentioned that Caste Mobilization can affect voting behaviour. Further 39% of the respondents mentioned that Caste Mobilization cannot affect Voting behaviour. Whereas 17% of the total Respondents reported that maybe it can affect Voting Behaviour. 1.7% of the total respondents opted for the "No Response"
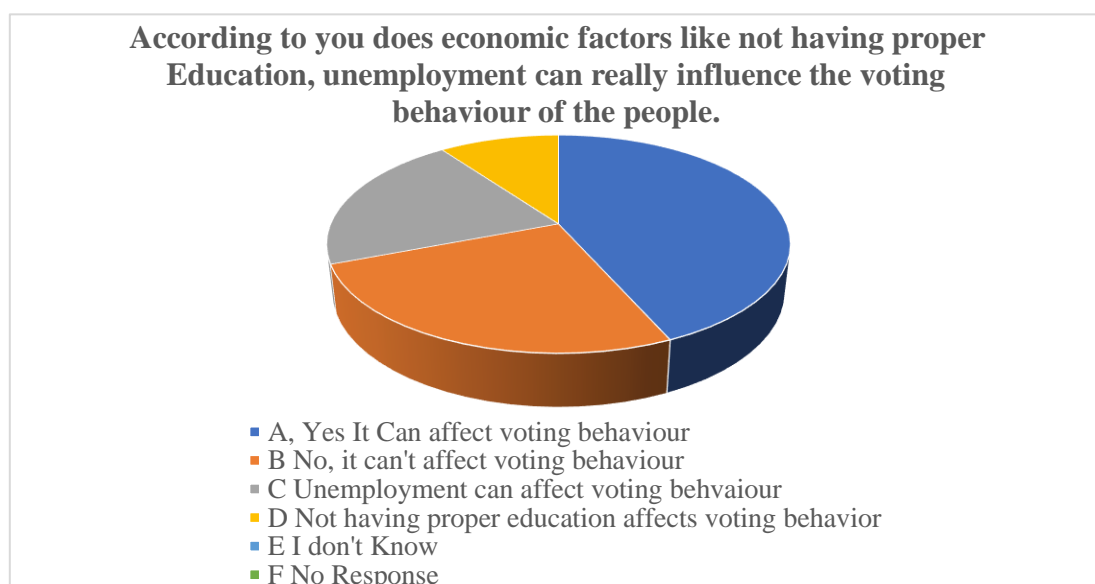
Fig. 4.35: Economic Factors

Among the total of 120 respondents who provided an answer to this question. Around 43.3% of the total Respondents said that it can affect voting behavior. Further 25.8% of the total

responded that it can't affect Voting behavior. Whereas 20.8% total responded that unemployment can affect Voting Behaviour. Around 10% of the total Respondents further mentioned that not having proper education affects Voting Behaviour.
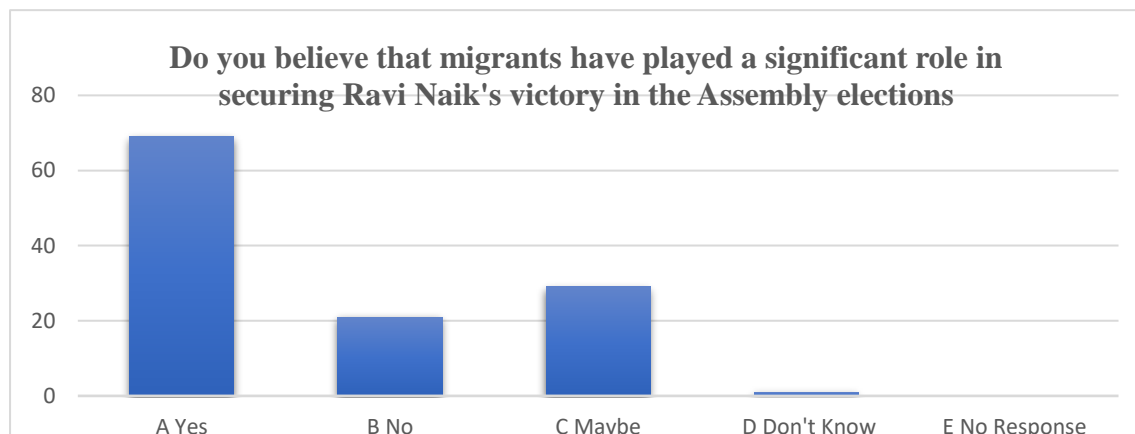
Fig. 4.36: Do you believe that migrants have played a significant role

Out of a total of 120 Respondents who have answered this Question. Around the Majority of the respondents mentioned that migrants have played a very important role. Whereas 21 Respondents said that "No" migrants did not played an significant role in Securing Ravi Naik's Victory in the Assembly Elections. Around 29 Of the respondents reported that "Maybe" That means they are not sure about it whether migrants plays an important role or not. Further 1 Resopndent has opted for the option Don't Know.
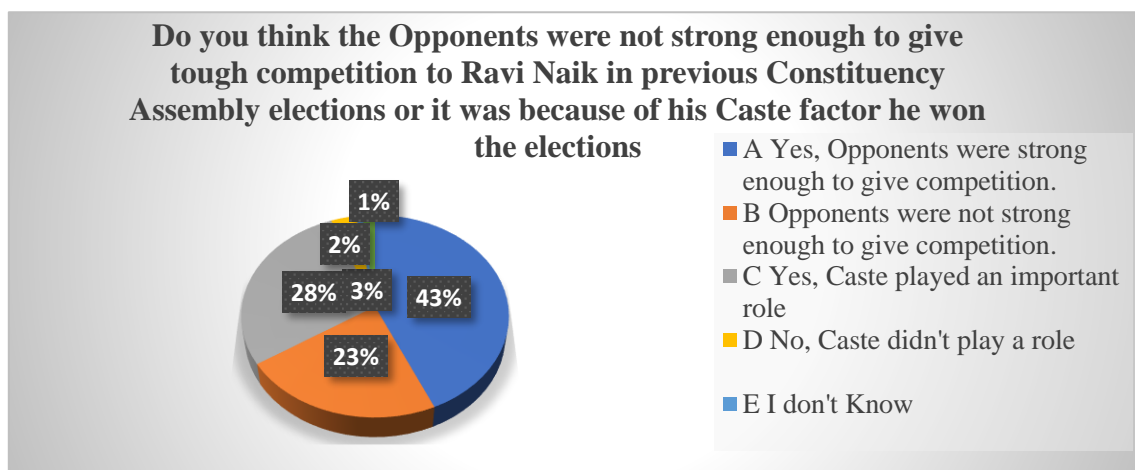
Fig. 4. 37: Opponents were not strong Enough

 From the total 120 Respondents Majority of the respondents mentioned that opponents were strong enough to give enough competition. Further around 23% of the total population

mentioned that the Opponent were not strong enough to Competition Ravi Naik. 28% of the total respondents mentioned that Caste played an Important role. Further 3% of the toal respondents menioned that Caste didn't played an important role. around 0.8% of the total respondents reported I don't know response and 1.7% opted for No response.
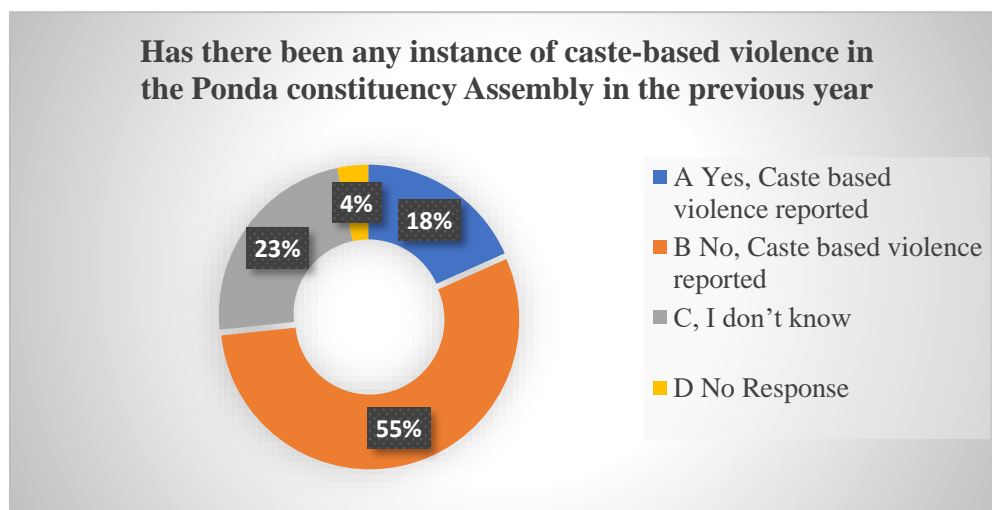
Fig. 4.38: Has there been any instance of Caste based violence in the Ponda Constituency

Out of the 120 respondents, approximately 55% stated that no caste-based violence had been reported. Meanwhile, 18% reported that caste-based violence had indeed been reported. Additionally, 23% indicated they were unsure about the matter, while around 4% chose not to respond.
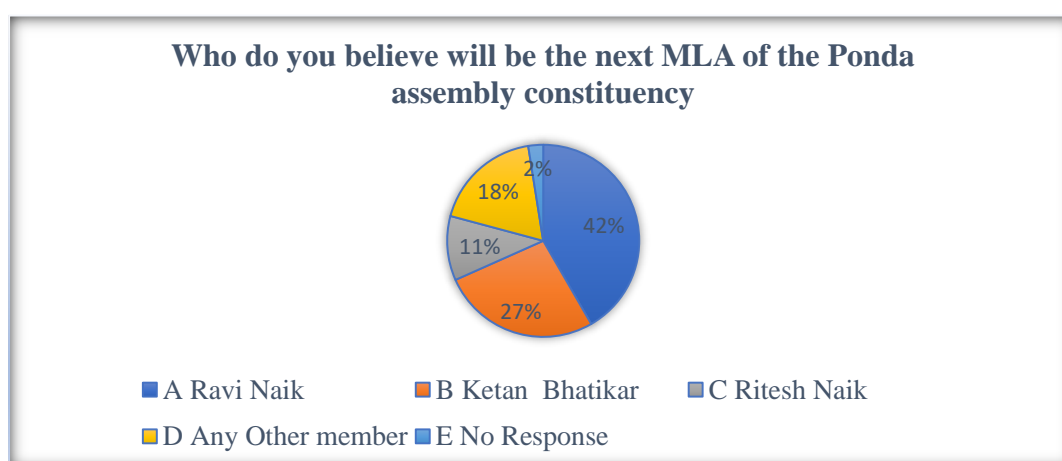
Fig. 4.39 who do you believe will be the next MLA of the Ponda assembly Constituency

Out of the total 120 respondents, a significant majority (27%) expressed a preference for Ketan Bhatikar as their next MLA. Additionally, 42% indicated a desire for Ravi Naik to be their next

MLA, while 11% favoured Ritesh Naik for the role. Furthermore, 18.4% of respondents expressed interest in another candidate as their MLA, and 2% chose not to respond.
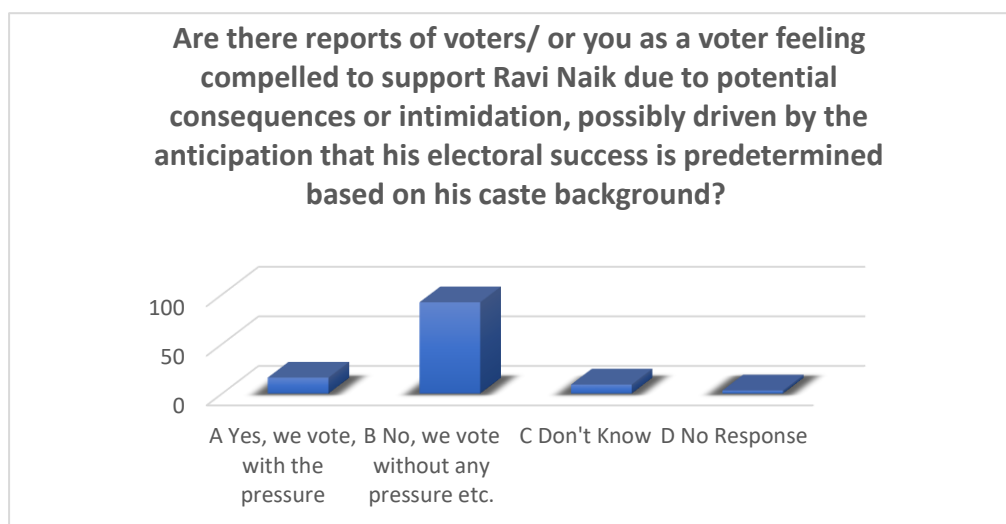
Fig. 4.40: Support due to potential consequence or intimidation

The majority of respondents stated that they vote without any external pressure, while a minority mentioned voting under pressure. The remaining respondents either selected the "Don't know" option or chose not to respond.
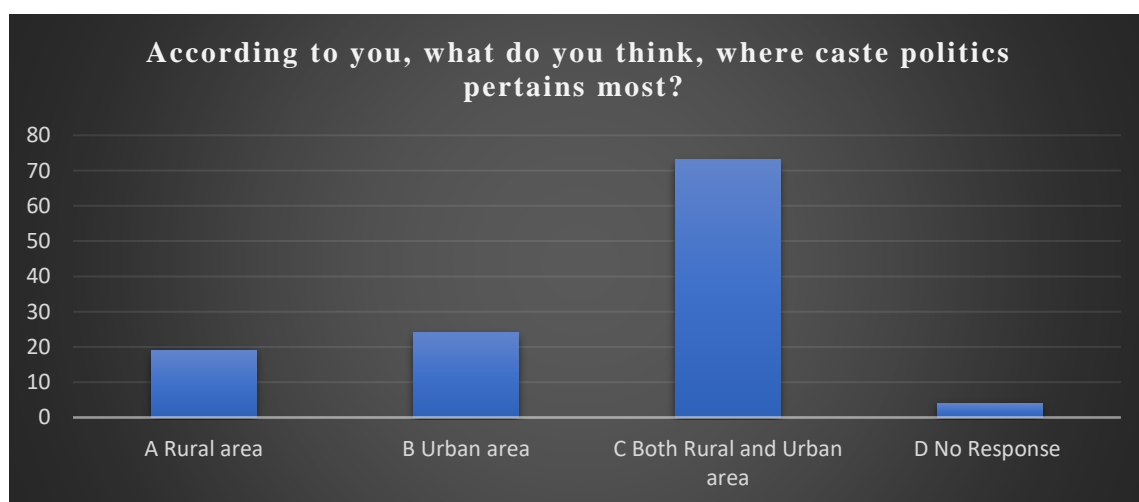
Fig. 4. 40: According to you, what do you think, where Politics pertains most

Out of 120 respondents who answered this question, approximately 79 indicated that they believe caste politics is prevalent in both rural and urban areas. Additionally, 24 respondents

specified that it is more prevalent in urban areas, while 19 respondents indicated rural areas. Four respondents opted for No Response.
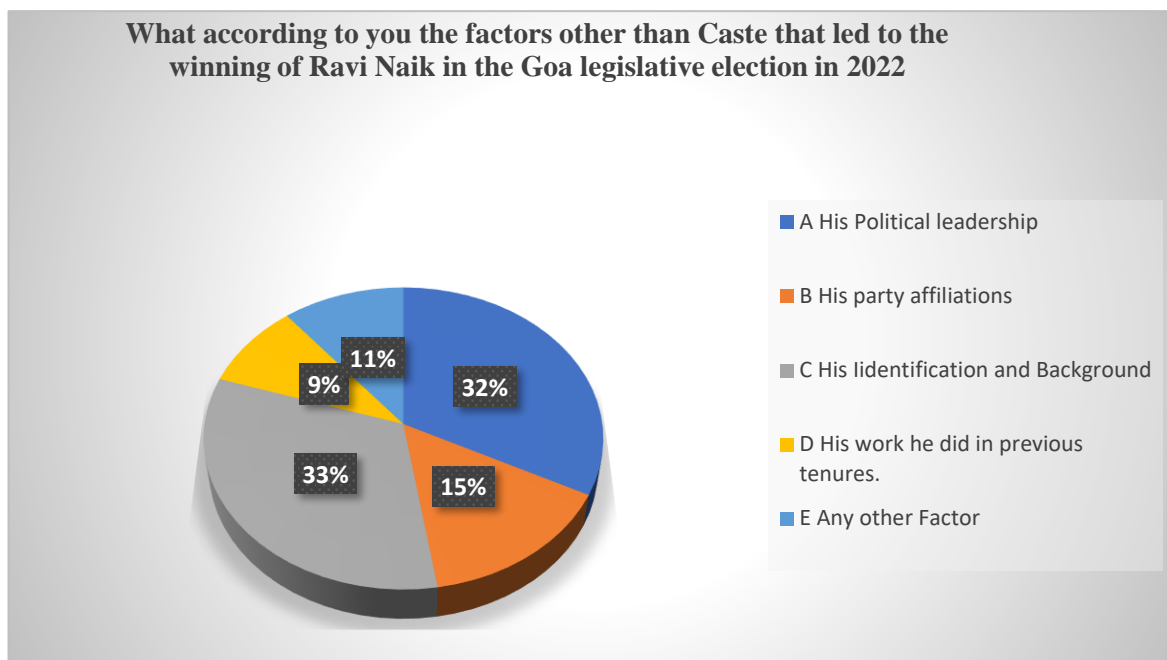
Fig. 4.41: What according to you Factors other than Caste led to the winning of Ravi Naik in the Goa Legislative Election in 2022

Among the total of 120 respondents who provided an answer to this question. A majority (33%) of the respondents mentioned that he won the elections because of his identification and Background. Further 32% of the total respondents mentioned that he won because of his political leadership. Around 15% of the total Respondents indicated that he won because of his Party affiliations whereas 11% of the Total Respondents said that he won the elections because of any other factor. whereas 9% of the total Respondents said that he won because of the works he did in previous tenures.

Section III- Open-Ended Research Questions

The question asked was, "Where do you think the caste factor is more prevalent: urban areas or rural areas?" The respondents' answers indicated that most believe it exists in both rural and urban areas. Furthermore, 19% of the total respondents believe that it exists in rural. areas. Around 20% of the Total respondents said that it exists In Urban areas. whereas 3.3% of Total Respondents opted for No Response. Further Follow-up questions were asked on " If it exists in rural areas why according to you it is in rural areas, as well as why according to you it exists in Urban areas. The majority of the respondents mentioned that they don't know the proper reason for it, further a significant Respondents said that it exists more in Rural areas because of a lack of proper education. Further, A minority of the Respondents reported that people give more importance to Caste in rural areas. a bunch of the respondents said that it exists In Urban areas because of the elite caste people voting for other elite caste candidates.

Money power plays an important role. One of the Respondents mentioned it happened more in Urban areas because of the more casteist Politics in urban areas. Further, some of the Respondents viewed that it exists in rural areas because of poor standard of living. Two individuals said that it exists in both Rural as well as Urban areas because of having less Knowledge about Caste Politics. Furthermore, the individuals have mentioned both the areas that are rural as well as urban are not so developed politically which is the reason caste Politics happens in both areas. other individuals mentioned that cities are more developed with less knowledge about politics. Other individuals mentioned that Caste politics is deeply entrenched in urban areas, contributing to more pronounced political dynamics compared to rural regions. Further, the Individual also mentioned that it Depends on mindset whereas the mindset in some areas is still traditional. Other Respondent mentioned that in rural areas more people are poor hence, they get some feeling of security when someone from their caste gets elected. They feel

secure about getting a job when someone from their caste gets elected. Because according to me they feel like we will not get anything if someone from another caste gets elected.

The other question was asked "What are your thoughts on the 2022 Election? Do you perceive a Caste factor in the 2022 Election? especially considering the Narrow Gap of only 77 Votes between Ravi Naik and Ketan Bhatikar" The Majority of the respondents said that yes Caste has played an important factor in the Politics of Ponda. further significant respondents mentioned that Caste Politics didn't play a role in the elections in 2022. On the other hand, a minority of the respondents mentioned that caste politics did play a role, but not a significant one. Other respondents indicated that there was a 50-50 split in the influence of the caste factor in the 2022 elections. Some also suggested that the candidate's success was attributed to their own capabilities.

The debate revolved around two arguments. some respondents said that if there was no Caste politics he would not have won with less than 77 margin of votes. whereas another argument is No caste Politics that's the reason he won with a very Narrow margin. Further one respondent mentioned Caste was a factor was there in Politics but it was not as much as it was there in earlier elections

The other Question was asked "Being an assembly constituency with a major Bhandari Population. Does the Bhandari Population played an important role in electing Ravi Naik as an MLA of the Ponda Assembly Constituency". A majority of the respondents mentioned that the Bhandari Population has played an important role in electing Ravi Naik as a Legislative member of the Ponda Assembly Constituency. Other respondents said that the No, Bhandari population didn't play a very important role. Further, the Respondents have also mentioned that he won because of the work he did during the previous tenures and no Bhandari population has helped for get elected. Furthermore, a lot of Respondents opted for "No Comments" when

the question was asked to them. A minority of the respondents mentioned that the Bhandari Population played a significant role and not much.

The Fourth Question which was asked to the Respondents "According to you, Did Ravi Naik has been successful enough to take every community including minority section in the development". A Majority of the Respondent of the respondents have mentioned that yes he has been successful enough to take every community including minority section in the development. Further a significant of the respondents have mentioned that they partly agree with it because they don't know whether every community has got upliftment under the leadership of Ravi Naik. Whereas a minority of the Respondents mentioned that they don't know about it because they are not very attached to social life. whereas other respondents have reported that he was not able to take every community in the development section including the minority community. That means the respondents says that he has not been successful enough to uplift the marginalized community. Further, their significant respondents have said that there is communal violence which can be seen in the Ponda Assembly. Around 10% of the respondents said they reported the 50-50 development of marginalized communities.

The fifth Question was asked to the Respondents "What according to you the socio-economic factors that may lead to the Politics of Caste." The majority of the respondents said that Education has played an important factor that led the politics of Caste. that means not having proper education about politics and how the candidates try to gain votes based on the caste. Voters are unaware of it thus education plays a very important role. Further Level of income or standing of living means if the standard of living or a level of income of a particular voter is high, they won't Fall under the strap of the candidates who try to convince people based on Caste politics. So thus, lack of income and poor standard of living can lead to do the Caste Politics. Again, Favouritism towards Caste also plays an important role that can led Caste Politics. While significant respondents mentioned that they don't anything about it. An

Individual Respondents further mentioned that "Basically if the family is not in good condition so obviously, he is going to vote on same caste if he thinks that he will give a job solely on the basic of Caste". a significant respondent also mentioned that to some extent Health, poverty also can lead to do Caste Politics. Further remaining respondents mentioned that there are lot many factors which are responsible for it.

The sixth question to the respondents is "Do you think the Government should take any steps to curb the Caste in Politics in elections" A Majority of the respondents mentioned that they should take if the Caste politics exist, they should take steps to curb it for the betterment of the Country. Further A significant of the population said that the election commission should look into it and further find some solution to it. Whereas a minority of the respondents said that the state nor the election should take any steps if Caste Politics is happening and it should continue. Further, A small group of respondents said that they didn't know about it.

The seventh Question was asked to them "What is your opinion on the development initiatives undertaken by Ravi Naik". A significant Respondents mentioned that yes development has been taken in the Ponda assembly constituency. whereas most of the respondents further mentioned that development took place after he got elected but it was very slow and steady. Some respondents further mentioned that development has taken but not in the proper way i.e. roads again have potholes, and the street which was installed again broke down. Further, A significant population has also mentioned that no development has happened in the Ponda assembly Constituency after electing Ravi Naik as a leader. Another individual respondent mentioned that he has only given importance to the development of education. Furthermore, another respondent also mentioned that development has taken place but it's not sustainable and proper. some of the respondents also mentioned that the development is much slower and should go much faster.

The Eighth question that was asked to the respondents was "What was the most crucial issues for you when casting your vote in the previous legislative elections in Goa in 2022". The Majority of the respondents said that Unemployment was the main issue in the previous elections. A significant number of respondents said that inflation was a significant issue in the previous assembly elections. An issue of water scarcity was also an important issue during the previous assembly election in 2022. Further communal harmony was an issue during the previous assembly elections. There were several issues that respondents have highlighted i.e. Rigid Bureaucracy, water scarcity, Roads were pathetic, water scarcity, Destruction of wildlife, and trees, transport issues, food price hikes, lack of infrastructure, delay in welfare scheme, etc.

4.4 DATA FINDINGS AND INSIGHTS FROM SURVEY

The questionnaire was answered by approximately 120 respondents, providing insights into the broader landscape of caste politics as revealed in a field survey conducted via questionnaire. If we see the overall view of the fieldwork the majority of the people have said that they are satisfied with the work done by Ravi Naik in the last past 2 years. Further, the respondents have also said that the caste has an impact on the electoral politics of Ponda. so people do believe that Caste Politics has played a very important role in deciding the electoral politics of the Ponda Constituency assembly. This proves my First hypothesis.

The respondents were asked further about the BJP's engagement in caste politics, citing the election of Ravi Naik, a leader from the Bhandari Community. This indicates that people believe caste has an impact on electoral politics in Goa, supporting my second hypothesis.

Further the respondents have also said the socio-economic factors like unemployment, standard of living lack of proper education has played a very important role. That means that the factors have a contributed to do Caste Politics and influence the voting behaviour of voters.

Further, the respondents also mentioned that caste politics do exist both in urban as well as in rural areas. A very strong base it has in rural areas as well as urban areas. Furthermore, the respondent asked about the reason about it saying why they believe that caste politics exist in rural areas and why it exists in urban areas. so, the respondents have given several responses to it.

Again, most of the respondents also answered the questions about the factors or determinants on which Ravi Naik got elected. The majority of the respondents said that he won the elections because of his identification and background which means people do believe his works and the development he did in his previous tenures. Further, a significant population said that he won because of his party affiliations basically with the BJP. Around 32% of the respondents said that he won because of his political leadership. the way he has governed the Ponda Constituency since 1990.

Respondents also mentioned the migrants have played a very important for securing Ravi naik victory in the assembly elections. so, respondents do believe that migrants have voted in support of the Ravi Naik. Further, the main question that was asked to the respondents was that even after so many defections Ravi naiks able to secure a win only because of his Caste factor. so the majority of them did agree that caste has been one of the important factors in winning the elections since 1990 for Ravi Naik.

further interview was also scheduled with the academicians elected members etc. The question was asked to the academicians whether Caste politics have a base in the Ponda Constituency. The input that I got from the individual is that yes Caste Politics exists. people vote according to the caste factor. further he also mentioned that the community has been not united thus lacking the political leadership even though having majority of the population in the state of Goa. further another individual has also given me inputs saying neither the community have

proper political representation nor their economic status uplifted. so, the community is still being marginalized.

Further, the question was put forward to them whether they justify the remarks of the Aam Aadmi party. further they mention they didn't justify it because that's clear case of caste Politics which they did.

According to the field survey, caste does play an important role, but alongside other factors that also have significant influence. The majority of respondents also indicated that religion has a presence in electoral politics in Goa as well as in India.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

The Study "Understanding Caste as an Influencing Factor in the Voting Behaviour in Goa's Electoral Politics: A Case Study of the Ponda Assembly Constituency" attempts to understand Politics and to Unearth the impact of Caste in electoral Politics. Caste has been one of the important factors in electoral politics for decades. The existence of caste is a result of extensive social evolution over time. Caste is inherently intangible and has significantly influenced the electoral politics of India. Caste or Jati as a hierarchical construct of the Hindu society is marked with overt manifestations of inherent discrimination and oppression. While conflict stemming from caste or Jati stratification is prevalent in India, similar occurrences can also be observed in a cross-cultural context across South Asian countries such as Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bangladesh. In the Indian context, caste or Jati is regarded as more hierarchical than class, contributing to intra and inter-caste conflicts. A significant portion of political discourse in India revolves around caste politics driven by power struggles, exploitation, and discrimination. Caste, a characteristic social construct of the Indian subcontinent, has exerted influence over Christians, Muslims, Sikhs, and other religious groups. This influence can be viewed as a "cross-cultural civilizational influence" of social dominance that impacts religions and communities beyond Hinduism. This study tries to capture the influence of Caste in electoral Politics through a hypothesis that "Caste has played a very important role in the politics of Ponda Constituent Assembly" and "Electoral success of Ravi Naik in Ponda constituent assembly is a reflective importance of caste in the assembly sequence" In the course of study, this hypothesis is tested and proven valid.

Electoral politics is not solely influenced by the factor of caste; rather, numerous other factors play a significant role in shaping electoral outcomes. Religion, Language, Region, Personality, Performance of the Ruling Party, Party Identification, ideology, and other factors do influence the Voting Behaviour of the Voters.

Through the study, it is evident that the caste factor holds more sway in rural areas compared to urban areas. There are several reasons why this phenomenon has a strong foundation in rural areas. One significant reason could be the lack of proper education and understanding of Politics. Another reason could be a genuine inclination to support caste-based politics.

The First chapter explains the theoretical framework of the study by defining the Politics of Caste, further giving a proper understanding of Caste politics. Further, it also gives importance to why it is necessary to understand the concept of Caste Politics. Further, it discusses the relevance of the concept of caste politics is contemporary times wherein India is going through more kinds of communal politics. It further examines the significance of caste politics in contemporary India, amidst a backdrop of increasing communal polarization. The discussion highlights the enduring relevance of caste dynamics within India's evolving political landscape, which is also witnessing a resurgence of communal tensions and identity-based politics. The literature review underscores the themes of identity politics, Indian politics, and electoral dynamics with a specific focus on the electoral politics of Goa. These topics are examined and emphasized within the scholarly context, shedding light on their interconnectedness and relevance in understanding political processes. Along with specifying the hypothesis of the study, the first chapter specifies the objectives of the research.

The second chapter delves into the historical backdrop of caste and Electoral politics in India, exploring the perspectives of scholars like Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Gandhi, Jyotirao Phule, and others who have defined and shaped the discourse surrounding caste identity. The chapter also

discusses the role of caste as an ideology in shaping political mobilization and electoral strategies, highlighting how political parties leverage caste for their objectives in elections. Furthermore, the chapter explores caste as an ideology in politics, along with a case study of Kanshi Ram and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in Uttar Pradesh (UP). Founded by Kanshi Ram in 1984, the BSP aimed to empower Dalits and Bahujan communities politically. Subsequently, Mayawati emerged as a prominent leader within the party and went on to serve as the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh on four occasions. This case study highlights the evolution of caste-based politics and the mobilization of marginalized communities for electoral empowerment. The narrative underscores how the BSP's formation and subsequent electoral successes exemplify the strategic utilization of caste identity and ideology in Indian politics. This chapter also examines the case of Bihar, particularly focusing on the impact of caste-based reservations introduced by the Janata government. As a result, three primary caste groups emerged: forward castes, backward castes, and scheduled castes and tribes. Historically, forward castes such as Brahmins, Bhumihars, Rajputs, and Kayasthas enjoyed privileges including land ownership, official positions, literacy, economic prosperity, and social prestige, which translated into political dominance.

The Third Chapter mainly looks out for the identity Politics of Goa. it further discusses the profile of the Ponda constituency assembly. in the 2022 legislative assembly elections, a total of 32,157 voted in the elections. of these 16,271 were male while 15,886 were female. the third chapter has given more importance to the electoral politics of the Ponda assembly constituency. Furthermore, it also discussed the electoral trends from 1990 onwards in the Ponda assembly constituency till the 2022 legislative elections. elections being a very important part of the life of the person.

The third chapter primarily focuses on identity politics and electoral dynamics in the Ponda constituency of Goa. It delves into the profile of the Ponda assembly constituency, wherein in

the 2022 legislative assembly elections, a total of 32,157 votes were cast, with 16,271 being male and 15,886 Female. This chapter places significant emphasis on the electoral politics of the Ponda assembly constituency, analysing electoral trends from 1990 to the 2022 legislative elections. Elections are regarded as a crucial aspect of individuals' lives. The chapter underscores the importance of electoral participation and highlights how electoral trends have evolved over the years in the Ponda constituency. By examining voter turnout and gender distribution of voters, the chapter provides insights into the electoral landscape and its impact on local politics. Moreover, it sheds light on the electoral patterns and dynamics that have shaped the political scenario in Ponda, reflecting the broader significance of elections as a fundamental democratic process influencing the lives of citizens. Furthermore, within the same chapter, there is a discussion on Ravi Naik's political career and leadership within the political arena. This section highlights the significance of analysing Ravi Naik's career trajectory, underscoring his contributions and influence in the political landscape. Examining Ravi Naik's political journey is deemed important within the context of understanding the dynamics of electoral politics and leadership in the Ponda constituency of Goa.

The fourth chapter surveys the Caste politics in the Ponda assembly constituency and tries to understand the influences on electoral politics of the Ponda assembly constituency. To understand the scenario an interview of the respondents was conducted by designing a Questionnaire that was circulated in online and offline modes. A total of 120 responses were collected from residents of the Ponda assembly constituency to assess the significance of caste in electoral politics within this constituency. The analysis aimed to determine whether caste played a pivotal role in influencing electoral outcomes in the Ponda Constituency assembly. Through the responses, it became clear that Caste has a role in the influencing voting behaviour of the people in the Ponda constituency assembly. However, other factors also played important roles in influencing voting behaviour. Many respondents said that they give preference to

candidates over there and not to the party. Upon analysing the survey, it became evident that a significant number of migrants also voted for Ravi Naik.

A sizeable portion of the Respondents also mentioned that the caste-based violence was reported thus dealing with the Socio-political and economic issues of caste Politics. Furthermore, many respondents highlighted that apart from caste considerations, Ravi Naik's political leadership and development initiatives were key factors contributing to his electoral success.

Upon studying this topic, it became evident that compared to Goa, caste has emerged as a significant factor in states such as Uttar Pradesh (UP), Bihar, Maharashtra, and to some extent, Madhya Pradesh. The politics in these states is largely driven by caste considerations. Unlike Goa where caste may have a lesser impact on electoral dynamics, in these states, caste plays a pivotal role in shaping political alliances, candidate selection, and voter behaviour. The prevalence of caste-based politics reflects the deep-rooted social divisions and identity politics prevalent in these regions.

In contrast to Goa's political landscape, where other factors may hold more sway, the states mentioned exhibit a strong correlation between caste and electoral outcomes. The prominence of caste in these states underscores the complexity of Indian politics and the enduring influence of socio-cultural identities on political processes. Understanding the interplay between caste dynamics and politics in these states is crucial for comprehending the broader socio-political landscape of India, where regional variations and historical legacies contribute to diverse patterns of political behaviour and governance. Caste Politics cannot be eliminated unless the caste system itself is abolished.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I

Survey Questionnaire

POLITICAL SCIENCE PROGRAMME

D.D KOSAMBI SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND BEHAVIOURAL STUDIES, GOA UNIVERSITY

Name of the Topic: Understanding Caste as an influencing factor in the Voting Behaviour in the Goa's Electoral Politics, A Case study of Ponda Assembly Constituency.

Name of the Supervisor: Professor (DR.) Rahul Tripathi

Name of the Researcher: Yogesh Babu Varak

Hello,

My name is Yogesh Babu Varak and I have come from D.D. Kosambi School of Social Sciences and Behavioural Studies, Goa University. I am conducting a survey on "Caste as an Influencing Factor in the Voting Behaviour in Goa's Electoral politics. In simple words, this research deals with how the Caste plays a very important role in the electoral politics of Goa and I have taken the Ponda Constituency Assembly as a case study to get a better understanding of caste politics. This survey is a part of my dissertation work which has to be submitted to Goa University. Your cooperation will help us in earning an M.A. degree. Participation and answering the survey questions is voluntary and it is entirely up to you to answer or not to answer any question that I ask. This study is independent and is not associated with any political party or government. Your identity or any information which you provide will be kept strictly confidential. I hope that you will take part in the survey since your participation is important. please spare some time for the interview and help me in completing the survey. Thank You! This questionnaire is

exclusively for residents residing in the Ponda Assembly Constituency and should be completed by them only.

SECTION A

Question. No	Question	Response					
01	Consent	Received	Not Received	Location			
02	Date:	Start Time	End Time	Total Time:			
03	Respondent Name:				Age	Gender	Occupation
04	Head of the Family:				Age	Gender	
05	Total members who reside in this house (including you)		Male	Female			
06	How many members in your family are eligible for Voting?						
07	Respondent Religion	Hindu	Christian	Muslim	Others		
08	How many members are working in the family	Government	Private	Self employed	Business	Others	
09	Social Status of Respondent	OBC	ST	SC	General	EWS	Others
10	Where did you stay	Rural area	Urban area	Others			

SECTION B

01   Village Panchayat Name: Panch/Councilor Name: Total Wards in Panchayat/Municipality:

02   What's your education qualification? Illiterate

         Primary School

         High school

         Hr. Secondary

         Diploma/ Certificate

         Graduate & above including professional and technical Courses

03   What's your occupation   Student   A

         Unemployed   B

         Unemployed Available to work   C

         Government Service   D

         Private Service   E

         Own Enterprise   F

         Farmer G

         Daily wage Labour   H

         Housewife/ House Maker   I

         Others (please specify)   J

04   What's your marital status?   Unmarried   A

         Married   B

         Widowed   C

         Separated/ Divorced   D

05   Annual family income of the family   1000- 50000 thousands   A

         50000- 100000 Lakh   B

         100000- 150000 Lakhs   C

         150000- 200000 Lakhs   D

         200000- 300000 Lakhs   E

         300000- 400000 Above   F

SECTION C

01   Did you vote in the previous legislative assembly elections of Goa in 2022? (If no please specify the reason)   A. Yes B. No C. No Response   D. If not, why did you didn't attend the voting

02   Did you take anyone's advice, while decoding whom to vote for, and if so, whose?
        A. Yes B. No, did not take advice   C. If yes, so Whose

                        Spouse (Husband, Wife), Father/ Brother/ Son/ Uncle

                        Caste Community leaders

                        Any other family members

03 Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the work done by the current MLA of your area during the last 2 years?   A. Fully Satisfied   B.

Somewhat Satisfied   C. Somewhat dissatisfied   D. Fully dissatisfied   E. No Response

04 When deciding about whom to vote for, did you pay more attention to the party or to the candidate.   A. Party   B.

Candidate   C. Any other Factor   D. No Response

05 Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the performance of the BJP-led Government in Goa for the last 5 years?   A. Fully satisfied   B.

Somewhat satisfied   C. Somewhat dissatisfied   D. Fully dissatisfied   E. No Response

06According to your opinion which party would be best to protect the interest of your Caste-Community   A.

Bhartiya Janata Party B. Indian National Congress C. Aam Aadmi Party D.

Revolutionary Goans party   E. Other parties (including MGP, Goa Forward party)   F. No Response

07 Are you a Migrant or You have migrated to Goa from any other state?   A. Yes B. No

SECTION D

01   While deciding whom to vote in the assembly elections in Ponda Constituency Assembly, whose work did you consider or give more importance to?   A. Ravi Naik as a leader B. BJP as a party   C. Any other Factor   D. No Response

02   If the party in question safeguards the interests of your caste or Religion, do you believe that casting your vote for that party would be a preferable choice? A. Yes B. No C. Don't Know   D. No Response

03   In your opinion, do you believe Ravi Naik should assume the position of Chief Minister?   A. Yes B. No C. Don't

know   D. No Response

04   In your opinion, which party do you believe has   A. BJP B. INC C. AA P   D. RG   E. MGP   F. GFP G. No party associated with caste politics

        engaged in caste-based politics?

05 Do you believe that caste-based politics exists in lower governing bodies such as panchayats and municipalities as well?   A.

Yes, it exists   B. No, it didn't exist   C.

Somewhat exist   D.

Partially exist E. No Response

06 According to you, do you think that political parties take decisions according to the Caste-based factor.   A.

Yes   B. No C. Don't know E. No Response

07 Do you see Religion as an important factor in influencing the voting behaviour of the voters in the election along with the caste factor?   A. Yes, I believe religion is an

important factor   B. No, I don't believe religion plays an important factor   C. Maybe   D. No Response

SECTION E

01 Do you think Caste has a profound impact on the Ponda Constituency Assembly from early on?   A. Fully agreed   B.

Somewhat agreed   C.

Somewhat disagree   D. Fully disagree   E. No Response

02 Do you believe the BJP party engaged in caste politics by nominating Ravi Naik, a leader from the Bhandari caste, in an assembly with a significant

Bhandari population? A. Yes B. No C. I don't know   D. No Response

03 Do meetings or any form of caste gatherings take place before the elections?   A. Yes B. No   C. I don't know   D. No response

04   If such meetings occurred, did you attend and cast your vote by the guidance of the caste leaders? A. Yes B. No C. I didn't attend   D. No Response

05 According to you, what is your view on Caste Politics, is it Good for the country or is it bad for the country's development?   A. Yes, it is Good for Country   B. No it is bad for Country   C. I don't know   D. No Response

06 Do you think Caste has been a major factor in the Politics of Ponda for electing Ravi Naik even after so many defections?   A. I agree   B. I disagree   C. Partially I agree   D. I don't know   E. No Response

07 Do you think Caste mobilization can affect the voting behaviour of the Ponda Constituency Assembly?   A. Yes, it can affect voting behaviour B. No, it can't affect voting behaviour   C. Maybe, it can affect   D. No Response

08 According to you does economic factors like not having proper Education, and unemployment can influence the voting behavior of the people?   Yes, it can affect voting behaviour   A

                No, it can't affect Voting Behvaiour   B

                Unemployment can affect voting behaviour C

                Not having proper education affects voting behaviour   D

I don't know   E

No Response   F

09 Do you believe that migrants played a significant role in securing Ravi Naik's victory in the Assembly elections?   A. Yes B.

No   C. I don't

know   D. No Response

10 Do you think the Opponents were not strong enough to give tough competition to Ravi Naik in previous Constituency Assembly elections

        Yes, Opponents were strong enough to give competition   A

        Opponents were not strong enough to give competition   B

        Yes, caste played an important role   in   C

Or

It was because of his Caste factor he won the elections.   No, caste didn't play a role   D

                No Response   E

11 Has there been any instance of caste-based violence in the Ponda constituency assembly in the previous year?   A. Yes, Caste based violence was reported   B. No, Caste based violence reported   C. I don't know   D. No Response

12 Who do you believe will be the next MLA of the Ponda assembly constituency?   A.

Ravi Naik   B. Ketan Bhatikar   C. Ritesh Naik E. No Response   F. Any other Member

13 Are there reports of voters/ or you as a voter feeling compelled to support Ravi Naik due to potential consequences or intimidation, possibly driven by the anticipation that his electoral success is predetermined based on his caste background? A. Yes, we vote, with the pressure   B. No, we vote without any pressure etc.   C. Don't know D. No Response

14 According to you, what do you think, where caste politics pertains most?

----

15 If it happens in a rural area's why according to you it is in a rural area, as well as why according to you it exists in an urban area. (Mention the reason)   A. Rural Area B. Urban Area   C. No Response   D. Both Urban and Rural Area   E. No response

16 What according to you the factor that led to the winning of Ravi Naik in the Goa assembly legislative elections in 2022? A. He won because of his political leadership   B.

Because of his party affiliations   C. Because of his identification and background   D.

Because of the work he did in

previous tenures   E. Any other factor

SECTION F

Q.1 What are your thoughts on the 2022 elections? Do you perceive a caste factor, especially considering the narrow gap of only 77 votes between Ravi Naik and Ketan Bhatikar?

Q. 2 Being an assembly constituency with a major Bhandari Population. Does the Bhandari Population play an important factor in electing Ravi Naik as a member of the Ponda Assembly Constituency?

Q.3 According to you, Did Ravi Naik have been successful enough to take every Community Including the minority section in the development?

Q.4 What according to you the socio-economic factors that may lead to do the politics of caste?

Q.5 Do you think the Government or Election Commission should take any steps to curb the caste in Politics in Elections?

Q.6 As a voter, what recommendations would you like to propose to address and mitigate caste-based discrimination in elections?

Q.7 What is your opinion on the development initiatives undertaken by Ravi Naik.?

Q.8 What were the most crucial issues for you when casting your vote in the previous legislative election in Goa in 2022?

Appendix II

<center>Personal Interview Questionnaire</center>

1. What is your view on Caste Politics?

2. As a Sarpanch do you think Ravi Naik has been able to give justify to all the Communities?

3. As an Academicians how do you see the Politics of the Ponda Constituency assembly

4. Do you believe that Caste can influence the voting behavior of voters in the Ponda Assembly Constituency?

5. During Ravi Naik's tenure Do you see that the Ponda has seen heights of developments?

6. Does Bhandari Community have been economically and politically uplifted?

7. What is your opinion on Ravi Naik getting elected in the 2022 assembly do you have a prediction that he can win with a small margin of votes?

8. How do you see the Political career of Ravi Naik from the Period of 1990s till 2022?
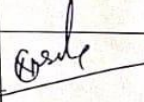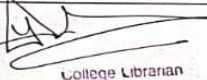
Appendix III   **Interviews**

POLITCAL SCIENCE PROGRAMME

D.D KOSAMBI SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND BEHAVIOURAL STUDIES, GOA
UNIVERSITY

Name of Researcher: Yogesh Varak

Title of the Topic: Understanding Caste as an Influencing Factor in the Voting Behaviour in the
Goa's Electoral Politics: A Case study Of Ponda Assembly Constituency.

I, **Yogesh Varak**, the student of M.A. II, Political Science Programme. D.D. Kosambi School of
Social Sciences and Behavioural Study (DDKSSSBS), Goa University. As part of my M.A. course,
I have to complete dissertation on the topic "Understanding Caste as an Influencing Factor in the
Voting Behaviour in the Goa's Electoral Politics: A Case study Of Ponda Assembly Constituency".
As part of my dissertation, I need to complete an internship. This involves visiting libraries, doing
fieldwork, surveys, and interviews. I have to keep careful records of everything I do. To show that
I've visited places, I need to get signatures or stamps as proof. This helps make sure my research
is genuine and accountable.

SR.NO	VISITED PLACES OR FIELD	DATE	TIME	STAMP/SiGNATURE
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6.	ANIKET KANOLKAR P.E.S. R.S.N. College of Arts & Scie	02/4/24		.2/4/24
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9	Havesh Naik Sarpanch Curti Khandepor	2/4/24		
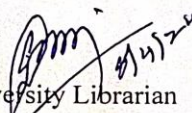
SR.NO	VISITED PLACES OR FIELD	DATE	TIME	STAMP/ SIGNATURE
10	MR. NILESH B NAIK ASST. PROFESSOR GOVT. COLLEGE OF ARTS, SCIENCE & COMMERCE, KHANDOLA	06/04.2024	2103	Nilip 06/04/2024.

Appendix IV   **Library Records**

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TO WHOM SO EVER IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that Mr. Yogesh Varak, a student of Goa University, M.A. (Political Science), visited Goa University Library for her reference work on the following dates and completed 109.03 Hours of research internship as a part of his M.A. dissertation.

The detailed dates and times he visited are attached herewith:

This certificate has been issued at the written request of Professor DR. Rahul Tripathi.

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