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978-1-107-07008-0 - Elite Parties, Poor Voters: How Social Services Win Votes in India

Tariq Thachil

Frontmatter

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Why do poor people often vote against their material interests? This puzzle has been famously studied within wealthy Western democracies, yet the fact that the poor-voter paradox also routinely manifests within poor countries has remained unexplored. This book studies how this paradox emerged in India, the world's largest democracy. Tariq Thachil shows how arguments from studies of wealthy democracies (such as moral values voting) and the global south (such as patronage or ethnic appeals) cannot explain why poor voters in poor countries support parties that represent elite policy interests. He instead draws on extensive survey data and fieldwork to document a novel strategy through which elite parties can recruit the poor while retaining the rich. He shows how these parties can win over disadvantaged voters by privately providing them with basic social services via grassroots affiliates. Such outsourcing permits the party itself to continue to represent the policy interests of its privileged base.

Tariq Thachil is an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science at Yale University. Thachil's doctoral dissertation received the 2010 Gabriel A. Almond Award for best dissertation in the field of comparative politics from the American Political Science Association and the 2010 Sardar Patel Award for best dissertation on modern India in the humanities, education, fine arts, or social sciences from the University of California, Los Angeles. His articles have appeared in *American Political Science Review*, *Comparative Politics*, *Contemporary South Asia*, and *World Politics*.

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Frontmatter

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For my parents
Ania Loomba and Suvir Kaul
for teaching me to love the world of ideas
And for my Nana
Satish Loomba
whose memory inspires these pages

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Tariq Thachil

Frontmatter

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Tariq Thachil
Frontmatter
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978-1-107-07008-0 - Elite Parties, Poor Voters: How Social Services Win Votes in India

Tariq Thachil

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Tariq Thachil
Frontmatter
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Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>List of Tables</i>	x
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xi
1. Introduction	I
2. The Anatomy of a Puzzle: Dissecting the BJP’s Struggles with Poor Voters	36
3. Why Rich and Poor Voters Support an Elite Party in India	81
4. Why an Elite Party Turned to Services	104
5. How Services Win Votes	142
6. When Services Fail	183
7. The Argument in Comparative Perspective	233
8. Conclusion: The Future of Service as an Electoral Strategy	263
<i>Afterword</i>	281
<i>Appendix A Variables, Sources, and Summary Statistics</i>	287
<i>Appendix B Additional Tables and Figures</i>	295
<i>Appendix C Supplemental Survey Information</i>	298
<i>Appendix D Information in Online Supplement</i>	304
<i>References</i>	305
<i>Index</i>	325

Figures

1.1.	Map of BJP performance with Dalit and Adivasi voters (2004)	<i>page</i> 10
1.2.	How rival strategies affect the efficacy of service	29
1.3.	Summary of research design	34
2.1.	Content analysis of BJP manifestos and speeches (1984–2004)	49
2.2.	Average BJP seat share (unweighted) within major state assemblies (1957–2008)	57
2.3.	BJP performance and Hindu-Muslim riots	63
2.4.	Social profile of voters identifying a political party as representing the interests of their caste community	78
3.1.	Impact of associational membership vs. support for Hindutva	92
3.2.	Impact of associational membership vs. economic preferences	94
4.1A.	Growth in Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram projects, 1981–2007	109
4.1B.	Growth in Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram villages contacted, 1981–2007	109
4.2A.	Growth in Seva Bharati projects across India (1990–2004)	110
4.2B.	Growth in Seva Bharati projects (Delhi Wing, 1979–2005)	110
4.3.	Density of Sangh service networks across India (2004)	126
4.4.	BJP performance and Sangh service activities (2004)	127
4.5.	BJP performance and Sangh non-service activities (2004)	128
4.6.	Service and BJP gains and losses, 1996–2004	129
4.7.	Subaltern population size and service network density	136
4.8.	Average marginal impact of membership increases where Sangh service networks are denser	139
5.1.	Location of VKA activists in fieldwork site (Jashpur Sub-district, Jashpur District, Chhattisgarh)	149
5.2.	Which school provides the best quality of education?	154
5.3.	Comparing VKA and government schoolteachers	155
5.4.	Survey districts (highlighted) in Chhattisgarh	165

<i>List of Figures</i>	ix
5.5. Effect of opinion of service organizations on voter preferences (non-beneficiaries only)	175
6.1A. Manifesto best addressing the problems of your community	195
6.1B. Evaluations of Communist performance in education (1996–2001)	195
6.2. Expansion of RSS membership in Kerala (1942–1987)	209
6.3. BJP and BSP electoral performances in Uttar Pradesh (1985–2007)	216
6.4. Survey districts (highlighted) in Kerala	225
6.5. Survey localities in Agra	226
8.1. 2009 BJP performance and Sangh service activities	267

Tables

1.1.	Service as an electoral strategy	<i>page</i> 16
1.2.	Which parties are most likely to divide electoral labor?	17
2.1.	BJP performance and social service spending	56
2.2.	Non-elite candidates in the BJP and BSP	71
3.1.	Determinants of support for the BJP	90
3.2.	Propensity matching and sensitivity analysis	99
3.3.	Comparing determinants of support for major parties	101
4.1.	Main organizations of the Sangh Parivar	108
4.2.	Caste-wise demographic makeup of major Indian states	112
4.3.	BJP gains with Dalits and Adivasis (1996–2004)	125
4.4.	Determinants of state-level BJP support (1996–2004)	133
5.1.	Voting patterns across districts in Chhattisgarh	166
5.2.	BJP support by respondent type in Chhattisgarh	168
5.3.	Village-level determinants of service activities	170
5.4.	Assessing the influence of service on voting in Chhattisgarh	173
5.5.	Matching analysis among Chhattisgarh survey respondents	176
6.1.	Literacy rates in Kerala and India (1911–1951)	188
6.2.	Social bases of partisan support in Kerala	196
6.3.	Sangh service and BJP support in Kerala and UP	227
6.4.	BJP support by respondent type in Kerala and UP	227
6.5.	Assessing the influence of service on voting in Kerala and UP	230
7.1.	Determinants of support for Islamic party system in Yemen (2006)	247
7.2.	Determinants of support for PAN, PKB, and PKS in Indonesia (2005)	259
7.3.	Education and organization: Influence on PAN and PKS support	260

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-07008-0 - Elite Parties, Poor Voters: How Social Services Win Votes in India

Tariq Thachil

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgments

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978-1-107-07008-0 - Elite Parties, Poor Voters: How Social Services Win Votes in India

Tariq Thachil

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-07008-0 - Elite Parties, Poor Voters: How Social Services Win Votes in India

Tariq Thachil

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Acknowledgments*

xiii

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Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-07008-0 - Elite Parties, Poor Voters: How Social Services Win Votes in India

Tariq Thachil

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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