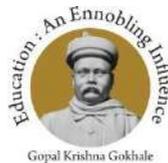# LOCAL BODY ELECTIONS IN MAHARASHTRA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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Education : An Ennobling Influence

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ABBREVIATIONS

AV	Average
AvVT	Average Voter Turnout
BCC	Backward Category of Citizens
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
REVERSE COMP	Proxy measure for Level of Competition Between Different Political Parties
DEV	Development quotient of a district
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
INC	Indian National Congress
IND	Proportion of Votes Garnered by Independent Candidates
MCC	Model Code of Conduct
NCP	Nationalist Congress Party
POL	Political Alignment
R1	Round One of Elections
R2	Round Two of Elections
R3	Round Three of Elections
R4	Round Four of Elections
RES	Proportion of Seats Reserved in a Council
SC	Scheduled Castes
SECM	State Election Commission of Maharashtra
SS	Shiv Sena
ST	Scheduled Tribes
VT	Voter Turnout

FOREWORD

1. Maharashtra, which is one of the most urbanized States of the country, has worked assiduously towards restoring the rightful place of the local bodies in the political governance. This is evident from the conduct of free, fair and transparent elections by the State Election Commission since its inception in 1994 following the amendments to the Constitution of nearly 28,000 local bodies (26 Municipal Corporations, 340 Municipal Councils and Nagar Panchayats, 34 Zilla Parishads, 351 Panchayat Samitis and approx. 27,781 Gram Panchayats).

2. Collection and preservation of data of all the elections is necessary not only for understanding the dynamics of politics and but also for making improvements in the subsequent elections. It is unfortunate that very little data has been preserved of previous elections. Only data pertaining to number of reserved seats, voter turnout and seats won by different political parties is available and that too for Zilla Parishads, Panchayat Samitis, Municipal Councils and Municipal Corporations only.

3. State Election Commission, Maharashtra proposes to collect and preserve relevant data of all the elections from now onwards pertaining to the following broad categories:

i.   Arrangements done e.g. number of wards (with reservation), polling stations, polling personnel, vehicles etc.

ii.   Details given by candidates in nomination papers and affidavit e.g. Age, educational qualification, assets and liabilities, criminal background etc.

iii.   Activities during elections: e.g. violation of Model Code of Conduct, incidents of violence, re-poll etc.

iv.   Post elections e.g. expenditure incurred by the local bodies / candidates / political parties, profile of winning candidates etc.

4. I am happy that Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune has done analysis as directed by State Election Commission, Maharashtra of all the elections of all local bodies held in the State between 1994-2013 with the available, scanty data. A team of 7 researchers led by Smt. Manasi Phadke and Prof. Dnyandev Talule of YASHADA analyzed the

data over a period of four months from July to October 2016, the main findings of which are as below:

i.   Average voter turnout in Municipal Councils and Nagar Panchayat over all elections is 71 per cent, whereas that in Municipal Corporations and Zilla Parishads is 56 per cent and 69 per cent respectively.

ii.   Higher voter turnout leads to higher swing in all local bodies i.e. higher voter turnout is linked to higher political competition amongst different parties

iii.   Higher the voter turnout, higher is the proportion of seats won by independent candidates in all local bodies

iv.   Higher levels of development lead to lower voter turnout; this trend is observed across all local bodies in Maharashtra

v.   The study has identified those local bodies which have historically lower voter turnouts

vi.   It has also identified those bodies wherein the elections may be fiercely contested by political parties

Above findings have great implications for undertaking various programs like voter awareness program and effective implementation of Model code of Conduct.

5. I take this opportunity to congratulate Smt. Manasi Phadke and Dr. Rajas Parchure of Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Prof. Dnyandev Talule and Director General of YASHADA and Department of Rural Development, Government of Maharashtra for making this analytical study possible.

6. I am further pleased to learn that Gokhale Institute is publishing this analysis in a book form, elucidating the methodology, analysis, suggestions and recommendations for future elections. I am sure that this will greatly help all the stakeholders in ensuring maximum peoples' participation in a free, fair and transparent manner.

Shri. J. Saharia
State Election Commission
Maharashtra

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I am very pleased to present this report titled "Local Body Elections in Maharashtra: A Comparative Analysis (1994-2013)" to the readers and scholars of decentralization. As the discerning reader must be aware, the State Election Commission of Maharashtra has been conducting local body elections in Maharashtra from 1994. Data pertaining to 4 rounds of elections held so far has been maintained by the SECM. This data contains a mine of information, the analysis of which would yield important insights for the SECM, especially from a policy making perspective. For example, voter awareness programs have to be given priority in the conduct of elections. This is an important issue for the SECM. However, should voter awareness programs be run with equal intensity across all parts of Maharashtra? Are there zones where voter turnout rates tend to be low? Can we identify these? If we can, then special attention can be given to these zones whilst planning the voter awareness drive. Careful analysis of data helps us to create these insights which would be relevant for policy making.

Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics was given the task of analyzing the data available with the SECM in order to bring out important insights that may aid the direction of electoral policy. The data pertains to elections held in Municipal Councils, Municipal Corporations, Zilla Parishads as well as Panchayat Samitis. This publication brings out the comparative analysis pertaining to election data of all local bodies. The analysis of data of specific local bodies is presented in other reports. Our team at the Institute has worked hard in terms of cleaning up the database, enhancing it with other variables to draw insights and reporting the observable trends contained in the data with accuracy. The report carries interesting insights on all variables important for electoral policy direction.

Let me express my gratitude to Shri Jageshwar Saharia, State Election Commissioner, Maharashtra, for granting this interesting study project to the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics. Shri K. Suryarishnamurty, Assistant Commissioner, State Election Commission, Maharashtra, was a mentor for our team and guided and supported us at every stage of the project right from the data analysis to writing the report.

This project helped us to gain deep insights into the dynamics of local body elections in Maharashtra, all of which have been duly presented in the report. I am sure that the report will serve as a useful addition to the existing literature on the subject.

Prof. Rajas Parchure
RBI Professor and Offg. Director
Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics
Pune

CHAPTER - 1

LOCAL BODY ELECTIONS IN MAHARASHTRA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

PROLOGUE

The 73rd Amendment to the Constitution, which gave constitutional status to the Panchyat Raj Institutions (PRI), was passed in 1992. The same Amendment provided for creation of the State Election Commission of Maharashtra (SECM) for conduct of elections in urban and rural local self-governance bodies. All urban and rural local body elections in Maharashtra since 1994 have been conducted by the SECM. While urban bodies include Municipal Corporations, Municipal Councils and Nagar Panchayats, rural bodies encompass Zilla Parishads, Panchayat Samitis and Gram Panchayats.

Since 1994 the State Election Commission of Maharashtra conducts the elections to the local bodies including Zilla Parishads, Panchayat Samitis and village Gram Panchayats for rural democratic setup and the elections to the Municipal Councils and Corporations in urban power structure. Elections to Zilla Parishad and Panchayat Samitis are conducted simultaneously while for Corporations and Councils the elections take place at the regular interval of every five years. Since its inception in 1994 the State Election Commission of Maharashtra has been electing approximately 2.5 lakh "people representatives" in nearly 28,000 local bodies which comprise 26 Municipal Corporations, 340 Municipal Councils and Nagar Panchayats, 34 Zilla Parishads, 351 Panchayat Samitis and approximately 27, 781 Gram Panchayats respectively.

In Maharashtra State, at the time of establishment of the SECM, some of the local bodies, rural as well as urban, were already in existence and were functioning with elected members. It was decided to allow such local bodies to continue and hold elections to these local bodies as and when they completed their 5-year term. Thus, in Maharashtra, all local bodies do not go to polls at the same time. Different local bodies, urban and rural, go to polls as and when their 5-year term ends.

Since its establishment, the SECM has conducted 4 rounds of elections in all the local bodies. The first round was from 1994-98, the second round was from

1999-2003, the third from 2004-08 and the fourth from 2009-13. From 2014 onwards, the fifth round of elections is being conducted by the SECM across all rural and urban local bodies in Maharashtra. Whilst some bodies have already conducted the fifth round of elections, in nearly 26 out of 36 districts in Maharashtra, all urban and rural bodies will go to polls from November 2016 to March 2017.

The SECM has maintained some basic data on a few electoral variables for each round of elections held since 1994. This data is on the following variables:

a. Population governed by the local body
b. Proportion of SC population within the total population
c. Proportion of ST population within the total population
d. Total number of wards created within the area governed by the local body
e. Number of seats contested in each local body.
f. Number of seats reserved for SC, ST, BCC categories
g. Number of seats that fall under General Category
h. Number of seats reserved for women under General, SC, ST, BCC categories
i. Number of voters within the population
j. Number of male and female voters
k. Number of votes cast
l. Number of valid votes cast
m. Voter Turnout Ratio (defined as number of valid votes/ number of eligible voters in the population)
n. Proportion of votes received by different political parties, coalitions and independent candidates
o. Distribution of seats won by different political parties, coalitions and independent candidates

The following graph shows a pictorial representation of the data available with the SECM across four rounds of elections, hereafter referred to as R1, R2, R3 and R4. For some of the local bodies, data on Voter Turnout is missing for R1. However, data on all variables is definitely available for R2, R3 and R4. This data is available for Municipal Corporations, Municipal

Councils, Nagar Pachayats, Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis. Data has not been maintained for Gram Panchayats.

1.　DATA AVAILABLE WITH SECM

Figure 2.1: Data available with SECM
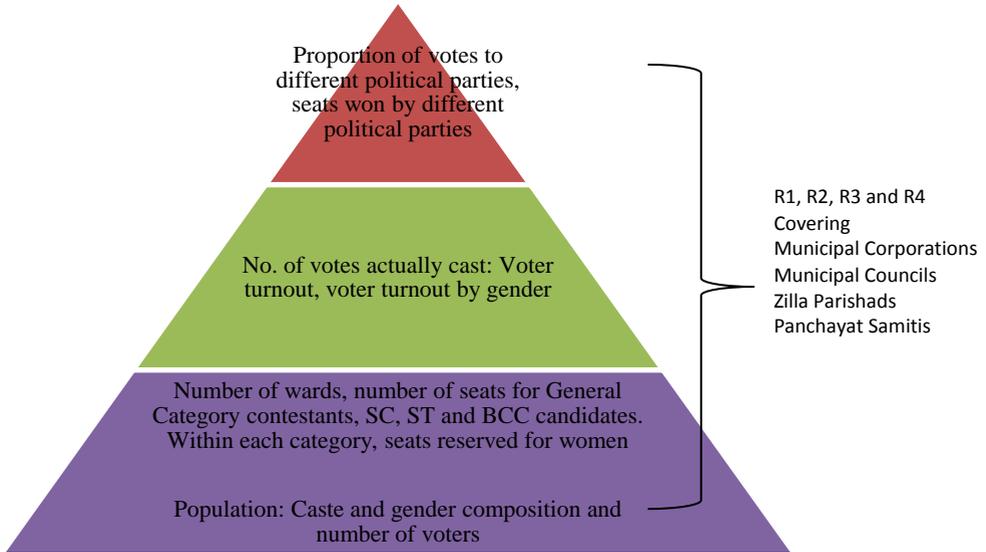
Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics has come out with 4 separate reports giving detailed data analysis on each of the local bodies. This report summarizes the findings presented in all of those reports, and brings out some interesting similarities as well as dissimilarities in the datasets pertaining to Municipal Corporations, Municipal Councils, Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis. This report has to be read together with the data analysis reports on the individual local bodies to get a complete picture of the trends in the data.

2.　FORMATTING AND ENHANCING THE DATASET

Section 1 gives details of the variables on which data has been maintained by the SECM. Following variables were constructed from the existing database so as to understand the key patterns in the dataset.

VOTER TURNOUT (VT)

Voter Turnout is hereafter referred to as VT. The importance of VT from the perspective of electoral results cannot be underestimated. The ratio of VT can swing results of the election either way and hence VT is one of the most watched variables by candidates, political parties as well as the SECM. Indeed, for the SECM, increasing the VT has been a key issue because a truly fair election can only be deemed to be held when the VT is nearly 100per cent.

Our reports treat VT as a key variable. Patterns in VT for all local bodies across different rounds of elections have been highlighted. Correlations between VT and various other variables have been explored so as to draw meaningful conclusions that could be relevant to the SECM in the conduct of future elections.

PROPORTION OF SCST (SCST)

The proportion of SC and ST population to the total population of the area governed by the local body is hereafter referred to as SCST. SCST can have an impact on VT and hence it is important to analyze this variable.

The proportion of SC and ST population to the total population as declared by the Census for the particular area is taken as a reference while deciding the number of seats to be reserved within a Council by the SECM. The reservation of seats too impacts VT. In fact, rather than use SCST as a causal variable to explain the trends in VT, it would be more pertinent to look at the patterns in reservations. Patterns in the reservations are captured in the variable RES, which is described next.

PROPORTION OF SEATS RESERVED (RES)

As has been mentioned above, the proportion of SC and ST in the population is declared in the Census report; since the Census is released every decade, the proportion of SC/ST to total population within Council limits is considered as fixed for one decade. However, in the same decade, two elections are conducted to any local body. Now, since the seats are reserved on a rotation basis, a very interesting pattern emerges. Even if the SC/ST population for the Council is frozen for a decade as per the Census, reservation of seats in different

constituencies of the Council undergoes rotation in the same decade. And this change in reservation affects voter behavior.

RES is defined to be the proportion of reserved seats to the total number of seats in any local body. This has been used as a causal variable to check whether changes in the proportion of seats under reservation bring about a change in the VT ratios in different local bodies.

PROPORTION OF SEATS WON BY INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES (IND)

The proportion of votes garnered by independent candidates in a local body is hereafter referred to as IND. IND is interesting because it identifies those areas wherein independent candidates garner highest number of votes.

Apart from these variables which have been created out of the existing dataset, some additional variables were created in order to explore the data patterns more deeply. Thus, the existing data has not only been used to identify certain key variables, but it has also been enhanced by introducing new variables. Following were the new variables added to the dataset.

POLITICAL ALIGNMENT (POL)

POL is a dummy variable which stands for "Political Alignment." If the party winning maximum number of seats at the local level is the same as the party in power at the State level, then the dummy variable POL takes value 1, otherwise 0. This variable was added to identify clusters of local bodies that normally show higher alignment with the State Government.

PROXY FOR COMPETITION BETWEEN PARTIES (REVERSE COMP)

REVERSE COMP is a variable that helps to understand the level of competition between different political parties. The dataset contained data on distribution of seats to different political parties. Lower standard deviation in the distribution of seats would imply that different parties were in neck to neck competition.

Thus, REVERSE COMP is defined as the standard deviation of distribution of seats between political parties. Lower the value of REVERSE COMP higherwould be the level of competition between the parties. Areas with high

degree of competition between political parties show a high level of "swing" i.e. the elections can swing the outcome in favour of any one party. Hence, those areas with low REVERSE COMP values could be identified as areas wherein the swing quotient would be quite high and the contest would be close.

DEVELOPMENT INDEX (DEV)

Political outcomes show distinct patterns vis-à-vis development ratios. Normally, in more developed areas, casting a vote is normally not the only way in which the electorate can signal their approval or disapproval for the party or the elected member in power. In fact, in more developed areas, where alternative options (such print media and television, social media, etc.) are available to the electorate to convey their sentiments to the elected representatives or to the Government, the voter turnout could be lower. Similarly, in more developed areas, one may witness higher participation of women both as voters as well as contestants. Thus, the level of development of an area (DEV) could be a key factor in determining voter behavior in general and voter turnout in particular. It would be thus necessary to develop a proxy for DEV, without which VT may not be explained satisfactorily.

The 2011 Census carries data on per capita income at the district level, which can be used as a district level development indicator. DEV is constructed in the following fashion:The proportion of per capita income of a particular district to the combined per capita income of all districts (in Maharashtra) is defined as DEV. Since this data is only available at a district level and not at taluka level, effect of development on other electoral variables has only been explored at district or divisional aggregate levels. Secondly, since this data is only available in the 2011 Census, it is not possible to trace the effect that economic development has on political dynamics across time. However, in this study, the correlations between economic development and political variables have been worked out in a static sense.

The following section highlights the research questions on local bodies that were handled using the enhanced data sets.

3. IDENTIFYING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Following is a list of the research questions around which the data analysis is structured.

1. What is the trend of Voter Turnout (VT) in successive rounds of elections in local body elections? Has the average VT changed across successive rounds?
2. Do certain clusters of Corporations/ Councils/ ZPs/ PSs have a history of higher VT?
3. Do local bodies with higher proportion of seats reserved for SC and ST population show higher VT?
4. Do local bodies of better developed regions show a lower VT?
5. Which local bodies in Maharashtra exhibit "swing" i.e. Local bodies in which elections are closely contested and can potentially swing in favor of any one party?
6. Similarly, which are the local bodies in which the swing is extremely low? That is, which are the local bodies which show single party dominance?
7. Are swing bodies also those which exhibit a higher VT?
8. Is there a correlation in development quotient and the swing behavior?
9. Which are the local bodies that show a high degree of political alignment to the State Government?
10. Has the proportion of seats won by independent candidates in different local bodies increased over a period of time?
11. Is it the case that proportion of seats won by independent candidates is higher in more well-developed areas?

These are the main research questions around which the data analysis has been designed. A focal point of data analysis is to develop crucial insights into the trends in local body elections so that some strategies can be designed for the upcoming elections.

CHAPTER - 2

TRENDS IN LOCAL BODY ELECTIONS: A DATA-BASED COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

This chapter compares the trends in the data pertaining to Municipal Corporations, Municipal Councils, Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis.

2.1 VOTER TURNOUT

Following are the summary statistics for VT (in per cent) across three rounds of elections in all local bodies. In the data maintained by the SECM, VT in R1 is not available.

Table No. 2.1: Comparison in the Trends in VT of all local bodiesacross Successive Rounds of Elections

VT	R2	R3	R4	Average VT
	1999-2003	2004-2008	2009-2013	
Municipal Corporations	55.77	58.51	55.00	56.4
Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis	69.44	69.24	67.54	68.7
Municipal Councils	70.80	75.01	68.90	70.7

Table 2.2: Comparison in VT between urban and rural local bodies

Local Bodies	Overall VT
Urban	63.55
Rural	68.7

1. The average voter turnout for Municipal Corporation elections in Maharashtra is 56 per cent whereas that for Municipal Councils and Nagar Panchayats is 71 per cent. ZP and PS elections are held simultaneously. Hence, the average VT for both ZP as well as PS elections is 69 per cent.

2. It is interesting to note that the VT in ZP and PS elections is lower as compared to the VT in Municipal Council and Nagar Panchayat elections. This implies that a higher proportion of the population votes at the Municipal Councils and Nagar Panchayats, which govern small urban or sub-urban areas, as compared to the proportion of population which votes for ZPs and PSs, which govern the rural parts of districts and blocks respectively.

   This is truly surprising because it has been a common observation across countries, states and local areas that rural areas have higher VT as compared to urban areas. This is because the urban voter does not exclusively rely on his vote to voice his opinion. He uses social media, newspapers, citizen groups and NGOs to voice his opinion on social issues. However, these options are not available to the rural voter or to the urban voter in small townships. Hence, one would normally expect the average VT to increase as one moves from Municipal Corporations to Municipal Councils and from Councils to ZPs. The average VT for Municipal Corporations in Maharashtra stands at 56.4 per cent;for ZP and PS it stands at 69 per cent and for Municipal Councils and Nagar Panchayats it stands at 70.7 per cent. Data trends belie intuition.

   Thus, the average VT in ZP and PS elections has in fact been lower than that in the Municipal Council elections. One of the reasons that could be a contributing factor to this trend could be migration. If the level of migration from rural to urban areas is higher as compared to that from semi-urban areas to urban areas, then it may reflect in lower VT in the rural body elections.

This trend also highlights the fact that urbanization and migration could well become a central policy issue for the SECM over a period of time. More thought will have to be given to how migrating voters may be allowed to cast their vote from distant locations.

3. The table shows that the urban local bodies i.e. Municipal Corporations and Municipal Councils show an increase in the VT in R3. In R3, there was a huge drive to clean up the voters lists, which may have contributed to the increase in the voter turnout.

   However, the same trend is not seen in the rural local body elections. In fact, a worrisome observation pertaining to rural local bodies is that the voter turnout has been continually falling over the four rounds of elections held so far. In the Municipal Council as well as Municipal Corporation elections, the voter turnout has increased in R3 i.e. in the elections held during the period 2004-08. However, in the ZP election data, there is almost a linear decrease in the voter turnout with every election. Clearly, the enthusiasm in the urban voters in R3 has not beenobserved in rural voters.

4. Overall, the voter turnout in the urban local bodies is 63.5 per cent and that in the rural local bodies is 68.7 per cent.

2.2 POLITICAL ALIGNMENT

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the variable 'Political Alignment' (POL) has been created to enhance the data-set.

If the local body has the same party in power as the party in the State Government, political alignment i.e. POL takes value 1, otherwise 0. Political alignment helps to show alignment patterns of local bodies with State Government. The objective of creating this variable is to examine if certain pockets have a relationship with the government at the State. This variable highlights the effect of a change in the State Governments on local goverance tiers. One may well look at it as a "*political trickle down*" effect.

The various patterns in POL such as 1-0-0-0, 1-1-1-0, 1-0-1-0, 0-1-0-1, 0-1-1-1 etc. are extremely interesting and reveal different political dynamics. If a local

body exhibits a pattern such as 0-1-0-1 or 1-0-1-0, it indicates that there have been a lot of fluctuations in the political alignment. A pattern such as 0-0-1-1 indicates a recent move towards alignment. If an average of political alignment is considered, the average number will obviously lie between 0 and 1. A local body whose average across all rounds is 0 shows minimum influence of the State Government from 1995 to 2014. A local body whose average across all rounds is 1 shows maximum influence of State Government over local political forces.

Assume that two Councils (say) get an average score of 0.5 which indicates that they have been aligned with the State Government for 2 rounds each. However, the underlying political forces could be very different. One Council could be showing a pattern of 1-1-0-0 which means that it was aligned with the SS-BJP State Government in R1 and with the INC-NCP State Government in R2, but in the recent two elections, it does not show any alignment with the INC-NCP government. Another Council may show a pattern of 0-0-1-1 which means that it was not aligned with the SS-BJP Government in R1 and with the INC-NCP State Government in R2, but recently has become aligned with INC-NCP State Government in R3 and R4.

Thus, different political equations with parties in power at the State level will create different alignment patterns in POL.

Table 2.3: Comparison of Trends in POL in all local bodies in Successive Rounds of Election

Variable	Municipal Council	Municipal Corporation	Zilla Parishad	Panchayat Samiti
POL 1	0.13	NA	0.06	NA
POL 2	0.40	0.65	0.73	0.79
POL 3	0.65	0.57	0.76	0.63
POL 4	0.74	0.65	0.79	0.73
Average	**0.48**	**0.62**	**0.58**	**0.72**

Table 2.4: Comparison in POL between urban and rural local bodies

Local Bodies	Overall POL
Urban	0.55
Rural	0.65

1. It is difficult to spot a common thread in the trends in political alignment of local bodies with the State Government.

2. For the Municipal Corporations, in R2, 65 per cent of the Corporations show an alignment with the State incumbent (INC-NCP was the ruling party at State level between 1999-2003). The level of alignment reduces in R3; only 57 per cent of Corporations show a political alignment with the State incumbent. It is interesting to remember here that R3 is the round in which the voter turnout increased as well. Thus, an increment in voter turnout from R2 to R3 is observed together with a reduction in the number of Corporations aligned with the State incumbent. The relationship between the variables continues into R4 as well. That the VT reduced in R4 has been stated in the earlier section. The political alignment with the State Government increases from R3 to R4, even as the VT reduces. Thus, informally, it does seem to be the case that voter turnout and political alignment have an inverse relationship. Political alignment of the Corporations with the State Government increases in those rounds of elections when the voter turnout is lower.

3. While in R1, only 13 per cent of Municipal Councils are aligned; in R4, 74 per cent of the councils are aligned. Clearly, alignment with the State government has increased over a period of time. What does this indicate? In the first round of elections for Municipal Councils, Shiv Sena-BJP was in power at the state level. In this round, it is observed that the political alignment with the State government is minimal. However, this increases significantly with successive rounds. When the [2nd], [3rd] and [4th] round of Council elections were held, INC-NCP government was in

power at the State level. The higher political alignment of Councils with the State in these rounds implies that the Councils have been mostly dominated by INC and/or NCP in Maharashtra.

4. Further, it is observed that the jump in alignment is very large from R1 to R2. The State Government changed between R1 and R2. If it is true that the INC- NCP combination dominates the Councils, then the jump in political alignment gets explained quite well with a change in the State Government. The alignment further shows an increase from R2 to R3, indicating an increased hold of the INC-NCP on Councils. But the increase from R3 to R4 is at a decreasing rate. This could be indicative of either saturation or anti-incumbency effect as observed earlier.

5. A similar pattern can be seen in the Zilla Parishads. While in R1, only 6 per cent Zilla Parishads are aligned, in R4, 79 per cent of the ZPs are aligned. The jump in alignment from R1 to R2 is indicative of the deep spread of the INC-NCP party hold over the Zilla Parishads in Maharashtra.

6. A completely different trend is seen in the political alignment of the Panchayat Samitis. It can be observed from the table that the political alignment of the PSs with the State Government has in fact softened across time. Thus, this indicates that while the INC-NCP have increased their hold over the nodal rural bodies i.e. the Zilla Parishads over the past 15 years, their hold over the intermediate tier i.e. the Panchayat Samitis has reduced in the same time period.

7. Overall, it is the rural local bodies that seem to be more aligned with the State Government as compared to the urban local bodies. 65% of rural local bodies exhibit alignment with State incumbent as compared to 55% of urban local bodies.

2.3 SEATS WON BY INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES (IND)

The variable IND describes the proportion of seats won by independent candidates in local body elections. Following are the summary statistics for IND across 3 rounds of elections for all local bodies.

Table 2.5: Comparison of Trends in IND for all local bodies across Successive Rounds of Elections

	R2	R3	R4	Average
	1999-2003	2004-2008	2009-2013	
Municipal Corporations	5.65	14.72	7.37	9.24
Municipal Councils	13	28	10	17
Zilla Parishads	4.4	7.25	4.51	5.38
Panchayat Samitis	NA	7.92	4.68	6.3

Table 2.6: Comparison in IND between urban and rural local bodies

Local Bodies	Average IND
Urban	13.12
Rural	5.84

1. In every local body, it is evident that the proportion of seats won by the independent candidates has increased in R3.

2. For the urban local bodies, we know that R3 is associated with an increase in the level of VT. Hence, one could conclude that in the urban local body elections, the proportion of seats won by independents is associated with the level of voter turnout. Normally, when the VT is

high, independent candidates get a true chance at winning the elections. hence, at least within the urban bodies, one may say that voter awareness programs are not only important for getting a truly participative election process, but also for creating a more level playing field in which independent candidates may stand a true chance of winning the elections.

3. It is interesting to note that the overall average proportion of winning Independents within Muncipal Councils (17 per cent) is almost double of that at the Municipal Corporations (9 per cent). This could be indicative of the higher financial capacity that is required to contest and win Corporation elections.

4. The same trend can be noted within the rural bodies. The proportion of candidates winning at the PS level is slightly higher than that at the ZP level.

In general, the proportion of independent candidates winning elections within the urban bodies tends to be higher than that of those winning rural local body elections.

2.4 PROPORTION OF RESERVED SEATS IN THE TOTAL SEATS (RES)

As has been mentioned above, the proportion of SC and ST in the population is declared in the Census reports; since the Census is released every decade, these proportions are treated to be fixed for one decade. However, in the same decade, two elections are conducted to any local body. Now, since the reservation of seats for different constituencies with the same Council is done on a rotation basis, a very interesting pattern emerges. Even if the total proportion of SC and ST population in the Council limits is frozen for a decade as per the Census, the reservation of seats in different constituencies within a local body undergoes rotation in the same decade. And this can bring about sharp changes in the VT.

Hence, rather than SCST, it may be RES which has a greater impact on VT.

Table 2.7: Comparison of Trends in Reservation Proportions in all local bodies across Different Rounds of Election

RES	R1	R2	R3	R4	Average
	1994-98	1999-2003	2004-2008	2009-2013	
Municipal Corporations	NA	40.06	38.94	39.78	35.29
Municipal Councils	45.09	43	44.1	44	44
Zilla Parishads	52.412	52.921	52.568	51.490	52.35
Panchayat Samitis	NA	NA	51.02	51.5	51.26

Table 2.8: Comparison in RES between urban and rural local bodies

Local Bodies	Average RES
Urban	39.64
Rural	51.80

1. The trends in the above table show that the proportion of reserved seats is the lowest in Municipal Corporations. The proportion of reservation of seats has a direct relationship with the proportion of SC and ST population within the total population of the area. Given that Municipal Corporations govern large towns and cities where the proportion of reserved population classes tends to be lower, the proportion of seats reserved for candidates also is accordingly lower.

2. The proportion is higher for Municipal Councils than for Corporations.

3. However, it is within the rural local bodies that one sees that the proportion of reserved seats is the highest. 51.8 per cent of the seats within rural local bodies are reserved for SC, ST and BCC categories whereas 39.64 per cent are reserved within urban bodies.

CHAPTER - 3

DATA ANALYSIS: CORRELATIONS BETWEEN KEY VARIABLES

Correlations between key electoral variables change across local bodies. Thus, if two variables show a high level of correlation within the Municipal Corporation data, it is not necessary that the correlation also be observed in the Muncipal Council data. The following table brings out the correlations between different variables for all the different local bodies.

Table 3.1: Correlations in electoral variables in all local bodies

Variables	Municipal Corporations	Municipal Councils	Zilla Parishads	Panchayat Samitis
VT and REVERSE COMP (-)	Higher the VT, more the swing	Higher the VT, more the swing	Higher the VT, more the swing	Higher the VT, more the swing
VT and IND (+)	Independents win more when the VT is high	Independents win more when the VT is high	Independents win more when the VT is high	Independents win more when the VT is high
VT and RES	Higher VT observed in areas with high reservations	No relationship	Higher VT observed in areas with lower reservations	No relationship
VT and DEV (-)	Higher VT in low DEV areas	Higher VT in low DEV areas	Higher VT in low DEV areas	Higher VT in low DEV areas
REVERSE COMP and RES	No relationship observed	High presence of parties in areas with high reservations	High presence of parties in areas with high reservations	High presence of parties in areas with high reservations

Variables	Municipal Corporations	Municipal Councils	Zilla Parishads	Panchayat Samitis
REVERSE COMP and DEV(+)	Political parties flock to the grassroots, where DEV is low	Political parties flock to the grassroots, where DEV is low	Political parties flock to the grassroots, where DEV is low	Political parties flock to the grassroots, where DEV is low
POL and RES (+)	Political alignment tends to be high when the proportion of reserved seats is high	Political alignment tends to be high when the proportion of reserved seats is high	Political alignment tends to be high when the proportion of reserved seats is high	No observed relationship
POL and DEV (-)	More political alignment is observed in areas with low development	More political alignment is observed in areas with low development	More political alignment is observed in areas with low development	No observed relationship