

ASSAM SURVEY REPORT - 2018

(A Brief Analysis of Voters' Priorities and Performance of the Government on Governance Issues in Assam)

REPORT BY ADR

Association for Democratic Reforms
T-95, C.L. House, 2nd Floor,
Gulmohar Commercial Complex Gautam Nagar,
New Delhi-110049
Phone: +91-011-41654200
Fax: +91-11-46094248

INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and RA Asterisc Computing & Data Solutions Pvt. Ltd. (RAAC) conducted perhaps the largest ever voter survey in any one country. The All India Survey was conducted across 534 Lok Sabha constituencies with 2,73,487 voters participating in this exercise spread among various demographics. The three main objectives of this survey were to identify the following: (i) voters' priorities on specific governance issues, (ii) voters' ratings of the government's performance on those issues, and (iii) factors influencing voting behaviour. This survey was conducted between October 2018 and December 2018, prior to the General Elections to the Lok Sabha 2019.

Focusing on Assam, this report provides an analysis of 10 most important governance issues as rated by the voters of Assam (out of the 31 listed in the questionnaire). These voters' priorities are further examined in relation to the performance of the Government on those issues as perceived by the respondents. The survey covered approximately 7,000 respondents across all 14 constituencies in Assam.

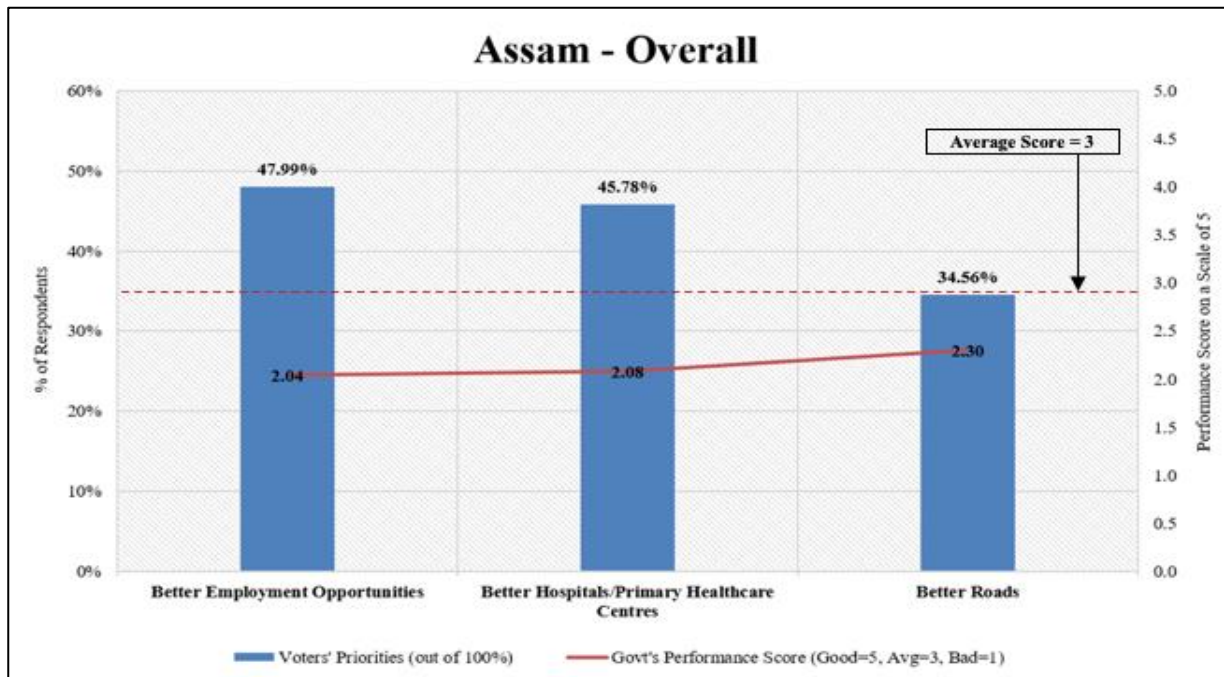
The key objective of this perception assessment is to provide an improved understanding of the important expectations of voters from the Government and how they assess its performance. In addition, it seeks to fill a vital gap in contemporary times, namely, evidence-based research and action on governance. For far too long we have depended entirely on ideology or the opinions of various experts. Though that is important, we also need to reflect on the priorities of the voters. These priorities and assessments will change over time, and hence there is a need to repeat this survey periodically.

Research Design: A cross-sectional, representative sample of the population over 18 was selected using a partially purposive sample selection procedure to ensure representation from various segments of the population like rural-urban, gender, caste, religion, and income groups. Every care was taken to make the samples unbiased and fully representative of the population. The accuracy of the survey is 95%, i.e., the true values are within 5% of the survey predictions.

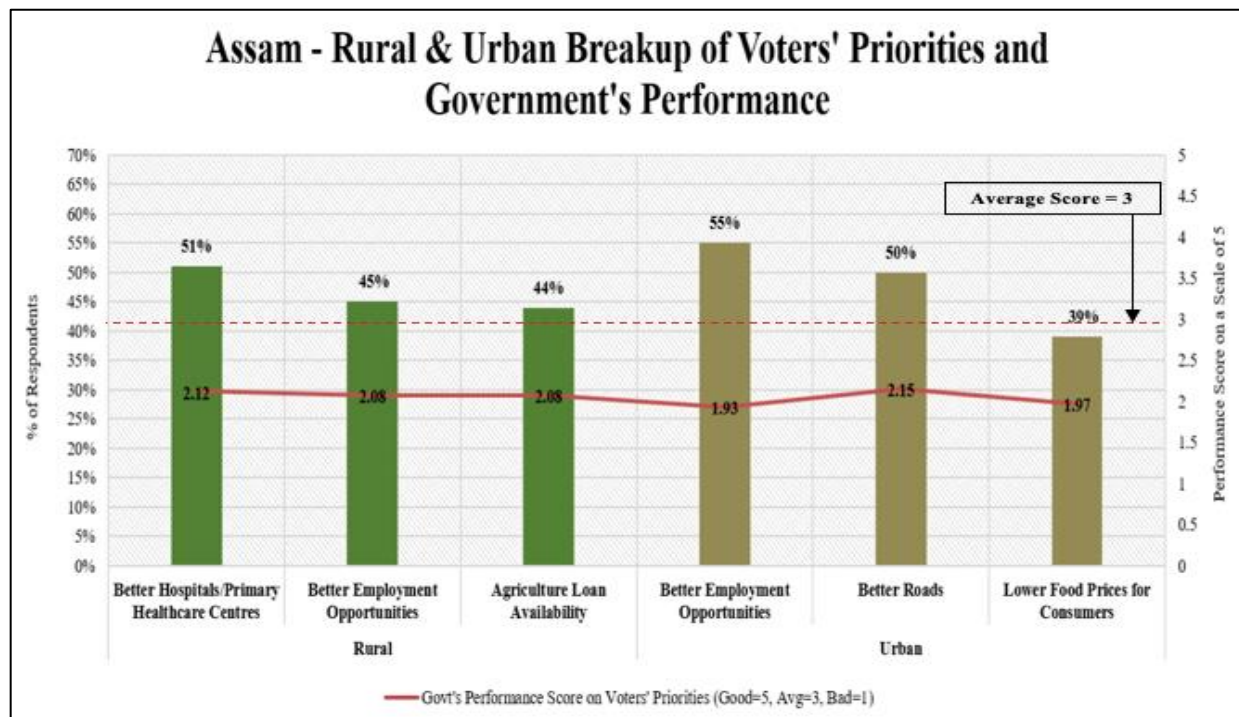
KEY FINDINGS

- The Assam Survey 2018 shows that Better Employment Opportunities (47.99%), Better Hospitals/Primary Healthcare Centres (45.78%), and Better Roads (34.56%) are the top three voters' priorities in overall Assam.
- The performance of the government on all top three voters' priorities of Better Employment Opportunities (2.04 on a scale of 5), Better Hospitals/Primary Healthcare Centres (2.08), and Better Roads (2.30) was rated as Below Average.
- In rural Assam, top most voters' priorities were Better Hospitals/Primary Healthcare Centres (51%), Better Employment Opportunities (45%), and Agriculture Loan Availability (44%).
- The performance of the government on rural voters' priorities of Better Hospitals/Primary Healthcare Centres (2.12 on a scale of 5), Better Employment Opportunities (2.08), and Agriculture Loan Availability (2.08) was rated as Below Average.
- In addition, the government has performed poorly in providing Agriculture Subsidy for Seeds/Fertilisers (1.97) and Availability of Water for Agriculture (2.05) in rural Assam.
- For the urban voters in Assam, the top most priorities were Better Employment Opportunities (55%), Better Roads (50%), and Lower Food Prices for Consumers (39%).
- The performance of the government on urban voters' priorities of Better Employment Opportunities (1.93 on a scale of 5), Better Roads (2.15), and Lower Food Prices for Consumers (1.97) was rated as Below Average.
- In addition, the government has performed poorly in providing Electricity for Domestic Use (1.94) and Better Hospitals/ Primary Healthcare Centres (1.99) in urban Assam.

I. Top 3 Voters' Priorities and the Performance of Government in Assam – Overall and Rural & Urban

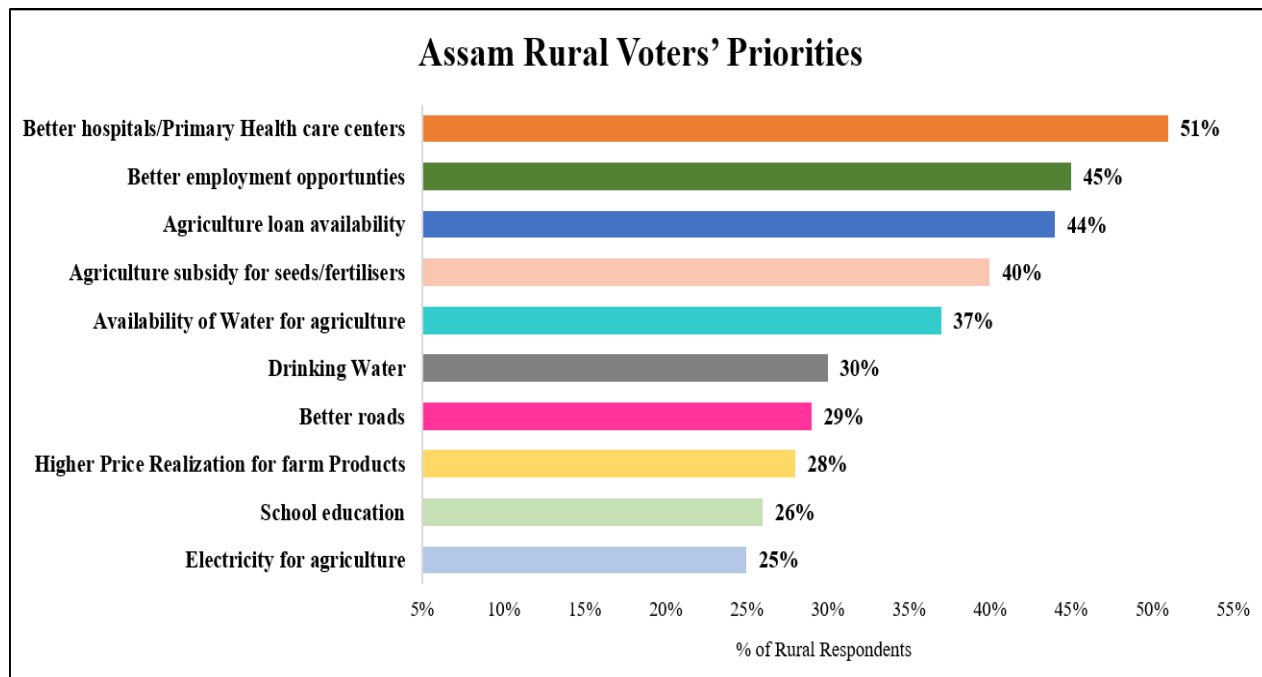


Graph 1: Assam - Top 3 overall Voters' Priorities and Government's Performance Ranking

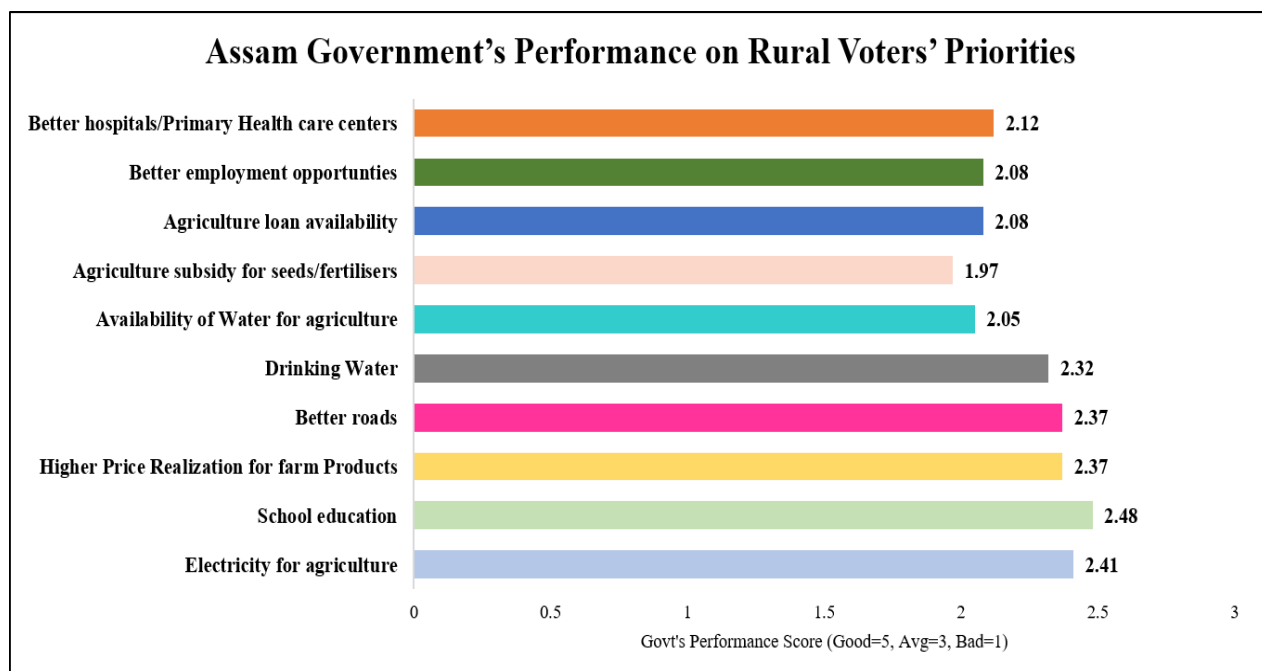


Graph 2: Assam - Rural & Urban Breakup of Voters' Priorities and Government's Performance

II. Rural Voters' Priorities and the Performance of Government in Assam

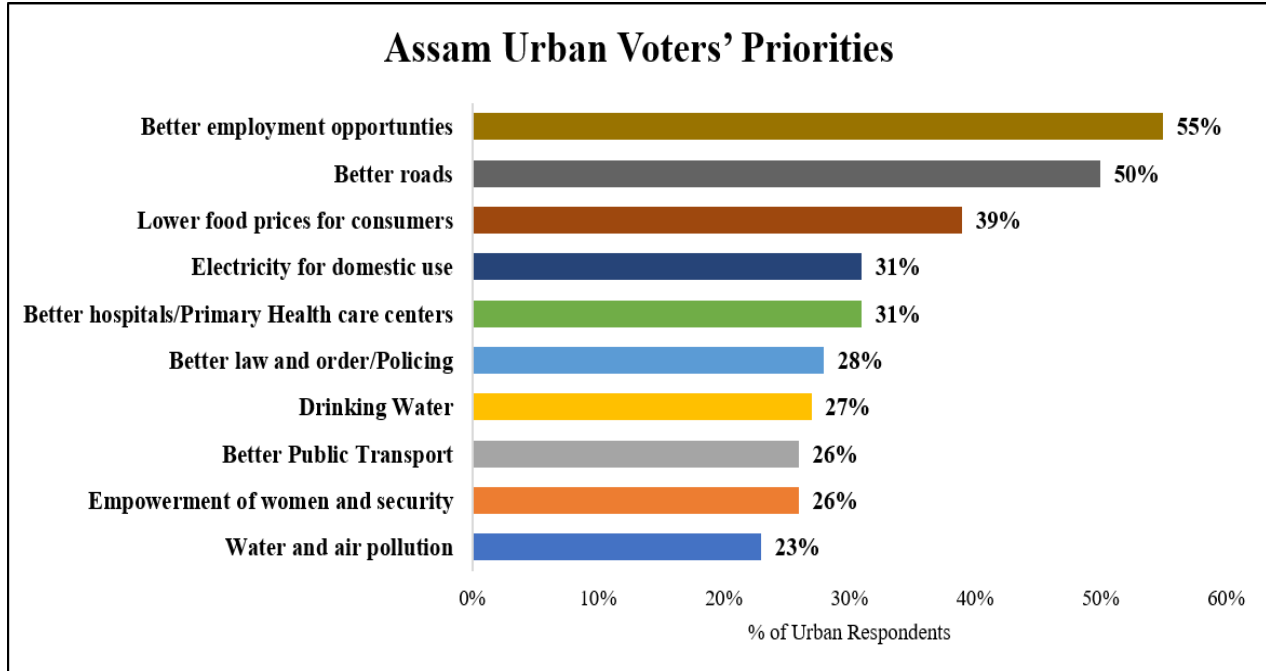


Graph 3: Rural Voters' Priorities in Assam

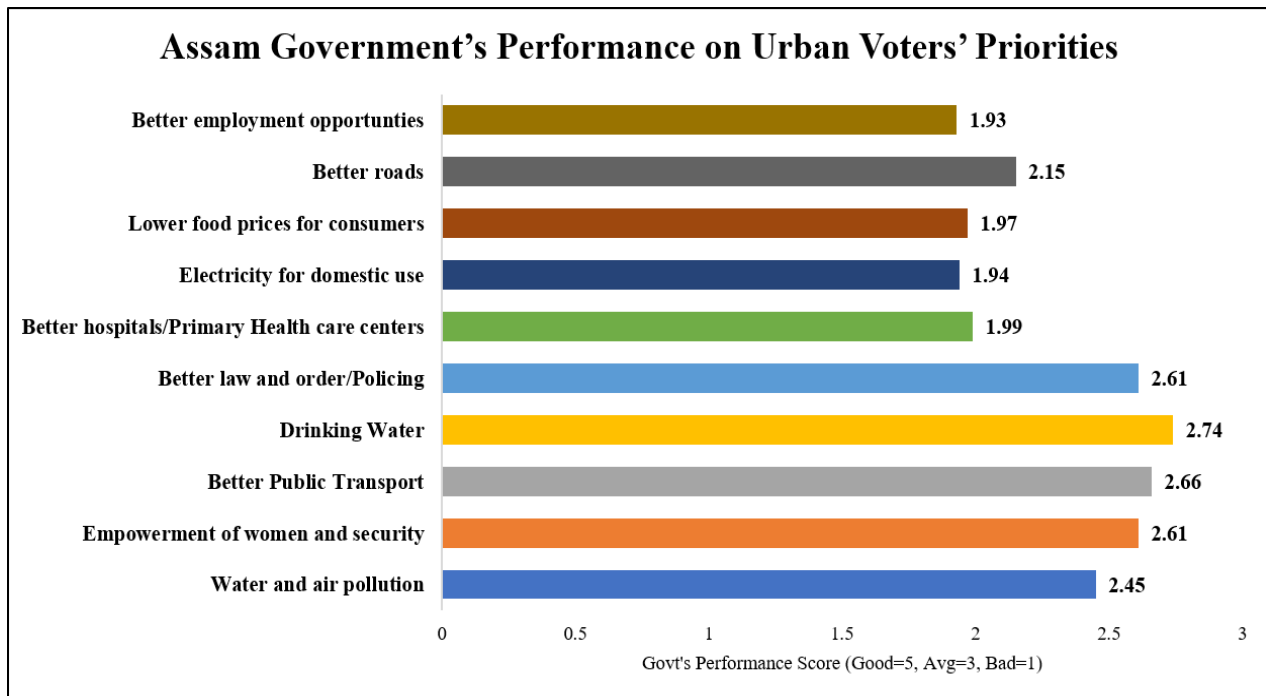


Graph 4: Performance of Government on Rural Voters' Priorities in Assam

III. Urban Voters' Priorities and the Performance of Government in Assam



Graph 5: Urban Voters' Priorities in Assam



Graph 6: Performance of the Government on Urban Voters' Priorities in Assam

VOTING BEHAVIOUR

The survey tried to analyse the following aspects with respect to voting behaviour – (i) factors influencing voting behaviour, (ii) opinion regarding criminal candidates contesting in elections, and (iii) voter awareness regarding the role of crime and money.

To identify the factors that influence voting behaviour following queries were posed – “What are the reasons you vote for a candidate?” and “In an election, whose opinion mattered the most while deciding which candidate to vote for?”.

In order to comprehend voters’ opinion regarding criminal candidates contesting in elections, the two questions that were posed were – “Should someone with a criminal case be in Parliament or State Assembly?” and “Why do people vote for those with criminal records?”.

To assess voter awareness regarding the role of crime and money, the following questions were asked – “Do you know that distribution of cash/money/gifts etc. are illegal?”, “Are you aware of instances of distribution of cash/money/gifts/liquor in your constituency during the last election?”, and “Do you know that you can get information on criminal records of the candidates?”.

Salient Observations on Voting Behaviour in Assam

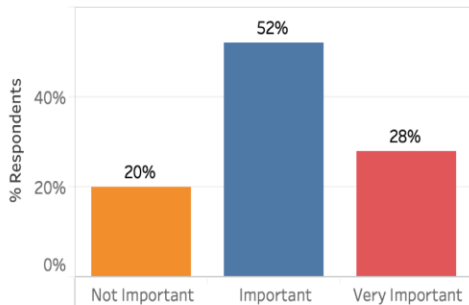
- According to the Assam Survey 2018, highest percentage of voters said Candidate’s Party was the most significant reason (Important: 41% and Very Important: 43%) for voting for a candidate in an election. This was followed by the CM Candidate (Important: 40% and Very Important: 43%) and the Candidate himself/herself (Important: 52% and Very Important: 28%).
- For 13% voters, distribution of cash, liquor, gifts etc. was an important (8%) and very important (5%) factor in voting a particular candidate in an election.
- While deciding which candidate to vote for in an election, 87% Assam voters stated that their

own opinion mattered the most, followed by voters for whom opinion of their Family Members (5%) and Spouse (5%) mattered the most.

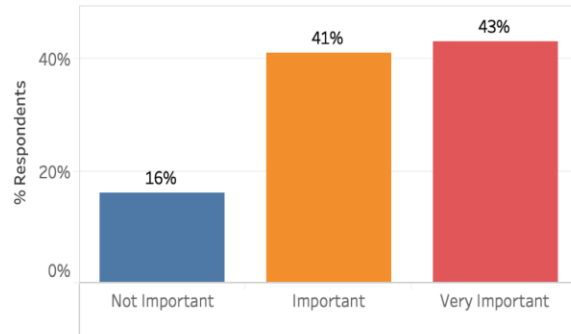
- A large number of voters (78%) knew that distribution of cash, gifts etc. are illegal.
- Only 23% voters said that they were aware of instances where such inducements were offered to the voters in return for their votes.
- 98% voters felt that candidates with criminal background should not be in Parliament or State Assembly.
- Merely 27% voters knew that they could get information on criminal records of the candidates.
- In relation to voting candidates with criminal antecedents, 38% voters felt that people vote for such candidates because candidate otherwise does good work.
- Other significant factors in voting for criminal candidates was that the candidate is powerful (37%) and because voters don't know about the criminal record of the candidate (37%).
- In the opinion of 35% voters, people vote for criminal candidates because they feel that the cases against such candidates are not of serious nature.
- 34% voters felt people vote for criminal candidates as they spend generously on elections.
- Caste and religious considerations is also a factor for 32% voters in choosing candidates with criminal records.

Voter Behaviour I

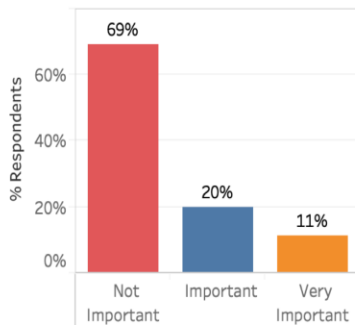
What are the reasons you vote for a candidate? - The Candidate



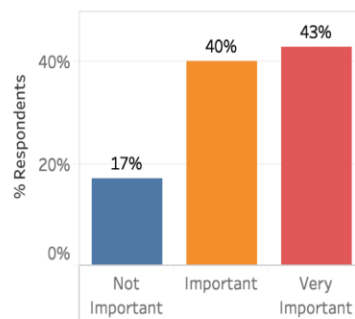
What are the reasons you vote for a candidate? - Candidate's Party



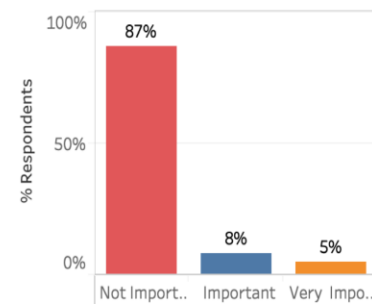
What are the reasons you vote for a candidate? - Candidate's caste or religion



What are the reasons you vote for a candidate? - CM Ministerial Candidate

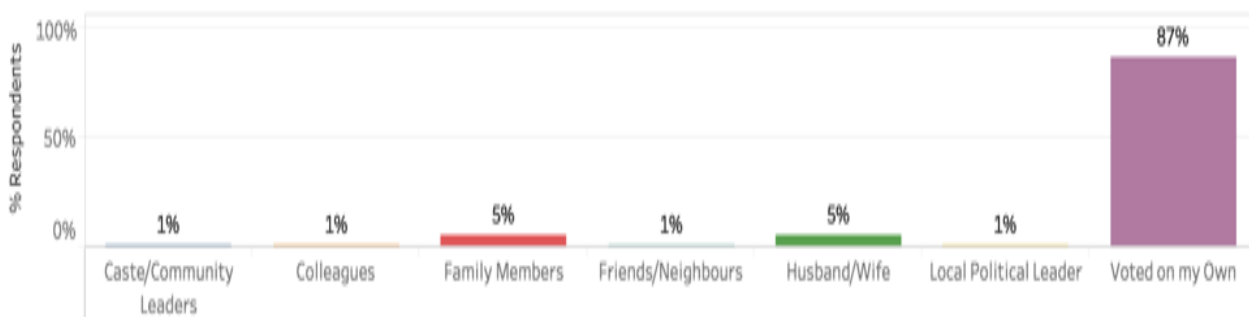


What are the reasons you vote for a candidate? - Distribution of cash liquor, gifts etc.



Graph 7: Factors Influencing Voting Behaviour

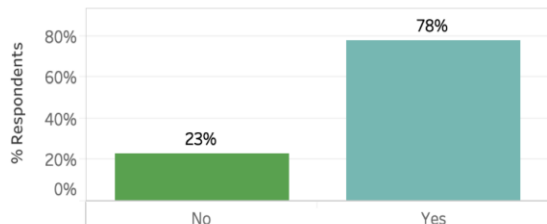
In deciding who to vote for in an election, whose opinion mattered the most?



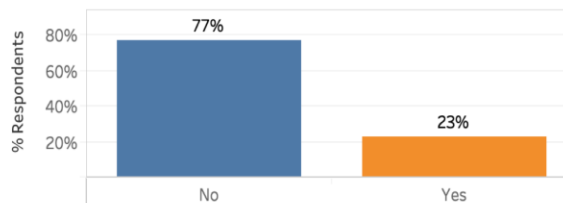
Graph 8: In an election, whose opinion mattered the most while deciding which candidate to vote

Voter Behaviour II

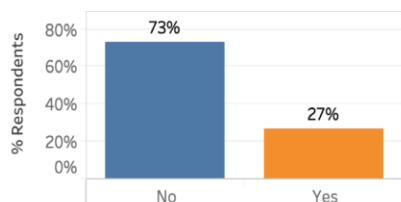
Do you know that distribution of Cash/money/gifts are illegal?



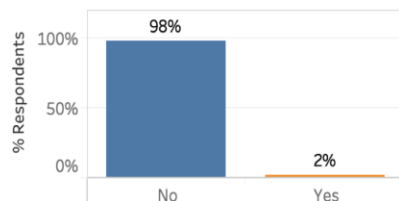
Are you aware of instances of distribution of money/cash/gifts/liquor in your constituency during the last election?



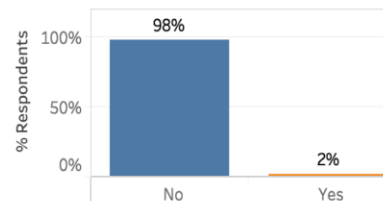
Do you know that you can get information on criminal records of the candidates?



Do you think people should vote for candidates with a criminal record/arrested in jail?



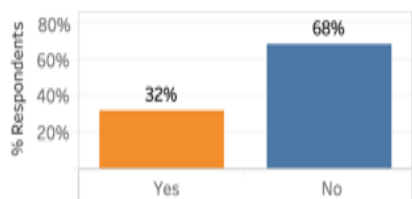
Should someone with a criminal case be in Parliament or a State Assembly?



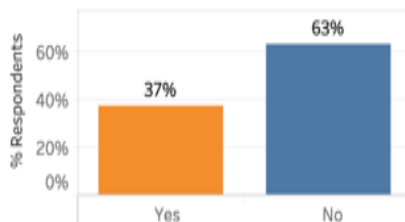
Graph 9: Voter Awareness regarding the Role of Crime and Money in Elections

Voter Behaviour III

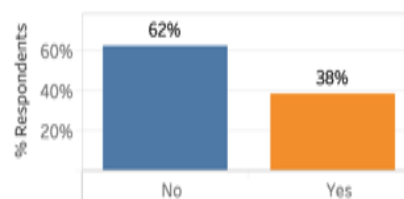
Why do you think people vote for candidate with a criminal record?-Candidate is of similar caste/religion



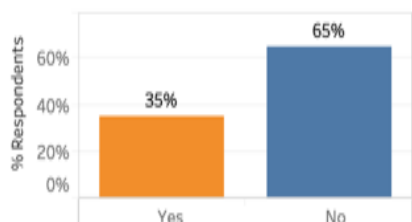
Why do you think people vote for candidate with a criminal record?-Candidate is powerful



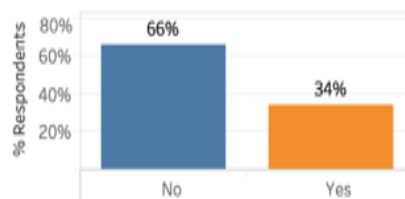
Why do you think people vote for candidate with a criminal record?-Candidate otherwise does good work



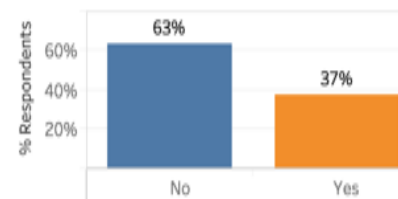
Why do you think people vote for candidate with a criminal record?-Cases against him are not serious



Why do you think people vote for candidate with a criminal record?-Candidate has spent generously in elections



Why do you think people vote for candidate with a criminal record?-Voters don't know about the criminal record

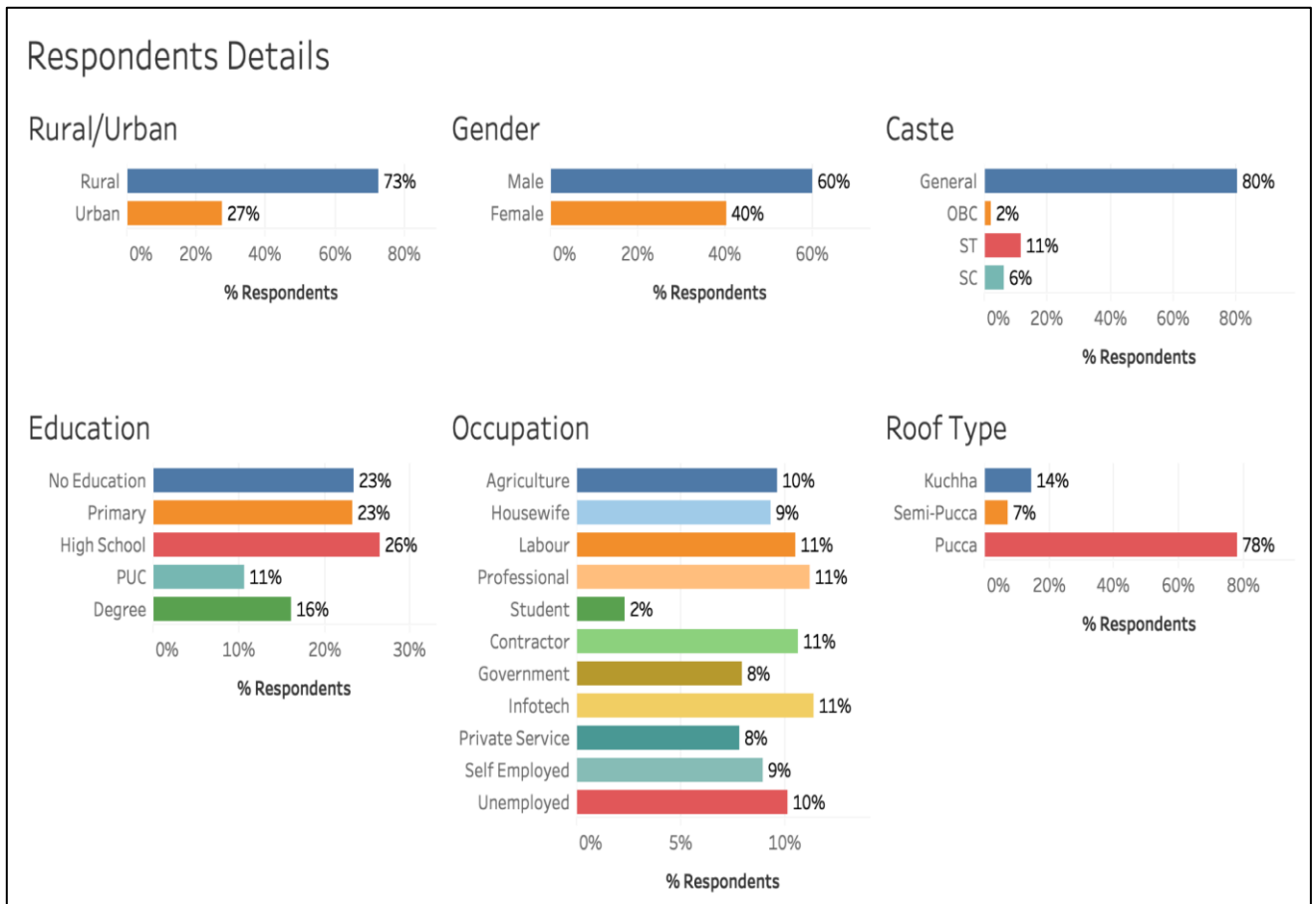


Graph 10: Voters' Opinion regarding Criminal Candidates Contesting in Elections

VOTERS' DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS

- 73% of the voters surveyed were from rural areas and 27% were from urban areas.
- 60% were Males and 40% were Females.
- 80% were from General category, 11% ST, 6% SC and 2% OBC.

The other respondent details can be observed from the graphs below.



Graph 11: Voters' Demographic Details

CONCLUSION

The Assam Survey Report 2018 points to the fact that voters' priorities in Assam have been largely neglected by the government in power. This is quite clear from the fact that the government has performed poorly and underwhelmingly on all 10 governance issues as rated by the voters of Assam. The analysis of the trend of voters' priorities and the government's performance in Assam poses a few critical questions to the government and the legislators -

- Are decisions related to public policies in different spheres like infrastructure, social and economic development etc. made in favour of certain sections of the society at the expense of overall social welfare?
- Is there a need for the Government to reallocate/plan budget expenditure as per the voters' priorities?
- How can political parties be made more accountable in delivering on the promises made in the manifesto?
- What policy changes need to be made to provide employment, better health care and drinking water to the deprived sections of the society?

The fact that the electorate has no role once the politician has been elected, allows the priority of the elected candidates to be determined by the political parties. It is then hoped that the electorate takes care to elect a better politician to represent them.

Political representation is about making constituents' preferences present in politics and governance. Behind these ratings is the daily reality that people living in our country face. The ratings try to capture this and help inform our Government what that number means and how the Government is perceived by the voters of this country.

DISCLAIMER

This survey was conducted to ascertain the most pressing governance issues that voters of India perceive to be affecting their daily lives and also to investigate whether the voters are happy with their respective governments with regard to the addressing of those issues.

The survey was conducted using sound scientific techniques and the consequent findings and reports were prepared using recognized data analysis techniques. The inferences drawn in this report are based on the responses provided by the Indian voters.

This survey is a systematic and scientific attempt to study the gap between governance-demands of the voters of India and the delivery of the respective governments as perceived by the Indian voters. This survey is in no way an attempt to appreciate or denigrate any government(s) or political party or individual or any other organization or institution.

Every effort has been made by ADR to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data contained in this report.

Anyone using or quoting from this report should acknowledge the source as ‘Assam Survey Report - 2018’.



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