

Analysis of First Phase of Polling in Jammu-Kashmir

Contributed by C. Akella
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The first phase of polling was complete in Kashmir. About fifty five percent of people voted in the first phase. The biggest accomplishment for the security forces is the fact that the elections were held without any violence. Several separatist leaders were held under house arrest during the time of election as a preemptive measure to retain calm.

Here is the in depth analysis of what the turnout means:

Indian News sources: Most of the Indian News sources said that this was a victory of democracy. The press trust of India used words such as "Braving freezing temperatures and ignoring separatists' boycott call, Voters came out in large numbers". While Hindustan times carried a statement from National Conference president Omar Abdullah stating that "The high voter turnout in the first phase of the seven-stage polling in Jammu and Kashmir is a positive indication for a better future and a stable state".

NDTV was one of the few news agencies which reported both sides of the story. It carried a positive statement "Women are voting in large numbers because the village has no drinking water," and another anti election statement "We don't want elections, we are for boycott". Which gives us a more closer look into the reality where there were undertones of resentment amongst the voters.

Pakistan's News sources:

The news articles from this side reelected the total opposite of what the Indian News has been reporting. An average reader should however read all the news reports with a grain of salt. Dawn carried a statement from the separatist Mirwaiz Umar Farooq "You can't have free and fair elections in the presence of hundreds of thousands of occupation forces". The reports which came a few hours ahead of the polls indicated that the turnout will be low based on the number of people demonstrating against the election. However this claim/ prediction fell flat in the event of a huge turnout.

Third party news sources.

Interesting conclusions can be derived when an independent or a third party news report is read. ABC news reports all sides of the story. ABC reported that a number of voters were voting for better local government even if they did not accept the Indian rule or support the security forces. It also reported that the separatist leaders were hoping for something around twenty percent turnout to declare victory. This however did not happen.

We can conclude based on the reports that, the election was definitely a defeat for the separatists who were hoping for a low turnout, however it is not fair to assume that everyone who voted was pro-India. Since a lot of them voted as they just wanted immediate solutions to their day to day problems,