Why Muslims in Maharashtra support MVA despite underrepresentation in Opp alliance

The community's priority: Defeat 'politics of polarisation,' elect govt that 'ensures its physical safety'

ZEESHAN SHAIKH
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 31

"THERE IS a sense of unease within the community regarding the limited political representation afforded to Muslims by the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), but there is no anti-incumbent sentiment against it," says Dr Subhashish Chaudhuri, of the Subhashish of Muslim Voices NGO of Maharashtra.

Accordingly, community opinion over the current political landscape for Muslims in Maharashtra. People being an disempowerment to the welfare of their constituents, making leaders of the BJP, many Muslims are more inclined to lend support to the alliance, which in under years ago. On the Indian Muslims had also been, which had since quickly called for the Muslim community.

The Sachar Committee, Muslims in Maharashtra is a community not yet towards, after the Lok Sabha polls, where the vote-bank of Muslim and Scheduled Caste voters significantly consolidated in the MVA's favour in elections. Of the 48 Lok Sabha seats, 30 had BJP leaders, including Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, and 17 had Congress leaders. Of the 30 seats, the BJP lost 14, and the Congress lost 12 of the 17 seats it had contested.

TS SEATS WHERE MUSLIMS COMPRISE OVER 30% OF THE POPULATION

Among these 15 seats, Congress and nonaligned forces won their seats in the 2019 polls, followed by NCP in three, BJP in two, and the undivided SS (Undivided) and AIMIM at one each.

Assembly seat	Share of Muslim population (%)	2019 Assembly winner
Malegaon Central	[illegible]	AIMIM
Bhadakal Shivaji Chowk	[illegible]	NP
Bhiwandi East	[illegible]	NP
Mumbai Fort	[illegible]	Cong
Bhiwandi West	[illegible]	BJP
Kurla (West)	[illegible]	NCP
Nandurbar	[illegible]	Shiv Sena
Aurangabad Central	[illegible]	Shiv Sena
Aurangabad West	[illegible]	Shiv Sena
Nanded	[illegible]	BJP
Dhanori	[illegible]	Cong
Mumbai Port	[illegible]	Cong
Kalda	[illegible]	Shiv Sena

Source: ECI, 2019 Census

Muslims in state

Maharashtra's 12.1 crore Muslims make up 11.56% of the state's total (12.18 crore population, 19.26% urban, 88% rural). There are 36 constituencies where Muslims reports exceed the 30% of the population (including nine constituencies where they outnumber the state than 40%). Despite the demographic significance, Muslim representation in Maharashtra's political landscape has been minimal.

Since the past 25 years, the highest number of Muslim MLAs — 21 in 2014 and 19 in the 2009 election (notably, was elected in 1999). In the 2019 assembly elections, 16 Muslim MLAs were elected. Following the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, there was hope that an equal number would be seen in the assembly, and the Muslim community's political representation. The seven-member Maharashtra Legislative Assembly constituted Muslim leaders, including NCP's Nawab Malik, Dilip Walse-Patil, Jitendra Awhad, Dhananjay Munde, Hasan Mushrif, and Sharad Pawar. In addition, the private Muslim representation.

Yasin Shaikh (Congress) is the sole politician in the delegation of Islamic Maharashtra Parliament said.

However, in case, the MVA has nominated only eight Muslim candidates for the forthcoming Assembly polls.

Key issues

In recent years, the state has witnessed a surge in hate speeches as rallies organised by right-wing Hindu groups. Statements that have included an assault with the BJP including Nitesh Rane's (Cabinet Minister) and Pravin Darekar's (MLA, Mumbai) Rane, as well as religious leaders such as the Hindu community, have been witnessed, as well as the Muslim community.

Against this backdrop, and amid heightened fears of social discriminations, many in the Muslim community are prioritising "politics of polarisation" over issues of state politics of representation.

The average Muslim voter is also inclined to fly the mantra to cast a power vote in the election due to physical safety and additional social discriminations. Even yet, most just now consider the BJP's polarising strategy," explains Dr Chaudhuri, a political scientist from Mumbai.

Dr Chaudhuri's study in the state identified two factors that influence Muslim voters: "Defeat the politics of polarisation" and "ensure physical safety." The study also found that the MVA enjoys better support among Muslims than other parties, since perhaps the secularism and inclusivity of the Congress, which is the dominant party in the alliance, and the presence of the Muslim community in the alliance.

Yasin Shaikh said the community has been perhaps the most affected by the polarisation, and the Muslim community is also responsible for upholding the core principles of Indian Muslim Jamaat, Sufi Society, and Dargah Committee." asserts Dr Dr Dr