



A STUDY ON THE ROLE OF PRESIDING OFFICERS (PROS) AND ASSISTANT PRESIDING OFFICERS (APROS) IN THE SUCCESSFUL CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS AT THE BOOTH LEVEL ACROSS HASSAN DISTRICT

Dr. Srinivasa N V

*Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Government Arts, Commerce and Post Graduate College,
Autonomous Hassan. -573201*

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ABSTRACT

The successful conduct of elections at the booth level is essential for ensuring free, fair, transparent and peaceful democratic processes. Presiding Officers (PROs) and Assistant Presiding Officers (APROs) perform important responsibilities in managing polling stations, verifying voters, maintaining secrecy of voting, handling election materials and ensuring compliance with prescribed election procedures. The present study examines the role of PROs and APROs in the successful conduct of elections at the booth level across Hassan District. The study specifically investigates the impact of the roles and responsibilities of PROs and the influence of APROs on successful election management. The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire from selected PROs and APROs. A total sample of 800 respondents, comprising 400 PROs and 400 APROs, was considered for the study using a stratified sampling approach. Secondary data were collected from election reports, manuals, books, journals and other relevant sources. The collected data were analysed using SPSS software. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, Cronbach's Alpha, correlation and multiple regression analysis were used. The findings reveal that the roles and responsibilities of PROs have a significant impact on the successful conduct of elections, with an R Square value of 0.871. Similarly, the roles and responsibilities of APROs have a highly significant influence, with an R Square value of 0.941. The study identifies overall supervision, voter management, record maintenance, handling of election materials and coordination as important factors. The study concludes that effective training, teamwork, technical preparedness and clear allocation of responsibilities are essential for strengthening the successful conduct of elections at the booth level.

KEYWORDS: *Presiding Officers, Assistant Presiding Officers, Election Management, Polling Booths, Successful Conduct of Elections, Hassan District.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Elections are the cornerstone of a democratic system, providing citizens with an opportunity to exercise their constitutional right to choose their representatives. The credibility and effectiveness of an electoral system depend not only on the legal and institutional framework but also on the efficient conduct of polling at the grassroots level. The polling booth is the most important point of interaction between the voter and the election administration. Therefore, the successful conduct of elections at the booth level requires proper planning, coordination, discipline, transparency, impartiality and strict adherence to electoral rules and procedures. Presiding Officers (PROs) and Assistant Presiding Officers (APROs) play a crucial role in ensuring the smooth and successful conduct of elections at polling stations. The Presiding Officer is primarily responsible for the overall supervision, management and administration of the polling station. The officer ensures the proper conduct of the mock poll, secrecy of voting, regulation of voters, maintenance of order, effective handling of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) systems, recording

of important events and completion of all procedures after the close of polling. The Presiding Officer also acts as the key authority for resolving operational issues and ensuring that polling is conducted in a free, fair, peaceful and impartial manner. Assistant Presiding Officers support the Presiding Officer by performing several essential duties during the polling process. Their responsibilities generally include checking the names of voters in the electoral roll, verifying voter identity, applying indelible ink, obtaining signatures or thumb impressions in the prescribed registers, managing voter movement and maintaining necessary election records. They also assist elderly persons and persons with disabilities and help maintain discipline and order within the polling station. Their effective coordination with the Presiding Officer is essential for preventing delays, confusion and procedural errors. The efficiency, preparedness, knowledge and commitment of PROs and APROs significantly influence the overall success of elections at the booth level. Their roles become particularly important in managing large numbers of voters, handling technical difficulties, ensuring compliance with election guidelines and maintaining public confidence in the electoral



process. Proper training, clear communication, teamwork and awareness of election procedures are therefore essential for effective election management.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The conduct of free, fair and peaceful elections depends significantly on the effective functioning of election officials at the polling station level (Glaser et al., 2007). The polling booth represents the most important operational unit of the electoral process, where electoral laws, procedures and technological systems are implemented directly (Clark & James, 2023). Previous studies and official literature on election administration have emphasised the importance of well-trained, impartial and responsible polling personnel in ensuring the credibility and successful completion of elections (Clerkin & Cogburn, 2012). Presiding Officers (PROs) and Assistant Presiding Officers (APROs) play a central role in this process by supervising polling activities, verifying voters, maintaining records, operating election equipment and ensuring compliance with prescribed procedures (Claassen et al., 2008). The Election Commission of India has highlighted the importance of the Presiding Officer as the chief authority responsible for the management of the polling station. Election manuals and training guidelines explain that the Presiding Officer is responsible for receiving polling materials, arranging the polling station, conducting the mock poll, ensuring the secrecy of voting and supervising the overall polling process (Clark, Barsky & Bustanza, 2023). The Presiding Officer is also responsible for maintaining law and order within the polling station and ensuring that voters are provided with an equal opportunity to exercise their franchise (Greenberger, 2024). These responsibilities demonstrate that the Presiding Officer performs both administrative and supervisory functions (Preston, 2019). Existing literature on election management has also recognised the importance of the Assistant Presiding Officers in supporting the effective functioning of the polling station (Christensen, Paarlberg & Perry, 2017). APROs perform operational duties such as verifying the names of voters in the electoral roll, checking identity documents, applying indelible ink, obtaining signatures or thumb impressions and maintaining prescribed records (Hall, Monson & Patterson, 2007). Their role is essential in reducing the workload of the Presiding Officer and ensuring the systematic movement of voters through different stages of the polling process (Williams & Sondhi, 2022). Studies on election administration indicate that the coordination and division of responsibilities among polling personnel can significantly improve efficiency and reduce delays at polling stations (DeVaro & Morita, 2013). The introduction of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) systems has increased the technical responsibilities of polling officials (Ritter & Tolbert, 2024). Literature on electronic voting systems suggests that the proper functioning of technology depends greatly on the knowledge, training and preparedness of election personnel (Hausman, 1978). Presiding Officers and APROs must understand the procedures for conducting mock polls, setting up voting machines, responding to technical difficulties and following prescribed

procedures in the event of machine-related problems (Election Assistance Commission, 2022). Therefore, training and practical demonstrations are important components of election preparedness. Several studies on electoral administration have emphasised the importance of training programmes for polling personnel. Election officials are required to understand electoral laws, voting procedures, the use of EVMs and VVPATs, voter identification rules, documentation procedures and the management of special situations (Moynihan & Pandey, 2007). Training helps reduce procedural mistakes and improves the confidence of election officials (Burden & Milyo, 2015). Effective training also enables PROs and APROs to deal with challenges such as long voter queues, disputes, equipment malfunction and voter assistance requirements (Roberts & Greenberger, 2023). Thus, continuous and practical training is considered essential for the successful conduct of elections. Another important area identified in the literature is the maintenance of secrecy and fairness in voting (Högström & Jerhov, 2023). Polling officials have a responsibility to ensure that voters can cast their votes freely without intimidation, pressure or unnecessary interference (McLennan et al., 2009). The Presiding Officer plays a major role in regulating entry into the polling station, maintaining order and ensuring that only authorised persons remain within the polling premises (Burden, Jones & Stein, forthcoming). Assistant Presiding Officers support these efforts by managing voter movement and ensuring that procedures are followed systematically. These functions are essential for protecting the integrity and credibility of the electoral process (Frederickson & Hart, 1985). Research on election management also highlights the importance of voter facilitation and inclusion (Stein et al., 2025). Polling personnel are expected to provide necessary assistance to senior citizens, persons with disabilities and other eligible voters who require support, while ensuring that electoral procedures and secrecy are maintained (Brewer & Selden, 1998). The availability of trained and cooperative polling staff can improve the overall voter experience and encourage greater participation. Therefore, the role of PROs and APROs extends beyond administrative responsibilities to include voter-friendly service delivery. The literature further identifies coordination, communication and teamwork as essential factors in booth-level election management (Houston, 2000). The Presiding Officer is responsible for coordinating the activities of all polling personnel, while Assistant Presiding Officers contribute by performing assigned tasks efficiently and reporting problems immediately (Stewart III, 2022). Effective communication helps in addressing issues quickly and prevents minor problems from disrupting the polling process. A well-coordinated polling team can maintain efficiency even when faced with large voter turnout or unexpected operational difficulties (Barsky et al., 2023). Previous studies also discuss various challenges faced by polling personnel, including long working hours, high levels of responsibility, technical difficulties, large voter turnout, maintenance of law and order and the need to complete detailed documentation (McAuliffe, 2009) (Wilson, 2012). Election officials must remain alert throughout the polling process and ensure the safe



sealing and handover of election materials after the close of polling (Jerhov & Högstöm, 2024). The performance of PROs and APROs is therefore influenced by their level of training, experience, communication skills, leadership ability and ability to work under pressure. Overall, the reviewed literature indicates that Presiding Officers and Assistant Presiding Officers are vital to the successful conduct of elections at the booth level (Jones & Stein, 2021). The Presiding Officer provides leadership, supervision and overall control, while the Assistant Presiding Officers ensure the efficient execution of operational procedures (Taplin & Winterton, 2007). Their combined efforts contribute to transparency, efficiency, voter confidence and the successful conduct of free and fair elections (Manson & Gronke, 2022). However, there is a need for more focused studies examining the specific roles, challenges and contributions of PROs and APROs at the booth level (van Loon, Leisink & Vandenabeele, 2013). The present study therefore seeks to provide a better understanding of their role in ensuring the successful conduct of elections (Barsky, 2024).

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The successful conduct of elections at the booth level is essential for ensuring free, fair, transparent and peaceful democratic processes. Presiding Officers (PROs) and Assistant Presiding Officers (APROs) play a crucial role in managing polling stations, verifying voters, maintaining secrecy of voting, operating EVM/VVPAT systems, maintaining records and ensuring compliance with election rules. However, polling personnel often face challenges such as inadequate training, technical difficulties, heavy voter turnout, time constraints, long working hours, maintenance of discipline and the proper handling of election materials and documents. Any procedural error or lack of coordination may affect the smooth conduct and credibility of the election process. Although the roles of PROs and APROs are clearly defined, their actual contribution and effectiveness at the booth level require systematic examination. Therefore, the present study seeks to examine the role of Presiding Officers and Assistant Presiding Officers in the successful conduct of elections at the booth level and to identify the challenges they face in performing their responsibilities effectively across hassan district.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the impact of the roles and responsibilities of Presiding Officers (PROs) on the successful conduct of elections at the booth level across hassan district.
2. To examine the influence of the roles and responsibilities of Assistant Presiding Officers (APROs) on the successful conduct of elections at the booth level across hassan district.

5. HYPOTHESIS

- H₀: The roles and responsibilities of Presiding Officers (PROs) do not have a significant impact on the successful conduct of elections at the booth level across hassan district.
- H₁: The roles and responsibilities of Presiding Officers (PROs) have a significant impact on the successful conduct of elections at the booth level across hassan district.

H₀: The roles and responsibilities of Assistant Presiding Officers (APROs) do not have a significant influence on the successful conduct of elections at the booth level across hassan district.

H₂: The roles and responsibilities of Assistant Presiding Officers (APROs) have a significant influence on the successful conduct of elections at the booth level across hassan district.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to examine the role of Presiding Officers (PROs) and Assistant Presiding Officers (APROs) in the successful conduct of elections at the booth level across Hassan District. The study is primarily based on primary data, collected through a structured questionnaire from selected PROs and APROs who have performed election duties. A stratified random sampling technique will be used to ensure adequate representation of both categories of polling personnel across the district. The questionnaire will consist mainly of closed-ended questions measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Secondary data will be collected from Election Commission reports, election manuals, books, journals and relevant research studies. The collected data will be coded, classified and analysed using SPSS software. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, Cronbach's Alpha, correlation and regression analysis will be used. The hypotheses will be tested at a 5 per cent level of significance ($p < 0.05$) to determine the impact and influence of PROs and APROs.

7. SAMPLE SIZE

The study adopts Yamane's (1967) sample size determination formula to identify an appropriate sample for the research. The formula is expressed as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

N represents the total population, and e represents the level of precision or sampling error. The study population comprises Presiding Officers (PROs) and Assistant Presiding Officers (APROs) who have performed election duties across Hassan District. Based on the required representation and practical feasibility, a total sample of 800 respondents will be selected, comprising 400 Presiding Officers and 400 Assistant Presiding Officers. A stratified sampling method will be adopted to ensure adequate representation of both categories of election officials. The total population will be divided into two strata, namely PROs and APROs. From each stratum, 400 respondents will be selected using an appropriate random sampling technique. This approach ensures balanced representation and enables a comparative analysis of the roles, responsibilities and contributions of both PROs and APROs towards the successful conduct of elections at the booth level across Hassan District.



8. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study focuses on examining the role and contribution of Presiding Officers (PROs) and Assistant Presiding Officers (APROs) in the successful conduct of elections at the booth level across Hassan District. The study specifically covers their roles, responsibilities, election preparedness, coordination, voter management, maintenance of secrecy, handling of EVM/VVPAT systems, record maintenance and management of election-related challenges. The study is confined to 400 PROs and 400 APROs who have performed election duties in Hassan District. It examines the impact of the roles and responsibilities of PROs and the influence of APROs on the smooth, transparent, free and fair conduct of elections. The findings may provide useful insights for improving training, coordination and the overall efficiency of polling personnel in future elections.

9. DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data will be coded, classified, tabulated and analysed using SPSS software. Regression analysis will be used to examine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The independent variables are the roles and responsibilities of Presiding Officers (PROs) and Assistant Presiding Officers (APROs). The dependent variable is the successful conduct of elections at the booth level. Regression analysis will determine the extent to which the roles and responsibilities of PROs and APROs influence successful election conduct. The statistical significance of the results will be tested at the 5 per cent level of significance ($p < 0.05$).

Roles and responsibilities of Presiding Officers (PROs) on the successful conduct of elections

H_0 : The roles and responsibilities of Presiding Officers (PROs) do not have a significant impact on the successful conduct of elections at the booth level across hassan district.

H_1 : The roles and responsibilities of Presiding Officers (PROs) have a significant impact on the successful conduct of elections at the booth level across hassan district.

The regression analysis was conducted to examine the impact of the roles and responsibilities of Presiding Officers (PROs) on the successful conduct of elections at the booth level across Hassan District. The model summary indicates a strong positive relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, with an R value of 0.933. The R Square value of 0.871 indicates that 87.1% of the variation in the successful conduct of elections is explained by the twelve roles and responsibilities of Presiding Officers. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.867 further confirms the strong explanatory power of the regression model. The standard error of the estimate is 0.41990, indicating a reasonable level of accuracy in the model. The ANOVA results reveal that the regression model is statistically significant, with $F = 216.591$ and $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that, collectively, the roles and responsibilities of Presiding Officers have a significant impact on the successful conduct of elections at the booth level. Therefore, the overall null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted.

5 per cent level of significance ($p < 0.05$).

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.933 ^a	.871	.867	.41990		
ANOVA ^b						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	458.271	12	38.189	216.591	.000 ^a
	Residual	68.059	386	.176		
	Total	526.331	398			
Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.156	.096		1.624	.105
	Overall supervision	.428	.045	.406	9.518	.000
	Verification of polling materials	-.004	.045	-.003	-.084	.933
	Ensuring mock poll	-.014	.037	-.015	-.393	.694
	Ensuring secrecy of voting	-.079	.050	-.069	-1.580	.115
	Regulating entry	.790	.055	.877	14.465	.000
	Resolving issues and complaints	.199	.041	.216	4.857	.000
	Authorising voter identification and voting	-.206	.041	-.224	-5.024	.000
	Ensuring proper use of EVM/VVPAT	.024	.046	.027	.517	.606
Recording important events	-.066	.078	-.042	-.850	.396	



Handling tendered votes, challenged votes and other special cases	.344	.055	.299	6.283	.000
Closing the poll properly	-.377	.095	-.325	-3.961	.000
Sealing, accounting and handing over election materials and documents	-.168	.105	-.139	-1.602	.110
a. Dependent Variable: Successful conduct of elections at the booth level across hassan district					

The coefficient analysis shows that overall supervision ($\beta = 0.406$, $p < 0.001$), regulating entry of voters ($\beta = 0.877$, $p < 0.001$), resolving issues and complaints ($\beta = 0.216$, $p < 0.001$) and handling tendered votes, challenged votes and other special cases ($\beta = 0.299$, $p < 0.001$) have significant positive impacts on the successful conduct of elections. Among these factors, regulating the entry of voters has the strongest positive influence. However, authorising voter identification and voting ($\beta = -0.224$, $p < 0.001$) and closing the poll properly ($\beta = -0.325$, $p < 0.001$) show statistically significant negative coefficients. Verification of polling materials, ensuring the mock poll, ensuring secrecy of voting, proper use of EVM/VVPAT, recording important events, and sealing and handing over election materials do not show statistically significant individual effects, as their p-values are

greater than 0.05. Overall, the findings confirm that the effective performance of Presiding Officers plays a significant role in ensuring the successful conduct of elections at the booth level across Hassan District.

Roles and responsibilities of Assistant Presiding Officers (APROs) on the successful conduct of elections

H₀: The roles and responsibilities of Assistant Presiding Officers (APROs) do not have a significant influence on the successful conduct of elections at the booth level across hassan district.

H₂: The roles and responsibilities of Assistant Presiding Officers (APROs) have a significant influence on the successful conduct of elections at the booth level across hassan district.

Model Summary						
Model		R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1		.970 ^a	.941	.939	.31488	
ANOVA ^b						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	611.473	12	50.956	513.940	.000 ^a
	Residual	38.271	386	.099		
	Total	649.744	398			
Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.352	.072		-4.901	.000
	Assisting the Presiding Officer	-.056	.049	-.056	-1.136	.257
	Checking the voter's name	.457	.032	.411	14.347	.000
	Verifying voter identity documents	-.178	.043	-.152	-4.123	.000
	Marking the electoral roll	.034	.044	.028	.782	.435
	Applying indelible ink	.100	.029	.091	3.403	.001
	Obtaining the voter's signature or thumb impression	.245	.036	.192	6.895	.000
	Issuing the voter slip/token	.034	.032	.033	1.058	.291
	Assisting in managing voter queues	.080	.032	.078	2.474	.014
	Helping elderly persons and persons with disabilities	-.217	.033	-.223	-6.583	.000
	Maintaining necessary records and forms	.543	.068	.310	8.011	.000
	Reporting any irregularity or problem immediately	-.045	.044	-.035	-1.020	.309
	Assisting in sealing and packing election materials	.467	.044	.362	10.564	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Successful conduct of elections at the booth level across hassan district						



The regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of the roles and responsibilities of Assistant Presiding Officers (APROs) on the successful conduct of elections at the booth level across Hassan District. The model summary reveals a very strong relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, with an R value of 0.970. The R Square value of 0.941 indicates that 94.1 per cent of the variation in the successful conduct of elections is explained by the twelve roles and responsibilities of Assistant Presiding Officers. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.939 further confirms the strong explanatory power of the regression model, while the standard error of the estimate of 0.31488 indicates a good level of accuracy. The ANOVA results show that the overall regression model is statistically significant, with $F = 513.940$ and $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$). This confirms that the roles and responsibilities of Assistant Presiding Officers, when considered collectively, have a significant influence on the successful conduct of elections at the booth level across Hassan District. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_2) is accepted. The coefficient analysis reveals that checking the voter's name ($\beta = 0.411$, $p < 0.001$), applying indelible ink ($\beta = 0.091$, $p = 0.001$), obtaining the voter's signature or thumb impression ($\beta = 0.192$, $p < 0.001$), assisting in managing voter queues ($\beta = 0.078$, $p = 0.014$), maintaining necessary records and forms ($\beta = 0.310$, $p < 0.001$) and assisting in sealing and packing election materials ($\beta = 0.362$, $p < 0.001$) have significant positive influences on the successful conduct of elections. Among these, checking the voter's name has the strongest positive influence, followed by assisting in sealing and packing election materials and maintaining necessary records and forms. On the other hand, verifying voter identity documents ($\beta = -0.152$, $p < 0.001$) and helping elderly persons and persons with disabilities ($\beta = -0.223$, $p < 0.001$) show statistically significant negative coefficients. Assisting the Presiding Officer, marking the electoral roll, issuing the voter slip/token and reporting irregularities or problems do not have statistically significant individual effects, as their p-values are greater than 0.05. Overall, the findings demonstrate that the effective performance of APROs plays a highly significant role in ensuring the smooth, efficient and successful conduct of elections at the booth level across Hassan District.

10. RESEARCH FINDINGS

1. The roles and responsibilities of Presiding Officers (PROs) have a significant impact on the successful conduct of elections at the booth level across Hassan District.
2. The PRO regression model explains 87.1 per cent of the variation in the successful conduct of elections, indicating strong explanatory power.
3. Overall supervision by PROs has a significant positive impact on the successful conduct of elections.
4. Regulating the entry of voters and maintaining order has the strongest positive influence among the roles of Presiding Officers.
5. Resolving issues and complaints effectively contributes to the smooth and successful conduct of elections.

6. The proper handling of tendered votes, challenged votes and other special cases significantly contributes to election management.
7. The roles and responsibilities of Assistant Presiding Officers (APROs) have a highly significant influence on the successful conduct of elections.
8. The APRO regression model explains 94.1 per cent of the variation in successful election conduct, demonstrating a very strong relationship.
9. Checking voters' names in the electoral roll is one of the strongest positive contributors to the successful conduct of elections.
10. Maintaining necessary records and forms by APROs significantly improves the efficiency and transparency of the polling process.
11. Assisting in sealing and packing election materials has a significant positive influence on the successful completion of election duties.
12. The findings confirm that effective coordination, clear division of duties, proper training and teamwork between PROs and APROs are essential for ensuring free, fair, transparent and successful elections at the booth level.

11. SUGGESTIONS

1. Regular and comprehensive training programmes should be conducted for both PROs and APROs before every election.
2. Practical training on EVM and VVPAT operations should be strengthened to improve technical preparedness.
3. Mock poll exercises should be conducted effectively to ensure that polling personnel understand all procedures.
4. Clear division and communication of duties should be provided to all Presiding Officers and Assistant Presiding Officers.
5. Special training should be provided for voter identification, handling challenged votes and managing special election situations.
6. Effective voter queue management systems should be developed to reduce congestion and delays at polling stations.
7. Adequate technical support and rapid response teams should be available to address EVM/VVPAT-related problems.
8. Polling stations should provide improved facilities and assistance for senior citizens and persons with disabilities.
9. Better communication and coordination mechanisms should be established among polling personnel and election authorities.
10. Regular performance evaluation and feedback mechanisms should be introduced to identify weaknesses and improve the efficiency of PROs and APROs in future elections.

12. LIMITATIONS

The present study is subject to certain limitations. It is confined to Presiding Officers and Assistant Presiding Officers who performed election duties across Hassan District; therefore, the findings may not be fully generalised to other districts or states. The study is based mainly on primary data collected through a structured questionnaire and relies on the perceptions



and experiences of respondents. Since election duties may vary according to the type of election, the findings may not represent all electoral situations. Time and resource constraints may also limit extensive data collection. The study focuses only on selected roles and responsibilities of PROs and APROs and does not include the views of voters, election observers, police personnel or other stakeholders. Future studies may overcome these limitations through wider geographical coverage and mixed-method approaches.

13. DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research may expand the geographical coverage of the present study by including multiple districts, states or regions to provide a broader understanding of the role of Presiding Officers and Assistant Presiding Officers in election management. Comparative studies may be conducted between rural and urban polling stations or between different types of elections. Future researchers may also examine the perspectives of voters, election observers, police personnel and other stakeholders. The impact of training, technology, EVM/VVPAT management, stress, workload and coordination on the performance of polling personnel may be studied in greater detail. Longitudinal studies can examine changes in election administration over time. Mixed-method research combining quantitative and qualitative approaches may provide deeper insights into the challenges, experiences and effectiveness of polling personnel in ensuring free, fair, transparent and successful elections.

14. CONCLUSIONS

The present study concludes that Presiding Officers (PROs) and Assistant Presiding Officers (APROs) play a vital role in ensuring the successful conduct of elections at the booth level across Hassan District. The regression analysis revealed that the roles and responsibilities of PROs significantly influence successful election conduct, with the model explaining 87.1 per cent of the variation. Similarly, the roles and responsibilities of APROs demonstrated a highly significant influence, explaining 94.1 per cent of the variation. Overall supervision, regulating voter entry, resolving polling-related issues, checking voter names, maintaining records and sealing election materials were identified as important contributing factors. The findings highlight the importance of proper training, effective coordination, clear allocation of duties and teamwork among polling personnel. Strengthening technical preparedness, voter management and communication mechanisms can further improve booth-level election administration. Therefore, the effective performance of PROs and APROs is essential for conducting elections in a smooth, transparent, free, fair and efficient manner.

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