

NEWS

BJD Alleges Discrepancies in Voting Patterns During Odisha Polls

By **Brajabandhu Mahanta** • December 24, 2024 • 2 min read

Odisha Polls: Six months after its first electoral defeat since its inception, the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) has raised serious concerns regarding alleged irregularities in the voting patterns observed during the 2024 general and Assembly elections in Odisha. The party, which has been a dominant political force in the state, submitted a memorandum to the Election Commission of India (ECI) on Monday, detailing its findings and demanding transparency.

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Concerns Over Voting Discrepancies

The BJD's allegations stem from an analysis of the voting data provided by the ECI. According to the party, there were significant discrepancies between the number of votes recorded at polling booths and the total votes counted by the electronic voting machines (EVMs).

"How is this possible? This should not be the case as the total number of votes counted by the returning officer cannot vary from the report of votes polled by the presiding officer, especially when EVMs are used," the BJD stated in its memorandum.

The party expressed concern that these variations, even if observed at a single booth level, could have had a substantial impact on the final outcomes of Assembly and parliamentary constituencies when aggregated across booths. "These discrepancies raise serious questions about the integrity of the electoral process," the memorandum noted.

Lack of Access to Crucial Data

The BJD further highlighted its struggle to access critical documents under the provisions of the Right to Information (RTI) Act and the Representation of the People Act. Despite multiple requests, the party claimed that it had not yet received copies of Form 17-C from district authorities, a document essential for verifying polling data.

"In this, we would also like to add that despite repeated requests under RTI and the Representation of the People Act, we have still not received copies of Form 17-C from all districts," the party said, underscoring its frustration over the lack of cooperation.

Implications for Electoral Integrity

The discrepancies cited by the BJD and the lack of access to requested documents have cast a shadow over the fairness of the elections. The party emphasized that the integrity of the electoral process must be upheld, urging the ECI to investigate and address the concerns raised.

The allegations by the BJD mark a significant development in Odisha's political landscape, with potential implications for future electoral processes and the credibility of the democratic system in the state.

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