

## Research Article

# Electoral Politics and Assembly Elections in Arunachal Pradesh: Examining Electoral Trends of Cross-District Candidature in Mixed-Population Constituencies

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*This study explores the dynamics of cross-district candidature in the mixed-population constituencies of Namsai, Lekang, and Bordumsa Diyun in Arunachal Pradesh. It aims to identify and analyze the motivations driving candidates from other districts to contest elections in these constituencies, assess the socio-economic and political impacts of such candidacies, and investigate local voter perceptions and voting behavior. Utilizing a combination of historical and empirical approaches, the study employs both qualitative and quantitative methods. The trend of cross-district candidature began in 2014 when Nikh Kamin, a PPA party candidate, contested and won the assembly election from Bordumsa Diyun (Gen) constituency. Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was gathered using purposive sampling to select the assembly constituencies and polling stations, and simple random sampling to select the respondents. A total of 150 respondents were selected from three assembly constituencies using questionnaires and scheduled interviews as tools of data collection. Secondary sources such as books, articles, newspapers, and election statistics were also utilized. The findings reveal that factors such as the presence of a large non-APST population, a leadership vacuum, the desire to address specific local issues, and political opportunities are primary motivations for candidates from other districts. Non-APST voters generally perceive these candidacies as beneficial for socio-economic development. However, apex tribal organizations and some indigenous populations in these constituencies largely oppose this trend, viewing it as a threat to the political representation of minor tribes.*

**Keywords:** Electoral Politics, Electoral Trends, Cross-District Candidature, Mixed-Population Constituencies, Arunachal Pradesh**1. Introduction**

Democracy is built on the foundation of free and fair elections, which allow citizens to exercise their sovereign right to vote and hold public officials accountable. This constitutional guarantee allows individuals to break free from traditional hierarchies of caste, gender, and class, promoting inclusivity in the electoral process [1]. In India, the phenomenon of cross-district candidature is prevalent, where individuals contest elections from constituencies outside their native district. This trend is observed in both Lok Sabha and Assembly elections. For instance, in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, several leaders contested from states other than their native one, such as Smriti Irani (BJP) who contested from Amethi, Uttar Pradesh, despite being a native of Gujarat [2]. A report by ADR and NEW, "Analysis of affidavits of candidates contesting in 2019 Lok Sabha elections" (2019), found that; 14% of candidates (1,046) contested from a constituency outside their

native state [3].

In Assembly elections, it's quite common for candidates to contest from constituencies outside their home districts for various reasons. Candidates may do so for strategic advantages, such as targeting constituencies where they have a better chance of winning or where their influence extends beyond their home district. Political parties often strategically place candidates in specific constituencies based on demographic factors and past election performance. Additionally, candidates with strong connections to local issues or who have previously engaged with the electorate may also contest outside their home district. This phenomenon is not new, as noted by political scientist, K.C. Suri, who observed that "candidates often contest from safe constituencies, which may not be their native place" [4]. This trend highlights the complexities of Indian electoral politics, where candidates often prioritize political

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expediency over local connections.

However, in Arunachal Pradesh, the youngest state to be integrated into India's modern electoral system, this trend is a relatively new phenomenon, warranting an examination of its implications on electoral politics [5].

In the context of electoral politics in Arunachal Pradesh, the term 'cross-district candidature' refers to a relatively recent trend in which candidates contest elections outside their native districts. Traditionally, assembly constituencies in Arunachal Pradesh have been reserved for APST (Arunachal Pradesh Scheduled Tribe) candidates, and the local electoral contest typically involves candidates from the same district. However, since 2009, a new phenomenon has emerged where candidates from different districts contest elections in constituencies other than their own. These individuals are often referred to by local voters as 'external candidates.

The term 'mixed-population constituencies' pertains to assembly constituencies characterized by a heterogeneous population. Such regions are distinct because they have a significantly large non-APST population and a comparatively smaller indigenous Arunachali population. Constituencies like Namsai, Lekang, and Bordumsa-Diyun are prime examples, where the demographic composition includes a large number of non-tribal voters, creating opportunities for external candidates to appeal to this diverse voter base.

Thus, 'cross-district candidature' and 'mixed-population constituencies' are closely interrelated in this study, as external candidates tend to target constituencies with a mixed population to secure electoral advantages.

The first General Election to the Legislative Assembly of Arunachal Pradesh was held in 1978, marking a significant milestone in the region's political history. During this election, a total of 2,40,046 electors were registered, out of which 1,64,587 votes were polled, resulting in a voter turnout of 68.6%. The Assembly comprised 30 constituencies, with 28 designated for General candidates and 2 reserved for Scheduled Tribes (ST) [6]. The Janata Party (JNP) emerged as the dominant force, securing 17 seats with 42.1% of the votes. The People's Party of Arunachal (PPA) followed, winning 8 seats and garnering 30.2% of the votes, while Independent candidates captured 5 seats with 27.2% of the vote share. This election laid the foundation for the state's legislative and political framework, reflecting the region's initial steps towards democratic governance [6].

It was only after statehood in 1987, the assembly seats were increased from 30 to 60. The election to the 60 assembly seats was held in 1990. Though, cross-constituency candidature was prevalent in the assembly elections of Arunachal Pradesh, for instance, Sotai Kri, from 44-Tezu ST Assembly Constituency contested the 1999 Assembly election from 48-Lekang ST Assembly constituency. The 2009 assembly election in Arunachal

Pradesh marked the first instance of cross-district candidature in the Lekang constituency, with Larbin Nasi, a former MLA of Dimprijo, contesting from the All India Trinamool Congress, and James Techhi Tara from Papum Pare district running on an Indian National Congress ticket. (ECI, Statistical report on general election, 2009 to the Legislative Assembly of Arunachal Pradesh. 2009) [7]. This trend of candidates from outside districts continued to grow, becoming more prominent in subsequent elections. In the 2014 assembly election, Lekang saw four cross-district candidates: Bida Taku from PPA, Tape Bagra from BJP, Pike Pulu from the Naga People's Front, and Anita Payeng as an independent. (ECI, Statistical report on general election, 2014 to the Legislative Assembly of Arunachal Pradesh 2014) [8]. Bordumsa-Diyun, an unreserved seat, also witnessed cross-district candidature that year with Nikh Kamin from PPA winning with 41.2% of the votes. (ECI, Statistical report on general election, 2014 to the Legislative Assembly of Arunachal Pradesh 2014) [8]. The 2019 assembly election further intensified this trend, with six cross-district candidates in Lekang, including Takam Sanjoy from INC and Padmeshwari Jamoh from Janata Dal (United). (ECI, Statistical report on general election, 2019 to the Legislative Assembly of Arunachal Pradesh 2019) [9]. In Bordumsa-Diyun, Nikh Kamin contested from the National People's Party among others. The 2024 election saw continued cross-district participation, with Likha Soni from NCP winning in Lekang and Nikh Kamin from NCP securing victory in Bordumsa-Diyun with 51.2% of the votes. Namsai also experienced this phenomenon with Likha Saya, a former MLA of Yachuli Constituency, contesting from an NCP ticket. (ECI, Statistical report on general election, 2024 to the Legislative Assembly of Arunachal Pradesh 2024)[10]. This trend highlights a dynamic shift in electoral politics in Arunachal Pradesh, reflecting the increasing mobility and influence of political figures across district boundaries.

The trend of cross-district candidature in Arunachal Pradesh has generated significant controversy and resistance among indigenous APST (Arunachal Pradesh Scheduled Tribes) populations, particularly within Namsai and Changlang districts. This phenomenon has been met with opposition from organizations such as the Tai Khamti Singpho Council (TKSC), Tai Khamti Development Society, All Tai Khamti Singpho Students' Union, and All Namsai Area Youth Association, which argue that such practices pose a threat to the political representation and cultural identity of minor tribes like the Tai Khamti and Singpho. TKSC secretary-general Jaling Mannow has articulated concerns regarding the potential erosion of tribal identity and political influence, suggesting that the presence of external candidates may undermine the harmonious coexistence of the state's diverse tribal communities [11]. The All Mishmi Students Union has similarly voiced apprehensions, noting the risk of similar incursions in smaller constituencies such as Tezu. Although these groups recognize the democratic and legal rights of all candidates, they emphasize the importance of local representation for the political preservation of minor tribes. This ongoing debate highlights a critical tension within Arunachal Pradesh's electoral and state politics, juxtaposing democratic inclusivity with the need to

safeguard indigenous cultural integrity, and thereby challenging the state's balance between these competing imperatives.

## 2. Objectives of the Study

The study is based on the following objectives:

- To identify and analyze the motivations driving candidates from other districts to contest elections in the mixed-population constituencies of Namsai, Lekang, and Bordumsa Diyun in Arunachal Pradesh.
- To assess the socio-economic and political impacts of cross-district candidacies on local voter perceptions and voting behaviour in these constituencies.

## 3. Research Methodology

This study employs a combination of historical and empirical approaches, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods. Data collection involved primary and secondary sources. Primary data was gathered through purposive sampling to select the assembly constituencies and polling stations, and simple random sampling to select the respondents. A total of 150 respondents from the three assembly constituencies were selected using questionnaires and scheduled interviews as tools of data collection. Secondary sources, including books, articles, newspapers, and election statistics, were also utilized to complement the primary data.

## 4. Area of Study

Arunachal Pradesh, with a total electorate of 8,82,816 spread across 60 assembly constituencies as per the 2024 Election Commission report, presents a diverse and complex political landscape. This study focuses on the assembly constituencies of Namsai, Lekang, and Bordumsa Diyun. Lekang and Namsai are reserved for Arunachal Pradesh Scheduled Tribes (APST) and are part of the Namsai district. In Lekang, there are 20,831 voters, with an overwhelming majority of approximately 18,000 being non-tribals. Namsai assembly constituency has a total of 24,554 registered voters. In contrast, Bordumsa Diyun is the only unreserved assembly constituency in the region, with a total of 22,943 registered voters. Common factors across these constituencies include a significant non-APST population and the presence of candidates from other districts contesting elections, which form the crux of this study's examination of electoral dynamics and voter behaviour.

## 5. Data Analysis

These constituencies have a varied demographic composition with a significant number of non-APST (Arunachal Pradesh Scheduled Tribe) voters. This diversity offers candidates an opportunity to appeal to a broader electorate and address the concerns of different communities. Contesting in these constituencies can be seen as a chance to try their political luck. Candidates may perceive these areas as having a more open or competitive electoral landscape where they have a better chance of success. Candidates from other districts might seek to position themselves as leaders of the downtrodden non-APST population. By addressing the specific needs and concerns of these communities, they aim to build a reputation as a champion of marginalized groups. The presence of diverse populations and significant non-APST voters provides strategic opportunities for gaining political support. Candidates can leverage these demographics to build a broad base of electoral support. Candidates from other districts may have access to better financial resources, campaign infrastructure, or political networks. This can be advantageous in constituencies where they can use these resources effectively to enhance their campaign efforts. Political parties might field candidates from other districts as part of a broader strategy. This could involve balancing regional representation, strengthening alliances, or consolidating support across different areas to achieve party goals. For many candidates, contesting elections in new constituencies represents an opportunity for personal and professional growth. It allows them to gain experience, build a political profile, and advance their careers in the political arena. By contesting in constituencies with diverse populations, candidates can enhance their public image and appeal. They can present themselves as inclusive leaders who are concerned with the welfare of all communities, improving their overall political standing. Candidates may be motivated by a desire to tackle specific issues or challenges faced by the non-APST population or other communities in these constituencies. Their expertise or background might offer targeted solutions to local problems. Contesting in new areas can help candidates expand their political influence beyond their home districts. Success in these constituencies can lead to increased visibility and influence in the state's political landscape.

Further, to assess the socio-economic and political impacts of cross-district candidacies on voter perceptions and voting behaviour in these constituencies, the researchers conducted a detailed field study, the data are presented below.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very Positive	23	15.3%
Positive	25	16.7%
Neutral	78	52.0%
Negative	24	16.0%
Total	150	100.0

**Table 1.1: How Do You Perceive the Impact of Cross-District Candidates on Electoral Politics**

The data presented in Table 1.1 indicates a diverse range of perceptions regarding the impact of cross-district candidates on

electoral politics. A majority of respondents (52.0%) view the impact as neutral, suggesting a lack of strong opinion or mixed

feelings about the presence of candidates from outside their district. Meanwhile, 32.0% of respondents hold a positive (15.3%) or very positive (16.7%) view, indicating that a significant portion

sees benefits or improvements associated with such candidates. Conversely, 16.0% perceive the impact as negative, reflecting concerns or drawbacks perceived by this group.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Much Better	25	6.7%
Better	33	22.0%
About the Same	75	50.0%
Worse	17	11.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 1.2: Do You Believe That Cross-District Candidates Understand the Local Issues and Concerns Better or Worse Than Local Candidates?**

Table 1.2 reveals varying perceptions about whether cross-district candidates understand local issues and concerns better or worse than local candidates. A substantial majority of respondents (50.0%) believe that cross-district candidates understand local issues that is about the same as local candidates. This indicates a prevailing view that cross-district candidates do not necessarily have a significant advantage or disadvantage in understanding

local concerns. Meanwhile, 28.7% of respondents think that cross-district candidates understand local issues either better (22.0%) or much better (6.7%), suggesting a recognition of the potential for broader or diverse perspectives brought by external candidates. On the other hand, 11.3% of respondents feel that cross-district candidates understand local issues worse than local candidates, pointing to concerns about the depth of local knowledge.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Increased Significantly	13	8.7%
Increased Slightly	30	20.0%
No Change	68	45.3%
Decreased Slightly	27	18.0%
Decreased Significantly	12	8.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 1.3: How Has the Presence of Cross-District Candidates Influenced Your Trust in The Electoral Process?**

Table 1.3 presents insights into how the presence of cross-district candidates has influenced respondents' trust in the electoral process. The majority of respondents (45.3%) report no change in their trust, suggesting that the presence of such candidates has not significantly impacted their perception of the electoral system. Meanwhile, 28.7% of respondents experience an increase in trust, either significantly (8.7%) or slightly (20.0%), indicating

that a notable portion perceives the involvement of cross-district candidates as enhancing the credibility or appeal of the electoral process. Conversely, 26.0% of respondents feel a decrease in trust, with 18.0% experiencing a slight decrease and 8.0% a significant decrease, reflecting concerns that cross-district candidates might negatively affect their confidence in the electoral system.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	33	22.0%
Agree	23	15.3%
Neutral	56	37.3%
Disagree	28	18.7%
Strongly Agree	10	6.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 1.4: Do You Think Cross-District Candidates Bring More Resources (Funds, Development Projects) To Your Constituency?**

Table 1.4 examines perceptions regarding whether cross-district candidates bring more resources, such as funds and development projects, to a constituency. A combined 37.3% of respondents are neutral on this matter, indicating uncertainty or no strong opinion about the resource contribution of cross-district candidates. Meanwhile, 37.3% of respondents believe that cross-district

candidates bring additional resources, with 22.0% strongly agreeing and 15.3% agreeing. This suggests that a notable proportion of people perceive a positive impact on resource allocation due to the involvement of candidates from outside their district. On the other hand, 25.4% of respondents disagree (18.7%) or strongly disagree (6.7%) with the notion that cross-district candidates bring

more resources, reflecting skepticism or dissatisfaction regarding the resource benefits of such candidates. Overall, the data shows a mixed perception, with a significant portion of respondents seeing

potential benefits in terms of resources, but also a considerable number expressing doubts or a neutral stance.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Much More Likely	23	15.3%
More Likely	33	22.0%
About the Same	55	36.7%
Less Likely	39	26.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 1.5: Are You More or Less Likely to Vote for a Cross-District Candidate Compared to a Local Candidate?**

Table 1.5 provides insights into how respondents' likelihood to vote for a cross-district candidate compares to a local candidate in elections. A combined 37.3% of respondents express a higher likelihood of voting for cross-district candidates, with 15.3% much more likely and 22.0% more likely. This indicates that a significant portion of the electorate sees cross-district candidates in a favorable light, potentially due to perceived benefits or new perspectives they bring. Conversely, 26.0% of respondents are less likely to

vote for cross-district candidates, suggesting some reservations or preferences for local candidates. Meanwhile, 36.7% of respondents believe their likelihood to vote remains about the same regardless of whether the candidate is from within or outside their district, reflecting neutrality or indifference towards the district of origin. Overall, while there is a notable inclination towards cross-district candidates among some voters, a substantial proportion remains either neutral or prefers local candidates.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Greatly Improved Stability	12	8.0%
Improved Stability	33	22.0%
No Impact	45	30.0%
Reduced Stability	35	23.3%
Greatly Reduced Stability	25	16.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 1.6: What Is Your Opinion on The Impact of Cross-District Candidacies on Political Stability in Your Constituency?**

Table 1.6 explores opinions on the impact of cross-district candidacies on political stability within constituencies. A combined 30.0% of respondents perceive no impact on political stability, indicating a view that the presence of cross-district candidates neither improves nor diminishes stability. Meanwhile, 30.0% of respondents believe that cross-district candidacies either improve (22.0%) or greatly improve (8.0%) stability, suggesting that a significant portion of the electorate sees these candidates

as beneficial to the political environment. Conversely, 39.9% of respondents feel that cross-district candidacies reduce (23.3%) or greatly reduce (16.7%) stability, reflecting concerns that such candidates might disrupt or destabilize local politics. Overall, while there are notable views supporting the positive impact of cross-district candidates on stability, a considerable portion of the population perceives a negative effect, highlighting a divided opinion on the issue.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Much More Accessible	12	8.00%
More Accessible	15	10.00%
About the Same	33	22.00%
Less Accessible	76	50.67%
Much Less Accessible	14	9.33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 1.7: Do You Feel That Cross-District Candidates Are More or Less Accessible to Common Voters Than Local Candidates?**

Table 1.7 assesses perceptions regarding the accessibility of cross-district candidates compared to local candidates. A majority of respondents (60.0%) feel that cross-district candidates are less accessible (50.67%) or much less accessible (9.33%) than local candidates, indicating a general sentiment that these candidates

may be more difficult to reach or engage with. In contrast, a smaller proportion of respondents view cross-district candidates as more accessible (10.00%) or much more accessible (8.00%), suggesting that some believe these candidates are easier to connect with despite their non-local status. Additionally, 22.00% of respondents

think that the accessibility of cross-district candidates is about the same as that of local candidates, reflecting a neutral stance on this issue. Overall, the data highlights a predominant concern about the

accessibility of cross-district candidates, with many respondents feeling that local candidates are more readily available to common voters.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Extremely Important	33	22.00%
Very Important	76	50.67%
Moderately Important	14	9.33%
Slightly Important	12	8.00%
Not Important at All	15	10.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 1.8: How Important Is A Cross-District Candidate's Ability to Engage with And Understand Local Culture When Deciding Your Vote?**

Table 1.8 highlights the significance of a cross-district candidate's ability to engage with and understand local culture in the voting decision process. A substantial majority of respondents (72.67%) view this ability as either extremely important (22.00%) or very important (50.67%). This indicates that a significant portion of the electorate places high value on candidates' cultural engagement and understanding when deciding their vote. Conversely, 27.33% of respondents consider this factor to be only moderately important

(9.33%), slightly important (8.00%), or not important at all (10.00%). This suggests that while many voters prioritize cultural engagement, there is a notable segment that does not consider it a crucial factor in their voting decisions. Overall, the data reflects a strong emphasis on the cultural connection of candidates, with most respondents viewing it as a critical aspect of their electoral choices.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very Greatly	12	8.0%
Greatly	33	22.0%
Moderately	45	30.0%
Slightly	35	23.3%
Not at All	25	16.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 1.9: To What Extent Do Campaign Promise by Cross-District Candidates Influence Your Voting Decision?**

Table 1.9 evaluates the influence of campaign promises made by cross-district candidates on voters' decisions. A significant portion of respondents (30.0%) report that campaign promises influence their voting decision moderately, indicating that while promises have some effect, they are not the sole determining factor. Meanwhile, 30.0% of respondents find these promises to influence their decisions either greatly (22.0%) or very greatly (8.0%), suggesting that for a notable segment of voters, campaign promises

play a crucial role in shaping their choices. Conversely, 23.3% of respondents feel that these promises influence their decisions only slightly, and 16.7% indicate that promises have no impact at all on their voting behavior. Overall, the data shows a varied impact of campaign promises, with a majority of voters considering them moderately to greatly influential but a significant portion viewing them as having little or no effect on their voting decisions.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Increases Turnout Significantly	13	8.7%
Increases Turnout Slightly	30	20.0%
No Effect	68	45.3%
Decreases Turnout Slightly	27	18.0%
Decreases Turnout Significantly	12	8.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 1.10: Do You Think the Involvement of Cross-District Candidates Affects the Overall Voter Turnout in Your Constituency?**

Table 1.10 examines the perceived effect of cross-district candidates on overall voter turnout in constituencies. A significant majority of respondents (45.3%) believe that the involvement of cross-district

candidates has no effect on voter turnout, indicating that for many, the presence of such candidates does not alter their likelihood to vote. Conversely, 28.7% of respondents think that cross-district

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candidates increase turnout, either slightly (20.0%) or significantly (8.7%), suggesting that some voters perceive these candidates as a factor that can boost electoral engagement. On the other hand, 26.0% of respondents feel that cross-district candidates decrease turnout, with 18.0% reporting a slight decrease and 8.0% a significant decrease. This reflects concerns that cross-district candidates might discourage voter participation. Overall, while a notable portion of respondents sees potential for increased turnout due to cross-district candidates, a significant number either perceive no impact or believe turnout might decrease.

## 6. Findings and Discussions

- **Diverse Population:** These constituencies have a varied demographic composition with a significant number of non-APST (Arunachal Pradesh Scheduled Tribe) voters. This diversity offers candidates an opportunity to appeal to a broader electorate and address the concerns of different communities.
- **Political Opportunity:** Contesting in these constituencies can be seen as a chance to try their political luck. Candidates may perceive these areas as having a more open or competitive electoral landscape where they have a better chance of success.
- **Establishing Leadership:** Candidates from other districts might seek to position themselves as leaders of the downtrodden non-APST population. By addressing the specific needs and concerns of these communities, they aim to build a reputation as a champion of marginalized groups.
- **Strategic Political Advantage:** The presence of diverse populations and significant non-APST voters provides strategic opportunities for gaining political support. Candidates can leverage these demographics to build a broad base of electoral support.
- **Resource Availability:** Candidates from other districts may have access to better financial resources, campaign infrastructure, or political networks. This can be advantageous in constituencies where they can use these resources effectively to enhance their campaign efforts.
- **Party Strategy and Alliances:** Political parties might field candidates from other districts as part of a broader strategy. This could involve balancing regional representation, strengthening alliances, or consolidating support across different areas to achieve party goals.
- **Personal Ambitions and Career Growth:** For many candidates, contesting elections in new constituencies represents an opportunity for personal and professional growth. It allows them to gain experience, build a political profile, and advance their careers in the political arena.
- **Public Perception and Image Building:** By contesting in constituencies with diverse populations, candidates can enhance their public image and appeal. They can present themselves as inclusive leaders who are concerned with the welfare of all communities, improving their overall political standing.
- **Addressing Specific Issues:** Candidates may be motivated by a desire to tackle specific issues or challenges faced by the non-APST population or other communities in these constituencies. Their expertise or background might offer targeted solutions to local problems.

- **Expanding Political Influence:** Contesting in new areas can help candidates expand their political influence beyond their home districts. Success in these constituencies can lead to increased visibility and influence in the state's political landscape.
- **Impact on Electoral Politics:** A majority of respondents (52.0%) perceive the impact of cross-district candidates on electoral politics as neutral, with no strong opinion either way. However, 32.0% of respondents view the impact positively (16.7%) or very positively (15.3%). This neutral stance suggests that while cross-district candidates are seen as neither overwhelmingly beneficial nor detrimental, a significant proportion of the electorate recognizes their potential advantages. The positive outlook among some voters might be attributed to perceived fresh perspectives or increased diversity brought by these candidates.
- **Understanding of Local Issues:** A substantial majority (50.0%) believe that cross-district candidates understand local issues about the same as local candidates. However, 28.7% think cross-district candidates have a better (22.0%) or much better (6.7%) understanding of local issues, while 11.3% feel they understand them worse. This distribution reflects a general view that cross-district candidates are perceived as having comparable local issue knowledge to their local counterparts. The belief that cross-district candidates might have a better understanding could be linked to their broader experiences and perspectives, though concerns about their local knowledge persist among some voters.
- **Trust in the Electoral Process:** A majority (45.3%) report no change in their trust in the electoral process due to cross-district candidates. Conversely, 28.7% feel that their trust has increased (20.0% slightly, 8.7% significantly), while 26.0% feel it has decreased (18.0% slightly, 8.0% significantly). The varied responses suggest that while the presence of cross-district candidates does not significantly alter the trust of many voters, a notable portion experiences either an increase or decrease in their trust. This variability indicates that the impact of cross-district candidates on trust is subjective and could depend on individual experiences or perceptions of the candidates' legitimacy.
- **Resource Allocation:** 37.3% of respondents are neutral about whether cross-district candidates bring more resources to their constituencies. However, 37.3% believe they do bring additional resources (22.0% agree, 15.3% strongly agree), while 25.4% disagree (18.7% disagree, 6.7% strongly disagree). The data suggests a divided opinion on the resource contribution of cross-district candidates. While some voters see potential benefits in terms of increased resources, scepticism remains among others, reflecting concerns about the effectiveness or sincerity of such candidates in resource allocation.
- **Likelihood to Vote:** 36.7% of respondents indicate that their likelihood to vote for cross-district candidates remains about the same as for local candidates. However, 37.3% are more likely (22.0% more likely, 15.3% much more likely) to support cross-district candidates, whereas 26.0% are less likely to vote for them. This shows that while a significant portion of voters may be inclined to support cross-district candidates,

a substantial segment prefers local candidates. This mixed response highlights varying voter preferences and the complex factors influencing electoral choices.

- **Political Stability:** 30.0% believe cross-district candidates have no impact on political stability, while 30.0% view their involvement as improving stability (22.0% improved, 8.0% greatly improved). Conversely, 39.9% think it reduces stability (23.3% reduced, 16.7% greatly reduced). The perception of cross-district candidates' impact on stability is polarized. While some voters see these candidates as contributing positively to stability, others are concerned about potential disruptions, reflecting a range of views on how such candidates affect the political environment.
- **Accessibility:** A majority (60.0%) find cross-district candidates less accessible (50.67%) or much less accessible (9.33%) compared to local candidates. Only 18.00% believe cross-district candidates are more accessible (10.00% more accessible, 8.00% much more accessible), and 22.00% see them as about the same. The perception of accessibility is notably negative, with many voters finding cross-district candidates harder to engage with. This could impact the candidates' effectiveness and their ability to connect with constituents.
- **Understanding Local Culture:** A majority of respondents consider a cross-district candidate's ability to engage with and understand local culture as either very important (50.67%) or extremely important (22.00%). Only 27.33% see it as moderately, slightly, or not important at all. The high importance placed on cultural understanding underscores the value voters place on candidates being attuned to local traditions and values. This indicates that cultural fit is a critical factor in voters' decision-making.
- **Influence of Campaign Promises:** 30.0% find campaign promises moderately influential, while 30.0% view them as greatly (22.0%) or very greatly (8.0%) influential. Conversely, 40.0% perceive them as slightly (23.3%) or not at all (16.7%) impactful. The data highlights a range of views on the significance of campaign promises. While some voters are heavily influenced by these promises, others find them less compelling, suggesting varied voter responses to campaign strategies.
- **Effect on Voter Turnout:** 45.3% believe cross-district candidates have no effect on voter turnout. In contrast, 28.7% think their presence increases turnout (20.0% slightly, 8.7% significantly), while 26.0% feel it decreases turnout (18.0% slightly, 8.0% significantly). The impact of cross-district candidates on voter turnout is mixed. While some respondents see potential for increased engagement, others believe it may reduce participation, reflecting diverse opinions on how these candidates influence electoral participation.

## 7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the data reveals a multifaceted view of cross-district candidates in electoral politics. While many respondents perceive their impact as neutral, indicating neither strong positive nor negative effects, there is significant variation in opinions. Some voters believe these candidates bring valuable new perspectives and

resources, while others express concerns about their understanding of local issues, accessibility, and potential disruptions to political stability. Trust in the electoral process and voter turnout responses also vary, reflecting a complex interplay of benefits and challenges associated with cross-district candidacies. Overall, while cross-district candidates offer opportunities for addressing underserved areas and introducing diverse viewpoints, their effectiveness and acceptance are influenced by their ability to connect with local cultures, manage resources, and engage effectively with constituents.

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