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Curry

Swatantra paid penalty for lack of effort in Rajasthan

Hindustan Times Correspondent
Jaipur, April 30—The debacle of the Swatantra Party and the combined opposition at the two by-elections in Rajasthan is attributed mainly to lack of organization and adequate propaganda, according to political observers.

The party which had retained both the seats during the last two general elections suffered reverses for want of workers and a field organization. The Congress Party had an advantage over its rivals as it had a well-co-ordinated band of workers.

On the Swatantra side Maharani Gayatri Devi was the sole campaigner. The only outsider who helped her was the Rajmata of Gwalior who toured the area for two days.

Heavy price

Because of her reflected glory the Maharani undoubtedly attracted larger crowds particularly in the rural areas, but this time she failed to make an impact on the voters. The reason was that Maharajkumar Prithviraj after his election to the Lok Sabha from the same constituency in 1962 failed to show up even once, leaving the constituents to fend for themselves.

He paid a heavy price for this lapse as the voters refused to trust him any more.

The result showed that the Maharani still wields great influence among the women who turned up in large numbers to vote for her candidate. But the Swatantra Party had no volunteers who could bring the voters to the polling stations. This was responsible for poor polling—as low as 2 per cent—at several places in the Dausa parliamentary constituency.

The Congress Party which had made the by-elections a matter of prestige pressed into service all Ministers, MLAs and about 5,000 workers from all over the State.

Since both the Swatantra candidates were backed by the Opposition, brisk campaigning by Mr Kumbharam Arya to woo Jat

votes and a band of Jan Sangh workers headed by Mr Bhairon Singh and Satish Aggarwal, failed to cut any ice. The Jan Sangh is little known in the rural areas and has practically no organization there.

Credit to Sukhadia

The credit for the Congress victory goes to Mr Sukhadia and his team. Mr Sukhadia and Mr Nathuram Mirdha, RPCC chief, addressed a large number of meetings. Mr Sukhadia went from door-to-door in Chomu town and other villages to canvass support for Mr Ram Kishore Vyas. Mr Sukhadia seemed to be so confident of the victory that he did not deem it fit to invite any Central leader to address meetings and the elections were fought entirely by the State leadership.

In Chomu the voters returned Rajeshwar Singh Rawal of Samod, during the last general election who fought as a Swatantra candidate. But he too failed in this backward area which is in dire need of essential amenities like roads, schools, electricity, medical facilities and adequate water supply. He also resigned from the seat.

Maharani's statement

Although the Rajmata of Samod had issued a signed appeal to the voters to vote for Tikkaram Pallwal, this too had little effect. The voters here feel that Mr Vyas being a senior Congressman would on election be able to look after the interest of his constituent.

The Congress leaders this time were shrewd not to make any genuine or false promises to the electorate.

"We will see to it after the election" was a curt reply given to the voters at the public meetings. The Congress victory is also indicative of the fact that the influence of Jaipur house is waning away in the district which was considered to be a stronghold during the last election.

Maharani Gayatri Devi Swa-

tantra leader, said that the use of Government machinery and lack of resources and workers were responsible for the debacle in the by-election.

The Maharani, addressing a news conference, blamed ruling party for gross misuse of Government vehicles and private transport to bring voters to the polling stations which was illegal.

She said many voters did not turn up to exercise their franchise because of the harvesting season.

If only they could have brought these voters to the polling booths as had been done by the Congress we could have defeated the Congress candidates, she added.

Sharma surprised

She alleged that ballot boxes were tampered with and were found in excess of those issued, she added.

Many would envy Mr Naval Kishore Sharma, (Congress) who won the by-election to the Lok Sabha from Dausa, after trouncing his Swatantra rival, Maharajkumar Prithviraj.

Mr Sharma had filed his nomination papers as a covering candidate for Mr Morarka who was given the Congress ticket. On the last date fixed for withdrawals, he went to the office of the Returning Officer to submit his withdrawal form but was prevented from doing so.

Mr Sharma was taken aback when told that he would contest the election as a Congress candidate. As luck would have it, Mr Morarka decided to step down from the contest at the last moment.

A lawyer by profession and a modest worker, he could never dream of contesting the election to the Lok Sabha. After his success, he told some friends: "I sometimes pavs to be a covering candidate."

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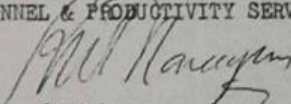
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