

South Asia Analysis Group

Published on *South Asia Analysis Group* (<http://www.southasiaanalysis.org>)

[Home](#) > Bhutan Primary Election: Brings a Surprise.

Bhutan Primary Election: Brings a Surprise.

Submitted by asiaadmin2 on Wed, 09/26/2018 - 14:43

Paper No. 6431

Dated 26-Sept-2018

By Dr. S.Chandrasekharan

In the primary elections held on 15 September, the incumbent party PDP was knocked out and instead, the people chose an untested party DNT (Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa) led by a Medical Practitioner Dr. Lotay Tshering that got the maximum number of votes. The second was the DPT led by Pema Gyamtso-a party that was in power in the first election and in opposition in the second election.

In short, the election showed that the PDP lost, the DPT held on and the new entrant DNT won. The BKP also a new party was the last. Before the election, it was thought that the Ruling Party the PDP had an “edge” but it turned out that it was not so!

The results as announced by the Elections Commission were as follows

Party.	DNT.	DPT.	PDP.	BKP
--------	------	------	------	-----

Postal

Votes.	37556.	36912.	56180.	10409
--------	--------	--------	--------	-------

EVM.	55166.	53108.	23703.	18064
------	--------	--------	--------	-------

There is a general view that the Ruling Party lost mainly because of the anti- incumbency factor and that people wanted a change. While the latter could be true, it cannot be said that the PDP lost because of the anti-incumbency factor. The Party led by Dr. Tobgay had done well in

running the government and one factor that would have contributed to its fall was that it was far too over confident in winning and perhaps did not connect well with the people as other parties had done in the run up to the elections.

The DNT President Dr. Lotay Tshering, a popular surgeon who studied in Dhaka University and later in Wisconsin and Japan and with an MBA from Canberra had called on the people to give a chance to the new parties and his reasoning though specious was that it is dangerous if a political party takes root in a democratic culture! He made it a point to visit all the 47 constituencies and said that he wanted to interact with the people to make them familiar with the party's ideology.

From various speeches made by the party leaders of DNT and in the Presidential debates, we could gather the following about the DNT.

- The party stands for a complete overhaul of the health care system and stream line the tax administration.
- Will focus on private sector development.
- Will improve investment and business climate
- Equitable distribution of wealth- in other words narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor.
- Stands for a vibrant growth of Media
- Decision making power to go down to the grass roots level.
- Government to take the service to the people and not the other way.

The Party when formed was named initially as "Social Democratic Party" but later changed. The Party was for a change to "serve the King and the People" and it has succeeded indeed in convincing the people that a change was needed.

The Party was a poor third in the last General Election but it was the only political party that was active outside the parliament closely following the developments in the country and raising concerns on national issues.

The voter turn- out overall was 66.36 percent though the higher figure was obtained because of heavy postal voting. The number of voters who voted in the postal ballot and in facilitation centres was fairly high with 108,149 voters as compared to those who voted in the EVM machines that totaled 182,595. The increase in postal voting was mainly because of an innovative step taken to take the polling stations to the places in remote areas to let the people vote.

On a broad matrix, it looks that the elections results were too close for the first two parties with the DNT polling 92,722 and the DPT coming very close with 90,020. This means that the final election may go either way as the voting this time was for the party and not for the individuals whereas the final one will be for the individuals and not the parties.

Looking from a different angle, the DPT won in 22 constituencies while the leading scorer won only in 16 constituencies. The PDP won in 9

constituencies. The DPT would therefore need to win in only two other constituencies to get a simple majority. But this would depend on how the voters who voted for PDP would now vote whether for the DNT or the DPT. In the run up to the elections, it is said that the DNT concentrated on defeating the PDP that was expected to win. It is difficult to imagine that the voters who voted for PDP would change their mind and vote for the DNT!

It may be recalled that in the last elections, though the DPT won in the primary election, they were outvoted by the second running PDP in the final round. Therefore, it cannot be said that DPT will surely win in the final round. All that can be said now is that the election in the final round will be a very close one and either of the two parties the DNT or the DPT could emerge as the winner.

I notice some concern in the Indian media and even from some analysts of the emergence of a new untested party and the DPT which laid more emphasis on sovereignty and security. These concerns are unjustified and there is hardly any difference among the parties on the relationship with India. And, there is the King who is still revered and who is well disposed towards India. One should wait and see.

Tags:

[bhutan](#) ^[1]

[Primary Elections](#) ^[2]

[DNT](#) ^[3]

[DPT](#) ^[4]

Category:

[Papers](#) ^[5]

Countries:

Bhutan [6]

India [7]

Topics:

Political [8]

Copyright ©2012. All Rights are Reserved.

Source URL: <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/node/2354>

Links

[1] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/taxonomy/term/5>

[2] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/taxonomy/term/1953>

[3] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/taxonomy/term/1954>

[4] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/taxonomy/term/405>

[5] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/papers>

[6] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/bhutan>

[7] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/india>

[8] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/political>