

**SARAWAK STATE ELECTION 2011: SURVEY OF VOTERS' BEHAVIOUR IN BN
CRITICAL AREAS OF N9 PADUNGAN, N10 PENDING, N24 BETING MARO, N26
BUKIT BEGUNAN, N28 ENGKELILI AND N30 SARIBAS**



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5.2 Enhanced Executive Summary

Sarawak is considered as the strong hold of Barisan Nasional (BN). Henceforth, Pakatan Rakyat (PR) is very keen on capturing Sarawak. Results in the 2006 state election have been alarming and many people expected similar if not more challenging times for the BN in Sarawak. Even though BN managed to retain two-thirds majority seats (55 out of 71) during SSE2011, it was still considered a major loss. This was evident when the opposition managed to increase their seats in the state legislative assembly to 16 from nine during the 2006 Sarawak State Election.

The objectives of this study is to investigate the voting behaviour of the different races in BN Critical Areas of N9 Padungan, N10 Pending, N24 Beting Maro, N26 Bukit Begunan, N28 Engkelili and N30 Saribas, pertaining to factors such as candidate's personality and voters' loyalty to political parties of their choice.

Furthermore, this study looks into the level of acceptance of Sarawakians towards political parties that originated from outside Sarawak i.e. Democratic Action Party (DAP), Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) and Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS).

5.3 Introduction

The Sarawak State Election (hereon after SSE2011) has proved to be one of the most exciting and intense elections the country has seen. Results from the 2006 Sarawak State Election (hereon after SSE 2006) and the 2008 12th General Elections (hereon after GE 2008) have been alarming with the opposition parties increasing their seats in both the state and national level.

Although the Barisan Nasional (BN) managed to retain its two-thirds majority seats (55 out of 71) during SSE2011 (Refer Table 1), it was still considered a major loss. This is evident when the opposition managed to increase their seats in the state legislative assembly from two in 2001 and then nine in 2006 to 16 in 2011. This clearly indicated a change in voting loyalty among the voters in Sarawak.

Table 1: Results of the 10th Sarawak State Election 2011

Party	Candidates	Wins
Barisan Nasional	71	55
Opposition	101	15
Independent candidates	41	1

Source: Election Commission of Malaysia)

Several factors have been accredited to the reason behind BN's significant drop in electoral seats; among of which are the issue of land lease (and renewal of land lease), corruption, equality, and rising cost of living standards. As a result of the shift in voting loyalty, it sends a clear signal to BN that Sarawak can no longer be considered a BN-stronghold state.

This report is divided into three sections. The first section will look into the critical Chinese areas. The second and third section will investigate the critical Malay and Dayak areas respectively.

5.4 Sarawak State Election 2011: Survey of Chinese Voters' Behaviour in BN Critical Areas of N9 Padungan and N10 Pending.

5.4.1 Introduction

The 2011 Sarawak State Election (hereon after SSE 2011) has proved to be one of the most exciting and intense elections the country has seen throughout its almost 50 year history. Results from the 2006 Sarawak State Election (hereon after SSE 2006) and the 2008 12th General Elections (hereon after GE 2008) have been alarming with the opposition parties increasing their seats in both the state and national level.

Although the Barisan Nasional (BN) managed to retain its two-thirds majority seats (55 out of 71) during SSE2011 (Refer Table 1), it was still considered a major loss. This is evident when the opposition managed to increase their seats in the state legislative assembly from two in 2001 and then nine in 2006 to 16 in 2011. This clearly indicated a change in voting behaviour among the voters in Sarawak.

The voting pattern amongst the Chinese community has been hard to ascertain. This was because in the past, especially prior to SSE 2006, strong support was given to SUPP but it seemed that in recent times, the Chinese community have resorted to vote for the opposition. Indirectly, this sent a clear signal to the SUPP that the Chinese voters in Sarawak have lost faith in them.

In Kuching, areas which were lost by the BN during SSE2011 included Padungan, Pending, Batu Lintang, Kota Sentosa, and Batu Kawah, where the Chinese community dominate¹. Based on the electoral results, it seemed that many of the Chinese have turned their backs on BN and chose to vote for the opposition. In fact, even SUPP party president and deputy chief minister himself, George Chan lost his Piasau seat to Democratic Action Party (DAP) first-timer Ling Sie Kiong.

Several factors have been attributed as the reasons behind BN's drop in electoral seats especially in Chinese dominated areas, among which are the issue of land lease (and renewal of land lease), rising cost of living standards, equality, and corruption. For example, in SSE 2006, the opposition placed more emphasis on the issues of royalties and the hike of oil prices as well as the lack of sugar supply during the point of time. For DAP, issues of development and land also became materials for campaigns. It was utilized by the DAP to instill the feeling of dissatisfaction by emphasizing the elements of 60 leases which should have ended in the year 2006. Many owners felt that they should have to pay 32-75 percent of the premium payment if they were to release their land especially in the municipal vicinity. The issue trapped SUPP especially as the party was supposedly one that protected and upheld the rights and interests of the Chinese community in Sarawak (Pandian, 2010).

The incumbent of the Padungan (N9) seat was Dominique Ng of Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR), which is a component party of Pakatan Rakyat (PR). Ng was the only PKR

¹ Other areas which were lost to the opposition included Krian, Repok, Meradong, Bukit Assek, Dudong, Pelawan, Pelagus (independent candidate), Kidurong, Piasau, Pujut, and Ba'Kelalan.