

ABOUT REPORT

This report is a result of five-month long research project, “*Understanding Political Representation and the Level of People Participation in Chin State*,” carried out between August and December, 2018 by Chinbridge Institute (Center for Research and Social Studies) and supported by Global Research Network on Parliaments and People, London, United Kingdom. The primary aim of this research is to increase knowledge about political representation and participation in Chin State. This research employed a mixture of quantitative structured survey and qualitative methods such as focus-group discussion and informant interview. The number of respondents for structured questionnaire survey interview ranges between 800 and 1015 people from nine townships in Chin State.

RESPONDENT RATE BY TOWNSHIP

The survey covered all 9 townships in Chin State. Out of total respondents, 12% of respondents from Paletwah with equal number of respondents from Kanpalet, Mindat, Thantlang and Tonzang, and Falam and Tedim comprised of 10% of respondents each, and 13% were from Hakha, and 7% from Matupi.

POLITICAL INTEREST AMONG CHINS

The finding generated through survey suggested that the majority of Chin people were not “very interested” in politics. Out of 1014 Respondents, only 14% of respondents reported that they are “very interested” in politics (in general). Then, respondents were asked how interested they are in politics by different areas of political interest such as “local politics,” “national politics,” and “international politics.” A combination of the total number of people who said “they are interested” and the number of people who indicated they are “fairly interested” in politics (in general) reached 47%, 60% for local politics, 57% for national politics, and 52% for international politics.

Interestingly, the number of people who said they are not interested in ‘local politics’ is lower by 4% than the number of the number of people (39%) who said they are interested in ‘politics’ (in general). Chin people care more about local politics than national or international politics.

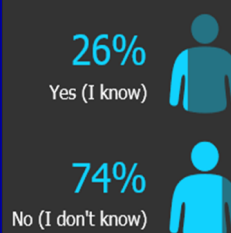
DO YOU KNOW WHO YOUR LOCAL MP IS?

Although the majority of respondents (74%) reported they are interested in local politics, only 26% of respondents could correctly name their local MP when asked them to name their local MPs.

DATA AND FACT

- ⇒ There are 18 elected member of parliament, and 6 unelected (Tatmadaw’s representatives) Members of Parliament.
- ⇒ Among 18 elected representatives (MPs), 12 are from NLD, 3 from USDP, 2 from ZCD and 1 from CLD.
- ⇒ There is zero percent of women’s participation in Parliament with regards to Members of Parliament and 8 Parliamentary Committees.
- ⇒ In May, 2018, Chin State Parliament has created and passed 24 laws.
- ⇒ 74% out of 1015 Chin people can’t name who their local MP is.
- ⇒ 75% of eligible voters in Chin State voted, at least once, in the last 8 years.
- ⇒ The research found out that the vast majority of Chin people prefer representation with higher level of people’s participation.

Figure 1: Do you know who your local MP is?



HOW CHIN PEOPLE UNDERSTAND ABOUT DEMOCRACY AND REPRESENTATION

According to U Robin, Former Member of Chin State Parliament, there is correlation between election and representation. According to him, how good the relationship between MP and people depends on how honest the election is. One of research respondents reported that “they (party candidates) seem very nice and sound like they know everything during election but they just deceived us.” Many Chin feel that representative don’t really concern about public.

There are, however, some obstacles that hinder the relationship between people and elected representatives. Many of Chin MPs recognize those challenges. The key challenges include poor roads between villages, insufficient number of cars for MPs and Hluttaw’s budget, among others. Chin State Parliament has only two cars for constituency service - one for northern and another one for southern part of Chin State. One of Chin MPs said that “PMs can’t visit constituents more often, and as the result they can’t really work much for constituents.”

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AMONG CHINS

Respondents provided a wide-range of political activities and asked whether they have ever participated in such activities. Figure 2 provides the result with an overview of selected top 8 forms of political participation among Chin people. The data in figure 1 shows that voting is the only form of political participation through which majority of Chin participated in political decision-making. In the last eight years, 75% of Chin, among respondents, voted in election. However, the vast majority of respondents said they didn’t participate in other major form of people’s participation in politics.

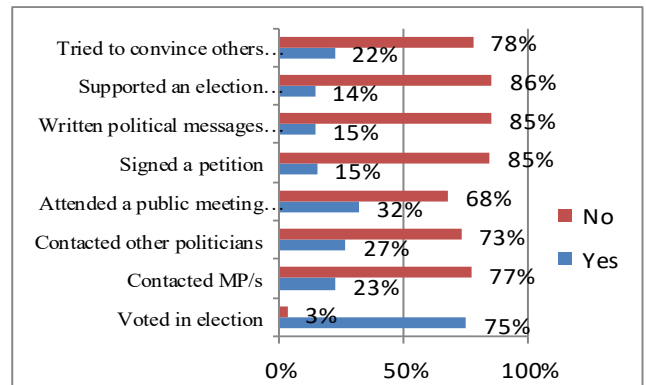


Figure 2: Top 8 Form of Political Participation

But when it comes to election, they were more likely to engage in politics in compare to other forms of political participation. Almost a quarter (22%) said that they tried to convinced others to vote for a party or candidate, and (14%) said that they supported an election campaign, at least once, in the last 8 years.

IT IS HIGHLY LIKELY THAT THE NUMBER OF VOTERS WON’T BE INCREASED

Proving that the level of interest in politics among Chins is low with high number of people indicating they are unlikely to vote in the next election, it is highly likely that the number of voters in next 2020 general election won’t be increased by a large extent unless and otherwise the government and CSOs increased voters’ education effort.

Figure 3 presents data on the number of people who said they didn’t participate in mentioned political activities in previous 8 years prior to the interview in September 2018 and the number of people who said they won’t participate in the future either.

According to the data, it can be noted that the level political participation in selected political activities will be doubled in the future except for voting in election.

