STUDENTS' ELECTION COMMISSION
2023-24

ELECTION REPORT
FRESHERS' & ISS ELECTIONS 2023

STUDENTS' ELECTION COMMISSION IIT MADRAS

INDEX

Introduction

The Freshers & ISS Election Report aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the recent student election at IIT Madras. This report analyzes various aspects of the election process, including voter turnout, vote distribution, and the overall integrity of the electoral process. It also highlights the election's significance within the academic institution and its broader implications.

Background Information on the Election

The student election at IIT Madras is a fundamental democratic process that allows students to elect their representatives for various academic departments, programs, and hostels. This election plays a crucial role in shaping the student experience and fostering a sense of engagement and participation within the university community.

Scope of the Report

This report covers all phases of the student election, from pre-election preparations to post-election analysis. It employs a data-driven approach, relying on voter registration statistics, ballot counts, and other relevant data sources to provide an accurate and comprehensive assessment of the election. Additionally, qualitative data, such as interviews and observations, have been used to provide a holistic perspective on the election process.

Pre-Election Phase

Voter Education and Outreach Initiatives

Details of voter education and outreach initiatives aimed at informing students about the election process and encouraging their participation are discussed.

    1.) <u>New Medical Sciences and Technology Batch Orientation - SEC</u>

Date: 24th August 2023
Venue: ED - 109
Turnout:- Full Strength

Event Highlights:
The event began with a warm welcome and introduction to the new Medical Sciences and Technology batch students, setting the stage for an informative session.
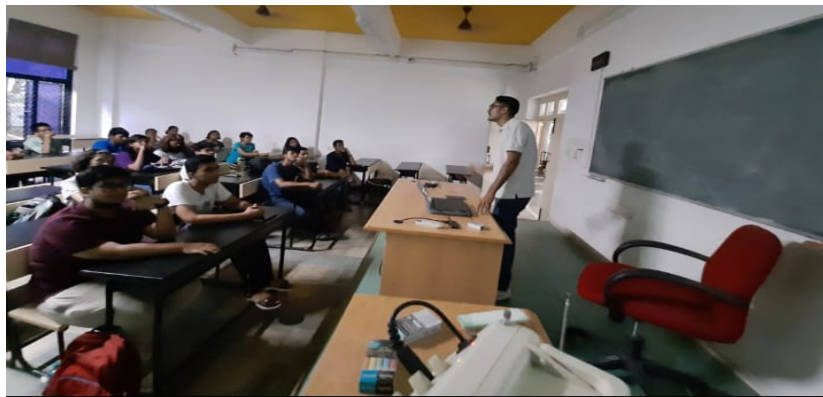
A comprehensive explanation of SECC and SEC was presented, encompassing their organizational power structures and pivotal roles within the student governance framework.
Attendees gained insights into the various positions within the institute, with a specific focus on the responsibilities of the department legislator.

The orientation provided an exhaustive overview of the election process, beginning with the election notification issued by the Office of the Dean (Students) (DoSt).
Detailed coverage was provided for each stage of the election process, including nomination procedures, feasibility reports, submission of statements of purpose, validation of nominations, and the final nominations list.

The intricacies of the election process were elucidated, covering aspects such as casting votes by the student body, the vote tallying process, and the calculation of election results.
The event concluded with a detailed account of the process leading to the official declaration of election results by the Office of the Dean (Students) (DoSt).

Briefing Session at the Department of Medical Sciences & Technology

2.) Briefing Session Swarnamukhi

Date: 2nd September 2023
Venue: 4th Floor Common Room
Turnout: 15+

Key Highlights:
Commencement and Introduction: The event was inaugurated with a cordial welcome and an introductory address to the newly admitted residents of Swarnamukhi Hostel, setting the stage for an informative session.

In-depth Analysis of SECC and SEC: A comprehensive examination was undertaken to elucidate the organizational power structures and pivotal roles of SECC and SEC within the student governance framework.

Insights into Institutional Positions: Participants were provided with invaluable insights into the various positions within the institute, with a particular emphasis on the responsibilities vested in the hostel legislator.

Election Process Overview: Our orientation session meticulously delineated the election process, commencing with the issuance of the election notification by the Office of the Dean (Students) (DoSt).

Detailed Coverage of Election Stages: A thorough exposition was delivered on each phase of the election process, encompassing nomination procedures, feasibility reports, submission of statements of purpose, validation of nominations, and the compilation of the final nominations list.

Clarification of Election Procedures: The intricacies of the election process were elucidated, encompassing elements such as the voting procedures within the student body, the meticulous tallying of votes, and the precise calculation of election results.

Briefing Session at Swaranmukhi Hostel

3.) Briefing Session Mandakini A & B

Date: 6th September 2023
Venue: 4th Floor Common Room
Turnout: 25+

Key Highlights:

Event Commencement and Introduction: The event commenced with a warm and welcoming address to the newly admitted residents of Mandakini A & B Hostel, creating a conducive atmosphere for an insightful session.

Comprehensive Examination of SECC and SEC: A thorough analysis was undertaken to clarify the organizational power structures and pivotal roles of SECC and SEC within the framework of student governance.

Insightful Exploration of Institutional Roles: Participants were furnished with invaluable insights into the diverse roles existing within the institute, with a particular focus on elucidating the responsibilities of the hostel legislator.

Overview of the Election Process: Our orientation session meticulously outlined the entire election process, commencing with the issuance of the election notification by the Office of the Dean (Students) (DoSt).

In-Depth Coverage of Election Phases: A comprehensive explanation was provided for each stage of the election process, encompassing nomination procedures, feasibility reports, submission of statements of purpose, validation of nominations, and the compilation of the final nominations list.

Clarification of Election Procedures: The intricacies of the election process were elaborated upon, including aspects such as the voting procedures within the student body, the meticulous tallying of votes, and the precise calculation of election results.

Briefing Session at Mandakini A & B

4.) <u>Interview-Based Election Promotion Video by Student Election Commission</u>
<u>(in collaboration with the Media Club)</u>

Date: 23 September 2023
Venue: Himalaya Mess and Lawns

Introduction: The Student Election Commission took on the initiative of a dynamic interview-based awareness video as part of its ongoing efforts to promote civic engagement and enhance public understanding of the electoral process. This event aimed to provide a platform for meaningful discourse, perceived insights based on lived experience, and the overall creation of informative yet light-hearted content to promote the upcoming elections.

Event Highlights:

- **Personal Interviews**: The event featured a series of insightful interviews with consenting students providing perspectives on various aspects of the electoral process, mixed with some fun questions in between. The students talked about perceived campaign finance, some grievances due to candidates campaigning, comments based on their own experience as contesting candidates, the bureaucratic procedures associated with the elections, and finally, the role of the Election Commission in ensuring free, fair and smooth elections.
- **Interactive Sessions**: Following each interview, the audience had the opportunity to engage with the Student Election Commission Head of Secretariat (Events). This allowed attendees to seek clarifications, delve deeper into specific topics, and share their concerns.
- **Permeating Students' Attention**: The end product was a catchy video circulated on social media, where attendees learned informative content about the electoral process mixed with engaging content, to keep the prevailing low attention span in check. The video gave a platform to students to voice their own opinions, which made the video more relatable as the concerns of even those students who were watching were somewhat relayed by others.

Media Coverage:

The event received significant media coverage, and was tediously shared on social media platforms. This extended the reach of the event's electoral awareness messages and content creation efforts to a broader audience. The video currently has close to 2000 views on Instagram.

Questionnaire:

·   What are your perceptions regarding the Institute's electoral process?

· What may be a governance problem that you encounter?

· What secretary will you want to be? What necessitates that?

· Mention any song that you associate with the elections

Video Link: https://www.instagram.com/reel/CxsOkgWMFh9/?igshid=MWZjMTM2ODFkZg==

Interaction of SEC with Students

5.) Candidates' Mental Well-Being Event by Student Election Commission (in collaboration with MITR)

Date: 25 September 2023
Venue: Raman Block 301

Introduction: In an initiative to comfort the candidates, the Student Election Commission organized an event that focused on the mental well-being of election candidates. Recognizing the immense stress and pressure that candidates often experience during electoral campaigns, this event aimed to create awareness about mental health issues and provide resources and support for those in the political arena.

Event Highlights:

● **Awareness Sessions**: The event commenced with an awareness session by a MITR coordinator that highlighted the importance of mental health in the context of electoral politics. These sessions addressed the specific challenges that candidates face,

including the demands of campaigning, public scrutiny, and the emotional toll of competition.

- **Expert Advice**: MITR associated mental health counselor Ms. Jinna was invited to participate and she shared insights into managing stress, anxiety, and maintaining mental well-being during the rigors of political campaigns. She emphasized the significance of seeking help when needed and reducing the stigma surrounding mental health issues.
- **Support Network and Resources**: The event brought forth knowledge of available resources to the candidates. Attendees were encouraged to prioritize their mental health throughout the campaign period. A support network was hence established for candidates, as they had access to requisite knowledge and professional attention. This network aimed to provide confidential assistance to those who may be experiencing mental health issues.

Media Engagement:

The Election Commission encouraged responsible media coverage and reporting on candidates' mental well-being. It emphasized the media's role in raising awareness, destigmatizing mental health issues, and promoting a more empathetic discourse around politics.

Promoting mental health in politics is not only a matter of personal well-being but also contributes to a healthier and more transparent democratic process. Despite a lower-than-expected turnout, with only 12-15 candidates joining in, the Student Election Commission considers it pertinent to continue this event.

MiTR briefing session in collaboration with SEC

6.) Monoact Event by Student Election Commission
(in collaboration with Drama Club)

Date: 27 September 2023
Venue: Mandakini Hostel

Introduction: The Student Election Commission organized a unique and engaging monoact event for the freshers to promote voter awareness and civic responsibility among the citizens. This innovative initiative aimed to use the art of mono-acting to convey important messages about the power of the elected representatives and the significance of voting by every individual.

Event Highlights:

The event featured a series of mono act performances by Khushi Rele, a coordinator of the Drama Club, who showcased her skills in delivering powerful messages through solo acts. Each performance revolved around her role-playing a specific instance where friends discuss their needs and realize that their elective representative has that particular vertical under them, and their needs can be realized if they vote for the representatives who work to realize the needs of everyone.

Themes Explored:

- **Voter Education:** The event provided valuable insights into the significance of hostel representatives and the spheres they manage, and provided awareness for people in making informed choices in line with their needs.
- **Importance of Voting:** The event emphasized the crucial role of voting in a democracy and the impact of individual choices on the electoral outcome.

Public Participation:

The mono-act event witnessed a diverse audience, including master's and bachelor's students from various departments. The event took place on the ground floor of Mandakini Hostel as there were heavy rains outside. These rains somewhat played to our advantage as people waiting to go out but halted due to the rain, tuned in to see the monoact. In the end, the overall participation of the event was around 50-70 people.

Mono-Acting in Action

Election Preparations

The logistical arrangements and preparations made leading up to the election, including the setup of polling stations and the deployment of election personnel, are detailed.

Election Day

Opening of Polling Stations

The polling opened at 10 AM. but the booth setup and infrastructure check were done in advance by the Election Coordinators, collaboratively with the help of hostel managers.

Voter Turnout and Participation

Voter turnout and participation rates are analyzed, considering various factors that may have influenced student engagement in the election.

Incidents or Irregularities Reported

Any incidents or irregularities reported on election day are documented, emphasizing transparency and accountability.

Balloting Process and Technology Used

A portal was created from the admin side, and was made available on selected laptops at the polling booth

Closing of Polling Stations

The polling stations were supposed to be closed by 6 PM but were extended by 1 hour to 7 PM.

Vote Counting and Results

Ballot Counting Procedures

The process of counting ballots and ensuring the accuracy of results is outlined.

Transparency and Accountability Measures

Measures taken to maintain transparency and accountability in the vote-counting process are presented.

Official Declaration of Results

The official certification of election results and the declaration of winners was announced by mail by the DoSt Office on Saturday 30th September 12:33 pm, the next day after polling.

Link:-
https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?tab=rm&ogbl#search/election+result/FMfcgzGtxSscjtgbpDzNrDcTVMQgHqzq?projector=1&messagePartId=0.1

Election Statistics

In the comprehensive analysis of voter turnout, data was segmented into different categories to provide a holistic view of participation.

Batch	Votes Polled
2016	4
2017	7
2018	18
2019	132
2020	372
2021	418
2022	694
2023	901
Total	**2,546**

Program	Votes Polled
B.Tech	1,655
Foreign	2
M.S	140
M.Sc	86
M.Tech	330
MA	76
MBA	21
Ph.D	235
PHDMOU	1
Total	2,546

Department	Votes Polled
Aerospace Engineering	127
Applied Mechanics	51
Biotechnology	216
Chemical Engineering	211
Chemistry	57
Civil Engineering	233
Computer Science and Engineering	139
Electrical Engineering	320
Engineering Design	104
Global Engagement	8
Humanities and Social Sciences	89
Management Studies	34
Mathematics	51
Mechanical Engineering	455
Medical Science and Technology	24
Metallurgical and Materials Engineering	124
Naval Architecture	136
Ocean Engineering	36
Physics	131
Total	2,546

Hostel	Total Votes Polled
ALAKANANDA	115
BHADRA	131
BRAHMAPUTRA	74
CAUVERY	290
GANGA	97
GODAVARI	97
JAMUNA	88
KRISHNA	53
MAHANADHI	62
MANDAKINI - A	273
MANDAKINI - B	374
NARMADA	101
DAYSCHOLAR	21
PAMPA	64
SABARMATI	48
SAWARMATI	64
SHARAVATHI	157
SINDHU	31
SWARNAMUKHI	181
TAMIRAPARANI	67
TAPTI	112
TUNGA	46
Total	**2,546**

Batch	Total Eligible Freshers	Votes Polled by Freshers	Percentage of Freshers Voter Turnout
2023 (Fresher)	2,751	901	32.75%

Discussion

Voter Turnout by Batch

Voter turnout varies significantly across different student batches. These variations highlight the changing levels of engagement and participation over the years.

Fresher's Batch (2023): The fresher's batch of 2023 displayed remarkable participation, with a turnout of 32.75%. Out of the 2,751 eligible students in this batch, 901 actively participated in the election, indicating a positive engagement rate.

Earlier Batches (i.e., 2016 onwards): In contrast, earlier batches such as 2016 showed minimal participation, with only 4 votes. This indicates a considerable disparity in engagement between freshers and seniors, suggesting that tailored efforts may be necessary to motivate earlier batches to vote actively.

Voter Turnout by Program

The voter turnout data, when analyzed by the program, sheds light on the impact of academic programs on student participation.

B.Tech: Among the various programs, "B.Tech" had the highest voter turnout, with 1,655 votes. This substantial participation suggests that engineering students in this program were actively engaged in the electoral process.

PHDMOU: In contrast, "PHDMOU" had the lowest participation, with just one vote. This may indicate a need for targeted efforts to increase engagement among students in less popular programs.

Voter Turnout by Department

Participation variations are evident when analyzing data by the academic department. These disparities provide insights into the engagement levels of students in different fields of study.

Mechanical Engineering: The "Mechanical Engineering" department displayed the highest voter turnout, with 455 votes. This suggests that students in this department were actively involved in the election.

Management Studies: On the other hand, "Management Studies" had a lower voter turnout, with only 34 votes. This difference emphasizes the need to develop strategies to engage students in departments with lower participation rates.

Voter Turnout by Hostel

Voter turnout by hostel highlights engagement disparities within residential communities, influencing participation rates in the election.

MANDAKINI - B: "MANDAKINI - B" emerged with the highest participation, with 374 votes. This indicates that students residing in this particular hostel were highly engaged and active in voting.

DAY SCHOLARS: In contrast, "DAY SCHOLARS" had one of the lowest voter turnouts, with only 21 votes. The data implies that specific efforts may be needed to increase engagement among students in hostels with lower participation.

Voter Turnout by Freshers (2023 Batch Students)

Focusing on the freshers' batch of 2023, this segment of the analysis delves into their participation in detail.

Voter Turnout: The data reveals that the fresher's batch of 2023 exhibited a commendable voter turnout of 32.75%. Out of the 2,751 eligible freshers, 901 students actively participated in the election, indicating a positive level of engagement.

The comprehensive analysis of voter turnout by batch, program, department, hostel, and freshers (2023 batch students) provides valuable insights into the participation patterns among students. These insights can be used to develop targeted engagement strategies to increase voter turnout, foster a more engaged and informed student body, and ensure that every eligible student has the opportunity to participate in future elections or events.

Complaints & Grievance Redressal

SEC throughout the elections has been dealing with complaints that are often raised against the candidates who are not abiding by the Election Manual or the Model Code of Conduct.

Following is the small gist of the complaints that SECC received during the Freshers' & ISS Elections 2023.

- Violation of the Campaigning Guidelines mentioned in the Model Code of Conduct was the most common ground on which multiple complaints were filed with the SEC. In total 20 such complaints were filed with SEC where Incidents like candidates campaigning before or after the prescribed campaigning period (22nd September, 5:00 PM to 28th September, 10:00 PM) either through online mode (social media campaigning through Instagram or WhatsApp) or offline mode (door-to-door campaigning or sharing manifestos) were communicated to SECC.
- There were 5 complaints that were technical in nature and questioned the technical glitches that candidates were facing while filing the nomination form or getting their candidature proposed or seconded by their friends.
- There were 5 complaints from GSB that questioned the decisions, legitimacy, and functioning of SEC on the grounds that SEC should have conducted elections on some other date and shouldn't have kept the polling day during the beginning of the long weekend. The SEC clarified that due to the urgent need of the ISS and after a due deliberation with all the stakeholders including Executive Council 2023-24, Election Officers, CCW Chairman, DoST Sir, SECC & SLC Faculty Advisor, SEC had decided to conduct polling on 29th September 2023.
- Moreover, there was one unique complaint that was launched against SEC mentioning about the mismanagement of Elections to which SEC countered all the complainant's arguments with legitimate proof and reasons, keeping in loop DoST Sir, Election Officers, and SECC & SLC Faculty Advisor.
- After due deliberation on the veracity of the complaint and checking the legitimacy of the evidence, SECC used to 'acknowledge' the complaint within 24 hours. After a thorough investigation of the complaint, SECC imposed sanctions on the candidates who violated the Model Code of Conduct within 48 hours of acknowledging the complaint's complaint.
- The sanctions that were imposed by the SEC ranged from giving warnings to asking candidates to delete their Instagram posts or messages that they had circulated without following the social media campaigning guidelines. In this election, none of the candidates was asked to send a public apology and neither was any candidate's nomination canceled. Most of the sanctions imposed by SEC were restorative in nature as the complainant was always BCC'd in the mail which mentioned the sanction that was directly imposed over the candidate who had violated the election guidelines.
- During the Freshers' & ISS Elections 2023, SEC took suo moto cognizance against three Executive Council members who violated the Election Manual and Model Code of Conduct by approving two of the ISS Candidates' mail to GSB without taking due permission from SEC. Secondly, when one of the EC members approved a complaint by a GSB Member to the smail when the polling was going on which is an attempt to influence the voters' decision without any legitimate proof. SEC did not recognize his complaint on the grounds of intentionally influencing the voters at the time of polling with

false allegations and hence did not take any action against whom the complaint was launched as he did not follow the prescribed procedure of filing a complaint to SEC.
- DoST Sir, Elections Officers, and SLC & SECC Faculty Advisor have taken the required action against the three Executive Council members who violated the Election Manual and Model Code of Conduct in their official capacity.

Recommendations

Feedback from GSB

To improve the voting experience and the fairness of elections, several key recommendations have emerged from student feedback. Firstly, the introduction of online voting is suggested to accommodate students who are absent during long weekends and boost overall participation. Secondly, scheduling elections on weekdays rather than during holidays and long weekends is proposed to make voting more convenient for the majority of students. Thirdly, efforts in communication and outreach are recommended to raise awareness about voting's significance and the candidates, ultimately increasing participation and informed decision-making.

Additionally, addressing technical issues within the voting portal to ensure its robustness and user-friendliness is crucial to prevent disruptions and confusion. Encouraging fair campaigning and discouraging candidates from inundating messaging apps with campaign material is advised to maintain a level playing field. Enhancing the security of the online voting system to eliminate proxy voting concerns is essential for the integrity of the process. Promoting general awareness among residents about their civic responsibilities and engaging students in the electoral process will make them more interested in learning about candidates and attending campaign events.

Furthermore, the implementation of additional restrictions on polling day is suggested to prevent irregularities and manipulation by agents of contestants. Ensuring that the Student Election Commission (SEC) is responsive to student concerns and addresses issues in a prompt and transparent manner is crucial for maintaining trust in the electoral process. Taking into account the feedback regarding low voter turnout during long weekends, rescheduling elections to maximize representation and participation is recommended. Additionally, enforcing a minimum threshold of candidate attendance (e.g., 50%) is advised to ensure a competitive and representative election.
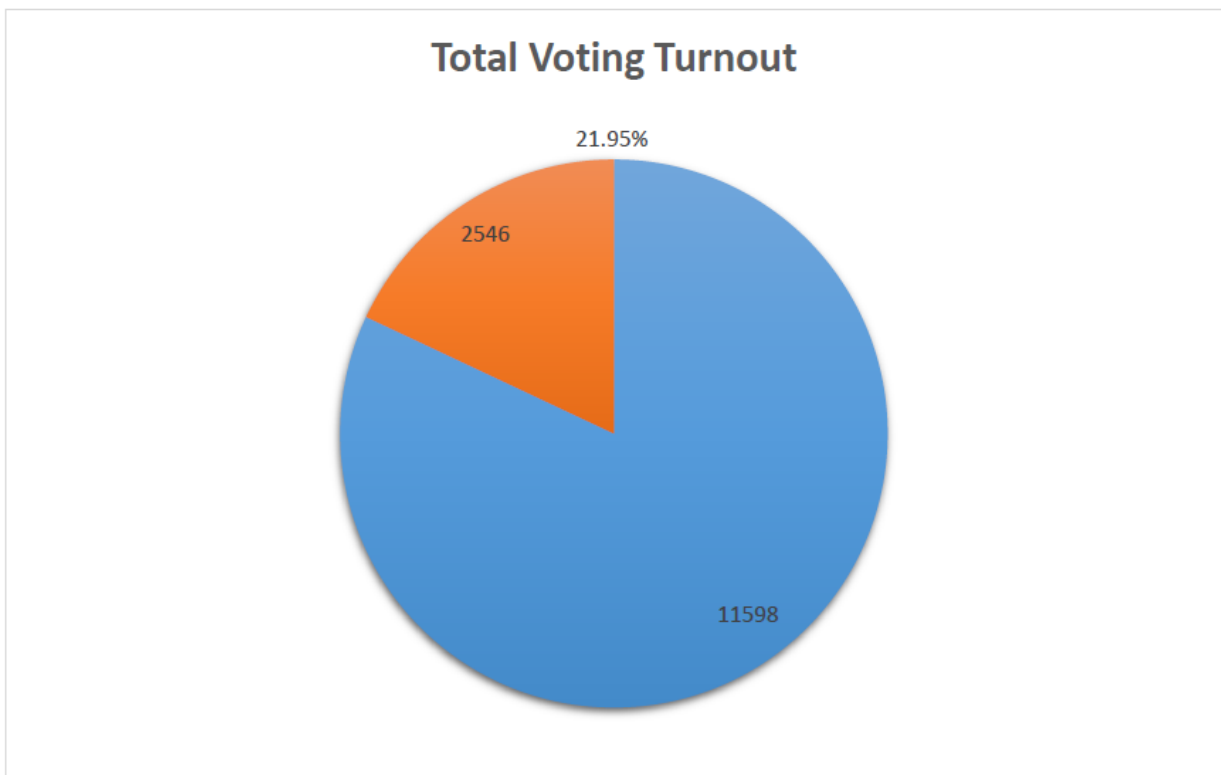
Finally, there is a call for a strengthened enforcement of the model code of conduct to prevent any misconduct or manipulation by contestants' agents, ensuring the integrity of the electoral process.
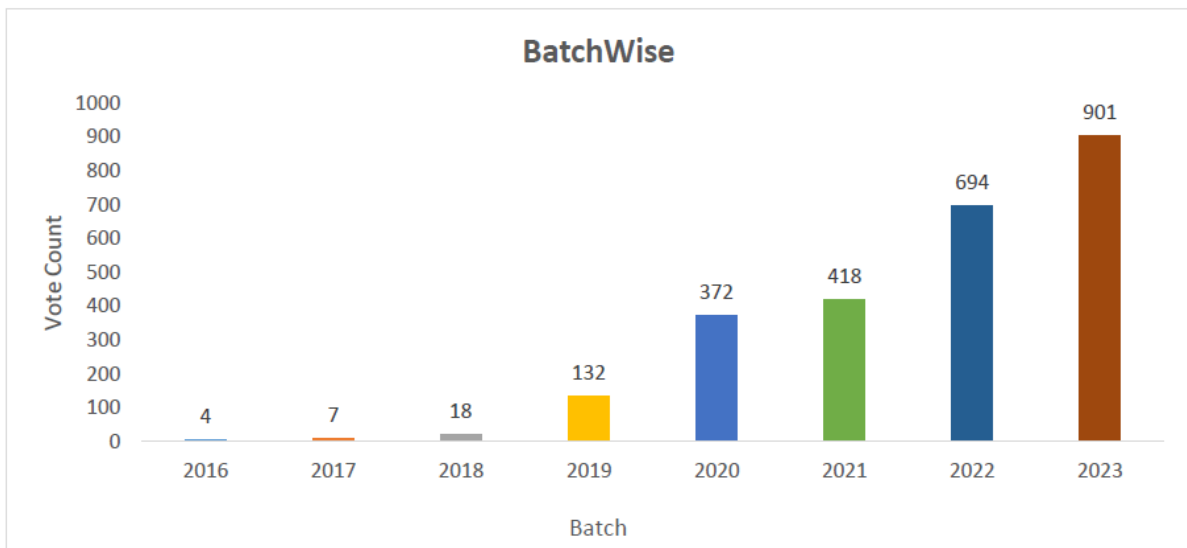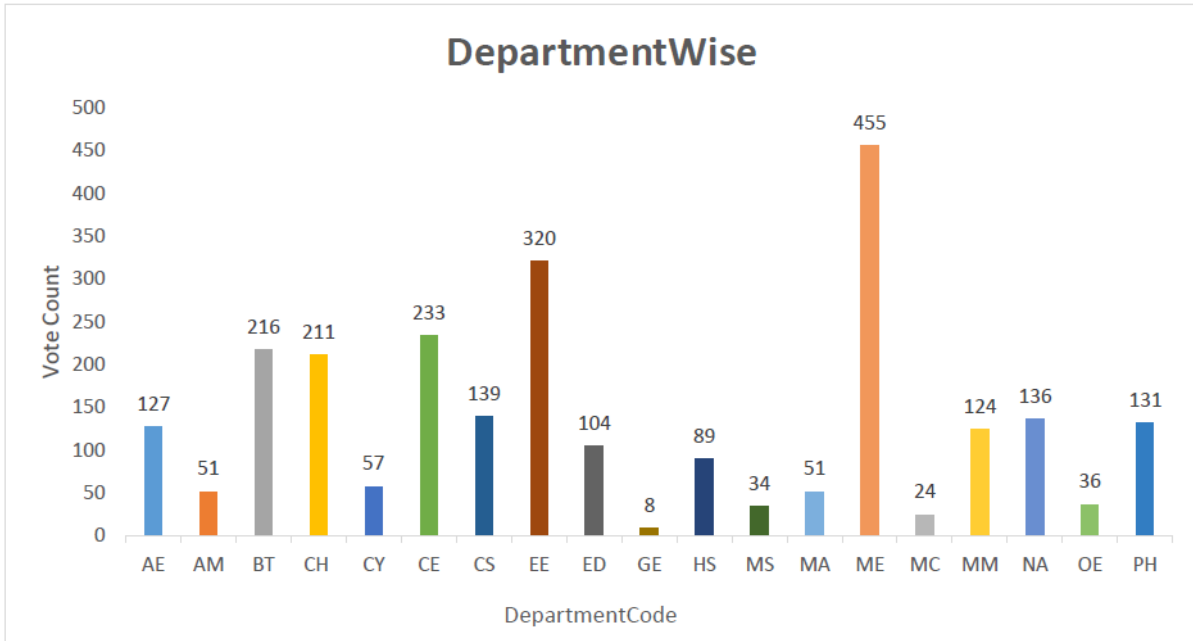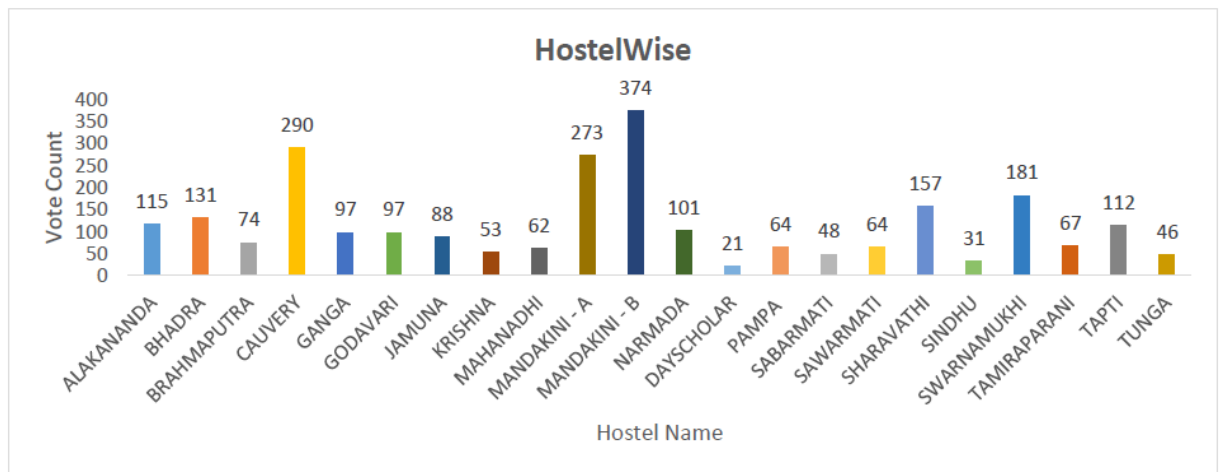
Conclusion

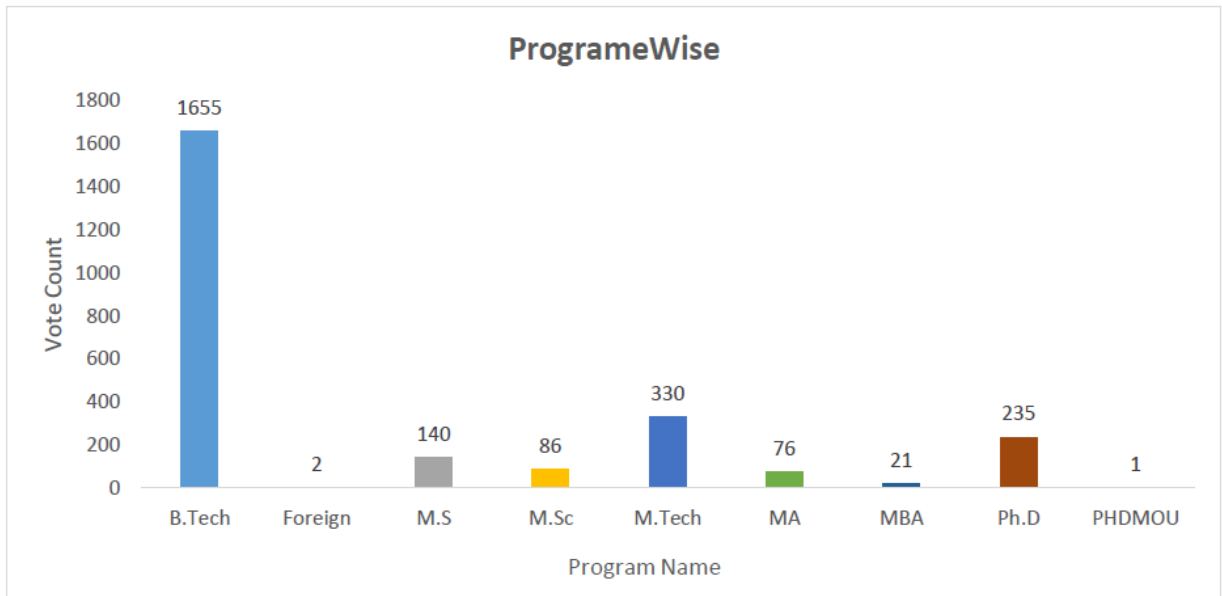The report concludes with a summary of key points and findings, emphasizing their significance. The broader significance of the student election within the academic institution and its impact on the student experience are highlighted.

Appendices

Relevant appendices containing election-related documents, maps, charts, graphs, and supporting data and statistics are included.

Total Voting Turnout

21.95%

2546

11598

DepartmentWise

DepartmentCode	Vote Count
AE	127
AM	51
BT	216
CH	211
CY	57
CE	233
CS	139
EE	320
ED	104
GE	8
HS	89
MS	34
MA	51
ME	455
MC	24
MM	124
NA	136
OE	36
PH	131

BatchWise

Batch	Vote Count
2016	4
2017	7
2018	18
2019	132
2020	372
2021	418
2022	694
2023	901

ProgrameWise

HostelWise

Total Voting Turnout of Fresher's
(2023 Batch Students)

32.75%

901

2751
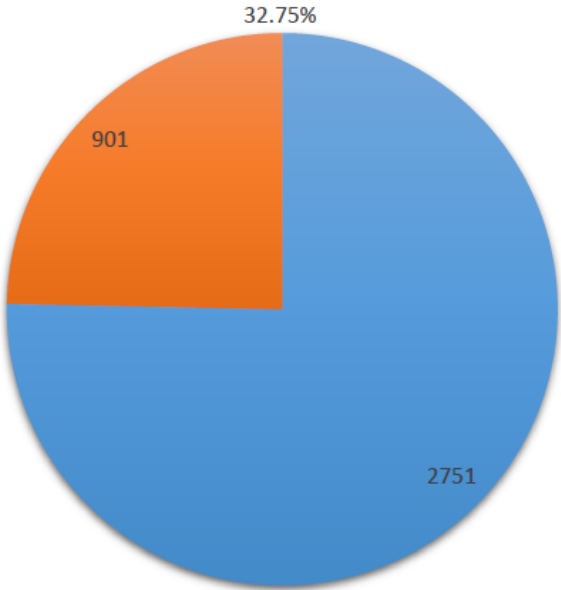
Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement of individuals or organizations that contributed to the report as well as to the Freshers' & ISS Elections 2023 has been mentioned below.

1. Dr. Anbarasu M. - Chief Election Officer
2. Dr. Sudakar Chandran - Deputy Election Officer
3. Dr. Anup Kumar Bhandari - SECC Faculty Advisor
4. Dr. Sathyanarayana N. Gummadi - DoSt
5. Dr. Thyagaraj T - CCW Chairman
6. Dr. JM Mallikarjuna - CCW Vice Chairman
7. Mr. Johnkennedy - CCW Operations Head
8. Hostel Managers
9. Mr. Sushant Jaswal - SEC Chief Commissioner
10. Ms. Meenakshi Anoop - SEC Commissioner
11. Ms. Tejaswini Jagtap - SEC Commissioner
12. Heads of Secretariat
    Mr. Kinshuk Kandpal - Events Head
    Mr. Utkarsh Upadhyay - Constitutional Monitoring & Operations Head
    Ms. Pooja Chandra - Design Head
13. SEC Coordinators
    Mr. Souvik, Mr. Karthik, Mr. Nithin, Mr. Pranay, Mr. Kaushik.
14. Committee members:

Name	Roll Number
Banavath Srikanth	NA22B030
Botta Demudu Naidu	HS20H015
Soumajit Paul	HS22H073
Abhiram	AE23B059
Sohit Pathak	MA22M019
Mokati Abhishek	NA22B052
Naman Sharma	CH22B082
Lakshmi Rohan	ME22B080
Badavath Rajender	ED22B042
J Vinod Kumar	EP21B042
Kasibhatta Rama Krishna Akhil	HS22H026
Sunain Dhoke	CH21B107
Partheeban Natesh	CE23M069
Rahul Manivanann	ME23B145
Siddharth Goutam	CE23M054
Santosh Satyala	HS22H071

Vishal Singh	HS20H059
Aryamann Kothari	NA23B024
Edward Daimary	HS22H023
Krishna	BE23B033
Anantharaam R	CE23M129
Sarthak Bhivaniya	NA23B070
Praneesh B	BE23B037
Yashwanth Raghav Reddy	CE22B115
Ruthvik G	ME22B129
Athram Santhosh	CH21B020
Tejas Akade	MC23B002
Vaibhav Awasthi	HS20H045
Prem M	HS20H033
Aditya Parihar	CH22B050
Aadhira	ED23B047
Ishika	HS23H050
Aditi Das	HS22H006
Navya	BS23B035
Asritha	NA23B062
V.V.S.Lasya Priya	CH22B015
Aiswarya CV	HS21H006
Ria Hansda	CH22B091
Tina	EE22B119
B Livingston	BS20B011
G Kavya	MM22B028
Surendra Nitharwal	CA23M010
Aslah Yasar	EP23B004

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Dr. Sudakar Chandran
Deputy Election Officer

Sushant Jaswal
SEC Chief Commissioner