




## Recent Trends of Party Politics of India: With special reference to the state elections 2023

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### Abstract

Indian federalism is unique in its form and practice. The relationship between the Centre and states varies differently with changes in regime at both levels. In recent years, Indian politics has exhibited a different character. In the Assembly elections of five Indian states, held in the second half of 2023, BJP won in three states with a thumping majority while Congress took the solace by winning Telangana and the people of Mizoram thrust their trust over ZPM, a local party. In 18th Lok Sabha polls, the BJP led NDA got the people's mandate.

These elections had a great impact on Lok Sabha results. The present paper seeks to analyze the factors responsible for the victory and defeat of the incumbent parties and the respective candidates in the state assembly polls held prior to Lok Sabha polls. The focal points of discussion will be the role of state elections and the issues, national as well as local, to identify the impact of state and central leadership. The role of political parties in magnetizing the voters along with the ongoing schemes, position of women in the election and other issue pertaining to youth will be the part of discussion. Broadly, the paper aims to study the dynamics of Indian politics particularly state politics and its impact on Indian Federalism.

**Keywords:** *federalism, elections, BJP, Congress, Lok Sabha, state politics, NDA, INDIA.*



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### 1. PRESENT POLITICAL SCENARIO

18th Lok Sabha polls witnessed an interesting trend in Indian electoral history. After the Nehruvian era and Indira period, it is for the third time that the Indian voters thrust their trust on one party. Although BJP was short of 32 seats to attain majority but its NDA partners helped it to remain at Centre. On the other hand,

Opposition parties under the banner of INDIA bloc gave a tough competition to the BJP but could not manage to get a good number of seats. Till the end of 2022, BJP and Congress were seen as the two main players in the Indian political system and Aam Aadmi Party managed to bag the title of a national party by winning 5 seats in Gujarat. Although Congress retained the power in

Himachal Pradesh it faced a major setback in Gujarat attaining only seventeen seats, least in the history. In April 2023, Congress managed to maintain its hold in the South by forming a government in Karnataka, however, the main semi-final for Lok Sabha polls was elections in Hindi heartland states i.e. Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh. These states were way more crucial for both the parties as it was a reality check of Congress governments in the incumbent state and the BJP government in the state as well

as at the Centre. Since, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, and Madhya Pradesh have 25, 11, and 29 Lok Sabha seats respectively hence, were important for Lok Sabha polls too. BJP's win in Lok Sabha polls was not instant but its hard-work in the state polls played a crucial role in the victory. On the other hand, Congress, the grand old party, had a good time as it won 99 seats and the post of Leader of Opposition too. In the state assembly polls, both BJP and Congress along with the regional parties had a great faceoff.

### The Battle of 2023: Who got what?

	Madhya Pradesh	Rajasthan	Chhattisgarh	Telangana	Mizoram
<b>BJP</b>	163	115	54	8	2
<b>Congress</b>	66	69	35	64	1
<b>BAP</b>	1	3	-	-	
<b>GGP</b>	-	-	1	-	
<b>BRS</b>	-	-	-	39	
<b>AIMIM</b>	-	-	-	7	
<b>ZPM</b>					27
<b>MNF</b>					10
<b>Total</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>40</b>

Source: [\(Election Commission of India\)](#)

#### ❖ Madhya Pradesh

BJP retained power in MP for the sixth term and is viewed as another Gujarat for BJP. The party loyalists like Shivraj Singh Chauhan extensively campaigned for the party. As a result, the party won 163 seats in the state along with maintaining its hold in the heart of India. BJP projected it as the success of a double-engine government after Gujarat. According to the Lokniti-CSDS post-poll survey, the electorates were highly satisfied with the BJP at the Centre as well as in the State. The victory of BJP in MP reflects the strong vote base of the party in the state. Congress didn't learn from the end of the one-year term of Kamal Nath Government due to Scindia's defection and failed to mobilize voters. The exit polls predictions of an anti-incumbency in the state with Congress winning with majority, made the party overconfident. But the Congress got only 66 seats. A new party Bhartiya Adivasi Party (BAP) succeeded in opening its account. The stronghold of the BJP is women voters and women-centric welfare schemes of the Shivraj Government attracted more votes for the BJP.

#### ❖ Rajasthan

In fact, the politics of Rajasthan Assembly Elections works on the principle of anti-incumbency. In 2023 polls, BJP came to power in the state by defeating the ruling Congress Party continuing the Riwayat of changing the Raaj (power). Even though exit polls depicted a different picture the reality appeared entirely different. BJP came to power in the state with the thumping majority of 115 seats while Congress contented with 69 seats. Congress lost the hold of Rajasthan politics despite Gehlot's reach among the voters. It could be viewed as a resentment among Gujar voters against the ill-treatment the then Deputy CM Sachin Pilot. Further, the alleged selection of candidates was severely criticized by the party members done by Gehlot. The failure to disseminate the welfare schemes among the electorates was also a reason for Congress losing hold over a big state.

#### ❖ Chhattisgarh

The results of Chhattisgarh were most surprising as all the exit polls predicted the victory of Congress in the state. BJP bagged highest ever 54 seats in the state while Congress ended with

just 35 seats. AAP lost its deposits on all 54 seats it contested. The Congress's loss was mainly seen in the ignorance of tribal issues by the incumbent government in the Surguja district where the BJP made a clean sweep on all 14 seats. The former Deputy CM TS Singh Deo hails from this area also lost his seat in this election. Further, the corrupt allegations on CM Bhupesh Baghel, his failure to ban alcohol in the state along with the PSC scam and the anger of the tribal community against Congress all gave space to BJP. BJP's win in the tribal-dominated state reflects the work done by the party cadre and the support of young voters.

### ❖ **Telangana**

The Telangana Assembly Polls were the only solace for Congress in the wake of Lok Sabha elections. The time when Congress lost two of its major Hindi heartland states to BJP, the Telangana victory was a sigh of relief. Congress won 64 seats while BRS had to satisfy on 39 seats only. BJP doesn't have strong hold in South India still it managed to grab eight seats and 14% votes in the state. In 2018, BJP won only one seat and two more in the by-elections. On the other hand, Congress which has a good grip in the Southern part, out threw the ten-year-old reign of the Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS). AIMIM retained its seven seats, continuing its hold in old-city Hyderabad. Corruption allegations against the government and people's annoyance with family rule the and government's welfare scheme benefitted only a limited section of the society were the reasons that BRS lost in the election.

### ❖ **Mizoram**

Mizoram, a small North-East State, with only 40 Legislative assembly seats has stunned the political pandits and analysts when Zoram People's Movement (ZPM), an alliance of seven regional parties, came with majority to rule the state by winning 27 seats. It is for the first time in last 40 years that people of Mizoram elected a party other than Mizo National Front (MNF) and Congress. MNF, the incumbent party won just ten seats, losing the power in the state. Congress Party, which had earlier ruled the state for 25 years managed to just open its account. In 2018, Congress bagged five seats and have now decreased to just one seat in the state. Mizoram has most of its population as Christian and the Mizo people have strong links with the Kuki

community. After the Manipur incident, it was the general thought among the people that BJP would fail to win any seat in Mizoram but to the contrary, BJP won two seats, one more than previous polls. Congress first failed in getting people's support in Central India and now in North Eastern region too.

These elections were a semi-final for Lok Sabha elections of 2024. To test its support among voters, BJP filed 21 MPs in these elections out of which nine lost. In 2019, Congress won in all the three Hindi heartland states (although government in MP fell after one year) and this time lost all of them. In Telangana, Congress gained power due to the strategy it applied in the state. Unlike the Hindi heartland states where the tickets were allocated on the basis of favoritism, in Telangana there was a united CM face, effective ticket distribution as new faces were given chance and a strong campaign was launched, pin pointing the issue of unemployment. Had the Congress paid the attention to these factors in other states, it would have won at least one Hindi heartland state.

## **2. POSITION OF PARTIES**

**Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP)** made a big comeback in Hindi heartland states with grabbing its hold in twelve states. BJP's wrest of power from Congress in Rajasthan, sixth term in Madhya Pradesh and a spectacular win in Chhattisgarh along with a good performance in Telangana polls have brought the morale up for the party. This victory was viewed as a gateway to the 18th Lok Sabha polls. BJP's good election strategy, ground work and loyal cadre has been its greatest strength. The efforts of national leadership along with the state leadership, the image of PM Modi and a good organizational structure contributed in BJP's win. All these factors helped the party to retain a third term at Centre.

**The Indian National Congress** exhibited a sessional character as it remained active during the elections. With the result of these elections, Congress lost its hold in the big states like Rajasthan which limited it to only three states with two in South and one in North India. After Karnataka, Congress got the hold of Telangana as a success of Bharat Jodo Yatra. Despite its strong organizational base, Congress failed to work at the ground level, listen to the common masses, bring the national and regional issues in notice and provide good leadership. Instead, the party's involvement in favoritism, copying BJP, waiting for

people to get bored with BJP regime all led to its defeat. Once being in power in most states, Congress is fighting its battle for survival. But the loss in Assembly polls of 2023, the party fastened its seatbelt and made a good comeback with increased number of seats in 18th Lok Sabha polls.

#### ➤ **Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)**

Although, AAP became a National Party in 2022 but still it failed to convince the voters. It managed to grab some seats in Gujarat, but none in these elections. It performed so bad that it scored less than NOTA. AAP, trying to be a third alternative, had failed to prove its acceptance among voters nationwide. After coming into power in Punjab and Delhi and winning Delhi MC polls, AAP became overconfident and considered it as an alternate to Congress against BJP. AAP's freebies were rejected by the voters. A good organization is needed to attract votes and AAP lacks this organizational structure.

#### ➤ **Bahujan Samaj Party**

The party constituted to safeguard the rights of Dalits and the marginalized sections, have also lost its acceptance among the voters. Once an important player in the politics of big state like Uttar Pradesh, the party failed to get the vote share above 3%. This was a new start for BSP Chief Mayawati's successor Akash Anand and the BSP cadre had a chance to work under young leadership but still party failed to make an imprint through these elections.

#### ➤ **Left parties**

The downfall in the vote share of left parties can be very well viewed through the results of Assembly elections. CPI managed to get

one seat in Telangana but none in other states. It also saw a sharp decline in the vote share (below 1%). CPI lost its status of national party in 2023, viewing the performance in the Assembly polls, it seems that CPI(M) may also lose the same.

#### ➤ **Bhartiya Adivasi Party (BAP)**

This Gujarat based party made a surprise entry as the party managed to win three seats in Rajasthan and one seat in Madhya Pradesh. It had surpassed the important parties like BSP and SP in vote as well as seat share. This party had consolidated the Tribal vote and have filled the void created by other regional parties.

#### ➤ **Zoram People's Movement (ZPM)**

Within five years of its formation, this alliance of seven parties, has formed the government in Mizoram by winning 27 seats. In 2018 polls, the party got just eight seats and now winning 27 seats shows that party has succeeded in winning the trust of Mizo people. Even, out of the three women MLAs, two are from ZPM.

On one side, we see these elections becoming a direct faceoff between BJP and Congress and the diminishing role of smaller parties as well as independents. On the other side, the rise of BAP and ZPM depicts a different trend of Indian Politics. The political parties are unable to counter the politics of BJP as well as win the trust of electorates. A multi-party system is an essence of democracy as it offers more choices to the voters. There is a steady decline in support of smaller parties as well as the parties other than BJP and Congress. The national performance of these parties and their leadership along with the internal functioning have also impacted the results of the state elections.

**Position of Women**

	<b>M.P</b>		<b>Chhattisgarh</b>		<b>Raj.</b>		<b>Telan.</b>		<b>Mizoram</b>
	<b>2018</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>No. of females Contes-tant</b>	235	253	128	155	184	183	136	221	16
<b>No. Of female MLAs</b>	21	27	13	19	24	20	6	10	3
<b>% of female MLAs in Assem-bly</b>	9	12	14	21	12	10	5	8	7.5

**Source: (Statistical data on Assembly Polls of MP, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Telangana and Mizoram held in 2023)**

In every election, women voters are outnumbering the male voters. But their representation is still not enough to properly represent this half section. The same was seen in these elections too. The number of female MLAs in Telangana, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assemblies is still less than one-third of the total assembly seats. This data is enough to present the real picture of Indian politics where strike rate of female voters is more than that of male voters but their representation is not even one-third of total seats. Although the number of women MLAs has increased in MP, Chhattisgarh, Mizoram and Telangana but it had declined in Rajasthan. In Mizoram, at present there

are three female MLAs while there was only one woman representative in the Assembly from 1972 to 2017. In MP and Rajasthan, the proportion of female representatives have never exceeded 13% and 15% respectively. This is at the time when 106th Amendment is passed by the Parliament which mandates the reservation of 33 percent seats for women in Lok Sabha and State Legislature. The situation of women representatives is not much better but after the enforcement of the Reservation Act (after the delimitation process in 2026), it is hoped that women will be empowered in the political sphere too.

### Vote share of BJP and Congress in the Four states in 2023 Assembly Elections

Party vote share	Rajasthan	(+/-)	Chhattisgarh	(+/-)	Madhya Pradesh	(+/-)	Telangana	(+/-)
<b>BJP</b>	41.69	+2.4	46.27	+13.3	48.55	+7.6	13.88	+7
<b>Congress</b>	39.53	-0.3	42.23	-0.8	40.40	-0.5	39.39	+11

Source: (Election Commission of India. [www.eci.in](http://www.eci.in))

The above data depicts the sharp decrease in Congress's vote share in the Hindi heartland states. The average difference in the vote share of BJP and Congress in Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh is 4.6%. On the other hand, BJP saw a sharp increase in its vote share in the three states along with the southern state of Telangana. This shows that BJP succeeded in convincing the electorates at large scale. On the other hand, Congress's vote share declined to some extent while there was a sharp decline in seat share. The increase in BJP's vote share resulted more from the vote share of smaller parties and independents while Congress saw only a minimal decline in its vote share.

### 3. FACTORS DETRIMENTAL IN INFLUENCING THE RESULTS

#### ➤ Domination of national issues over state specific issues

These elections showed a different trend as national issues dominated state issues. All the major parties campaigned with their top most leaderships. BJP contested these elections in the name of Modi and the Modi factor played an important role in BJP's victory. Congress failed to consolidate voters in the name of unemployment, inflation and even failed to project the local issues.

The voters were convinced from BJP campaigns and voted in the name of national security, promises fulfilled by BJP such as Abrogation of Article 370, construction of Ram Mandir etc.

#### ➤ Focus on Particular Communities

BJP's is pictured as the party of rich and upper castes but now it has gained the support of Adivasi and Dalit voters too. BJP's focus on other communities had made such an impact that it displaced the major parties like BSP and Gondwana Gantantra Party (GGP) whose main vote bank were Dalits and Adivasis. BJP outreach to every section has broken this conception that any party has a fixed vote bank. MP, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan being the major agricultural belt have more than 70% people directed involved in farming. Although, BJP and Congress targeted the farmers through their commitment to ensure MSP, increasing price of per quantal rice etc. but BJP's Sharp strategy and pro-farmers image attracted these Dalit and Adivasi farmers to vote in its favour.

#### ➤ Focus on women voters

The women centric schemes were projected in these states by all parties who appealed to women voters through their



manifestos. In MP, BJP's schemes like Ladli Behna paying Rs. 1250 per month and Ladli Lakshmi worked well, BJP promised 35% direct recruitment of women in government jobs, Scotties to meritorious girls etc. While Congress played the same card of promise to pay Rs. 1500 to women. BJP's reach among the women voters can be measured from the fact that in 34 assembly constituencies of MP, women's turnout surpassed that of men. In Mizoram BJP promised 33% reservation to women in government jobs, setting up of an all-women police battalion. etc. Congress as well as other regional parties like MNF, ZPM also focused on women security, promised measures for women empowerment etc,

In Rajasthan, where the issue of women security is of much concern, Congress promised free bus ride to women, subsidized gas cylinder and electricity and smart phones to women of certain income group. BJP focused on security issues and promised to set up all-women police stations in every district, anti-Romeo squad to curb eve teasing and saving bonds of Rs 2 lakh on the birth of girl child.

In Chhattisgarh, Congress promised to pay 1500 per month under Chhattisgarh Gruha Luxmi Yojana but this announcement came before the second phase of elections in the state while BJP came with Matrivandan Scheme of providing twelve thousand per year to married women. All the parties focused on women voters with promises like security and empowerment which reflects that no party could win by ignoring this half section of the society.

#### ➤ **Role of welfare schemes**

The welfare schemes have a major role in attracting the electorates. In a country like India where more than half population is below poverty line, free ration and other basic facilities are way more than ideologically or politically motivated issues. All political parties know this fact and try this strategy in every election. The manifestos of all the parties made several promises to develop tourism, setting of educational institutions and excess to education for all, benefits to farmers, women, health facilities, job temptations etc. BJP as well as Congress launched several welfare schemes during their rule but all the difference was created by the extent to which these schemes were projected to the voters. BJP propagated its schemes at ground level while Congress failed to

do so. Congress promised direct economic benefits to the voters still the voters rejected Congress and voted for BJP who made such promised to counter Congress.

#### ➤ **Role of CM face**

Apart from the political party, selection of candidates especially the CM face of the party played a decisive role in elections. In all the state, Congress revealed the CM face and also kept the incumbent CM at the Centre of whole election campaign despite dissatisfaction among the voters. TRS too went with two time CM KCR. On the other hand, BJP fought this election with PM Modi at centre of whole campaign and went without CM face. The interesting fact is that voters still voted for BJP which was clearly the impact of Modi wave. After elections, BJP gave chance to new commers, even the charge as CM and Deputy CM was conferred on new and young faces and the older leadership was assigned new task. The voters have no or less attachment with the leaders as they expect the performance and demand better services. The voting behaviour has become complex and with the more literate and aware electorate, it has become essential for political parties to abide by the promises they make.

#### ➤ **Corruption**

Corruption is an evil but still parties are alleged to be involved in corruption related activities. The voters want a government which works honestly. Once there are visible signs of corruption during the regime of any government, voters take no time to change the government in the elections. In Telangana, as per the CSDS survey, corruption emerged as a prominent source of dissatisfaction among voters against the KCR government. Approximately half of the voters felt that corruption increased during the tenure of BRS government in the state. Similarly, in Chhattisgarh, the Bhupesh Baghel government was alleged of corruption and the voters used their power to throw the corrupt government. In Rajasthan, the corruption charges against ministers and officers led to defeat of Congress.

#### ➤ **Diminishing role of old regional and small parties**

The stats clearly highlight the bi-party character of Indian politics. The role of regional as well as smaller parties have declined over the

years. One reason for growth in BJP's vote share is that most of the regional and small parties saw a sharp decline in the vote share as well as seat share. Congress saw a slight decrease in its vote share while BJP's vote share saw a sharp hike. This hike was because BJP attracted more votes from the smaller parties. The left parties have also

starting losing support of people. In 2018 Rajasthan polls, CPIM bagged two seats but in this election, it was left empty handed and a continued decline in vote share from 1.2% in 2018 to 0.96%. Other parties also failed to consolidate votes on regional and local issues.

### Performance of Samajwadi Party in Rajasthan assembly polls in 2018 and 2023

	2018	2023
<b>Seats contested</b>	52	72
<b>Seats won</b>	1	00
<b>Vote share %</b>	1.30	0.43

Source: (Statistical Data on the Assembly Polls, 2023)

In Rajasthan, the major contest was between BJP and Congress. Samajwadi Party (SP) which contested with 72 candidates, returned with no seats but a vote share of 0.43%. SP managed a second position in five seats out of 72 it contested. SP went into the state elections with its top leadership for the first time. SP has seen a

downfall since taking the reins of party by Akhilesh Yadav from his father and the founder of the party, Mulayam Singh. Firstly, the party lost UP Assembly polls in 2017, followed by performing below par in 2019 Lok Sabha polls, then again losing UP assembly polls in 2022.

### Performance of Bahujan Samaj Party in Assembly polls held in 2023

	Rajasthan		MP		Chhattisgarh		Telangana	
	2018	2023	2018	2023	2018	2023	2018	2023
<b>Seats won</b>	6	2	2	00	2	00		00
<b>Vote share %</b>	4.03	1.8	5	3.32	3.87	2	2	1.38

Source: (Statistical Data on the Assembly Polls, 2023)

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) won two seats in Rajasthan with a vote share of 1.8% but there was a drop of 4 seats as compared to 2018 elections where BSP won six seats. In this election, BSP saw a downfall in terms of the seats share as well as vote share percentage. In Chhattisgarh, it got a vote share of 2.05% and comparatively a bigger share of 3.38% in MP. Out of 178 candidates contesting under BSP, three candidates stood second. In 2018, BSP won two seats and had a vote share of 5.01%. In Telangana, party performed poorly this time again and was unable to bag any seat this time too. In 2014 Assembly elections, the party got two seats. Although BSP formed an alliance with Gondwana Gantantra Party (GGP) in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, still they failed to influence the voters. The party's declining hold over Dalit voters is much visible in

these elections. Once being in power in the big state like Uttar Pradesh, now the parties vote as well as seat share has declined drastically.

#### ➤ Hindutva factor

BJP has a strong hold on Hindu voters. The 'soft Hindutva' policy adopted by Congress and its leaders like Kamal Nath in Madhya Pradesh, performing rituals on Govardhan Puja by Bhupesh Baghel and Priyanka Gandhi etc., can never defeat BJP in its own game. In MP, BJP has used Hindutva politics as it organised Kumbh Mela, developed Ramayana sites like Chitrakoot. BJP consolidated Tribal votes through Vanvasi Kalyan Ashrams, Eklavya Schools, and activities by Vishva Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal against conversions. In Chhattisgarh, the clashes between Christians, Hindus and Tribals and the issue of inter-faith

marriages have been of immense advantage for BJP because the ruling Congress didn't entertain these issues but have just denied them.

### ➤ **Weak Opposition**

Congress had shown an immature behaviour as it has annoyed the alliance parties of INDIA bloc. Recent example of this is estrangement with BSP and Samajwadi Party during the Rajasthan Assembly polls. The SP alleged Congress of cheating during nomination and had gone solo in elections in the state of Rajasthan. With this unusual behaviour, the alliance of opposition may fail to compete against the show-stopper BJP. After being vanquished in these polls, Congress should leave its Big brother attitude and take all opposition parties together.

BJP made Ticket allocation on the basis of survey of caste, religion, ethnicity in that particular area and acceptance of mass leaders in the constituency. BJP adopted different strategy for different constituencies and communities. Congress went with the same faces even knowing that there is dissatisfaction among electorates. That's the reason why Congress has less young leadership. The party need to understand that a particular leader can go for a certain period only. If Congress have worked on ticket allocation and not just favoritism, it could have been in a better position.

## **4. RESULTS AND THE FUTURE PERSPECTIVE**

The BJP's victory cannot be called as mere ideological battle but it is more likely a failure of Congress to provide an alternative in the biggest democracy like India. Further, Congress has failed to provide a single vision for the opposition parties in the Lok Sabha elections. In a parliamentary form of government, the role of opposition is as important as of the ruling party. In April 2023, Communist Party of India, National Congress Party and Trinamool Congress lost the status of National Parties. The decreasing vote share and seat share of the different political parties may lead to the loss of the status of National Party after the Lok Sabha elections.

The North-South divide went in the favour of Congress as after winning Karnataka polls in April 2023, the party became victorious in the neighboring state of Telangana too. In Karnataka, the rule of anti-incumbency helped Congress to come in power with majority and in Telangana,

electorates dissatisfied with the ten year old rule of BRS, voted for Congress. Congress is now projecting that people of South are politically more aware as they voted for development unlike North Indian voters who vote in the name of religion. If BRS had come to power again, it would have been projected as the strong hold of regional parties in South India which gives a tough competition to the national parties. But it seems that after North India, to some extent, the regional parties have started losing their hold in South India.

BJP's outreach to Dalits, OBCs, women voter is a part of its political strategy of not leaving any electorate unreached. BJP kept in mind the interest of every community and gave them equal chance of representation. Further, BJP has given a share in power to every section. In Madhya Pradesh, the newly appointed CM Mohan Yadav belongs to OBC community while his deputies hails from Brahmin and SC communities. In Chhattisgarh, BJP selected a Tribal face while Rajasthan got a Brahmin CM. The selection of candidates was done in such a way that all communities got adequate representation. By naming Diya Kumari as Deputy CM of Rajasthan, the women representation was ensured. This proves that BJP has big plans for Lok Sabha elections of 2024. Further it is be seen that what will be the future of senior leaders like Vasundhara Raje, Shivraj Singh Chauhan, whether BJP will give them space in decision making or they will be conferred with some other tasks.

The rise of Bhartiya Adivasi Party and Zoram People's Movement cannot be seen a new phenomenon. In a multi-party system, many new parties grown with time and the old ones submerge after a certain period. BSP, SP, left parties are the example of the same. Once these parties ruled certain states and share power in coalition with Congress or BJP but at present their vote share has dropped to a great extent. BAP and ZPM have a long way to go.

## **5. LOK SABHA POLLS 2024 AND POSITION IN THESE STATES**

The Lok Sabha polls, in wake of which the state elections were analyzed, depicted a picture which was much different from that predicted by the exit polls. This election was mainly seen as BJP vs INDIA block. In Telangana, out of 17 seats, both NDA and INDIA alliance got eight seats each with AIMIM winning its permanent seat of Hyderabad.



In both MP and Chhattisgarh, NDA performed well similar to state polls. In MP, NDA made a clean sweep with winning all 29 seats in the state and one more than previous polls, with Congress losing its lone seat. Out of 11 seats in Chhattisgarh, NDA won 10 seats and INDIA block was left with a single seat with Congress dropping from two seats in previous polls to just one this time. The results of Rajasthan were a sigh of relief for the Congress

and INDIA block as out of 25 seats, NDA bagged 14 seats while INDIA got 11 seats. In both MP and Chhattisgarh, the vote percentage of NDA was 59.27 and 52.65 respectively. These results show that since Lok Sabha polls were held within the six months span from the State polls, the electorates didn't change their mind much and kept their faith in NDA led BJP.

### BJP's expansion across states since 2014



Source: (India Today Group)

In 2014, when BJP came into power at Centre, it ruled only seven seats while Congress was in power in thirteen states. Till 2023, BJP has control over twelve states or Union Territories and is in ruling coalition in five states (Bihar after Nitish rejoined NDA to be sworn as 9th time CM). By the end of 2023, in 17 states or union territories, BJP was in direct or indirect control along with Centre. BJP has extended its control in North, East as well as Western states of India and now it is looking forward at Southern India. Even though BJP first lost Karnataka polls but it has a strong hold in Karnataka as BJP and Congress are the only two parties in the state which come to power alternatively. Karnataka is called the gateway of South India for BJP. BJP is increasing its influence in South India. Telangana polls reflected the same where BJP rose from one seat in 2018 to eight seats and got an impressive 14% vote share in the state. While Congress has decreased from 13 states under its control in 2014 to only three states in 2023.

The strong hold of BJP in the national politics is what other parties need to learn. BJP has come a long way, strengthened its cadre vote and worked on the ground level may it be by the strong network of RSS Shakhshas, Panna Pramukhs, reaching each and every voter. BJP has surveyed every Community, every area to understand the mood of the voters. Congress had failed to perform its duty as an opposition and as the national party of India. The distancing of RSS from BJP during the Lok Sabha polls was a major reason that it failed to attain a majority at Centre. Thus, Assembly poll results of 2023 cannot be viewed in isolation with the RSS support. BJP realised this after the Lok Sabha polls performance and strengthened its ties with its parent organisation i.e. RSS.

### 6. CONGRESS AND THE INDIA ALLIANCE AND BJPS STRATEGY

Few months before the Lok Sabha polls, Congress faced crisis within and outside the party. The resistance from the INDIA alliance towards Congress was seen as an advantage for BJP. After withdrawal of TMC and AAP, JD(U), one of the

pioneers in the formation of the alliance, left it too. The arrogant and inflexible character of Congress party was blamed for the ongoing clashes and disagreement within the alliance. Samajwadi Party struggled with Congress over seat sharing before the Lok Sabha polls. Even INDIA alliance was at more advantageous position against BJP in the matter of vote share as total vote share of parties in INDIA alliance is 38% as compared to 37% of BJP alone. Further, Bharat Jodo Yatra and Bharat Jodo Nyaya Yatra of Congress focused only on Rahul Gandhi, projecting him as the PM face, causing dissatisfaction among the other allies. Unable to develop consensus among the alliance over PM face, seat sharing, manifesto, coordination, media management, Congress had a tuff time before the polls. Still, it made a comeback in Lok Sabha polls with the support of INDIA block especially Samajwadi Party.

BJP has substantially managed to attract the lower castes, the poor, rural and less educated voters. The reasons being Modi's popularity, BJP's organizational advantage, heightened nationalistic sentiments, and expansive welfare politics. Still there is nothing such as growing inclination towards Centre or centripetal forces as voters vote differently in different elections and anti-incumbency remained the factor for BJP's win.

## 7. CONCLUSION

There were many reasons behind BJP's win and Congress's losing its hold in Hindi heartland states such as choice of candidates, projection of leadership as well as projection of welfare schemes. Campaigning played an important role in these elections as all the parties went with almost same agendas but the fight was to convince the voters. It can be said that Congress is worse as an opposition and can be termed as a seasonal party that comes in action only when holds the power. Secondly, there is a lack of acceptable PM face in the opposition. Congress must work hard if not for its own sake, then at least for safeguarding the spirit of parliamentary democracy. These elections were seen as semifinal for Lok Sabha elections and with the spectacular win of BJP, the party was confident of the repeating at Centre with majority. Congress and the INDIA block made strong strategy to combat BJP. But through the balanced results, Indian electorates kept the hopes of both parties alive. The diminishing role of regional and small parties have turned Indian politics as a

battle ground between BJP and Congress as in most states these parties are in direct faceoff with each other. Although there is a rise of some small regional parties like BAP and ZPM but their existence is limited to particular areas. BJPS's efforts helped it in making a sixth term in Madhya Pradesh. Further, BJP's less reach in South India and dissatisfaction with BRS led to Congress's victory in Telangana. Further, the rejection of BJP in the South and declining support for regional Parties in the Southern India has kept the hope alive for Congress. Lok Sabha results, however, shocked everyone as Congress made a good comeback with the INDIA alliance while as per the expectations, BJP along with NDA formed the Government. BJP got a third term while Congress scored an average both in vote share as well as in seat share in these states. BJP with NDA alliance kept its hold tight in these states along with Centre. This depicts that after electing BJP in state polls, voters in these states didn't change their mood in Lok Sabha polls.

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