



THE ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS PARTY IN 1999 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION: A GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was analyzing the electoral performance of the Indian National Congress for India as a whole in the parliamentary election held in 1999. The analysis was carried out at the level of parliamentary constituency for all the 543 constituencies. The Congress was founded by an Englishman, A.O. Hume, on 27th December, 1885. It is the mother institution of almost all the other national parties in the country. It spearheaded the freedom struggle for full 62 years by virtue of which the country had attained independence in 1947. Secondly, the party from its very beginning has adopted the centrist path, which helped the party in drawing vote across the different socio-economic cleavages. These factors explain its dominance over the other political parties till now. The electoral performance of the Congress in terms of seats contested, percent vote polled and seats won in the above-mentioned election.

INTRODUCTION

In 1999, Lok Sabha election was held on 543 seats. The Congress had contested the election on 453 parliamentary seats and registered victories on 114 seats. The number of victories in this parliamentary election was least among all the parliamentary elections that the party had ever contested. The party had received 28.67 percent of the total valid votes polled. The patterns of seats contested by the Congress in this parliamentary election exhibits that the party had contested all the seats in the states and union territories of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Delhi, Lakshadweep and Pondicherry. Besides this, the party had contested 16 seats (out of 54) in Bihar, 5 seats (out of 6) in Jammu and Kashmir, 17 seats (out of 20) in Kerala, 43 seats (out of 48) in Maharashtra, 20 seats (out of 21) in Orissa, 11 seats (out of 13) in Punjab, 11 seats (out of 39) in Tamil Nadu, 76 seats (out of 85) in Uttar Pradesh and 40 seats (out of 42) in West Bengal. It is quite observable that the party had contested less number of seats in two states viz. Bihar and Tamil Nadu. The reason being the state-based parties in these two states have national out-look also. The party had not fielded its candidates in the state of Mizoram (Fig. 5.1). The region-wise analysis indicates that in this election the party had contested 85.64 percent of the total seats in



the North-Indian states, 79.11 percent in the Hindi-Speaking states and 76.52 percent in the South-Indian states.

STUDY AREA

In the present study, the electoral analysis has been carried out for India as a whole. The parliamentary constituency has been selected as unit of analysis and the analysis was carried out for all the 543 parliamentary constituencies. The electoral performance of the Indian National Congress has also been carried out at the regional level. For the purpose, India has been divided into Hindi Speaking states (Bihar, Haryana, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chandigarh and Delhi), North Indian states (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Orissa, Punjab, Sikkim, Tripura, West Bengal, Daman and Diu, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli and the above mentioned Hindi-Speaking states) and South Indian states (Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andaman and Nicobar Island, Lakshadweep and Pondicherry).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study has been undertaken to find out: (1) what are the main areas of support of the Indian National Congress at all Indian level and regional level, (2) Is the support of the, Indian National Congress is concentrated in specific areas or evenly distributed.

DATA BASE

Electoral data of parliamentary election of 1999 is used in this study. Data of parliamentary election were taken from the various Election Commission reports.

METHODS

Various statistical methods have been used to answer various questions about the voting patterns of the Indian National Congress raised above. In statistical methods, we have used mean, for the calculation of average vote. The techniques of standard deviation, co-efficient of variation are used for measuring the level of heterogeneity in the party vote.

SPATIAL PATTERN OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS VOTE

In this election, there were 14 states and 6 union territories where the party's percent vote share was above the national average vote percent figure of 33.98. These states and union territories were Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Rajasthan, Gujrat, Madhya Pradesh, Daman and Diu, Goa, Orissa, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Pondicherry, Andaman and Nicobar Island and Lakshadweep. In the states and union territories of Bihar, West Bengal, Sikkim, Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura,



Maharashtra, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Tamil Nadu, the party had polled less than the national average (Table 1).

Table 1: State / UT - Wise Average percent votes polled by the Indian National Congress in Parliamentary Election -1999

States/Union Territories	Average Vote (%)
Andhra Pradesh	43.72
Arunachal Pradesh	57.04
Assam	40.13
Bihar	8.81
Goa	38.8
Gujarat	45.31
Haryana	34.81
Himachal Pradesh	39.88
Jammu & Kashmir	21.88
Karnataka	45.41
Kerala	45.92
Madhya Pradesh	43.75
Maharashtra	32.53
Manipur	25.34
Meghalaya	31.84
Mizoram	-
Nagaland	71.18
Orissa	38.32
Punjab	45.49
Rajasthan	44.72
Sikkim	4.76
Tamil Nadu	11.10
Tripura	13.88
Uttar Pradesh	14.72
West Bengal	13.29
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	43.17
Chandigarh	47.00
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	14.14
Daman & Diu	49.48
Delhi	42.51
Lakshadweep	53.96
Pondicherry	37.17
India	33.98

Out of the total 453 seats that the party had contested in this election, the party had polled above 50 percent vote in 46 constituencies (31 in North-Indian states, including 15 in Hindi-Speaking states and 15 in South-Indian states); 40 to 50 percent in 168 constituencies (102 in North-Indian states, including 51 in Hindi Speaking states and 66 in South-Indian states); 30 to 40 percent in 95 constituencies (78 in North-Indian states), including 39 in Hindi-Speaking states and 17 in South-Indian states); 20 to 30 percent in 45 constituencies (42 in North-Indian states, including 18 in Hindi-Speaking states and 3 in South-Indian states); 10 to 20 percent in 45



constituencies (all 45 in North-Indian states, including 23 in Hindi-Speaking states) and below 10 percent in 54 constituencies (all 54 in North-Indian states, including 32 in Hindi-Speaking states). The map pattern of the Congress percentage vote clearly indicates, that the party had polled less number of vote in Ganga-Yamuna plain in general and in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West-Bengal in particular. Among the South-Indian states, the party had polled less number of vote in Tamil Nadu (Fig. 5.2). The average vote share of the Congress in this parliamentary election was 33.98 percent. The standard deviation and co-efficient of variation were 15.35 and 45.16 percent respectively. The region-wise analysis indicates a high degree of heterogeneity in the party voting. The average vote share of the party was more than the national average in the South-Indian states (43.78%), and less than in the North-Indian states (31.54%) and Hindi-Speaking states (30.83%) (Table 2).

Table 2: Region-Wise Spatial Variation in the Indian National Congress Vote in Parliamentary Election -1999

Region	Average Vote (%)	Standard Deviation (%)	Co-efficient of Variation (%)
North Indian States	31.54	16.01	50.77
Hindi – Speaking States	30.83	16.31	52.90
South Indian States	43.78	6.14	14.04
India	33.98	15.35	45.16

The party's vote share was more uniform in the case of the South Indian states, whereas it was heterogeneous in the North-Indian states in general and in the Hindi-Speaking states in particular. The average vote share in case of the South-Indian states was 43.78 percent. The standard deviation was 6.14 percent and co-efficient of variation was 14.04 percent. In case of the North-Indian and Hindi-Speaking states, the average vote percentage share were 31.54 and 30.83 percent; standard deviation were 16.01 and 16.31 percent and co-efficient of variation were 50.77 and 52.90 percent respectively. It clearly indicates that in this parliamentary election also the party had more heterogeneous vote pattern in the North-Indian states in general and the Hindi-Speaking states in particular.

SPATIAL PATTERNS OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS VICTORIES

Out of the total 453 seats contested by the Congress, the party had won 114 seats. The number of victories in this parliamentary election was least among all the parliamentary elections that the party had contested. This certainly indicates the declining popularity of the party in the country. In this election the party had won 25.16 percent of the seats it contested and 20.99 per cent of the total seats. The figures are quite a low figure for the all-India political formation like the Congress. This showing that the party victories indicate no specific pattern. The seats



won were less in number and they were scattered here and there. There were seven states (Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, Sikkim and Tripura) and three union territories (Andaman and Nicobar, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Delhi) where the party had not won even a single seat. The states and union territories wherein the party had showed good electoral performance were Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Karnataka, Nagaland, Punjab, Chandigarh, Daman and Diu, Lakshadweep and Pondicherry (Table 3).

Table 3: State-Wise Indian National Congress Victories in Parliamentary Election-1999

States/Union Territories	Total Seats	Seats Contested	Seats Won
Andhra Pradesh	42	42	05
Arunachal Pradesh	02	02	02
Assam	14	14	10
Bihar	54	16	04
Goa	02	02	0
Gujarat	26	26	06
Haryana	10	10	0
Himachal Pradesh	04	04	0
Jammu & Kashmir	06	05	0
Karnataka	28	28	18
Kerala	20	17	08
Madhya Pradesh	40	40	11
Maharashtra	48	43	10
Manipur	02	02	0
Meghalaya	02	02	01
Mizoram	01	0	0
Nagaland	01	01	01
Orissa	21	20	02
Punjab	13	11	08
Rajasthan	25	25	09
Sikkim	01	01	0
Tamil Nadu	39	11	02
Tripura	02	02	0
Uttar Pradesh	85	76	10
West Bengal	42	40	03
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	01	01	0
Chandigarh	01	01	01
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	01	01	0
Daman & Diu	01	01	01
Delhi	07	07	0
Lakshadweep	01	01	01
Pondicherry	01	01	01
India	543	453	114

The analysis of the seat won by the Congress at the level of region indicates that of the total 114 seats won by the party, 79 were from the North-Indian states (including 34 from the Hindi-Speaking states) and 35 from the South Indian States. The party in total had won 25.16 percent



of seats it had contested. The region-wise picture of the seats won indicates that the party had won 34.65 percent of seats it had contested in the South Indian states, whereas, the percentage victories in the case of North-Indian states and Hindi-Speaking states were 22.44 and 19.10 percent respectively (Table 4).

Table 4: Region-Wise Indian National Congress Victories in Parliamentary Election -1999

Region	Total	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Victories as percentage to the seats contested
North Indian States	411	352	79	22.44
Hindi – Speaking States	225	178	34	19.10
South Indian States	132	101	35	34.65
India	543	453	114	25.16

Regional analysis also reveals that in terms of the Congress electoral victories; (i) the south Indian states are still more sympathetic to Congress than the other two regions despite the fact that the party had contested less percentage of seats in South-Indian states than the Hindi-Speaking states and the North-Indian states; (ii) there has been large scale decline in the total number of seats won from the South Indian states.

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