



THE ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS PARTY IN 1991 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 1991. 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 1991, Lok Sabha election was held on 521 seats. The Indian National Congress had contested the election on 492 parliamentary seats, of which the party won 232 seats. The party had received 36.56 percent of the total votes polled. In this parliamentary election, the party had contested all the seats in the states and union territories of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tripura, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Delhi, Lakshadweep and Pondicherry. Besides, the party had contested 16 seats (out of 26) in Gujarat, 16 Seats (out of 20) in Kerala, 28 seats (out of 39) in Tamil Nadu, 80 seats (out of 85) in Uttar Pradesh and 41 seats (out of 42) in West Bengal. The party had not fielded its candidates in the state of Sikkim. While in this parliamentary election, polling for two states viz. Jammu & Kashmir and Punjab was not held due to the problem of terrorism. The region wise analysis of the pattern of the seats contested indicates



that the party had contested 91.24 percent of total seats in the North-Indian states, 97.78 percent in the Hindi-Speaking states and 88.46 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 1991 is used in this study. The election of 1991 was the first parliamentary election in the history of party which resulted in party's return to the seat of power without any member of Nehru family as its head. 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 15 states and 5 union territories where the party's percent vote share was above the national average percent vote figure of 39.86. These states and union territories were Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Tripura,, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Goa, Orissa, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Andhra Pradesh,



Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Pondicherry, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep. In the states and union territories of Haryana, Chandigarh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Manipur, Mizoram and Daman and Diu, 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-1991

States/Union Territories	Average Vote (%)
Andhra Pradesh	45.91
Arunachal Pradesh	68.60
Assam	29.12
Bihar	25.47
Goa	57.67
Gujarat	45.18
Haryana	37.24
Himachal Pradesh	46.15
Jammu & Kashmir	-
Karnataka	42.22
Kerala	48.59
Madhya Pradesh	45.85
Maharashtra	48.55
Manipur	38.61
Meghalaya	58.53
Mizoram	38.08
Nagaland	44.34
Orissa	44.27
Punjab	-
Rajasthan	43.42
Sikkim	-
Tamil Nadu	60.07
Tripura	82.76
Uttar Pradesh	25.37
West Bengal	37.09
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	50.39
Chandigarh	35.86
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	61.74
Daman & Diu	22.75
Delhi	40.02
Lakshadweep	50.55
Pondicherry	53.07
India	39.86

Out of the total 492 seats that the party had contested in this election, the party had polled above 50 percent vote in 105 constituencies (59 in North-Indian states, including 21 in Hindi Speaking states and 46 in South-Indian states); 40 to 50 percent in 155 constituencies (100 in North-Indian states, including 42 in Hindi Speaking states and 55 in South-Indian states); 30 to 40 percent in



102 constituencies (88 in North Indian states, including 45 in Hindi-Speaking states and 14 in South-Indian states); 20 to 30 percent in 54 constituencies (53 in North Indian states, including 3 in Hindi Speaking states and 1 in South Indian states); 10 to 20 percent in 59 constituencies (all in North-Indian states, including 58 in Hindi Speaking states) and below 10 percent in 17 constituencies (16 in North-Indian states, including 15 in Hindi Speaking states and 1 in South Indian states). The patterns of the Congress vote percentage clearly indicates, that the party had polled less number of votes in the North-Indian states in general and in the states of Assam, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh in particular.

The average vote share in seats contested of the Congress in this parliamentary election was 39.86 percent. The standard deviation and co-efficient of variation were 15.44 and 38.73 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 (48.92%), and less than in the North Indian states (37.04%), and Hindi Speaking states (32.55%) (Table 2).

Table 2: Region-Wise Spatial Variation in the Indian National Congress Vote in Parliamentary Election-1991

Region	Average Vote (%)	Standard Deviation (%)	Co-efficient of Variation (%)
North Indian States	37.04	15.42	41.63
Hindi-Speaking States	32.55	14.74	45.28
South Indian States	48.92	10.19	20.83
India	39.86	15.44	38.73

The party's vote share was far more uniform in the case of South Indian states, whereas, the party's vote percentage pattern was heterogeneous in the North Indian states in general and the Hindi-Speaking states in particular. The average vote share in case of the South-Indian states was 48.92 percent. The standard deviation was 10.19 percent and co-efficient of variation was 20.83 percent. In the case of North Indian and Hindi-Speaking states, the average percentage, vote share were 37.04 and 32.55 percent; standard deviation values were 15.42 and 14.74 percent and the co-efficient of variation were 41.63 and 45.28 percent respectively. It clearly indicates that in this parliamentary election the party had more heterogeneous vote pattern in the North-Indian states in general and Hindi-Speaking states in particular.

SPATIAL PATTERNS OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS VICTORIES

As discussed above, the Congress in this parliamentary election had contested election on 492 seats (out of the total 521 seats) and won 232 seats. The number of victories in this parliamentary



election was more than the previous parliamentary election of 1989 wherein the party could capture only 197 seats and lost the seat of power in centre to the multi-party National Front. However, in this election the Congress was again voted to the seat of power (Table 3).

Table 3: State-Wise Indian National Congress Victories in Parliamentary Election-1991

States/Union Territories	Total Seats	Seats Contested	Seats Won
Andhra Pradesh	42	42	25
Arunachal Pradesh	02	02	02
Assam	14	14	08
Bihar	54	54	01
Goa	02	03	02
Gujarat	26	16	05
Haryana	10	10	09
Himachal Pradesh	04	04	02
Jammu & Kashmir	06	-	-
Karnataka	28	28	23
Kerala	20	16	13
Madhya Pradesh	40	40	27
Maharashtra	48	48	38
Manipur	02	02	01
Meghalaya	02	02	02
Mizoram	01	01	01
Nagaland	01	01	00
Orissa	21	21	13
Punjab	13	-	-
Rajasthan	25	25	13
Sikkim	01	-	-
Tamil Nadu	39	28	28
Tripura	02	02	02
Uttar Pradesh	85	80	05
West Bengal	42	41	05
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	01	01	01
Chandigarh	01	01	01
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	01	01	01
Daman & Diu	01	01	-
Delhi	07	07	02
Lakshadweep	01	01	01
Pondicherry	01	01	01
India	543	492	232

The table 3 shows that the Congress victories clearly indicates that the party had won more seats in the South Indian states than the North Indian states. The states and union territories wherein the party had showed good electoral performance were Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Goa, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Lakshadweep and Pondicherry. In these states and union territories the party had



won more than 50 percent of the seats it had contested. The party had not won any seat in the state of Nagaland and in the union territory of Daman and Diu. The party's electoral performance was dismal in some of the big territorial states viz., Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal wherein the party respectively had bagged only 1.85, 6.25 and 12.19 percent of seats it had contested.

The regional analysis of the seats won by the Congress indicates that of the total 232 seats won by the party, 140 were from the North Indian states (including 59 from the Hindi-Speaking states) and 92 from the South Indian States. The party in total had won 47.15 per cent of seats it had contested. The region-wise picture of the seats won as percentage of the total seats contested indicate that the party had won 78.63 percent of seats it had contested in the South Indian states, whereas the percentage victories in the North-Indian states and Hindi-Speaking states were 37.33 and 26.82 percent respectively (Table 4).

Table 4: Region-Wise Indian National Congress Victories in Parliamentary Election-1991

Region	Total	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Victories as percentage to the seats contested
North Indian States	411	375	140	37.33
Hindi-Speaking States	225	220	59	26.82
South Indian States	132	117	92	78.63
India	543	492	232	47.15

The regional analysis reveals that the Congress electoral victories were more in the South Indian States than the other two regions despite the fact that the party had contested less percentage of seats in the South-Indian states than the Hindi-Speaking and the North-Indian states.

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