



THE ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS PARTY IN 2004 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 2004. 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 2004, Lok Sabha election was held on 543 seats. The Indian National Congress had contested the election on 417 parliamentary seats. It was the least number of seats ever contested by the party. The party had won 145 seats. The party had received 26.53 percent of the total votes polled. In this parliamentary election, the party had contested all the seats in the states and union territories of Assam, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Orissa, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttaranchal, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Delhi and Lakshadweep. Besides, the party had also contested 34 seats (out of 42) in Andhra Pradesh, 1 seat (out of 2) in Arunachal Pradesh, 4 seats (out of 40) in Bihar, 1 seat (out of 6) in Jammu and Kashmir, 9 seats (out of 14) in Jharkhand, 17 seats (out of 20) in Kerala, 26 seats (out of 48) in Maharashtra, 1 seat (out of 2), in Manipur, 11 seats (out of 13) in Punjab, 10 seats (out of 39) in Tamil Nadu, 73 seats (out of 80) in Uttar Pradesh and 37 seats (out of 42) in West Bengal. The party had not fielded its candidates in the state of Mizoram and the union-territory of Pondicherry. The region wise analysis of the pattern of the seats contested indicates that the party had contested 79.32 percent of the total seats in the North Indian states, 78.67 percent in the Hindi-Speaking states and 68.94 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 2004 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 19 states and 5 union territories where the party had polled above the national average percent vote figure of 34.43. These states and union territories were Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Rajasthan, Gujrat, Daman and Diu, Orissa, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Maharashtra, Goa, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep. In the states and union territory of Nagaland, Sikkim, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Dadra and Nagar Haveli, the party had polled less than the national average. The pattern of the Congress vote percentage clearly indicates,



that the party had polled less number of vote in the North-Indian states in general and in the states of Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura in particular (Table 1).

Table 1: State/UT Wise Average Percent of Votes Polled in Seats contested by the Indian National Congress in Parliamentary Election- 2004

States/Union Territories	Average Vote (%)
Andhra Pradesh	51.79
Arunachal Pradesh	23.47
Assam	35.07
Bihar	46.79
Chhattisgarh	40.16
Goa	55.24
Gujarat	45.52
Haryana	42.13
Himachal Pradesh	51.89
Jharkhand	33.97
Jammu & Kashmir	38.89
Karnataka	36.82
Kerala	38.18
Madhya Pradesh	34.07
Maharashtra	44.15
Manipur	37.00
Meghalaya	45.55
Mizoram	-
Nagaland	25.78
Orissa	40.43
Punjab	39.71
Rajasthan	41.42
Sikkim	27.43
Tamil Nadu	59.17
Tripura	14.28
Uttaranchal	38.31
Uttar Pradesh	13.18
West Bengal	16.30
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	55.77
Chandigarh	52.06
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	25.70
Daman & Diu	49.51
Delhi	54.81
Lakshadweep	48.79
Pondicherry	-
India	34.43

Out of the total 417 seats that the party had contested in this election, the party had polled above 50 percent vote in 64 constituencies (31 in North-Indian states, including 16 in Hindi-Speaking states and 33 in South-Indian states); 40 to 50 percent in 129 constituencies (103 in North-



Indian states, including 45 in Hindi Speaking states and 26 in South-Indian states); 30 to 40 percent in 99 constituencies (69 in North-Indian states, including 34 in Hindi-Speaking states and 30 in South-Indian states); 20 to 30 percent in 34 constituencies (32 in North-Indian states, including 22 in Hindi-Speaking states and 2 in South-Indian states); 10 to 20 percent in 29 constituencies (all in North-Indian states, including 18 in Hindi – Speaking states) and below 10 percent in 62 constituencies (all in North-Indian states, including 42 in Hindi-Speaking states).

The average vote share in seats contested by the Congress, in this parliamentary election, was 34.43 percent. The standard deviation and co-efficient of variation were 16.37 and 47.54 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 (45.21%), and less than in the North-Indian states (31.61%) and the Hindi-Speaking states (29.31%) (Table 2).

Table 2: Region-Wise Spatial Variation in the Indian National Congress Vote in Parliamentary Election- 2004

Region	Average Vote (%)	Standard Deviation (%)	Co-efficient Variation (%)
North Indian States	31.61	16.70	52.83
Hindi – Speaking States	29.31	17.15	58.15
South Indian States	42.21	9.70	21.45
India	34.43	16.37	47.54

The party's vote share was more uniform in the case of the South-Indian states, whereas the party's vote percentage pattern was heterogeneous in the North-Indian states and the Hindi-Speaking states. The average vote share in case of the South-Indian states was 42.21 percent. The standard deviation was 9.70 percent and co-efficient of variation was 21.45 percent. In the case of North-Indian states and Hindi-Speaking states, the average percentage, vote share were 31.61 and 29.31 percent; standard deviation was 16.70 and 17.15 percent and the co-efficient of variation were 52.83 and 58.15 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 Hindi-Speaking states in particular.

SPATIAL PATTERNS OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS VICTORIES

In this parliamentary election, out of the total 417 seats on which the party had fielded its candidates, 145 seats were won by the party. The number of victories in this parliamentary election was more than the previous parliamentary election of 1999, wherein the party could



capture only 114 seats. The Congress had contested this election under the leadership of Mrs. Sonia Gandhi and voted to the seat of power with the help of its alliance parties and the outside support of mainly the Communist parties. After a longheaded debate on the Sonia Gandhi's foreign-origin nationality, Dr. Manmohan Singh was sworn as the Prime-Minister of India (Table 3).

Table 3: State/UT Wise Indian National Congress Victories in Parliamentary Election-2004

States/Union Territories	Total Seats	Seats Contested	Seats Won
Andhra Pradesh	42	34	29
Arunachal Pradesh	02	01	0
Assam	14	14	0
Bihar	40	04	03
Chhattisgarh	11	11	01
Goa	02	01	01
Gujarat	26	25	12
Haryana	10	10	09
Himachal Pradesh	04	04	03
Jharkhand	14	09	06
Jammu & Kashmir	06	03	02
Karnataka	28	28	08
Kerala	20	17	0
Madhya Pradesh	29	29	04
Maharashtra	48	26	13
Manipur	02	01	01
Meghalaya	02	02	01
Mizoram	01	-	-
Nagaland	01	01	0
Orissa	21	21	02
Punjab	13	11	02
Rajasthan	25	25	04
Sikkim	01	01	0
Tamil Nadu	39	10	10
Tripura	02	02	0
Uttar Pradesh	80	73	09
Uttaranchal	05	05	01
West Bengal	42	37	06
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	01	01	01
Chandigarh	01	01	01
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	01	01	0
Daman & Diu	01	01	01
Delhi	07	07	06
Lakshadweep	01	01	0
Pondicherry	01	-	-
India	543	417	145



Table 3 shows that the Congress victories clearly indicates that in terms of the seats contested 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 shown good electoral performance were Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Manipur, Tamil Nadu, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Daman and Diu and Delhi. 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 single seat in the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Kerala, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura and the union territories of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Lakshadweep. The party's electoral performance was poor in some of the territorially big states viz., Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal wherein the party respectively had bagged only 9.09, 13.79, 9.52, 18.18, 16.00, 12.33 and 16.22 percent of the seats it had contested.

The regional analysis of the seats won by the Congress indicates that of the total 145 seats won by the party, 97 were from the North-Indian states (including 46 from the Hindi-Speaking states) and 48 from the South Indian states. The party in total had won 34.77 percent of seats it had contested. The region-wise picture of the seats won as percentage of the total seats it had contested indicate that the party had won 52.75 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 29.75 and 25.99 percent respectively (Table 4).

Table 4: Region-Wise Indian National Congress Victories in Parliamentary Election- 2004

Region	Average Vote (%)	Standard Deviation (%)	Co-efficient Variation (%)	Victories as percentage to the seats Contested
North Indian States	411	326	97	29.75
Hindi – Speaking States	225	177	46	25.99
South Indian States	132	91	48	52.75
INDIA	543	417	145	34.77

The regional analysis reveals that electoral victories for the Congress were more from 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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