



## Seats down but BJP may scrape through in Guj

CNN-IBN



**SAFFRON SOLDIER:** Chief Minister Modi is far ahead of BJP and Congress leaders in popularity.

**New Delhi:** If the science of opinion polling is anything to go by, Narendra Modi is likely to create an electoral history of sorts by returning to power in Gujarat. The findings of the Indian Express-CNN-IBN-Divya Bhaskar Gujarat poll suggest that despite losing some popular support, the BJP in Gujarat has retained much of the edge that it has enjoyed over the Congress in the last decade or more.

The poll suggests that the BJP improved its performance in the last few days before elections and is likely to return a very impressive performance in the second phase of polling. (Read methodology)

It poll estimates that the BJP will end up between 92-100 seats and thus win a clear majority in the 182 member state assembly. The Congress on the other hand is expected to improve its tally from 51 in the last elections to 77-85 this time but fall short of challenging the BJP.

### Seats projection

Party	Seats projected to win
BJP	92-100
Cong +	77-85
Others	3-7

**Note:** Congress+ includes NCP, CPI (M) and LNJP

The BSP and other rebels may cut into the votes of the main parties but are not expected to move into double digits.

The best news for the BJP comes from north Gujarat region that went to polls in the second phase. Here internal dissension within the Congress appears to have taken a toll on the party and the BJP appears all set to repeat its spectacular performance in the 2002.

It may lose a few seats in Central Gujarat region, the epicentre of anti-Muslim riots in 2002 which the BJP swept in the elections that year, but is likely to retain an upper hand.

The Congress can still have some hopes in south Gujarat, the predominantly tribal and conventionally pro-Congress region of the state, but there are not many seats here and the Congress cannot hope for a sweep.

Similarly the Congress can expect to pick some additional seats in Saurashtra-Kuchh region, but not as many as would be needed to cover the massive deficit in central and north Gujarat.

### Votes estimate

Party	Vote share (%) 2007
BJP	47
Cong +	42
Others	11

**Note:** Congress+ includes NCP, CPI (M) and LNJP

A quick analysis of the social patterns of voting suggest that the Congress sis make some inroads in the social coalition of forward castes and some OBCs that the BJP has built in the state, it not succeed in creating a new coalition of its own.

The much hyped Patel revolt was confined to a Leuva Patels mostly from Saurashtra. The other forward caste including the Rajputs stayed solid with the BJP. Some Koli and other lower OBC voters did shift to the Congress, but not in the proportions that Congress had hoped for.

What would disappoint the Congress leaders most perhaps is the inability of the party to take a decisive lead among Dalit and Adivasi voters, a lead Congress used to enjoy in the state.

A good deal of the Adivasi voters in Central Gujarat who shifted to the BJP in 2002 have appeared to have stayed back with the BJP. The Muslims off course extended en-mass support to the Congress.

In this election too the BJP continued a massive lead in urban areas, but did not fall behind the Congress in rural areas either. Youth below 25 did support the BJP in greater proportions, but there is little evidence to suggest that women favoured the BJP disproportionately.

If the poll findings are indeed reflected in the final outcome on the December 23, the BJP would have won the fourth consecutive election, each on a different issue.

The assembly election of 1995 was a delayed mandate on Ram Mandir, the 1998 election on the Hajuria-Khajuria defections and the 2002 elections on the Godhara aftermath.

The election of 2007 appears to have been driven by the personality of Narendra Modi and the positive evaluation of the BJP government. At least partly, Modi appears to have succeeded in turning this election to be a plebiscite on himself.

No other Congress or the BJP leader ever came anywhere close to Modi in popularity rating. Although the government's performance rating dropped a little towards the end and the proportion of those who did not wish to give it another chance went up, in all the Modi government was assessed positively by the people.

#### Modi remains the most popular choice

Preferred CM...	2002	Pre-poll 2007	Post-poll 2007
Narendra Modi	38	40	42
Shankarsingh Waghela	14	10	11
Keshubhai Patel	6	4	3

**Note:** Rest of the respondents named other leaders or reported "No opinion"

Exit polls are expected to be the final word in election forecasting and are therefore definitive in their projections. But if this report sounds tentative and uncertain, there are some reasons for that:

- In a direct and close two-horse race as this one, even the smallest swing of votes can make a big difference of seats. Forecasting such a race requires precision of votes estimates that sample survey does not provide.
- As we reported in our pre-poll survey, in exit and post-poll too we find substantial evidence of over-reporting for the ruling party. We cannot be very sure of the extent of this over-reporting.
- This time we also came across an unusual degree of silence. About one-sixth of the voters quizzed during the post-poll survey and many voters during the exit poll refused to answer the question about voting or put a blank ballot in our dummy box. Most of those who did not answer were Congress sympathisers.

In our analysis we have adjusted for these possible errors and over-reporting. But it is in the nature of such errors that these can never be estimated precisely.

There is no tested and tried methodology for that. If in the final analysis the over-reporting and deceptive silence turns out to be bigger than we estimate, the BJP could fall below the majority mark. It would be unwise to be definite about this election before the actual counting of votes on December 23.

#### Swing of votes 2002-2007

Party	Estimated vote share 2007	Actual vote share 2002	Swing
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BJP	47	50	-5
Cong +	42	41	-1
Others	11	9	-2

**Note:** Congress+ includes NCP, CPI (M) and LNJP

#### Yet a discernible tilt away from Modi

Always liked Modi	35
Like him now, but not earlier	8
Liked him earlier not now	14
Never liked him	22

**Note:** Based on post-poll survey in the first phase constituencies. Rest of the respondents reported "Don't know"

#### Voters' choice not focussed on Modi

What mattered most in voting decision...	ALL	BJP voters	Cong voters
Candidate's work/reputation	26	28	25
Candidate's caste or relations	7	7	14
Party's leadership	24	27	21
Party's ideology	15	14	17
General liking for party	7	5	10

**Note:** Based on post-poll survey in the first phase constituencies. Rest of the respondents reported "Don't know"

#### BJP government performance rated positively

	Pre-poll	Post-poll
Satisfied	62	64
Dissatisfied	24	27

**Note:** Based on post-poll survey in the first phase constituencies. Rest of the respondents reported "No opinion"

#### Yet less willingness to give the government another chance

The BJP government in the state should...	Pre-poll	Post-poll
Get another chance	51	47
Not get another chance	32	39

**Note:** Rest of the respondents reported "Don't know"

#### Scepticism about Vibrant Gujarat

##### BJP's government's record on development...

Development for all	42
Development but only for the rich	26
No development at all	15

**Note:** Based on post-poll survey in the first phase constituencies. Rest of the respondents reported "No opinion"

#### Youth favour the BJP more but not women

	Vote BJP	Vote Congress
Men	46	43

Women	46	43
Youth (below 25)	48	41
Elder (above 55)	43	44

**Most forward castes stayed with the BJP**

	<b>Vote BJP</b>	<b>Vote Congress</b>
Rajput	50	34
Leuva Patidar	60	37
Karwa Patidar	83	11
Other forward caste	63	29

**Congress gained advantage among the marginal communities**

	<b>Vote BJP</b>	<b>Vote Congress</b>
Koli	32	53
Dalit	35	52
Adivasi	36	41
Muslim	17	78