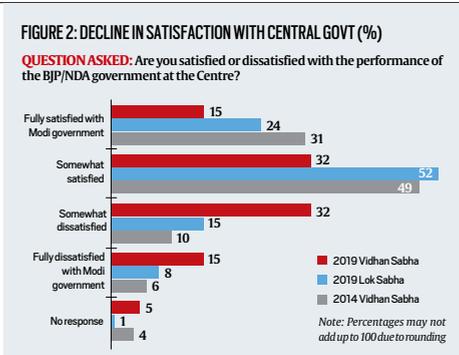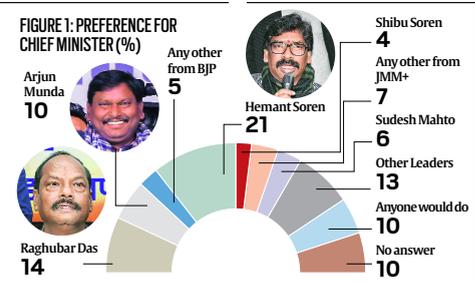# How Jharkhand result fits into a pattern

Data from the Lokniti-CSDS Post-Poll Survey underline the difference in the roles played by local and national factors in determining the outcome. In keeping with recent trends across the country, this Assembly poll saw a focus on local issues and a limited influence of the central leaders of parties, particularly the BJP

FIGURE 1: PREFERENCE FOR CHIEF MINISTER (%)

Arjun Munda **10**
Any other from BJP **5**
Raghubar Das **14**
Hemant Soren **21**
Shibu Soren **4**
Any other from JMM+ **7**
Sudesh Mahto **6**
Other Leaders **13**
Anyone would do **10**
No answer **10**

DECISION 2019 — JHARKHAND

SUHAS PALSHIKAR, SANDEEP SHASTRI & SANJAY KUMAR

THE LOSS of an incumbent government is not very dramatic, but losing over 17 per cent of the vote in just six months is indeed deeply troubling for a government. This is what the Jharkhand results have brought about for the BJP. As the post-poll carried out by Lokniti-CSDS (Centre for the Study of Developing Societies), there are many state-level factors contributing to this debacle but, at the same time, the larger impact would still haunt the BJP.

The Jharkhand elections happened when the national scene was becoming more and more heated due to the national-level debate on the question of citizenship. As such, a first temptation would be to see the Jharkhand outcome in retrospect as a response to all-India issues. In order to understand how the BJP lost this election and how JMM and its allies managed to win, it is necessary to dispel this temptation and situate the outcome firmly into the dynamics of state politics of Jharkhand.

No CAA resonance

For instance, did the debate around the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) make any difference? There is very little to indicate this. The last two rounds of voting (fourth and fifth) were held after the debate on the Citizenship Amendment Bill and the passage of the legislation. The BJP won eight of the 15 seats that went to polls in the fourth round. In 2014, the BJP had won 11 of these 15 seats. In the seats that went to polls in the fifth round, the BJP won three of the 16 seats and had won five of the 16 in 2014. Further, the CAA and NRC were rarely mentioned by respondents as a factor that influenced the way they voted. This, despite reports that top BJP leaders did mention this issue in their campaign rhetoric with the Prime Minister defending CAA as "1,000 percent correct".

Despite the state-specific explanations which we discuss below, the outcome must be rattling for the BJP because while state-level factors caused the defeat, all-India implications are unmistakable. The Jharkhand outcome fits into a pattern. In consonance with the trends across the country since the Gujarat Assembly elections, state polls have seen a specific focus on local specificities rather than national issues and the influence of the central leaders of parties — particularly the BJP — has been rather limited. More significantly, the voter choices appear to be increasingly different from national to state elections.

Loss of popularity for CM

While all-India narratives did not work, problems faced by voters of Jharkhand might still be the same as those faced by citizens elsewhere. The data emerging from the CSDS-Lokniti Post-Poll Survey in Jharkhand endorse the critical role of local factors and developments in explaining the electoral outcomes in the state. More than four of every ten respondents (43%) in the Jharkhand post-poll survey indicated that economic issues were the most important factor that influenced their voting choice (Table 6). The state government had to bear the brunt of popular dissatisfaction on this account.

Thus, it is important to record that in the post-poll survey, more than half the respondents (55%) expressed their dissatisfaction with the outgoing Raghubar Das government (Table 1). In a sense, the present outcome was pre-destined because at the time of the Lok Sabha elections too, the Raghubar Das government was not at all popular.

At the time of the state election, the ex-tent of dissatisfaction with the state government increased from 37 per cent in April-May 2019. Five years ago, the post-poll survey done at the time of the 2014 state assembly elections indicated that just over one-third (34%) of the respondents were dissatisfied with the then Soren government in the state.

What is more, half the respondents said they did not want the Das government to be given another chance. Only a little over one in every three voters were willing to give the government another chance — incidentally, that is exactly the vote share of the BJP in the election.

A linked factor is the low levels of approval for the incumbent Chief Minister (Figure 1). When respondents were asked an open-ended question on who they would prefer as the Chief Minister after the Assembly polls, just over one of every ten respondents (14%) mentioned the name of Raghubar Das. Hemant Soren's name was mentioned by over one-fifth of the respondents (21%). This seven-percentage-point gap between the incumbent and his challenger is indicative of how the popularity of state-level leaders could have influenced the electoral verdict.

Modi factor limited

For quite some time now, the Indian electorate has been making a clear distinction between national-level and state polls. The data clearly indicate that national issues could well have been accorded a lower level of priority in the state polls. In an Assembly poll, local factors and the impact of economic factors appear to play an important role. Nevertheless, some attrition in the overall popularity of the BJP is evident. So much so, that even the "Modi factor" played a limited role and voters seemed to have begun to be disenchanted with the central government as well.

Compared to the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, this time around two of every five of those who had voted for the BJP changed their party choice (Table 3). Among BJP voters, only two of every ten mentioned that they voted for the party on account of Prime Minister Modi (Table 2). Moreover, among the respondents in Jharkhand there has been a dip in the popularity of the central government since it assumed power for a second term.

At the time of the Lok Sabha poll of 2019, three-fourths of the respondents in Jharkhand had expressed satisfaction with the performance of the central government (Figure 2). Now, in the post-poll in Jharkhand, less than half the respondents (47%) expressed satisfaction with the performance of the central government. If at the time of the Lok Sabha polls one-fourth were fully satisfied with the performance of the central government, that number has steeply dipped to one-seventh of the respondents at the time of the Jharkhand assembly polls. If one-fourth were dissatisfied with the performance of the central government at the time of the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, it has increased to close to half the respondents (47%) around the time of the Jharkhand Assembly polls.

The implications of these trends are important. While local factors and dissatisfaction with the state government did play a central role in shaping voters' choice, the popularity of the Prime Minister or the performance of the central government could not bail out the state government; in fact, the result suggests a more all-round distancing by the voters from the BJP.

Demographic divisions

The BJP breaking its alliance with the All Jharkhand Students Union (AJSU) could have contributed to splitting the vote and working to the advantage of the JMM-led alliance. If one were to combine the vote share of the BJP and AJSU in the 81 constituencies, it would have been leading in 40 seats. However, this simplistic calculation becomes somewhat irrelevant in the backdrop of overall dissatisfaction with state government.

With almost no community barring the OBCs feeling that the state government did indeed take care of its interests, the JMM-Congress-RJD coalition managed to forge a winning combination of different segments of the society. Thus, in explaining how the BJP lost Jharkhand, it may be useful to look at a few key demographic variations in support for the JMM-led alliance and the BJP (Table 7). There was not much variation in support for BJP if the educational attainment of the respondent is kept in mind. The gap between the BJP and the JMM-led alliance appears consistent across age groups, though the BJP did marginally better among older voters as compared to youth. The real difference is noticed in terms of economic categories. The BJP did much better among the more affluent voters while the JMM-led alliance performed much better among the economically less privileged.

The tribal vote is a key factor in the state of Jharkhand. Compared to the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP was able to retain only half the tribal vote in the Assembly polls (Table 4). The BJP vote share fell sharply among the Oraon and other Scheduled Tribes, save the Santhals and Mundas. This factor was critical to the defeat of the BJP and the victory of the JMM-led alliance.

The CSDS-Lokniti post-poll data for Jharkhand also indicate a clear religious divide in terms of support. While the BJP had an eight-percentage-point advantage in terms of the Hindu vote, the JMM alliance had a huge double-digit advantage when it came to the religious minorities and others. The alliance had an 18-percentage-point lead among the Christians, a 39-percentage-point lead among the Muslims and a 12-percent-age-point lead among the others (Table 5).

The inability of the BJP to swing the non-Hindu vote in its favour and decline of support among the Hindus (especially the Yadavs) is key to explaining the defeat of the ruling party.

Overall, it is evident that the Jharkhand result was a clear manifestation of popular discontent with the state government and the leadership. Voting differently from how they did in April-May, just six months ago, voters in Jharkhand manifested the nuanced habit of treating the all-India and the state levels as different terrains of issues, leadership and performance.

The BJP campaign in Jharkhand focused on national trends and relied more on national level leadership. This seemed to be of little consequence for the electorate in Jharkhand for whom the track record of their government in the state and the confidence that they had in state level leaders seemed to be of key significance. In the process, while the BJP lost Jharkhand, it also lost considerably in terms of the prestige and popularity of its national leadership and central government.

While the BJP had an 8-percentage-point advantage in terms of the Hindu vote, the JMM alliance had an 18-percentage-point lead among the Christians, and a 39-percentage-point lead among the Muslims

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FIGURE 2: DECLINE IN SATISFACTION WITH CENTRAL GOVT (%)

QUESTION ASKED: Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the performance of the BJP/NDA government at the Centre?

	2019 Vidhan Sabha	2019 Lok Sabha	2014 Vidhan Sabha
Fully satisfied with Modi government	15	24	31
Somewhat satisfied	32	52	49
Somewhat dissatisfied	32	15	10
Fully dissatisfied with Modi government	15	8	6
No response	1	5	4

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding

TABLE 1: DAS GOVT ASSESSED FAR MORE NEGATIVELY THAN SOREN GOVT

QUESTION ASKED: Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the performance of the ruling state government in Jharkhand?

	During 2019 Vidhan Sabha (Das govt)	During 2019 Lok Sabha (Das govt)	During 2014 Vidhan Sabha (Soren govt)
Fully satisfied	13	13	11
Somewhat satisfied	26	48	51
Somewhat dissatisfied	31	27	14
Fully dissatisfied	24	10	20
No response	6	2	5

Note: Figures are percentages & may not total 100 due to rounding
Sample size (N) in 2019 VS – 2700; N in LS 2019 – 648; N in 2014 – 1608

TABLE 2: WHICH OF THESE MATTERED MOST TO VOTERS (%)

	Party	Candidate	CM candidate	Narendra Modi
Voters of JMM+	50	32	12	1
BJP voters	50	18	9	21
AJSU Voters	57	30	5	3
JVM voters	44	42	12	2
Voters of other parties	31	61	3	2
Overall	43	30	8	8

TABLE 6: ECONOMIC ISSUES TOP PRIORITY FOR VOTERS

QUESTION ASKED: What was the single most important issue for you while voting in this election?

Unemployment	18
Rising prices	16
Development and governance	10
Education and health	10
Corruption	9
Basic needs	7
Poverty	6
Political choice-related	4
Crimes and law & order	4
Housing	3
Farmer woes	2
Caste and tribal identity related	2
Terrorism and Naxalism	2
Environment	1
Hindutva-related	<1
NRC and CAA	<1
Other issues	1
No response	5

TABLE 7: IN VOTING PATTERNS BY KEY SOCIAL DEMOGRAPHICS IN JHARKHAND, PREFERENCES ARE MOST DIVIDED AMONG ECONOMIC CLASSES

	JMM-Congress+	BJP	AJSU	JVM	Others
EDUCATION					
Non Literate	38	31	9	5	18
Up to Primary	32	37	8	6	16
Up to Matric	38	34	8	5	15
College and above	33	33	8	5	22
AGE					
Up to 25 yrs	35	31	9	5	20
26-35 yrs	35	34	10	6	16
36-45 yrs	37	32	7	6	18
46-55 yrs	39	34	6	5	16
56 yrs and above	32	36	8	6	19
ECONOMIC CLASS					
Poor	38	36	9	3	14
Lower	37	31	10	5	17
Middle	34	34	8	6	19
Rich	32	35	5	7	20
OCCUPATION					
Farmers	36	40	7	5	12
Non-farmers	35	32	8	6	19

Source: Lokniti-CSDS Post Poll Survey; percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding off

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TABLE 3: BJP LOST TWO OF FIVE OF ITS LOK SABHA VOTERS TO OTHER PARTIES, GAINED VERY LITTLE FROM OTHERS' SUPPORTERS

	Party voted for in Assembly Election 2019				
	JMM-Congress+	BJP	AJSU	JVM	Others
JMM-Cong-RJD's LS 2019 voter	73	3	2	4	18
BJP's LS 2019 voter	17	58	9	4	12
AJSU's LS 2019 voter	7	32	61	—	—
JVM's LS 2019 voter	29	2	2	60	7
Others' LS 2019 voter	10	—	2	—	88
Did not reveal LS vote	17	8	14	13	48
Did not vote in LS elections	33	23	7	4	34

Note: Figures are percentages and may not add up to 100 because of rounding off

TABLE 4: COMMUNITY-WISE GAINS & LOSSES SINCE 2014 (%)

	JMM-Congress+ gains/ losses compared to 2014	BJP gains/losses compared to 2014
CASTE-COMMUNITIES		
Upper caste	-2	-8
Yadav	+11	-14
Kurmi	-11	-4
Other OBC	+2	-6
Jatav	+1	-2
Other SC	-1	+14
Oraon (Hindu and Christian)	+8	-21
Santhal (Hindu and Christian)	+2	+13
Munda (Hindu and Christian)	-7	+22
Other ST	-11	-13

Note: Although JMM and Congress-RJD contested separately in 2014, the JMM-Congress gains and losses here have been calculated after combining JMM and Congress-RJD vote share of 2014; although BJP and AJSU contested separately in 2019, BJP gains and losses have been calculated with respect to the BJP-AJSU alliance in 2014.

TABLE 5: THE RELIGION VOTE, AS SHARED AMONG PARTIES

	JMM-Congress+	BJP	AJSU	JVM	Others
Hindu	31	39	9	6	16
Muslim	53	14	5	6	22
Christian	41	23	7	4	25
Other	40	28	9	4	19

Note: Figures are percentages and may not add up to 100 because of rounding off

TABLE 8: BJP RETAINS ONLY HALF ITS ST VOTE SINCE LS POLLS

Communities	BJP's retention of its LS vote
Upper caste	70
Yadav	49
Kurmi	58
Other OBC	65
SC	57
ST	49
Religion	
Hindu	60
Muslim	66
Christian	40
Other	49
Economic classes	
Poor	61
Lower	53
Middle	59
Rich	65
Age groups	
18-25	51
26-35	62
36-45	55
46-55	66
56+	59

Methodology

THE FINDINGS here are from a post-poll survey conducted in Jharkhand by the Lokniti programme of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS). It was conducted from December 2 through December 22, 2019 among 2,700 voters in 108 polling stations spread across 27 Assembly constituencies. The sampling design adopted was multi-stage random sampling. The constituencies were randomly selected using the probability proportional to size method. Thereafter, four polling stations within each of the sampled constituencies were selected using the systematic random sampling method. Within each polling station, 35 voters were randomly sampled from the electoral roll using the systematic random sampling method. Of these 35, 25 interviews were targeted. Except in Phase 5, in all other phases the interviews were conducted a day or two after they had voted. The interviews were conducted face-to-face in Hindi using a standardised questionnaire. In order to ensure representativeness, the achieved raw sample has been weighted by Gender, Religion, Locality, and Caste group based on Census 2011 data. The survey was designed, supervised and analysed by a team of researchers associated with Lokniti. The survey was coordinated and supervised in Jharkhand by Harishwar Dayal (Associate Professor, Department of Economics, St. Xavier's College, Ranchi) and Amit Kumar (Institute for Human Development, Ranchi). It was directed by Prof. Sanjay Kumar of CSDS, Delhi.