

# India's 2014 Lok Sabha Elections

## Critical Shifts in the Long Term, Caution in the Short Term

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A clear majority for the Bharatiya Janata Party in the Lok Sabha and its spread across most states in the 2014 general elections marks a departure from the electoral outcomes of almost a quarter century. The BJP's success was made possible, among other factors, due to its electoral strategy of reinventing social engineering in what may be termed as its second transformation. As a result, it secured significant support among the Other Backward Classes as well as scheduled caste and scheduled tribe voters to gain a winning edge. Besides this, its promise of development and the projection of Modi as a strong and decisive leader attracted support among the lower and middle classes. This will have far-reaching implications to the structure of party competition in the coming years and shape the post-Congress polity. However, enthusiastic over-readings of the mandate would pose a challenge to the BJP even as it searches for ways to entrench itself as a dominant national party in India.

Observers and students of India's politics during the past quarter of a century have not been used to analysing election outcome that is as unambiguous and straightforward as that of the 16th Lok Sabha elections. This is understandable because 1984 was the last election to have thrown up an outright majority for one party with a clear choice of a leader to become prime minister. All governments since then have been dependent on coalitions and intense bargaining among partners of the ruling alliances or those who supported from outside. The outcome of the 16th Lok Sabha, therefore, has evoked a response of relief among the political commentators and analysts, if for nothing else, for the fact that one party – the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) – has achieved a clear majority of seats in the Lok Sabha. Most opinion polls before the elections predicted a lead for the BJP but given the experience of hung parliaments and coalition governments, none could predict the scale of BJP's victory. In that sense, the BJP's final tally of 282 seats did appear quite dramatic and reversing the electoral trend that India saw over the past three decades.

If the outcome has been dramatic, though by no means unexpected, the run-up to the elections was no less dramatic. As we argue below, the BJP managed to transform itself almost beyond recognition during the campaign and during the year preceding the elections. The rise of Narendra Modi as the central figure, around whom the BJP's campaign revolved, made the elections something of a plebiscite on the leader rather than a choice of either candidates in constituencies or a new set of political elite. This development was rather weakly countered by the Congress Party by relying helplessly on the expected charisma of its young and inexperienced leader, Rahul Gandhi. The "presidential turn" gave a sudden fillip to the BJP by infusing new life in the party and enthused the activists of the party that otherwise looked drifting and listless a year ago. This practically eclipsed the more routine discussions around local issues, state-level configurations, the socio-economic alternatives that parties offered, etc. And when the results finally came in, parties, media and academics were unanimous in labelling the outcome as victory for Narendra Modi.

Surely, the role of Modi and his prowess to single-handedly manoeuvre the electoral battle for his party cannot be underestimated. But the complexity of electoral politics in India demands that we carefully examine the combination of factors that produced this outcome. Even if Modi were the single-most

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crucial architect of the outcome, the question as to what he represented, whom he addressed his appeal, how voters responded to the situation, and what different politics went into the making of this campaign are questions worth probing if the analysis were not to be another paean in the stream of Modi-praise.

**Continuities and Changes in the Post-Congress Polity**

Let us first look at where this electoral outcome departed from the trends of the immediate past. The fall of Rajiv Gandhi and the emergence of the “coalition era” are associated with the decline of the Congress and the rise of the post-Congress polity. Since 1989, the life of the post-Congress polity has so far undergone two phases (Palshikar, Suri and Yadav 2014: 4-5). Its first phase was quite naturally characterised by a halting evolution of coalition politics, clumsy instability of political configurations accompanied by unstable and short-lived governments. The second phase of the post-Congress polity saw semblance of order and stability when the Vajpayee-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government completed its term. This phase also saw political adjustments in the form of two coalitions. Though their internal composition was rather fluid, the NDA and the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) could, between themselves, garner a stable proportion of votes and seats, hovering between 50% and 60%. As a result, they also ensured that power alternated only between them at the all-India level, although they could not outsmart the many state-level players from ruling at the state level, forcing the lead parties in both coalitions to bend quite often.

The combined vote share of the Congress and BJP could not cross 52% of the votes, except in 1991 and their combined seat share too, did not go beyond 60%, again, except in 1991 (for details see Table 1.8 in Palshikar, Suri and Yadav 2014: 18). In 2014, too, their combined vote share barely crosses 50% and their combined seat share is exactly 60%. The effective number of parties by votes (ENP/v)<sup>1</sup> in the Lok Sabha after the 2014 election stood at 6.95 (Table 1); which again, though slightly less than in 2009, is fairly comparable with the trends in past few elections. The only change worth noting is in the case of effective number of parties by seats (ENP/s). Departing from the trend where ENP/s used to be in the range of five to six, this time it was 3.45 (compare these for instance with the Table 1.7 in Palshikar, Suri and Yadav 2014). Stated simply, this means that whereas the number of parties that mattered in the electoral fray has remained more or less the same – and to that extent the structure of competition appears to be the same as before – the outcome is different in that the number of parties that matter in the conduct of the 16th Lok Sabha has declined in this election. Thus, the outcome of the 2014 elections articulates remarkable stability of some aspects of electoral competition (as seen from Table 2) while in terms of political reality producing potentially very significant long-term changes.

These elections also saw significant increase in the rate of shift in electoral support from one party to the other when compared to the elections held in recent years. The electoral

volatility<sup>2</sup> in 2014 crossed 20%, which is considered to be high and akin to the political situation that we saw during the 1980s and 1990s, indicating huge shifts that took place in party preferences among the voters.

**Table 1: Effective Number of Parties and Electoral Volatility (1984-2014)**

Year of Election	Effective Number of Parties		Electoral Volatility	
	Votes	Seats	Election Period	Volatility
1984	4.0	1.7	1980-84	23.9
1989	4.8	4.1	1984-89	28.2
1991	5.1	3.6	1989-91	12.9
1996	7.1	5.8	1991-96	20.7
1998	6.9	5.3	1996-98	20.0
1999	6.7	5.7	1998-99	16.7
2004	7.6	6.5	1999-2004	14.0
2009	7.7	5.0	2004-09	15.6
2014	7.0	3.5	2009-14	22.7

**Table 2: Parties Represented in the 16th Lok Sabha**

Number of Seats/Year of Election	2014	2009
Parties with only one seat	10	13
With two or three seats	10	7
With more than three but less than 10 seats	8	7
With 10 to 19 seats	3	5
With 20 or more than 20 seats	5	4
Effective number of parties (by seats)	3.5	5.0
Total number of parties represented in LS	36	36
Number of parties that participated in the elections	465	363

Another change that we witness in the outcome of 2014 is worth noting. Appreciating this change would also help in putting the BJP victory in perspective. The BJP polled 31% of the votes in the election. This was indeed a great leap for the party that had receded to barely 19% votes in 2009. While a changeover of 12% of the votes is in itself a measure of the social ground the party managed to cover, the key to its success lies elsewhere. With 31% of the votes, the BJP managed to win almost 52% of the seats in the Lok Sabha. Such huge asymmetry between seat and vote shares is not unknown in simple plurality systems (first-past-the-post (FPTP) system), and certainly not at all in the Indian context. But for the BJP, this was a major achievement. In technical terms, this means that a very favourable seat-vote multiplier<sup>3</sup> was attained by the party.

Ever since the BJP emerged as a serious player in national electoral politics in 1989, the multiplier for it has always been one or more (meaning that the party used to get more than 1% of the seats for each 1% of the vote it polled (Yadav and Palshikar 2009: 37)). But this time, the multiplier turns out to be 1.67; i e, the BJP could garner many more seats as compared to its vote share. This is far greater than the multiplier that the Congress could achieve even during its somewhat comfortable performance in 2009 (with a multiplier of 1.31). The BJP got approximately 3% more votes compared to the Congress in 2009, but could not emerge as the party with absolute majority in the Lok Sabha. This favourable development only reflects the ground reality that the BJP had much better capacity to translate its vote share into seats across states.

Not that the BJP was successful in winning seats in all states in a uniform manner. Appendix IV (pp 132-34) in this issue

shows that even after this rather dramatic victory, the existence of the BJP is spatially skewed. It has consolidated where it was strong earlier too – in the regions of north, central and western India and remained somewhat weak in south, east and the north-east. Table 1 brings this out. As the state-wise results shown in Appendix IV suggest, the BJP is definitely making headway in states in the south and the east. For instance, in Odisha, it has positioned itself as the main opposition to the Biju Janata Dal (BJD); and in Assam to the Congress. But at the same time, its victory in 2014 was crafted in specific regions of the country. In south and east, it polled 20% of the votes – much below its national average – and also failed to translate that into a dramatic increase in seat share (its seat share there remains in the range of 25% of the seats). Looking at the election result from the side of the regional parties, Kailash explains in his paper in this issue (p 64) why some regional parties flourished and others fizzled out. He makes a distinction between regionally-located parties and regionalist parties and points out that the latter fared relatively better. He further says that the electoral strategy of the BJP was favourable to the electoral fortunes of regionalist parties and disadvantageous to the regionally-located parties.

The outcome of the 16th Lok Sabha elections, thus, remains a part of the post-Congress polity and yet takes the logic of post-Congress polity much farther, and perhaps in a different direction. The Congress is reduced to a very diminutive position in the new Lok Sabha. Its defeat and also the adversities that the party might face in many states in the near future mean that the equilibrium between two larger and so-called all-India parties is now altered completely. While the state parties remain sizeable even now, their role is cut back to only the state level; coalitions would still continue to be political necessity but the internal equation within the NDA has changed in such a fashion that the partners of NDA have to be content with being satellites of the BJP. Thus, the balance within the NDA and that between the nationwide parties (particularly the BJP) and the state parties has also shifted in favour of the BJP.

**Performance and Personality**

In spite of the spatial skew that we see from Table 3, it must be admitted that both in terms of vote share and seats, the performance of the BJP was very impressive. Even in regions where it is traditionally not very strong, the party eased out the Congress. It became the first party since 1996 to cross 30% in vote share as also the first non-Congress Party ever to gain clear majority on its own in the Lok Sabha (excluding the Janata Party (JP) of course, which was not a party in the conventional sense but an agglomeration of disparate parts). Many factors help explain the ability of the BJP to achieve this distinction. The papers on both BJP and the Congress in this special issue attempt to explain these factors.

The Congress Party was leading the UPA for two terms and as such the decade-long occupation of office brought many negatives to the party. The non-political leadership of the government, the awkward bifurcation of governmental power

and party power, the indecision within the Congress over policy direction and political strategy, the suicidal response of the UPA to the anti-corruption movement, all direct attention to the deficit of politics from which the party was suffering. The economic slowdown added to the adverse public opinion against the Congress. No wonder then that popular dissatisfaction with the UPA government constituted an important factor for the outcome that saw decimation of the Congress Party. In other words, this train of thinking would lead us to believe that BJP won more because of Congress ineptitude and governmental performance. How far is this an accurate understanding? Table 3 reports the low levels of voter satisfaction about the performance of the UPA since 2011.

**Table 3: Lok Sabha Results by Regions**

(figures in the row show seats/vote share for parties)

	South	East	North-East	North	Central	West	Overall
Total seats	132	117	25	151	40	78	543
Congress	19/18.6	6/12.5	8/29.8	6/17.2	3/35.9	2/23.4	44/19.3
Cong allies	4/1.4	7/7.4	0/1.5	0/0.7	0/0.0	4/10.7	15/3.7
BJP	22/15.6	37/23.8	8/28.1	125/41.5	37/52.5	53/38.5	282/31.0
BJP allies	18/14.2	9/2.8	1/4.2	6/3.4	0/0.0	19/15.4	53/7.4
Left	8/5.8	2/13.2	2/7.3	0/0.3	0/0.5	0/0.4	12/4.8
BSP	0/0.6	0/1.1	0/0.0	0/11.6	0/3.4	0/2.0	0/4.1
SP	0/0.0	0/0.2	0/0.1	5/11.8	0/0.6	0/0.1	5/3.4
Other parties	61/42.8	56/37.6	6/28.0	9/12.7	0/5.6	0/8.3	132/25.2
NOTA	1.0	1.4	1.0	0.8	1.5	1.2	1.1

The table shows a clear pattern marked by low levels of satisfaction with UPA and a strong sentiment of dissatisfaction. Among the dissatisfied voters, BJP was the main choice rather than other non-Congress parties. Thus, in the pre-election survey, 40% of those who were “somewhat dissatisfied” and 52%

**Table 4: Satisfaction with Performance of UPA (2011-14)**

	Fully Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Fully Dissatisfied
August 2011	16	34	12	18
June 2013	10	28	13	27
Jan 2014	8	27	16	34
March 2014	13	33	12	31

All figures in percentages (rounded off). Remaining respondents gave no opinion. The survey in August 2011 was carried out as State of Nation Survey while the June 2013 and January 2014 surveys were part of the Lokniti-CNN-IBN Tracker Polls and had the same sample for both surveys; the March survey was pre-poll survey as part of National Election Study – NES 2014. N (total sample) for August 2011 –20,854; for June 2013, N=19,062; Jan 2014, N=18,596; and March 2014, N=20,951. For more details, see www.lokniti.org

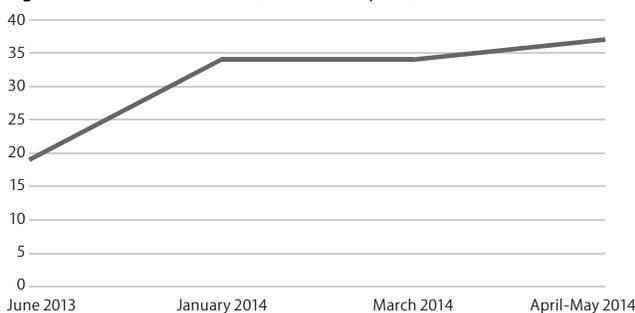
of those who were “fully dissatisfied” indicated that they would vote for the BJP. Even in states ruled by non-Congress/non-BJP parties, the BJP was the preferred party for as many as 35% dissatisfied voters. But more than its government at the centre, the Congress suffered more because of the adverse voters’ assessment of its state governments. In Congress-ruled states, the Congress was the choice of only 40% among those satisfied with its performance at the state level (with another 7% intending to vote Congress allies). In contrast, in BJP-ruled states, BJP was the choice of as many as 73% of the voters satisfied with the performance of their state government. Besides,

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satisfaction with state governments appears to be more crucial than satisfaction with UPA in influencing vote decisions at the state level. Thus, states where the voters expressed double dissatisfaction, BJP (and its allies) made gains (as in Andhra, Bihar, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh (UP)). Similarly, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh (MP), and Chhattisgarh were marked by huge satisfaction with the state government and that shaped the outcome in those states. This is also true of Odisha, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu. Thus, satisfaction with the state government appears to be the key determinant in most states, probably with the exception of only Karnataka, where the Congress could not cash on the double satisfaction. It needs to be noted that except Kerala and Karnataka, in all Congress-ruled states, people were dissatisfied with the state government more than the central government.

The BJP could thus benefit from the popular disaffection towards UPA and satisfaction with its own state governments because it presented itself as a credible alternative. The performance of the BJP during the decade when it was in opposition was only very moderate. However, this limitation was quickly offset by the fact that BJP made headway in projecting as a party of strong leadership. As we shall discuss below in the next section, the decision to project Modi enormously helped the party. Between June 2013 and January 2014, the popularity of Modi soared and he became successful in forcing a plebiscitary choice on the electorate. Figure 1 shows how popularity of Modi went on increasing much before the campaign began. National Election Study (NES) 2014 also found that many voters may have voted for BJP as a result of the “Modi factor”. When asked whether the respondent would have voted differently if

**Figure 1: Preference for Modi** (June 2013 to May 2014)



These responses are based on an open-ended question as to who the respondent would like to become the next prime minister. No names were provided. Source: Tracker Polls (June 2013 and January 2014); pre-poll (March 2014) and NES 2014 post-poll (April-May 2014).

Modi had not been BJP’s candidate for prime minister, 27% of BJP voters answered in the affirmative. Sandeep Shastri and Reetika Syal in their paper in this issue (p 77) argue that leadership was one of the determining factors in these elections and that the impact of leadership factor needs to be viewed in context. They say that the Congress leadership which was proved to be ineffective and directionless added sheen to the BJP’s projection of Modi as decisive, effective and experienced leader.

Thus, it is clear that the BJP benefited from three factors. One was the dissatisfaction with the UPA government. Another was the relatively higher level of dissatisfaction with Congress’s

state governments and relatively higher level of satisfaction with BJP’s state governments. The third factor was its leadership choice of Modi. In other words, circumstances certainly favoured the BJP, but its governmental performance and its strategy of choosing Modi as its leader helped it leapfrog its opponents. Therefore, the outcome is not only about the failure of the UPA or inability of Rahul Gandhi to attract the voters. It was as much due to Congress’s failure as it was due to BJP’s electoral strategy. Therefore, we need to further examine how the BJP managed to bring about this outcome.

**Transformation of the BJP**

Any analysis of the electoral success of the BJP must also take into account the internal transformation the party went through and thus, in the process, managed to win over large sections of Hindu voters. During the Masjid-Mandal controversies, BJP underwent its first transformation and reaped rich dividends in the 1990s. Similarly, 2014 marks the second transformation of the BJP. In the media din over UPA non-performance and the larger-than-life image of Modi, this transformation went almost unnoticed.

The BJP, known since its inception and more so in its earlier avatar of the Bharatiya Jan Sangh for its urban base, middle-class, upper-caste Hindu orientation, was able to muster considerable support from backward caste Hindus and dalits. In 2014, not only did the largest proportion of the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) vote at the national level go in favour of the BJP, but it also constituted the largest share within the vote received by the BJP. The party also received a substantial proportion of the dalit and adivasi vote in different parts of the country. Thus, the party’s victory points towards a transformation of the BJP. While electoral politics in India has often evidenced its capacity to bring newer sections into the political arena, this was much more in evidence during the 1990s. That process has been described as the “second democratic upsurge” (Yadav 1999: 2397-98) wherein the weaker sections, women, dalits, adivasis and OBCs became not only crucial as electors but began to claim share in power. While this development was caused by the political space vacated by the Congress in the initial phase of the post-Congress polity, in turn, the process also punished the Congress for ignoring the lessons of this churning. Just as this social churning consigned some parties to history, it produced new political formations and forced the older ones to adapt to the new social environment. The BJP has shown its readiness to adapt to this new sociopolitical situation.

The BJP has been a major player in the northern and the western regions of India from the 1970s onwards. However, its social base remained largely among the upper-caste Hindus who also constituted a large proportion of the urban middle classes. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the party sought to rise to prominence by forging political and electoral support on the basis of the Hindutva ideology by taking up the issues of Ram temple in Ayodhya, uniform civil code and the special status for Kashmir. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the BJP faced the dilemma of balancing its older upper-caste character

during the Mandal controversy and its efforts to forge a larger Hindu unity for the Ayodhya agitation.

In response to these developments, both for purposes of broadening the catchment area for its Hindutva ideology and for responding to democratic compulsions, the BJP began to transform itself. The party realised that it has to become responsive to the leadership ambitions of the intermediate castes, the backwards and the dalits and accommodate them in leadership positions. Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) strategist KN Govindacharya theorised the effort of promoting backward-caste leaders as “social engineering”. This was the moment when its electoral performance for the first time included a fair proportion of OBCs alerting analysts to the “new social bloc” (Yadav et al 1999; Heath 1999). This transformation of the BJP has been noticed by scholars monitoring the silent changes obtaining in the BJP (Jaffrelot 2003), the social composition of Hindutva (Hansen 1999) and social composition of elected representatives (Jaffrelot and Kumar 2009). Kalyan Singh, the then leader of the legislature party in UP assembly, was made the face of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. The OBC leaders such as Uma Bharati and Vinay Katiyar were brought to the forefront. The social engineering adopted by the BJP saw the party increase its tally from eight to 52 in UP in the 1991 Lok Sabha elections. In the 1996 Lok Sabha elections the BJP emerged as the single largest party pushing the Congress to a second place for the first time. The party won 51 seats in 1996, and 57 in 1998, more than one-fourth of all the seats it won in the country.

For the past two decades leaders from middle and backward castes became the face of the party at the state level too. Venakiah Naidu, a Kamma, and Bangaru Laxman, a dalit from Andhra Pradesh, became party presidents. The party projected leaders such as Uma Bharati (a Lodh) who became the chief minister of Madhya Pradesh followed by Shivraj Singh Chouhan (Kidar caste); Sushil Kumar Modi in Bihar; and Gopinath Munde (Vanjari caste) in Maharashtra. But this period also saw an uneasy coexistence of the upper castes and the backward castes in the BJP, from whom the party drew support in almost an equal measure. The same upper castes that once supported the Congress vis-à-vis the middle and backward castes but now abandoned that in favour of the BJP, wanted to reassert their dominance once the BJP was in power. They desired that those who worked towards a radical realignment of the Hindu sections either remain insignificant or irrelevant. Prominent backward-caste leaders either left the party or were marginalised. Govindacharya had to leave the party due to factional politics. Kalyan Singh, who once was in the league of Atal Behari Vajpayee, Advani and Joshi, left the party. Uma Bharati too met the same fate.

The 2014 election saw a renewal of the BJP’s strategy to expand its electoral support among the OBCs and the dalits with a determination to stage a comeback. This was epitomised by the rise of Modi in the party on the eve of elections to become its chief campaigner and the projected prime ministerial candidate. Modi had all the characteristics of a plebeian rising to the high level of becoming the chief minister of an important state.

He made optimum use of his humble social origins. As the electoral campaign progressed, Modi more explicitly went on referring to his backward caste background. His emphatic victory in Gujarat assembly elections of 2012, third time in a row, brought him to the centre stage of national politics.

As the election campaign progressed, Modi became very strident in his references to political rights of the backward castes. He said that the BJP was no longer an upper-caste party (Virendra Pandit, “BJP’s Social Engineering”, *The Hindu Business Line*, 21 March 2004). Speaking at a rally in Muzaffarpur in Bihar on 3 March 2014, Narendra Modi emphasised his own lower-caste origins, and said: “The next decade will belong to the dalits and the backwards.” In south India, inaugurating the centenary meet organised by the Kerala Pulayar Mahasabha in Kochi, Modi said that the saints and social reformers in the past century had belonged to either the dalit or backward sections of the society. He wondered why a memorial honouring the contribution of Ayyankal was not built in Kerala. He further declared: “The coming decade will be the decade of the marginalized sections of society” (George 2014).

As the 2014 elections approached, Congress had already failed to inspire confidence among the OBCs that they could share power with the help of the party. The OBC parties such as Samajwadi Party, Rashtriya Janata Dal and even Janata Dal (United) that held the promise of representing the democratic upsurge and radically restructuring the society had reached a dead-end in their OBC politics due to the perception they were only interested to perpetuate the political dominion of certain OBC groups around one leader or a family.

In this context, the BJP was not only present at the right juncture, but it has shrewdly positioned itself as a reliable

**Table 5a: Party Preferences by Caste and Community in the 2014 LS Election**

Party/Social Background	Upper	OBC		SC	ST	Muslim	Others
	Caste	Upper	Lower	Total			
<b>Congress</b>							
% within caste/community	13	15	16	15	19	28	23
% within the party	15	19	9	28	16	9	23
<b>BJP</b>							
% within caste/community	47	30	42	34	24	38	9
% within the party	33	25	14	39	13	7	3

**Table 5b: Vote for the BJP among Different Hindu Social Groups in Elections during the Period 1996-2009**

Year of Election	Upper Castes	OBC	SC	ST
<b>1996</b>				
Within the caste group		29	17	13
Within the BJP		49	33	11
<b>1998</b>				
Within the caste group		31	26	14
Within the BJP		41	41	10
<b>1999</b>				
Within the caste group		35	20	14
Within the BJP		46	36	11
<b>2004</b>				
Within the caste group		28	22	13
Within the BJP		40	39	11
<b>2009</b>				
Within the caste group		21	19	11
Within the BJP		36	43	11

Source: NES 1996, NES 1998, NES 1999, NES 2004 and NES 2009.

platform for all Hindus, particularly the backward Hindus who saw an opportunity in BJP's stance on social justice as well as development. Thus, we see that the BJP's victory was a result of a huge shift of voters towards the BJP this time, cutting across caste, class, regional, gender lines and age groups. The shift was more pronounced among the backward-caste voters, especially the lower OBCs. About one-third of the OBCs voted for the BJP, and they constituted nearly 40% of all the votes the BJP got in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections (Table 5a, p 43). At its peak of its electoral performance in the 1998 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP got only 26% of the OBC vote and 14% of the dalit vote (Table 5b, p 43). Pradeep Chhibber and Rahul Verma (p 50) in their paper demonstrate how the BJP put together an unprecedented social coalition in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. In addition to the upper castes and OBCs, the BJP received considerable support from the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. If we ignore the miserable performance in 2009 elections, and take the 1998 elections as a point to compare the results of the 2014 elections, the BJP saw a rise of 8% vote among the OBCs, 10% among the scheduled castes, and 14% among the scheduled tribes in 2014 elections (Table 5b).

But if we look at the vote share of the BJP among different castes and communities in states in which it has a strong presence, the preference of the OBCs for the party becomes more

**Table 6: Voter Preference in Terms of Caste Background for the BJP in Different States in the 2014 LS Elections**

Social Background	Upper Caste	OBC	SC	ST
<b>Bihar</b>				
% within the social group	45	23	28	*
% within the party	38	42	17	
<b>Chhattisgarh</b>				
% within the social group	45	56	38	44
% within the party	8	52	12	28
<b>Delhi</b>				
% within the social group	56	37	33	*
% within the party	63	25	12	
<b>Gujarat</b>				
% within the social group	69	62	31	42
% within the party	35	49	3	12
<b>Jharkhand</b>				
% within the social group	51	38	38	37
% within the party	25	40	12	22
<b>Karnataka</b>				
% within the social group	59	43	36	26
% within the party	22	61	14	4
<b>Madhya Pradesh</b>				
% within the social group	59	55	43	54
% within the party	32	36	13	20
<b>Maharashtra</b>				
% within the social group	27	30	17	37
% within the party	49	35	7	9
<b>Odisha</b>				
% within the social group	25	24	17	18
% within the party	20	49	13	19
<b>Rajasthan</b>				
% within the social group	61	54	47	59
% within the party	26	44	15	15
<b>Uttar Pradesh</b>				
% within the social group	59	42	24	*
% within the party	37	49	13	

\* Too small a sample to report frequency and percentage for the social group.

striking. In the states where the BJP has been strong, such as UP, Bihar, MP, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Uttarakhand, the party received about 40% of the upper OBC vote, and about half of the votes among the lower OBCs.

Moreover, the "Mandalisation" of the BJP did not lead to an erosion of support for the party among the upper-caste voters. Probably, the upper-caste voters and the OBC voters have learnt that they can prefer the party at the same time without jeopardising each other's interest and compromising on their positions. For instance, in Bihar two-thirds of the upper-caste voters voted for the BJP, while in UP the proportion went up to three-fourth, constituting about 40% of the total BJP vote in these two states (Table 6). As Sanjay Kumar (p 95) argues in his paper, the BJP's ability to forge a new social coalition of voters from different castes helped the party and its allies to register a massive victory in Bihar.

The foregoing discussion does not suggest that the support of certain caste communities in isolation made BJP's electoral victory possible. In the first place, as Tables 5a, b and 6 show, it is the combination of upper-caste vote and OBC vote that brings out the handsome victory for the BJP. Thus, while the BJP successfully attracted the OBCs, its support among upper castes did not dwindle, if anything, it only consolidated. This indicates a Hindu consolidation typical of the BJP's strategy of the 1990s. Second, as argued in the previous section, there was considerable disenchantment with the UPA government over its performance and palpable attraction for Modi as a leader. There was also an unease on the issue of economic slowdown. These factors added to the BJP's electoral support across different states and social groups while also consolidating its votes among sections where it was stronger already. But more crucially, a third factor was also present. Modi's campaign equally stridently emphasised the paradigm of development. The message of development carried multiple nuances and thus was able to attract different economic layers of voters.

### Development vs Welfare

Since the introduction of economic reforms in the early 1990s, there has been a growing convergence among most political parties on the need to liberalise India's economy in the changed international economic environment. The 2014 election saw a bold articulation of liberalisation policy in the name of development by the BJP. The BJP was able to present its position as distinct from the hesitant stance of the Congress in liberalising India's economy and pursuing welfare only as an appendage of market-friendly economic reforms. It has already travelled a long distance from its own ambiguous slogan of swadeshi which it anyway had virtually abandoned when it was in power during 1998-2004. A clear pro-business line of the BJP appealed to a large section of voters who saw it as an alternative to the apologetic welfare policies coupled with crony capitalism and mal-governance that India saw during the UPA-led government. Thus we see a huge endorsement of the BJP's policy stance from the middle class and the neo-middle class.

The BJP emphasised development of robust infrastructure, opening up of Indian economy to private capital, and building a brand India making it a globally competitive economy. The BJP had pursued almost the same policies of liberalisation when in power as is evident in the fact that it had a special cabinet minister for disinvestment. But Vajpayee and his team, excepting Arun Shourie, could not articulate this policy of economic reforms as a sure path to overall progress. This was achieved by the Modi-led BJP this time in 2014 elections.

In his election campaign meetings, Modi harped upon the Gujarat model of development based on rapid industrialisation by providing necessary incentives to the business houses to set up industries and businesses and focusing on development of infrastructure such as roads, ports, electricity and water. The BJP manifesto proclaimed that India, instead of remaining a market for the global industry, should become a global manufacturing hub. It said that economic freedom implies that the government will not get in the way of the freedom of individuals to start and operate legitimate businesses creating jobs and prosperity. It promised to create a conducive, enabling environment for doing business in India. It stood for a strong manufacturing sector to bridge the demand-supply gap and making India a hub for cost-competitive labour-intensive mass manufacturing industries (BJP 2014).

Thus, the BJP was able to join together its appeal to the OBCs and the dalits on the plank of social justice and empowerment with its development model based on rapid industrialisation and building infrastructure by allowing free market and free run to private capital and businesses. This might have generated considerable support among the middle and upper classes cutting across castes and communities. Thus, Pradeep Chhibber and Rahul Verma in this special issue (p 50) argue that the BJP energised its traditional base of social conservatives by mobilising voters who favoured less state intervention in the economy. Narendra Modi's anointment as the BJP's prime ministerial candidate aided this strategy, as Modi is widely perceived to be a socially conservative, pro-market leader.

While only 24% of the poor preferred to vote for the BJP, about 31% among the lower-class voters voted for the BJP. It was slightly high among the middle class at 32%, and rather high at 38% among the upper middle classes. In the 2009 Lok

Sabha elections, only 22% of the middle-class had voted for the BJP. So, the BJP saw an increment of about 10% of vote among the middle-class voters between 2009 and 2014 (Table 7).

The BJP perhaps sensed the gradually shifting attitudes towards economic reform policies and "development". As stated in its manifesto, the party saw the emergence of a neo-middle class in India – those who have risen from the category of poor and are yet to stabilise in the middle class. The members of this neo-middle class want amenities and services of a certain standard from the government, but feel that they are not up to the mark. Hence they resort to the private sector for provisions related to education, health and transport. As more and more people move into this class, their expectations for better public services have to be met, says the BJP manifesto (BJP 2014).

While popular attitudes to issues of economy are slowly changing from the pre-liberalisation era, the composition of the middle class too is undergoing a transformation. Today's middle class (including the lower middle class) is much more socially diverse than before. In particular, the share of OBCs in today's middle class is sizeable (Sheth 1999). This rising collapse between middle class economic status and backward class social location means that a party which is ready to symbolically speak the language of OBC power and also accommodate the interests of the rising middle class would gain support from the new social formation made up of traditionally backward and economically upwardly mobile social groups. The BJP did exactly that and drew support from two overlapping social groups – the OBCs and the new middle class.

**Reading the Mandate**

In the entire life of the post-Congress polity, elections barely threw up majorities. This time, the elections not only produced a comfortable majority (of only one party) but also produced a semblance of a mandate. Modi, BJP and in fact, all other parties need to identify what this mandate is. It might not be an exaggeration to say that politics in the coming years would be around this issue of defining the BJP's mandate. The opposition would need to make up its mind on this quickly, because only then it would be able to both challenge the BJP on its own ground and also shape an alternative to the mandate BJP has won. On its part, the BJP would urgently need to read the mandate so that its governance and politics are informed by that reading.

When a party wins on the basis of both an image and a strategy, there is always a temptation – more among its sympathisers – to over-read the mandate. As we saw in the previous section, the BJP adroitly tapped the anxieties and aspirations of the new entrants to the middle-class locations. Therefore, its mandate has been closely associated with an economic recovery brought about by radical departures from the welfare-constrained capitalism of the UPA regime. The victory of the BJP excited many because they felt that it was (as the party manifesto itself hinted) a victory for "economic freedom". It is argued that just as 1977 was about political freedom, this election was about economic freedom, a response to "progressively

**Table 7: Vote for BJP among Various Classes of Voters in the LS Elections (1999-2014)**

Party	Upper Class	Middle Class	Lower Class	Poor
1999				
% within the party	22	28	30	21
% within the class	36	29	23	16
2004				
% within the party	15	15	26	44
% within the class	30	29	22	19
2009				
% within the party	8	24	34	33
% within the class	25	22	19	16
2014				
% within the party	14	38	33	15
% within the class	38	32	31	24

greater government intrusion into the lives of people through extensions of the rights approach to housing, entrepreneurship and health rather than empowering them directly through growth and development” (Panagariya 2014). Such a reading would most likely invite a new confrontation between the well-to-do and those requiring state support (and thinking it to be their right). It would also mean that the new government would have to face critics who expected it to be more pro-capital than it can afford to (Bhalla 2014a, 2014b). As our discussion in the previous section indicates, while there is some attraction for the economic freedom that is supposed to bring development, it is not clear if the various layers of India’s complex middle class are yet ready for a state that progressively gives up welfare responsibilities. It is also a moot question how the poor would respond to moves in this direction.

Another reading of the mandate pertains to the cultural dimension and the debate over constitutive elements of India’s political community. Modi desisted from speaking of these issues throughout his campaign, and even after the election, he has not given much indication of how he looks at this issue. However, there are many among his supporters who seem to believe that this mandate is for the creation of a Hindu political community. The fact that BJP has been able to bring together a winning combination of the Hindu vote (coupled with the fact also that it has not won the confidence of minorities generally) has meant that elements within RSS and allied organisations now feel emboldened to pursue the agenda of cultivating a majoritarian political constituency.

It is beyond the scope of this overview to delve into the details of the popular attitudes regarding issues of majoritarian construction of the political community. However, one thing is clear: while many Hindu voters would not explicitly endorse a “communal” agenda, the victory of the BJP has not taken place without a mildly favourable disposition to such efforts at constructing the political community. Thus, for instance, when asked if “in a democracy, the will of the majority should prevail”, 52% agreed and 22% disagreed. Ten years ago, NES 2004 had found that the responses were more equally poised, with 35% agreeing and 35% disagreeing with the proposition (Palshikar 2004: 5,427). These emergent trends would certainly bring in sharp relief the possibility of a politics on the issues of culture, religion and diversity.

A third reading of the mandate would be purely personality-centred. As seen above, Modi’s image and personality definitely contributed to the BJP’s historic victory. This would enthuse his core supporters into believing that the mandate is for him to wrest all initiative and convert governance into a leader-centred affair. This viewpoint believes that ineffective leadership during the UPA rule and bifurcation of governmental authority and political power resulted into indecision and governance failures that went by the name of policy paralysis. Therefore, there is a huge expectation from personality-based authoritarian style that was built up in Modi’s electoral strategy of plebiscitary politics. This reading of the mandate would allow/want Modi to combine confrontational politics both in the realm of culture and the fields of policymaking and

governance. As one commentator argued right after the election results, “this was not a mandate for consensus but for audacity” (Dasgupta 2014). Nations require strong and decisive leaders, but extending this to the point where it transfigures into leader-centrism would not augur well for a democracy.

## Conclusions

The result of the 2014 Lok Sabha elections will be remembered for a long time for several reasons. As far as the dramatic nature of these elections go, India’s electoral politics are not shorn of the dramatic element even in the past. However, what sets these elections apart from many others in the past is their potential to bring about crucial shifts in India’s competitive politics. Long ago, Key (1955) introduced the concept of “critical election” (albeit in the context of us). A greater voter involvement, a “profound readjustment...in the relations of power within a community” and formation of “new and durable electoral groupings” mark the long-term relevance and criticality of an election (Key 1955: 4). Of course, such a criticality can be detected more by hindsight than projection. Yet, with the available analyses of previous elections and the data from NES 2014, as also the foregoing analysis in conjunction with the papers in this special issue of EPW, what possibilities can we detect?

Among the more durable effects of these elections, perhaps a key development would be witnessed in the field of party competition (Palshikar 2014). We have mentioned earlier the two distinct phases of the post-Congress polity. What would be the new features that might result into its next phase? We have noted that a very definite reconfiguration of coalitions and equilibrium among different parties is on the cards although these coalitions could have shifting partners and this equilibrium could remain dynamic for quite some time to come.

In particular, as the paper on the Congress Party in this issue suggests, the weakening of the Congress is likely to be a long-term trend having its effect on social bases of parties and on alliance making. But more importantly, the return to single party majority marks a true departure from the electoral outcomes of almost a quarter of a century. The BJP has emerged as a national party, growing beyond the confines of the Hindi heartland, although its success has been possible to the large number of seats in the Hindi-speaking states. Polling over 40% of the votes in these states is a phenomenal success and it has all the potential of altering nature of party competition not just in these regions but in many other states as well.

The BJP was also able to increase its presence significantly in all the regions and states where it did not have strong presence so far. Its vote share has considerably gone up in Jammu and Kashmir, Assam, West Bengal, Assam, etc. It is still weak in several south Indian states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu although its vote share in these states has gone up. The BJP may not be able to sustain its massive one-sided victories in the north and western states in future. But given the vote shares in rest of the country, it can now claim

to be an all-India party. This is the first time that any political party other than the Congress has come so close to being pan-Indian in terms of its geographical reach and presence across almost all states. This poses a critical challenge for the BJP. In order to stabilise its position, it has to expand in the south and the east and in doing so, it has to confront the state parties who also constitute the pool of its existing or potential allies. This challenge will stretch the reconfiguration of coalitions to the extreme.

Second, BJP's success has become possible because of the slow but sure process of social groups aligning with the BJP. The BJP began with a base among the upper and intermediate castes; succeeded in winning over sections of the OBC groups in the 1990s and now has firmly entrenched itself in both upper and OBC communities. This social base has been additionally augmented by the BJP's ability to move beyond the so-called "caste Hindu" groups (*savarnas*) and acquire decent support among dalits and adivasis. This process is not yet fully underway. As Table 6 shows, support for BJP among these communities is rather uneven. But BJP's social bases, as seen in 2014, indicate a quiet firming up of a broader Hindu electoral base which has implications for the configuration of party competition as also for the middle ground of India's politics, and by implication, the nature of democracy. The transformation of the BJP, along with the language of development, persuaded many observers to believe that the BJP was shaping as a clear right-of-centre (but secular) platform. Whether BJP will exercise that option and occupy the right-of-centre position without exciting secular sensibilities or involving claims to cultural majoritarianism is a crucial riddle.

Third, the 2014 elections was the first since Indira Gandhi's departure when leadership became the almost decisive factor. Modi and his supporters surely worked extra hard towards achieving this objective. But it is equally noteworthy that the electorate was also prepared to seek a leader – even bypassing regional and caste loyalties. In this sense, the election of 2014 marked a moment when the voters looked forward to a strong leader and when a party presented them with such an option. The campaign and the rhetoric centred around the issue of a "leader who can deliver" and a leader who symbolised people's aspirations. Modi's identification with young voters, aspiring middle classes and the established middle class was a key to his image as a truly national leader. In 2004 Vajpayee's popularity seemed to be the clinching factor for BJP, but "...the NDA lost this election despite Vajpayee and the Congress won it despite Sonia Gandhi" (Yadav 2004: 5,396). From there, the 2014 election became much more individual-centred and delivered rich dividends for the BJP.

Finally, this election also strongly draws attention to the possibility of a decisive shift in the middle ground of politics. This has been indicated in the previous section already – but only with respect to majoritarian views. However, as the paper by Pradeep Chhibber and Rahul Verma (p 50) suggests, a new consensus may be shaping over issues of economic policy orientation as well. After two decades of liberalisation, the

expectation that the state should do everything for the welfare of the poor may be slowly losing its persuasiveness for at least some sections of the society. Moreover, the entry of newer social sections in the category of middle class and their readiness to experiment with a more self-driven pursuit of well-being in the place of (or at least along with) the goal of collective well-being contributes to an imperceptible shift in popular attitudes towards economic liberalisation. The impact of issues pertaining to the economy on electoral outcomes has been a subject of considerable debate. (For analyses of the relationship between people's perceptions of the economy and their voting choices in 2004 and 2009, see Suri 2004, 2009.) Between 1996 and 2014, support for free trade by foreign companies has increased not only among the middle classes (from 25% to 36%), it has also increased among the OBCs (from 21% to 35%) and SCs (from 20% to 31%).<sup>4</sup> This suggests that people's orientation to key issues of public policy and contestation are slowly changing and probably the next decade would witness a somewhat changed middle ground compared to the middle ground of India's politics that predominated our thinking till recently – at least till the last decade. This election may be seen both as a reflection of this ongoing change and at the same time as a catalyst of that change in the time to come.

As the post-Congress polity normalises further, there may emerge some durable shifts in the political arena and these may have fundamental effect on the structure of party competition and the normative terrain that competitive politics would occupy. While the elections to the 16th Lok Sabha may thus prove to be critical in the long run, as for the more immediate and short term, it might be well to moderate the exaggerated enthusiasm and temptation to over-read the mandate and adopt hasty policies and political strategies. This is so, because in the short run, the BJP may have to be content with certain constraints in spite of its rather convincing victory.

While the BJP did get a majority on its own, its overall vote share was only 31%. We must note that in India's electoral history the lowest vote share of a party securing majority in Lok Sabha was 41% (Congress in 1967 and the JP in 1977). Thus, the BJP's majority in the Lok Sabha is still based on a rather thin electoral support base.

Apart from the limitation of spatial spread and somewhat thin electoral base, the BJP is also constrained by a tenuous social base. On the one hand, the "Hindu" coalition on which BJP depends for its survival is fraught with tensions. Such a social coalition can survive either through a constant

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reference to the “other” in the form of the non-Hindu, by an invocation of the Hindu essence of the Indian society, or by bringing about dramatic economic turnaround. Just as a generous construction of Hindutva is based on inclusion of backward, dalit and adivasi communities, it is also predicated on an exclusion of the non-Hindu, especially the Muslim. Apart from the sparse support that BJP could muster among Muslim voters, the fact that it does not have single member of Lok Sabha from Muslim community that constitutes about 13% of India’s population is an alarming feature of the new ruling party.<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, the alliance of the sections of middle and lower middle classes tends to produce exclusion of the poor from the new social contract. Such exclusion can be viable only if the numbers of the poor are fast reduced. These tensions would pose multiple challenges for the BJP, both as a party and as a government. Given the levels of poverty and deprivation, and low levels of human development, massive expenditure of the state on welfare is still necessary. A drastic no-holds-barred policy measures in favour of market forces may accentuate income inequalities in society causing a backlash from those who lose out in the process of unbridled implementation of these so-called economic freedoms.

These sobering social and structural features of party competition coupled with the limits of electoral oscillations may force a more moderate reading of the mandate than BJP’s fringe supporters may want. Such moderation may have an endorsement from public opinion as well. Public opinion, as seen from the series of surveys in the run-up to the election and the post-election survey undertaken by the NES 2014, suggests that there is only very limited space for extreme viewpoints. This election undoubtedly saw rejection of the Congress. It also underscored the inefficacy of caste appeal in isolation of everything else. But more than this, the election emphasised the popular expectations of basic delivery and performance as necessities of democratic governance. This expectation might appear to be very ordinary to those who transpose the high drama of the campaign to the routine processes of governance. Popular retributions may appear rather strong and wild but popular expectations often tend to settle for the modest. Given this dynamic of democratic politics, a moderate reading of the BJP’s first ever mandate may help the party in consolidating its second transformation. But more than that, the moderate reading will also keep India’s democratic journey on track and save it from authoritarianism and exclusionary imaginations.

NOTES

- 1 The effective number of parties, in terms of percentage of votes and seats secured by parties in elections to the directly elected chamber of Parliament, is calculated for all the general elections using the Taagepara and Shugart procedure ( $N=1/\sum p_i^2$  where  $p_i$  is the fractional share of  $i$ -th party and  $\sum$  stand for the summation of overall components). On the basis of the effective number of parties, we can arrive at an idea about the nature of the party system and structure of party competition, Taagepera and Shugart (1989).
- 2 Index of electoral volatility (known as the Pedersen index) shows the net change in party support in an election period (i.e., between one election and the next) in terms of percentage of votes secured by different parties resulting from individual vote transfers. It is computed by adding the absolute value of change in percentage of votes gained and lost by each party from one election to the next, then dividing the sum by 2. Thus, in a party system with “n” parties, electoral volatility = TNC/2, where TNC is Total Net Change in party support. The electoral volatility thus has a range of “0” (perfect stability of electoral support to parties, where no party gained or lost votes) to 100 (perfect instability, where there is total shift of voters from one party to the other).
- 3 Seat-vote multiplier is a ratio of the proportion of seats won by a party to the proportion of votes won by it. It is expression of the relationship between percentage of votes a party secures in an election and the seats it secures in the legislature. It is given by:  $1/[(\text{Vote share of a party}/100)/(\text{Number of seats secured by the party}/\text{Total number of seats in the legislature})]$
- 4 NES 1996 and NES 2014: Question wording in 2014: “Government should allow foreign companies to freely invest in India without too many restrictions”.
- 5 The BJP had fielded seven Muslims among its 482 candidates and all lost.

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**Appendix: Methodology**

Articles in this special section are based on the National Election Study 2014 (NES 2014). It consists of four data sets, of two “Tracker Polls”, one pre-poll and one post-poll, related to the 2014 Lok Sabha election. The NES 2014 was conducted by a team of scholars from all over India and coordinated by Lokniti, Programme for Comparative Democracy at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi.

The Tracker Polls are two rounds of national surveys that were conducted by CSDS three to nine months before the Lok Sabha elections in order to measure the political pulse of the country. The first round was conducted between 17 June and 5 July 2013 among 19,062 voters spread across 267 parliamentary constituencies of 18 states (Table 1). The second one was held from 5-15 January 2014 in 291 parliamentary constituencies among 18,591 voters. The pre-poll data set is based on a pre-election national survey conducted between 18 and 25 March 2014 among 20,957 voters spread across 301 parliamentary constituencies of 21 states. The pre-poll survey was conducted just days before the country started voting for the 16th general elections.

The post-poll data set is based on a post-election survey conducted between 8 April and 13 May 2014. The study covered 22,295 respondents spread across 306 parliamentary constituencies of 26 states. All the NES 2014 surveys mentioned above adopted multistage systematic random sampling. This procedure ensures that the selected sample is representative of the cross-section of voters in the country. The first stage involved the selection of parliamentary constituencies and then one or two assembly segments within each of the selected parliamentary constituencies. The constituencies were selected using the probability

**Table 1: Distribution of the Achieved Sample of NES 2014 Surveys**

States	Tracker Poll I	Tracker Poll II	Pre-Poll	Post-Poll
Andhra Pradesh (undivided)	1,681	1,506	1,308	1,232
Arunachal Pradesh	–	–	–	138
Assam	575	461	798	716
Bihar	1,735	1,317	1,557	1,532
Chhattisgarh	337	542	529	577
Delhi	301	951	891	895
Gujarat	910	837	917	876
Haryana	246	559	702	673
Himachal Pradesh	–	–	299	309
Jammu and Kashmir	–	–	321	222
Jharkhand	631	972	1,094	1,102
Karnataka	822	830	825	1,193
Kerala	508	807	607	682
Madhya Pradesh	1,439	936	1,121	1,129
Maharashtra	1,514	1,224	1,662	1,798
Manipur	–	–	–	122
Meghalaya	–	–	–	105
Mizoram	–	–	–	118
Odisha	626	978	796	805
Punjab	579	704	816	1,026
Rajasthan	1,691	960	837	1,222
Tamil Nadu	786	909	1,460	1,300
Tripura	–	–	–	140
Uttar Pradesh	3,284	2,834	2,633	2,569
Uttarakhand	–	–	344	317
West Bengal	1,397	1,264	1,440	1,497
Total	19,062	18,591	20,957	22,295

proportionate to size method (adjusting the probability of choosing a particular constituency according to the size of its electorate). In the second stage, four polling stations within each of the sampled assembly segments were selected using the systematic random sampling technique. The third and final stage involved the selection of respondents from the most updated electoral rolls. This was also done using the systematic sampling method. The sample of each of the surveys was representative of the Indian population, in terms of the country’s general demographic profile (Table 2).

**Table 2: Profile of the Achieved Sample of NES 2014 Surveys**

States	Census	Tracker Poll I	Tracker Poll II	Pre-Poll	Post-Poll
Women	48.6	43.6	44.2	46.0	46.8
Urban	31.2	24.0	24.5	26.3	26.8
SC	16.7	19.7	19.2	19.0	20.0
ST	8.6	9.8	7.4	8.0	9.7
Muslim	13.4	11.0	11.6	12.8	11.8

All figures are percentages; Census figures for women, urban, SCs and STs are from Census 2011; Census figures for Muslims are from Census 2001.

The post-poll survey is very different from an exit poll. During the post-poll survey, trained field investigators approached voters for an interview during the period after the polls were over in their respective constituencies, but before the results were known. Field investigators were instructed to interview only those whose names were given to them. Our investigators asked the respondents, in face-to-face interviews a detailed set of questions, which could take up to 30-35 minutes. While asking the question on who they voted for/would vote for, we gave them a dummy ballot paper on which they could mark their choice. They were then asked to place the ballot paper in a dummy ballot box. When grouping the states together, for our all-India analysis, we adjusted the figures using a statistical technique known as weighting, which means that each state was proportionately represented in the analysis. This means that we were able to produce an accurate assessment of regional- and state-level situations, as well as having a balanced and authoritative overview at the national level.

The surveys were designed and analysed by a team of researchers at the CSDS, Delhi. The team included Anuradha Singh, Ashish Ranjan, Avantika Chamoli, Dhananjay Kumar Singh, Dishil Shrimankar, Hilal Ahmed, Himanshu Bhattacharya, K A Q A Hilal, Kanchan Malhotra, Jyoti Mishra, Mohd Sanjeer Alam, Nitin Mehta, Pranav Gupta, Rahul Verma, Shreyas Sardesai and Vibha Attri. Suhas Palshikar and Sandeep Shastri provided their suggestions during the entire exercise. The survey was directed at the national level by Sanjay Kumar.

The surveys were coordinated by scholars of the Lokniti Network: E Venkatesu (Andhra Pradesh), Nani Bath (Arunachal Pradesh), Dhruva Pratim Sharma and Shubhrajit Konwar (Assam), Rakesh Ranjan (Bihar), Anupama Saxena and Shamshad Ansari (Chhattisgarh), Biswajeet Mohanty (Delhi), Bhanu Parmar and Mahashweta Jani (Gujarat), Kushal Pal and Anita Agarwal (Haryana), Ramesh K Chauhan (Himachal Pradesh), Ellora Puri and Aijaz Ashraf Wani (Jammu and Kashmir), Harishwar Dayal (Jharkhand), Veena Devi and Reetika Syal (Karnataka), Sajad Ibrahim (Kerala), Yatindra Singh Sisodia and Ashish Bhatt (Madhya Pradesh), Nitin Birmal (Maharashtra), Senjam Mangi Singh (Manipur), R K Satapathy (Meghalaya), Lallian Chhunga (Mizoram), Prabhat Mohanty and Pramod Kumar Ray (Odisha), Jagroop Singh Sekhon and Ashutosh Kumar (Punjab), Sanjay Lodha and Nidhi Seth (Rajasthan), Ramajayam (Tamil Nadu), Sukendu Debbarma (Tripura), A K Verma, Asmer Beg, Sudhir Khare and Kamal Srivastava (Uttar Pradesh), Annpurna Nautiyal (Uttarakhand) and Suprio Basu and Jyoti Prasad Chatterjee (West Bengal).

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