

## Caste, Community, and Victory: Decoding the BJP's Historic Third Win in Haryana's 2024 Elections

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**Abstract:** *The Haryana state assembly consists of 90 elected members. The present study delves into the largely unexplored local factors responsible for the BJP's hat-trick victory in Haryana in the recently concluded assembly elections during October 2024 and the INLD's near-abysmal presentation. The Indian national congress appears to have fared better than the INLD, but the party faced disappointment as it fell short of its own estimated victory hoping to come to power. Finally, the study also analyses the voting behaviour and the winning margins of each party. The study highlights the reasons why a party which was on a backfoot after the general elections came to power with a majority on its own.*

**Keywords:** - Elections, Spatial dynamics, Voter behavior

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### INTRODUCTION

Elections form an interesting study in political geography as it makes us look into various factors like the community structure, choice of party candidates, local and national issues affecting the voting behaviour of electorates. The spatial study on the map provides us with certain patterns and at times they also give us insights of a silent trend or undercurrent among the voters. Haryana state which is near the capital has seen many burning political issues on its soil like the farmers agitation and the protests of the women wrestlers. These issues were often highlighted by the press to go against the sitting government.

The geography of elections though looks very straightforward but is of a complex relationship between caste structure, physical landscape and political inclination of a region. The state of Haryana was believed to be dominated by the Jat

politics which has made the present study more interesting.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In India, the studies on electoral geography are limited and is comparatively a new trend. MD M Rahman, and R Khatun from West Bengal studied the voter behaviour in their state in the assembly elections for the period between 2006 to 2016. In Rajasthan, Dr Chaturvedi of Bhilwara has undertaken various research work on the elections of Rajasthan assembly be it the voting trends of reserved seats or the general voting trends. Yadav, Khan and Sharma analysed the election of Bundi municipal council and took various parameters for their research like age of candidates, their educational qualifications and the winning margins in each ward of the study. Yadav and Birla in their research on 2023 elections in Hindoli assembly segment of Rajasthan analysed the voting trends in 210 polling villages of the region and how the local factors out shadowed the national issues. Seema undertook her research in 2014 on Delhi assembly

elections. Yadav, Sharma and Khan analysed the 2023 elections in Bundi assembly constituency with 315 polling booths spread across 198 polling settlements.

**OBJECTIVES**

The main objective of the study is to look for the spatial patterns of voting during the 2024 Haryana assembly elections particularly covering the entire 90 constituencies. The data used for the research is secondary data provided by the election commission of India on its website. The data is then tabulated and plotted on the map to show the spatial patterns in Haryana. The role of social engineering and of election manifesto is also to be included in this study.

**STUDY AREA**

Haryana comprises of 22 districts with 90 assembly constituencies (Figure 1). The northern state of Haryana has 73 general and 17 reserved seats for SC candidates. The state comprises of around 27 percent Jats, 21 percent SC, 8 percent Punjabis, 7.5 percent Brahmins, 7 percent Muslims, 5 percent Yadavs and 5 percent Vaish, 4 percent Jat Sikhs, 3.4 percent Rajputs and 3.4 percent Gujjars, 3 percent Sainis of the total electorates. Till 2014 the Jats were the center of politics in Haryana and dominated the elections, thereafter the scenario is fast changing and is conspicuous.

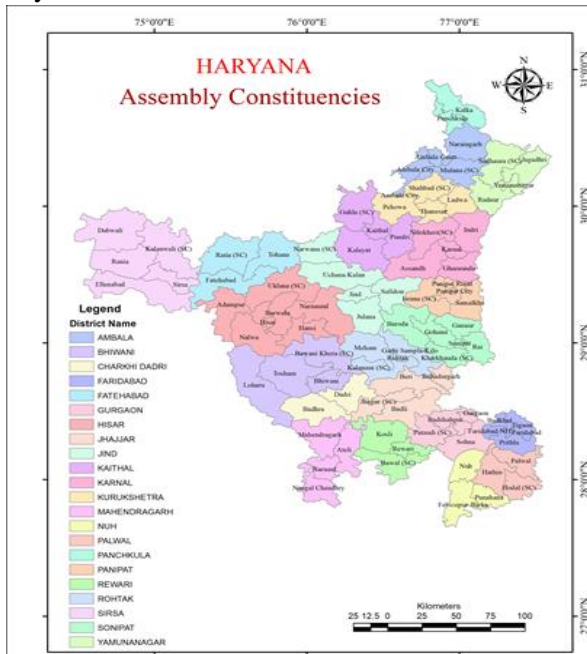


Figure 1 Haryana Constituencies

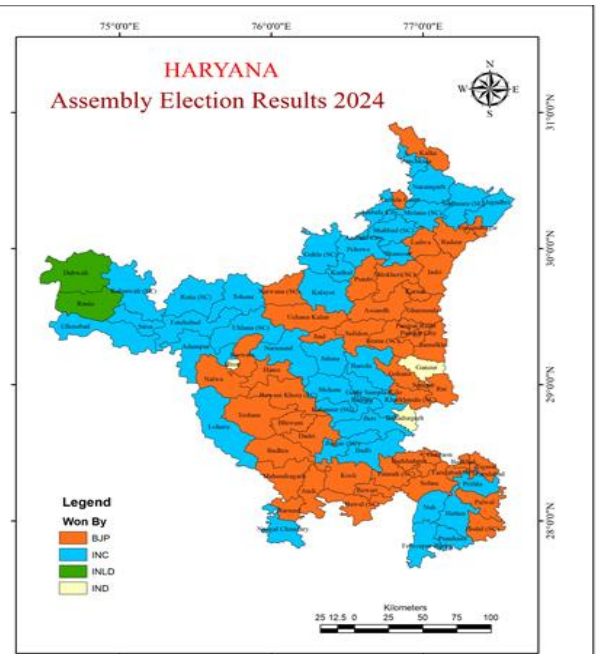


Figure 2 Assembly Election Results 2024

**Table 1: Comparison of Percent Votes received in Haryana Election (2019 – 2024)**

Political Party/ Year	2019	2024	Gain or Loss
BJP	36.49	39.94	+3.45
INC	28.08	39.09	+11.01
INLD	2.44	4.14	+1.70
BSP	4.21	1.82	-2.39
JJP	14.80	0.9	-13.90

Source: Election Commission Haryana Website

Table 1 shows the comparison of votes received by the major political parties in the Haryana assembly elections of 2019 and 2024. The table clearly shows the Congress mood of coming to power as it had gained tremendously in terms of vote share which could not materialise into seats. The BJP which was in power since 2014 and facing anti-incumbency as per media reports surprised everybody with the results and they even improved their vote share as well. The clear loser was Jannayak Janta Party (JJP)

and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) as their vote share dropped enormously by 13.9 percent and 2.39 percent with no seats going to their kitty. The INLD had an alliance with BSP and the JJP had an alliance with Azad Samaj Party of Chandrashekhar Azad. Figure 2 shows the assembly election results of 2024 with the BJP winning 48 seats, the INC winning 37 seats and 2 seats won by the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD), while the 3 seats won by the independent candidates who have declared to support the BJP government

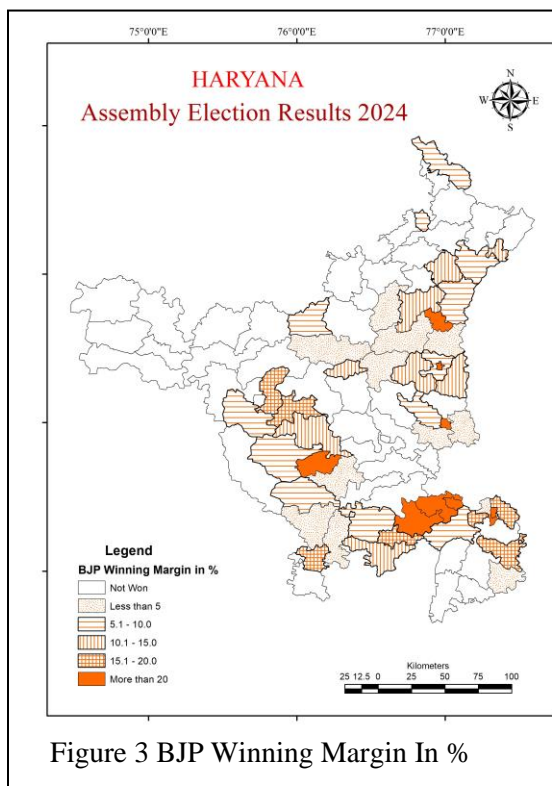


Figure 3 BJP Winning Margin In %

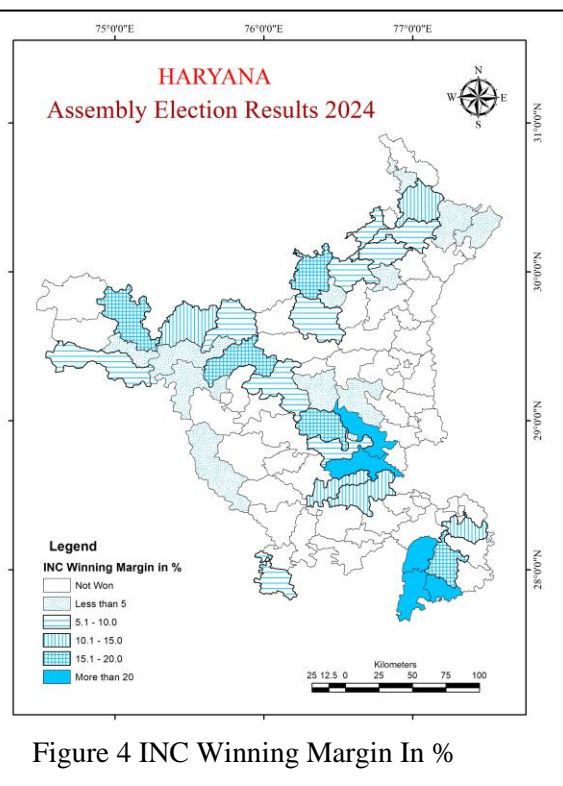


Figure 4 INC Winning Margin In %

This time BJP has formed a majority government in Haryana. BJP is the first party to form government in Haryana for three consecutive times. Before this, the people of the state never gave a third chance to any party. The Bhartiya janata party won in 48 assembly seats and their winning margin was above 20 percent in 8 seats (Figure 3), these are Faridabad (33.82), Gurgaon (29.57), Pataudi (29.57),

Ballabgarh (26.42), Panipat city (24.29), Bhiwani (22.52), Karnal (22.31) and Sonipat (20.46). All these seats are traditionally Bhartiya janata party's strongholds. However, there are still 12 seats in the state where BJP has not won even once. Whereas, there are 10 seats where BJP has won for the first time. These are Samalkha, Gohna, Baroda, Kharkhoda, Safidon, Narwana, Barwala, Dadri, Tosham and

Faridabad NIT seats. On the other hand, Nuh, Ferozepur Jhirka, Punhana, Julana, Dabwali, Meham, Garhi Sampla-Kiloi, Jhajjar, Beri, Uklana, Prithla and Kalanwali seats remained a distant dream for BJP this time too. BJP has not opened its account on these seats till now. Although BJP may have won a bumper victory in the Haryana assembly elections, it could not even open its account in 5 districts of Haryana. These districts include Nuh, Sirsa, Jhajjar, Rohtak and Fatehabad. If seen according to the belt, these districts come in Bagar, Deswal and Ahirwal- South Haryana belt. There are a total of 19 assembly seats in these districts.

The Indian national Congress no doubt did extremely good in seats having large number of Muslim electorates especially in Nuh, Ferozepur Jhirka, Punhana (Figure 4). The 5

assembly seats where their victory margin was over 20 percent votes are Ferozepur Jhirka (54.34), Garhi Sampla-Kilo (47.88), Nuh (30.31), Beri (29.82) and Punhana (21.82). Of these Nuh, Ferozepur Jhirka, and Punhana are the Congress strongholds where their performance was the same even in the 2018 assembly elections. On the other hand, Congress won Jat land and Bagar belt (Table 2). Bagar is such a belt where the performance of Congress has been better than last time. The party has gained an additional 6 seats from Bagar belt. Jat voters are the most in this belt. The Congress could not open its account in 5 districts, that is in Karnal, Panipat, Charkhi Dadri, Rewari and Gurgaon. Aam Aadmi Party cost Congress 4 seats as their candidates cut into their votes. These seats are Assandh, Uchana Kalan, Dabwali and Rania. However, Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) managed to win 2 seats. At the same time, 3 independent candidates also won their seats

**Table 2: Results by Region**

Region	Seats	BJP	INC	INLD	Independents
Ahirwal-South Haryana	23	17	6	0	0
Bagar	19	6	10	2	1
Deshwal	21	10	9	0	2
Grand Trunk Road	27	15	12	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

Source: Calculated by the authors

This time, there are 4 such seats where the margin of victory or defeat of the candidates was more than 50000 votes. These include Ferozepur Jhirka, Garhi Sampla Kilo, Badshahpur and Gurugram. This time in Haryana Assembly Elections 2024, there were 8 seats where the margin of victory and defeat of the candidates was less than 2000 votes. These include Panchkula, Sadhaura, Uchana Kalan, Dabwali, Adampur, Loharu, Dadri and Rohtak. Uchana Kalan was the seat with lowest winning margin of 32 votes.

The Congress party was riding on an anti-incumbency against the BJP along with issues

like farmers protest, Agnipath scheme, unemployment, wrestler protests and inflation. They could not cash these burning issues because of their arrogance. Before the elections they highlighted Bhupinder Singh Hooda (a Jat leader) and sidelined Kumari Shailja a prominent Dalit leader. The result was that the other castes voted against the Congress as the people of the state are now tired of dominance

of Jats in the state politics. Even the SC voters got annoyed and they didn't vote for the Congress even in Kumari Shailja's constituency. The clear winner in this was

obviously the BJP which won in 8 reserved seats.

Now the question arises how did the BJP won a lost battle which was even declared by the media in all the exit polls. The social engineering and the able leadership of the chief minister helped them draft a 20-point Sankalp patra which targeted almost all segments of the electorate. There is no doubt that RSS volunteers touched each door canvassing for the BJP and one important and which media failed to cover was the slogan during the elections “*Bina kharchi, bina parchi ki sarkar*”, which was clearly against the corruption during the earlier Jat dominated governments in the state. The party talked about monthly financial help of Rs 2100 to 78 lakh women between 18 and 60 years of age, housing for poor people in urban and rural areas, cylinders for Rs 500 under the Ujjwala scheme under the Har Ghar Grihaini Yojana, 2 lakh permanent government jobs along with an increase in old age, disabled and widow pension. The BJP also kept in mind the approximately 6 lakh 53 thousand voters in the state between the ages of 18 and 19. 1.09 crore people were lured for free treatment in Chirayu-Ayushman scheme. In the manifesto, under the Chirayu-Ayushman scheme, every family was promised free treatment up to Rs 10 lakh and every senior citizen above the age of 70 years would be provided free treatment up to Rs 5 lakh separately. The 20-point Sankalp Patra also included two schemes of the Centre. The party also promised the construction of the Kundli-Manesar-Palwal Expressway (KMP) Orbital Rail Corridor, the introduction of new Vande Bharat trains along with several rapid rail services and the introduction of Intercity Express Metro service between Faridabad and Gurugram. However, the BJP did not make any mention of the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) in the Sankalp Patra.

The party also promised that Haryana government will guarantee loans up to Rs 25 lakh for all OBC entrepreneurs in addition to the Mudra scheme. Dalit vote bank was wooed on the pretext of scholarship. BJP laid special emphasis on wooing the Dalit vote bank which had distanced itself from the party in the Lok Sabha elections. For the 21% vote bank, a promise was made to give full scholarship to students of other backward classes and scheduled castes who study medical-engineering from any government college in India. To attract farmers, BJP promised to buy 24 crops on MSP. Apart from this, the resolution letter also talked about giving ownership rights to the tenants on the land.

## CONCLUSION

Electoral geography of Haryana state suggests an interesting relationship among the caste structure and voting behavior. It is often called the land of Aaya Ram, Gaya Ram where the leaders took to horse trading and party defection to stay in power. Jats who dominated the state politics till 2014, are no longer the champions, as after 2014 the state has seen other castes coming together to overcome Jats' dominance. The election results of 2024 tell a story that support of SC and other backward castes is now a prerequisite for Jat leaders to come to power because we see that there is a gradual shift from Jat dominated politics to a multi caste alliance. The social engineering done by the BJP makes it an important fact to analyze the voting trends. It is quite clear that the minority community always support the Congress and that is why they swept all the three seats of Nuh district of Mehat region. The results of 2024 election also prove that if an effective leadership delivers a good administration, then the role of anti-incumbency is nullified. So electoral studies in Geography helps us understand the complex

relationship between the local factors, caste structure and electoral participation in a region.

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