

Seat Retention, Seat Reclamation and New Seats Won: Explaining BJP's 2024 Victory

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Abstract

The Indian General Elections of 2024 commenced with a much hyped 'Abki Baar 400 Paar' slogan by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) aiming for a parliamentary supermajority, winning 370 seats alone and over 400 constituencies together with its allies. The elections concluded with a third consecutive BJP victory albeit reliant on regional parties like the Telugu Desam Party and the Janata Dal (United), crucial pre-poll allies for a parliamentary majority. While the seat targets were often proclaimed as an emotive or psychological mark for the BJP and its cadre, what is often being overlooked, is a clear arithmetic calculus which seems to have shaped the BJP's electoral strategy in the recent Lok Sabha polls. The formula of 'Gain, Regain and Retain' thus strategically summarises BJP's 'Mission 370'. This strategy consisted of retaining the 303 seats it won last time around in 2019, reclaiming some 50-odd seats which the party had won earlier but could not win in 2019, and expanding into some newer constituencies where it had never emerged victorious before. Using election data provided by the ECI and Lokniti - CSDS, this article assesses the BJP's performance along these three parameters while analysing state-specific and sometimes even sub-state or constituency-level reasons for the same. It argues that an impressive retention rate across most states despite notable losses paralleled by modest to low success rates in reclaiming older seats and expanding into newer constituencies explain the sobering victory of the party in this election where the gains, though moderate, proved significant in partly covering the losses and placing the BJP in pole position to form a third consecutive government with support of its allies. In conclusion, this article shall also reflect on the nature of the BJP as a political party and the Indian party system in current times offering key strategic insights, electorally relevant for the BJP and the Opposition in and after 2024.

Keywords: *General Elections 2024, retention, reclamation, expansion, BJP, Opposition, strategic insights*

I. Introduction

After two consecutive majorities for the BJP in the Lok Sabha Elections of 2014 and 2019, the 2024 polls were a much anticipated election. Maximum retention of existing seats, regaining some older ones and expanding into newer constituencies seemed pivotal for the ruling party's prospects. Therefore, analysing the BJP's performance along these three dimensions of retention, reclamation and expansion should remain at the heart of any analysis this election.

Coming in the wake of major decisions including the Abrogation of Article 370 which had guaranteed special status to Jammu and Kashmir, the contentious Citizenship Amendment Act of 2020 which impacts the Muslim community disproportionately and the consecration of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya amongst others in the second term of the Narendra Modi led governmentⁱ, the period between 2019 and 2024 also witnessing the onslaught of the Covid - 19 pandemic and increasing economic distress in its aftermath.

A numerically weakened parliamentary opposition however seemed paralleled by the growth of extra-parliamentary civil society activism and protest movementsⁱⁱ as manifested in the anti CAA – NRC demonstrations, the farmer's protests, the wrestlers' mobilisation so on and so forth. The Oppositionⁱⁱⁱ nevertheless stitched together a more coordinated and unified front than ever before bringing together ideologically disparate and often rival parties in the 2024 General Elections. The Indian National Congress, Samajwadi Party, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, Trinamool Congress, Nationalist Congress Party (Sharad Pawar), Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray), the Left, the Aam Aadmi Party and many more parties were brought together under the broader umbrella of the Indian National Development Inclusive Alliance (I.N.D.I.A) in an attempt to deny Narendra Modi a third consecutive term as Prime Minister. Would the BJP win decisively again or the country would witness a reversal of trends, made the 2024 General Elections extremely significant. The results of such a keenly contested election proved equally significant.

II. Putting The 2024 General Elections Results in Context

Born in the cradle of one party dominance what Rajni Kothari termed as the 'Congress System'^{iv}, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh^v, the BJP's predecessor was a staunchly right wing political party premised on Akhand Bharat (undivided India), nuclearisation and a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) as its primary electoral agenda. Early leadership included the likes of Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, Deen Dayal Upadhyay and Balraj Madhok amongst others who were succeeded by a younger generation of leaders such as Atal Behari Vajpayee and Lal Krishna Advani who played a key role in anti - Emergency activism and subsequently served in the Janata Party Government as

Union Ministers. This was the first non Congress administration to govern India since 1947 of which the Jana Sangh remained a key constituent.

Initially, winning single digit seats in the Lok Sabha Elections of 1952 and 1957 before scaling up to double digits, the Jana Sangh registered its best ever performance with 35 MP's in 1967. This election saw the Indira Gandhi led Congress return to power with far reduced numbers but subsequently win a decisive victory in 1971. The Jana Sangh eventually merged into the Janata Party post the Emergency (1975 – 77) to unitedly defeat the Congress even as its own support base largely remained constricted to states like Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi and Gujarat, called the Hindi heartland in popular political discourse.

With the nineteen eighties dawned the gradual decline of the Congress in the states paralleled by the growth of regional parties. The BJP successfully consolidated upon the political space created by the Jana Sangh. By the nineties^{vi} as India moved into multi-party coalition politics, three factors including the rise of the middle class and neoliberal market reforms, enactment of the Mandal Commission recommendations prescribing reservations for the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and growing demands for the consecration of the Ram Mandir in aftermath of the Babri Masjid Demolition compounded to propel the BJP to the national stage. The party decisively won in the Hindi heartland and made considerable headway into other states like Bihar, Karnataka, Assam and Odisha while helming the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) coalition government at the Centre between 1998 and 2004. The Congress returned to power in the 2004 General Elections and went on to win another term in 2009 albeit at the head of a new coalition namely the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) even as the BJP remained the official opposition securing 138 and 116 seats respectively (Fig. 1).

A third consecutive defeat would have pushed the party into political oblivion but a generational change and organisational overhaul astutely orchestrated by its ideological fountainhead, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) rejuvenated the party and the workers. Projecting then Gujarat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi as its Prime Ministerial candidate whose personal charisma, promises of bringing back 'Acche Din'^{vii} (good days) and reclaiming India's lost pride on the world stage seem to have resonated well with an electorate discontented and weary of a faltering UPA administration helped the BJP win an absolute majority in 2014^{viii}, the first in the last three decades. This was followed by multiple Assembly poll victories over the years including in some states previously considered inimical for the BJP and its return to power with an even bigger mandate in the General Elections of 2019 expanding its support base both socially and geographically^{ix}. After a second term in office marked by several major yet contentious decisions, the 2024 General Elections saw a BJP led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi confident of a third consecutive term in office after completing two full tenures to match the record of only Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

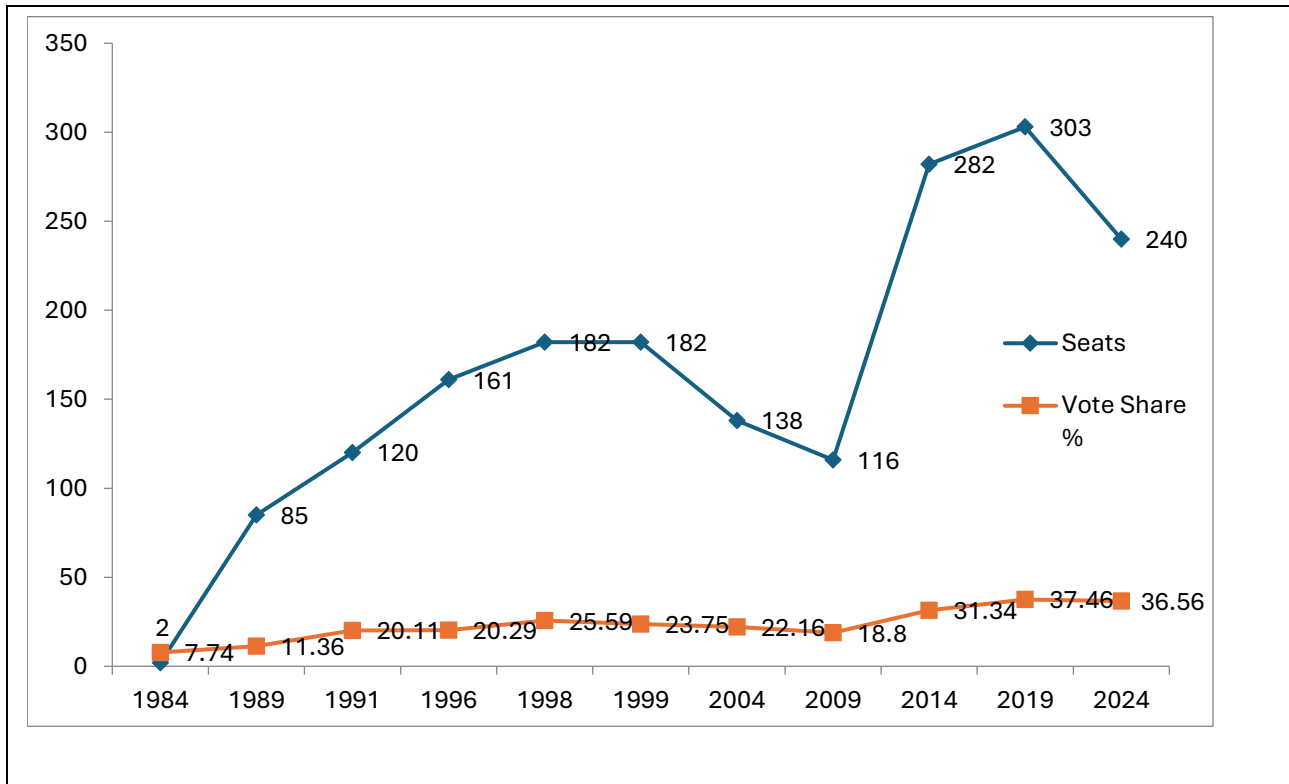


Fig.1: BJP's Performance in Lok Sabha Elections across the years

Source: Election Commission of India (ECI) Data

Further encouraged by Assembly election victories of December, 2023, the Prime Minister set an ambitious target. The BJP winning 370 seats alone and surpassing the 400 mark together with its NDA allies in the parliamentary elections, he asserted would strengthen his hand in enacting bigger impending reforms for realising the goal of a developed India by 2047. He further claimed that work done thus far was only a 'trailer'^x and called upon the voters to thwart the supposedly nefarious agenda of the Opposition whom he alleged were engaging in minority appeasement and even colluding with anti – national forces solely driven by narrow electoral interests. The latter meanwhile joined hands as the I.N.D.I.A bloc seeking redemption for Indian democracy and sought to protect what they called the very idea of 'India'^{xi}, condemning the majoritarian proclivities of the ruling BJP in one of the most polarising election campaigns ever.

The election results^{xii} (Table 1) however defied observers and pollsters, most of whom had predicted another lopsided victory for Narendra Modi's BJP. As political strategist Prashant Kishor^{xiii} had stated, the Prime Minister's 'Abki Baar 400 Paar' rhetoric very astutely made the 2024 Elections never about whether the BJP was winning but how big it would be winning. It

was always a question of magnitude rather than the direction of victory. While the BJP won a rare third term with Narendra Modi taking over as Prime Minister once again, the party single-handedly won only 240 seats way below the targeted 370 seats and also fell short of an absolute majority incurring a net loss of 63 seats from its 2019 tally of 303 seats with a near constant vote share as compared to last time. Together with its pre-poll allies, the BJP led NDA however

secured a comfortable majority with 293 seats including 16 members of the Telugu Desam Party which decisively won in Andhra Pradesh after a 5 year interregnum and 12 MPs from Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United), to form the government at the Centre for the third consecutive term.

Political Party	Current Party Membership in Lok Sabha
Bharatiya Janata Party	240
Indian National Congress	98
Samajwadi Party	37
All – India Trinamool Congress	29
Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	22
Telugu Desam Party	16
Janata Dal (United)	12
Others	89

Table 1. Current Party Membership in Lok Sabha as of June 2024

Source: Parliament of India

The Indian National Congress nearly doubled its seat tally to touch 99 despite registering a less than two percent growth in its vote share. Together with its major allies, most of whom fared better than expected; it secured a total of 234 seats and a significant 40 percent of the vote thereby putting up a spirited fight when most exit polls had predicted a very poor showing. Of the main constituents of the I.N.D.I.A bloc, the Samajwadi Party won 36 seats to emerge as the third largest party in parliament, the TMC secured 29, the DMK 22, the Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (SP) 9 and 8 seats respectively, the Left and RJD won four seats individually while the

AAP, the JMM and IUML had three seats each with the rest shared amongst smaller parties and independents.

While the overall political scenario at the national level would demonstrate that it is the Congress which mainly gained ground at the cost of the BJP, in essence this is an oversimplification as the realities are far more complex. Despite incurring a net loss of seats, the BJP did win newer constituencies and better its performance in states like Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana defeating regional parties while also improving in Kerala, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh at the cost of the Left and Congress respectively as compared to 2019. The very fact that the BJP secured roughly the same vote share yet a reduced seat tally bears testimony to the fact that while it did lose a significant chunk of votes in states where it fared exceptionally well 5 years back, it gained almost equally in vote share elsewhere. However, that wasn't enough to translate into a significant number of seats given the nature of distribution of its support this time around and regional dynamics which make a state by state assessment of the BJP's performance indispensable. This also implies that the BJP went onto win seats by much larger margins and lost several close contests. Just six lakh votes separating the BJP from achieving a clear majority on its own is a statistic that well highlights this trend.

But why did the 2024 Lok Sabha Elections play out the way it did? One part of the answer of course lies in structural imperatives of a First Past the Post electoral system but there are reasons beyond and deeper.

III. Aims and Scope

This article shall thus attempt to explain the sobering victory of the BJP in the 2024 Elections offering state wise and sometimes sub-regional or even constituency specific analysis while also reflecting on the nature of the BJP as a political party and the Indian party system in contemporary times offering key strategic insights, electorally relevant for the ruling party and the Opposition in and after 2024.

First, the paper shall analyse the BJP's performance with respect to the vote share and seat tally, mainly the latter which proves to be the most vivid indicator of electoral performance in a parliamentary democracy. Given the usage of a first past the post electoral mechanism, an assessment of net change in vote share would give a more accurate estimate of the minutest change in popular support levels even if there has been little to no change in seat distribution.

Second, the scope of the article isn't limited to mere statistical analysis. It also probes deeper to examine possible reasons which explain electoral outcomes in the states although issues like broader ideological consensus are not considered within the remit of this analysis to avoid the slippery slope fallacy for instance, the ideological hegemony of Hindutva may not always necessarily ensure a BJP victory while conversely, the ideological credibility of Hindutva may not necessarily be dented with the electoral defeat of the BJP.

Third, this paper is not predictive in nature and therefore while offering reflections doesn't make suppositions of the BJP continuing in office at the next elections or foretell the Opposition's success in coming years. Given that Indian politics has always remained in a flux resulting in unforeseen developments, strategic insights offered for both the BJP and the Opposition are from the perspective of as things stand currently : the stakes, risks and potentialities and what each could do better in order to enhance their electoral prospects in coming years without definitively concluding the outcome.

IV. Assessing the BJP's Performance in 2024

The BJP's 'Mission 400' for the NDA coalition and 370 seats for the party alone in the General Elections of 2024 seemed more like a psychological mark to enthuse its own cadre and voter base. The figure 370 resonates with the Abrogation of Article 370 symbolising national unity, a key tenet of BJP's core ideology. The Prime Minister on multiple occasions during the election campaign argued that 370 seats were necessary to consolidate upon the good work done by his government in the past decade and lead India towards being a developed nation by 2047. He and other BJP leaders conceived it as a verdict for fulfilling their major promises of 2019 including the consecration of the Ram Temple, enactment of the Citizenship Amendment Act and abrogation of Article 370 which they alleged the Congress led I.N.D.I. Alliance Government would restore if voted to power. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma^{xiv} had even said during the election campaign that the NDA needed 400 seats to implement the Uniform Civil Code and build grand temples in Kashi and Mathura while preventing the Opposition from reimposing the lock on the doors of the Ram Mandir. Many even saw 'Mission 400' as inklings for something larger possibly a merger of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) with India or even radical constitutional amendments.

Opposition leaders on the other hand, including the likes of Sharad Pawar saw a BJP supermajority as synonymous with the further erosion of democracy in India and directing the country to formally embrace dictatorship. It also alleged a possible attempt to destroy the Constitution framed by Babasaheb Ambedkar and et.al., reference to the former often venerated as a champion of the depressed classes in India was seen as a strategic move to shift the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes voters away from the ruling party on the plank of a presumed alteration of the reservation system in government jobs and educational institutions which has existed since Independence. The BJP severely criticised it as a nefarious ploy to divide the electorate along caste lines and made counter allegations of the Opposition planning to use political office to guarantee reservations for the religious minorities which was forbidden by the Constitution^{xv}, the Prime Minister even claiming that the 'Abki Baar 400 Paar' slogan came from the hearts of the Indian public.

Many political analysts also pointed out that the BJP already enjoyed the support of nearly 400 MPs in the 17th Lok Sabha^{xvi} with the NDA commanding over 350 seats including a 303 of the

BJP. The issue based support of a number of friendly regional parties like the Biju Janata Dal (BJD), the Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP), the Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) and independents amongst others who more often than not voted with the government rather than against it implied that the BJP led NDA crossing the 400 mark wouldn't really herald a very different scenario in national politics. However, amidst an unravelling of electoral narratives and propaganda what current literature albeit limited given the extremely contemporary developments, fails to account for is a clear numerical and strategic logic which could have driven the BJP's set target of 370 seats.

Retaining the seats the ruling party had won last time, reclaiming seats which the BJP had won in earlier elections but failed to hold onto in the 2019 Elections and of course attaining some newer constituencies where it has never been victorious further expanding the BJP's support base geographically and demographically, well add up to the number 370 although the actual results showed the BJP winning 240 seats and a clear majority of 293 seats together with its allies. Explaining this sobering victory of the BJP necessitates a thorough deconstruction of the BJP's performance along these three parameters of retention, reclamation and expansion in the recently concluded 2024 Lok Sabha Elections.

This article shall therefore attempt a three staged deconstruction wherein,

First, it shall assess the BJP's performance in constituencies which it had won back in the 2019 Elections i.e. 297 seats to be specific given delimitation in Assam and the constituencies of Baghpat in Uttar Pradesh and Kolar in Karnataka being re-allotted to BJP allies, the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) and the Janata Dal (Secular) respectively. The BJP never re-contested all the 303 seats won and thus comparing the party's performance in constituencies which it didn't directly contest this time around makes the metrics of such comparison essentially flawed

Second, it seeks to analyse the BJP's showing in constituencies where it had emerged victorious previously and contested again in 2024 i.e. 41 seats in actual count demonstrating the vitality of the BJP recovering winnable seats for continued electoral dominance in the coming years

Third, it shall examine the BJP's growth in constituencies previously considered impenetrable i.e. some 106 seats in number as contested in the 2024 General Elections and thus instrumental in partly covering the inevitable losses to enable the ruling party in continuing its winning streak

Thereby, generating strategic insights electorally relevant for the BJP and the Opposition in and after 2024.

(A) Seat Retention

The BJP's victory in the 2014 General Elections proved one of a kind in many ways, eliciting scholarly inquiry. It was the first time that any political party had secured an absolute majority since 1984 when the Rajiv Gandhi led Congress crossed 400 seats on its own yielding the largest

majority government since Indian Independence. The BJP also became the only non – Congress to ever win a clear majority given that the Janata Party which won the 1977 General Elections was a conglomerate of multiple opposition parties. The election also saw the BJP more than doubling its 2009 tally of 116 seats to win 282 constituencies, holding onto almost every seat it won in the last General Elections.

A state-wise analysis revealed BJP dominance in the Hindi heartland. Winning all seats in Gujarat (26), Rajasthan (25), Himachal Pradesh (4), Uttarakhand (5), Delhi (7), Goa (2) and nearly all constituencies in Uttar Pradesh (71/80), Madhya Pradesh (27/29), Chhattisgarh (10/11) and Jharkhand (12/14), the BJP also registered an impressive showing in Bihar (22/40), Maharashtra (23/48), Karnataka (17/28), Haryana (7/10), Assam (7/14) as well as Jammu and Kashmir (3/6). The party had won Haryana and Assam for the first time and triumphed in Bihar without forming an alliance with Nitish Kumar's JD(U). The magnitude of victory in the other states was unexpected as well. Growing anti-incumbency against the Congress led UPA: a slumping economy, rising inflation and unearthing of several corruption scandals fueling the Anna Hazare led India Against Corruption Movement compared with the charisma of BJP's new Prime Ministerial candidate Narendra Modi banking on his 'Gujarat Model'^{xvii} and espousing a new vision for the country encouraged a disenchanted electorate to vote decisively for change.

Five years down the line, the BJP registered a remarkable retention rate of 91% to repeat its near sweeping performances of 2014 contrary to popular expectation. It also significantly expanded its support base both geographically and socially to win a significant number of seats even in West Bengal (18/42), Odisha (8/21) and Telangana (4/17) respectively. This resulted in the BJP's largest electoral majority ever with 303 seats in the 2019 General Elections surpassing its 2014 tally. Riding on a conflation of Hindutva nationalism, welfare schemes^{xviii} and the rising cult of Narendra Modi projecting himself as the 'Chowkidaar' (defender of national security and public interest) in wake of growing nationalist sentiments post the Balakot Air strikes following the Pulwama terror attacks helped the BJP consolidate its grip on power pitted against a floundering and leaderless Opposition.

The 2024 General Elections proved historical as a BJP victory would mark the first time a Prime Minister would return to office for the third consecutive term after completing two full tenures in office matching the distinction of only Pandit Nehru who pulled off a hat-trick by winning the 1952, 1957 and 1962 Lok Sabha Elections respectively. Mrs. Indira Gandhi assumed the Prime Ministership four times in 1966, 1967, 1971 and 1980 respectively but won a third full term non-consecutively. Atal Behari Vajpayee was also a three time Prime Minister but served only a little over 6 years in total completing only one full term which was his last. Dr. Manmohan Singh completed two full terms but his Congress party was defeated in 2014 even though he had denied seeking a third term for himself should his party emerge victorious. When voting concluded on 1st June, 2024, most exit polls projected a third major victory for the Narendra Modi led BJP and NDA. The results threw a surprise with the Opposition faring much better than expected even as the BJP won 240 seats and 293 together with its allies ensuring a rare third term for the Prime

Minister but humbling the ruling party at the same time by denying it the super majority it hoped for.

What is even more stark is that out of the 240 seats the BJP won in 2024, 204 of these constituencies happened to be those which had been won back in 2019 as well, registering an impressive overall retention rate of 70 percent even as the picture varied largely across states requiring a detailed analysis of the party's performance in terms of retaining seats.

The BJP won all seats in Delhi, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand once again for the third time consecutively. An effective local leadership, robust organisational mechanism and Narendra Modi's magnetic charm rejuvenated the cadres and voters allowing the BJP to win again. Even as Delhi^{xix} continued the trend of voting differently in the state and Lok Sabha Elections, the arrest of AAP supremo and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in connection with the Delhi liquor scam and an unnatural alliance between the Congress and the AAP, arch rivals in state politics further enabled the BJP to hold onto all the seven seats in the national capital. In the states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, continuity defined election outcomes as BJP dominance persisted in Uttarakhand – a hill state where the BJP has swept every election over the last decade barring the 2012 Assembly Elections when it fell short by just a single seat. A new state leadership under Pushkar Singh Dhami has helped the BJP further consolidate its position. In Himachal Pradesh which sees a change of government at the state level every five years elected the Congress to power in 2022 but come 2024, the BJP registered a victory in all constituencies once again. Growing factionalism in the state unit of the Congress between the supporters of Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukkhu and the loyalists of former Chief Minister late Virbhadra Singh who now support his wife and son, both of whom occupy important positions in the state Congress, a reeling fund crunch and change in local BJP candidates by incorporating star power of the likes of Kangana Ranaut in Mandi, a seat lost in subsequent by-elections helped successfully contain the localised anti-incumbency and tap on the popularity of the Prime Minister even as the vote share dipped marginally compared to the 2019 elections.

The BJP also maintained a hundred percent retention rate in Madhya Pradesh^{xx} and Chhattisgarh building on the momentum generated during the recent Assembly Elections where it swept to power defeating the Congress party which had put up a strong showing in the 2018 elections. The departure of the Congress leadership at the state and local levels fearing imminent defeat helped the BJP surge further in fact increasing its share of the popular vote. The defeat of former Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel in Chhattisgarh's Rajnandgaon is a poignant reminder of how the BJP micromanaged the campaign at the grass roots and harnessed latent discontent against his government by successfully associating Baghel with a string of corruption allegations. New communication strategies of the BJP worked wonders for instance, the Assembly election narrative of 'MP ke Mann mein Modi' and 'Modi ke Mann mein MP' seemed to have spillover effects in making the Lok Sabha Elections solely centred around the Prime Minister and his accomplishments endearing him to the masses all the more and credited for innovative welfare schemes like the Ladli Behana Yojana. Clever social engineering by winning

back a significant chunk of the tribal vote which had drifted towards the Congress in later years, closely associating the BJP with a pro-tribal legacy in supporting Droupadi Murmu as the first tribal President of India, anointing another tribal leader Vishnu Deo Sai as the new Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh combined with tribal outreach programmes of the RSS and betting big on the PESA Act [Provisions of Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996] proved essential in crafting these major victories. The ideological penetration in these states has reached new highs leading to them being counted as strongholds for the party ranking only after Gujarat^{xxi}, the home state of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah which proved no aberration to the trend of the BJP winning almost all the seats once again but stopping one short of a perfect score. Only in the Banaskantha seat, bordering Rajasthan where the BJP's tally also sharply declined, saw the Congress win. Geniben Thakor, a local candidate with strong grass roots support including from the influential Thakor community proved to be the sole non – BJP winner in a state which has seen the Opposition even struggle to open its account in Lok Sabha polls over the last decade. The 2024 Lok Sabha Elections also saw the BJP retain the North Goa seat with Union Minister Shripad Yesso Naik triumphing for a fifth consecutive term despite a formidable AAP – Congress alliance in both states, pointing to new political dynamics on the horizons in the coming years as parties engage in new electoral strategies and modes of communication to convey their policy visions to the public.

Two other states, Odisha^{xxii} and Telangana^{xxiii} also witnessed the BJP maintaining control over all the seats it had won five years ago. The collapse of the Bharatiya Rashtra Samiti, consolidation of the anti – Congress vote, a polarised election campaign and the concentration of the BJP's support in the Greater Hyderabad region allowed the party to retain all the four constituencies of Secunderabad, Nizamabad, Adilabad and Karimnagar bettering its victory margins and vote shares simultaneously. Similarly, the defeat of Naveen Patnaik's BJD after 24 long years in power and the BJP's victories both in the Lok Sabha and State Assembly Elections conducted simultaneously marked the culmination of long term fatigue against BJD rule, concerns over failing health of Patnaik despite his personal popularity, disenchantment amongst BJD supporters and the cadre over the rise of former bureaucrat V.K. Pandian in the party, an alleged outsider and successful invocation of 'Odia Asmita' i.e.: Odia cultural pride by the BJP and a more unified Opposition vote given the marginalisation of the Congress aided the BJP victory in 20 out of the 21 constituencies, no wonder retaining all the eight seats won last time.

In the North Eastern states^{xxiv} which the Prime Minister has often referred to as the 'Ashta Lakshmi' (Eight Sister States) remain integral to the country's economic growth, indispensable for the BJP's political agenda and ideologically intrinsic to the exegesis of an Akhand Bharat. The party's hold here has been rather layered and varied across them rather than universal. In Assam, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh, a multi-level alliance structure i.e.: the National Democratic Alliance nationally, North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA) at the regional level and strategic tie ups with local parties like the United People's Party Liberal in the Bodoland Territorial Area of Assam or the Tipra Motha in the tribal dominated districts of Tripura coupled

with interdependent power relations given the greater dependence of these states on the Centre and therefore the dominant party nationally, characterise the BJP's 'unalloyed dominance' by dint of demographics and strong grassroots organisation as opposed to the other North Eastern states where BJP dominance has been increasingly contested or only strategically maintained through friendly regional parties in power. The BJP won a whopping 11 of the 14 seats in Assam together with its allies. Given the delimitation exercise and the consequent carving out of new constituencies, of the pre-existing six seats the BJP retained five in Assam while securing all seats in Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura once again despite witnessing a decline in vote share in the former state despite winning the simultaneous Assembly Elections decisively while registering a double digit increase in the latter by dint of its alliance with the Tipra Motha which gave it a tough fight in the Assembly Elections only held last year winning back the key tribal vote. However, in Manipur, a state of contested dominance saw the BJP and its allies lose both seats following a year of grave ethnic violence between the Meiteis and the Kukis, the two major ethnic communities in the state.

In the union territories, the BJP's performance in terms of retaining seats has been rather mixed. While it retained both its seats in Jammu riding high on fulfillment of the promise of scrapping Article 370 and capitalising on development projects undertaken thus far to realise the aspirations of the youth of 'Naya Kashmir' (new and developed Kashmir), it lost Chandigarh to local Congress stalwart Manish Tiwari and surprisingly the seats of Ladakh and Daman & Diu to independents. So far having considered states with perfect or near perfect retention rates, attention turns to states where the BJP was clearly on a downward slide yet put up a decent performance by retaining more than half of its current seats as of 2019.

Jharkhand saw a rather impressive retention of over 70% seats being retained by the BJP yet losing all of the Scheduled Tribes reserved seats by significant margins. BJP stalwarts like Arjun Munda were defeated while former CM Madhu Koda who rejoined the BJP months before the polls failed to make any impact in his former constituency of Singhbhum despite his wife Geeta Koda being fielded by the ruling party. The arrest of leading tribal leader and Chief Minister Hemant Soren seemed to have helped consolidate the tribal vote bank in the Opposition's favour. A coming together of the tribals, lower castes and Muslims could prove a formidable coalition for the BJP to tackle in the next polls. The neighbouring state of Bihar also saw the BJP hold ground with the party winning 11 of the 16 existing seats making Bihar the only one out of the four largest states to decisively support the NDA. The popularity of the Prime Minister and the good work done by Nitish Kumar seemed to resonate well with the Bihar voter still haunted by the spectres of Lalu Yadav's 'Jungle Raj'.

States & Union Territories	Total Number of MPs	Seats Won (2019)	Seats Re-Contested (2024)	Seats Retained (2024)	Retention Rate (%)	Vote Share% (2019)	Vote Share% (2024)	Change In Vote Share%
Arunachal Pradesh	02	02	02	02	100%	58.20%	50.61%	-7.59%
Assam	14	09	06	05	83.33%	55.20%	52.64%	-2.56%
Bihar	40	17	16	11	68.75%	55.13%	48.70%	-6.43%
Chandigarh	01	01	01	00	0%	50.64%	47.67%	-2.97%
Chhattisgarh	11	09	09	09	100%	52.03%	53.81%	+1.51%
Dadra & Nagar Haveli Daman & Diu	02	01	01	00	0%	42.98%	39.28%	-3.70%
Delhi	07	07	07	07	100%	56.86%	54.35%	-2.50%
Goa	02	01	01	01	100%	57.12%	56.43%	-0.69%
Gujarat	26	26	26	25	96.15%	62.21%	61.86%	- 1.25%
Haryana	10	10	10	05	50%	58.02%	46.11%	-11.91%
Himachal Pradesh	04	04	04	04	100%	69.11%	56.11%	-12.67%
Jharkhand	14	11	11	08	72.73%	56.72%	49.45%	- 7.27%
Jammu & Kashmir	05	02	02	02	100%	59.70%	52.37%	- 7.33%
Karnataka	28	25	24	16	66.67%	54.57%	51.34%	- 3.23%
Ladakh	01	01	01	00	0%	33.94%	23.58%	-10.36%
Madhya Pradesh	29	28	28	28	100%	58.50%	59.62%	+1.12%
Maharashtra	48	23	23	06	26.09%	53.95%	45.25%	- 8.70%
Manipur	02	01	01	00	0%	34.33%	16.58%	-17.75%
Odisha	21	08	08	08	100%	42.48%	46.38%	+3.90%
Punjab	13	02	02	00	0%	46.57%	23.59%	-22.98%
Rajasthan	25	24	24	14	58.33%	59.07%	49.42%	- 9.65%
Telangana	17	04	04	04	100%	41.54%	45.93%	+4.39%

Tripura	02	02	02	02	100%	49.03%	70.80%	+21.80%
Uttar Pradesh	80	62	61	32	52.46%	54.58%	45.39%	- 9.19%
Uttarakhand	05	05	05	05	100%	61.01%	56.81%	-4.20%
West Bengal	42	18	18	10	55.56%	47.57%	43.97%	- 3.60%
Overall		303	297	204	68.69%			

Table 2: BJP’s State-Wise Seat Retention Rate in 2024 vis-à-vis 2019

Source: Author’s own calculations based on ECI Data

In Karnataka^{xxv} which votes for change of government every five years at the state level has witnessed successive BJP wins in Lok Sabha Elections since 2004. 2024 seemed no aberration with the party winning 17 of the 28 seats registering a 66.67% retention rate carrying 16 of the 24 seats won last time. While the Congress improved its tally as compared to 2019, it fell way short of the 2023 standards when it swept Assembly polls. Consolidation of the Lingayat – Vokkaliga vote by dint of an alliance with the JD(S), stewardship passing onto the Yediyurappa clan with his son B.Y. Vijayendra as state president and factionalism within the Congress boosted the BJP’s prospects of maintaining its hold over the onlystate in the South of India it has ever ruled even as the drifting away of tribal and Scheduled Caste votes remained part of the larger story.

In Rajasthan^{xxvi}, despite a strong showing in terms of vote share by the ruling BJP which won nearly half the vote, strategic alliances between the Congress and local parties tapping upon local discontent and caste equations led to a loss of 10 seats for the BJP retaining only 14 of the 24 despite winning all seats here in the last two Lok Sabha Elections.

The state of West Bengal^{xxvii} has never backed the winner at the national level since 1980 barring 2004 and 2009 when the leading party joined the ruling coalition only as one of the junior partners. The closest was the 2019 elections when the BJP won 18 of its 42 seats just four seats behind the Trinamool Congress which has ruled the state since 2011. A division in opposition votes, further consolidation of the minority vote in favour of the TMC primarily in South Bengal in aftermath of a polarising campaign and a slew of populist welfare measures associated with the personal brand of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee helped tide an anticipated BJP wave in wake of rising anti-incumbency and corruption scandals in the state including public outrage over the Sandeshkhali incident. A weakening hold over the Junglemahal region in western part of Bengal where the BJP had decisively won polls back in 2019, flawed candidate selection for instance, fielding former state chief Dilip Ghosh from Burdwan – Durgapur instead of his home turf the Medinipur constituency led to eventual loss of both seats and growing rift within the

state unit between veterans and new comers allowed the BJP to retain just over half of its current seats in West Bengal defying multiple exit poll projections of a strong showing given the conducive political environment.

Uttar Pradesh^{xxviii} with its 80 seats sends the largest number of MPs to the Lok Sabha. Winning 71 and 62 of these seats in the past two elections respectively seems to have defined the BJP's success in national politics over the last decade. This time around, the BJP was nearly halved from 62 in 2019 to 33, only retaining 32 seats successfully. Localised anti – incumbency against non-performing BJP candidates, lack of proper coordination between government leadership and party organisation and a drifting away of the Dalit vote with a resurgent opposition, the Samajwadi Party – Congress alliance benefitting from fears of an impending constitutional amendment bulldozing the reservation system should the ruling party win a supermajority prevented another BJP sweep further aided by the near obliteration of Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) which had attracted a large chunk of the Dalit vote thus far leading to a formidable consolidation of Yadav, Muslim and Dalit voters against the BJP. Its vote share also dwindled by a significant nine percent as even in safe seats like Varanasi where the Prime Minister was re-elected saw the victory margins dip to 1.5 lakh votes from a greater than 4 lakh margin last time around signifying two broader trends across the state. Declining popular support for the BJP compounded by unification of the Opposition vote stemmed its rise after a decade of unfettered dominance in UP politics. Notwithstanding losses elsewhere, had the BJP maintained its tally in Uttar Pradesh which was by and large expected as exit poll trends showed, the party could have well crossed the majority mark of 272 seats nationally on its own for the third time.

In Haryana^{xxix}, the BJP registered a lukewarm performance with a 50% retention rate securing only five of all the ten seats in the state won last time explained by a double digit loss in popular support. The agrarian protests over the farm laws subsequently withdrawn, lacklustre performance of the BJP state government and a resurgent Congressin alliance with the emerging Aam Aadmi Party banked on the charisma of its local leadership to consolidate support from Jats, Muslims and now Dalits over the reservation narrative. Despite best attempts by top BJP leaders to clarify the alleged misconception, it seemed to have worked well for the opposition on the ground. Even as the BJP secured roughly the same voteshare as the Opposition performing extremely well in the urban dominated seats of Gurgaon, Faridabad amongst others, this was a sharp decline from last time when the BJP won across rural and urban constituencies to win all seats with 58 percent of the vote.

The biggest outliers in this election however proved to be Maharashtra^{xxx} and Punjab^{xxxi} with the poorest retention rates as far as the BJP is concerned. In Maharashtra, the BJP could win just six of the 23 constituencies won last time registering a dismal 27 percent retention rate therefore failing the first test in the state's changed political landscape given new coalition configurations in aftermath of the split in the Shiv Sena (SS) and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP). Growing public sympathy in favour of Uddhav Thackeray and Sharad Pawar who successfully projected themselves as victims of BJP's political vendetta leading to splintering of their parties,

a resurgent Congress attracting the apprehensive Dalit vote over the emotive reservation issue, Maratha discontent over the quota issue and agrarian anger especially in the western part of the state i.e.: the Marathwada region which saw record number of farmer suicides hurt the BJP's prospects. A delay in announcement of candidates due to a prolonged seat sharing bargain among the Mahayuti partners i.e.: the BJP and allies combined with underlying structural reasons of uneven distribution of its support base cost the BJP the state and most of its seats despite the BJP led alliance polling roughly the same voteshare as the Opposition I.N.D.I alliance for instance, in Mumbai North Union Minister Piyush Goyal defeated his closest rival by over 30 percent of the vote while in Mumbai North East and Mumbai North Central, the BJP candidates trailed by less than 2 percent of the popular vote leading to a disproportionate difference in seat tally. In other words, the larger argument that the BJP won fewer seats with comfortable margins while losing several close races stands best vindicated here.

The BJP drew a blank in Punjab losing both its traditional seats, Gurdaspur and Hoshiarpur despite a growing vote share in the state. This was however the first election the BJP contested without its longtime ally, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) which had dominated state politics for many years until being struck by an existential crisis in recent years. While capitalising on the Hindu vote and support of local parties, the BJP emerged a runner-up in three Lok Sabha constituencies, surpassed the Akali Dal to emerge as the third largest party in terms of vote share and led in around 23 Assembly segments even as a fledgling state organisation and significant agrarian discontent failed to convert the momentum into seats as the two leading parties in the state, the ruling AAP and the Congress contesting separately here despite being part of the I.N.D.I.A bloc nationally captured 10 of the 13 seats together by dint of a first party the post electoral system leaving one to the Akalis in their home turf of Bathinda and two Sikh – fundamentalist independents. Rising levels of popular support however came as a solace for the BJP giving it the confidence for future expansion plans in Punjab even as it failed to win any seat in 2024.

A state-wise analysis across the country thus reveals that the BJP's retention rate therefore has starkly varied between a perfect hundred percent in Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Telangana amongst others and a zero in Punjab exhibiting a huge inter-quartile range. However, a 70 percent retention rate overall nationally even after a decade in power seems quite impressive even as it is a decline of around twenty points compared to the remarkable 91 percent achieved back in 2019.

What explains this result in addition to the state specific factors already discussed, is that depending on regional parties alone to bring the BJP down would be a far fetched reality unless the Congress significantly bettered its performance in direct contests. In the 2024 General Elections, somewhat of a Congress resurgence helped the party improve its strike rate to 29 percent from a meagre 8 percent five years ago making significant gains in Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Karnataka at the cost of the BJP leaving the ruling party short of a clear majority although the gap in head on contests still remains stark. Even as the party lost 93 of the existing

seats it contested yet retained seats accounting for more than fourth – fifths of its current tally i.e. : 204 of the BJP's 240 seats only vindicate how the 2014 and 2019 General Elections had led to a tectonic shift of the political baseline rendering the BJP a lasting advantage which the Opposition struggles to overcome despite a stronger than expected showing.

The remaining 36 of the 240 seats which happen to be either reclaimed or won for the first time albeit seemingly minuscule in number proved determining in ensuring a third consecutive term for the BJP led NDA. Had the BJP not been able to cover its losses at least partly, the party would have been relegated around the 200th mark and the NDA bereft of a majority would be giving the Opposition I.N.D.I. alliance a real chance at government formation. Despite the stability and viability of such a political formation being debatable, the significance of these additional seats now seem well established requiring the focus of attention to thereby shift to the BJP's performance along parameters of reclamation and eventually expansion.

(B) Seat Reclamation

The BJP's prospects in the 2024 Lok Sabha Elections also premised upon its ability to win back seats where it had emerged victorious before 2019 but lost out during the 2019 Lok Sabha polls despite its greatest victory until then. Most of these seats happen to be from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar where the BJP had registered a near complete sweep in 2014 but lost some of them in 2019. Some are from the South – Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana where the BJP earlier won with the support of its allies but couldn't retain its hold. The rest are spread across other states.

When analysing the BJP's reclamation of seats across the nation, the party won 14 out of the 41 seats available under this category registering a reclamation rate of only 34.15 percent. In Bihar most of the seats where a BJP comeback was possible barring Nawada, which it reclaimed got re-allotted to its ally, the JD (U) in subsequent Lok Sabha Elections nullifying real chances of the party winning them back. In Uttar Pradesh, seats lost to the SP – BSP alliance in 2019 couldn't be recovered despite the alliance between two major regional parties getting dissolved in 2024. The SP retaining most of these seats alone showed the growing resilience of the opposition in the state and also their ability to go beyond the traditional Yadav – Muslim combination to win support of some of the other smaller OBC groups. SP chief Akhilesh Yadav strategically distributed most party tickets to other castes reserving just five for his family members who represented the Yadav clan in traditional seats of the party like Mainpuri, Kannauj, and Azamgarh amongst others while its ally the Congress helped attract the Dalit vote over the reservation issue aided by the collapse of the BSP. Only in Amroha, a strong local BSP candidate and the splintering of the Muslim vote helped the BJP nominee prevail claiming this seat back after a gap of five years while partly thanks to the local organisational strength of its ally, the RLD helped the NDA alliance garner the Bijnor seat in Jat dominated western Uttar Pradesh.

Similarly, in West Bengal the BJP couldn't reclaim either Dum Dum or Krishnanagar conceived a must win for the party in order to improve upon its performance of 2019. Once represented by former Union Ministers Tapan Sikdar and Satyabrata Mukherjee in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee led government albeit in alliance with Mamata Banerjee's TMC during the late nineties, both the constituencies saw the presence of strong Left Front candidates dividing the opposition vote and a consolidation of the minority and beneficiary votebank behind the TMC despite serious charges of treason against their candidate Mahua Moitra and longterm localised anti-incumbency against Sougata Roy show how the analysis on reclamation maybe connected to larger trends exhibited across the state as discussed previously.

In Jharkhand, the BJP couldn't recover tribal dominated seats^{xxxii} like Rajmahal given their overwhelming support for the JMM or reclaim the minority dominated South Goa constituency or win back Nowgong in Assam, demographics significantly influencing election results. Corresponding to state level trends, the BJP's performance also remained dismal in terms of reclaiming seats in both Punjab and Tamil Nadu significantly increasing their vote share given that this was the first election in the two states they contested without any major ally but the growth proved insufficient to covert into seats. In Rajasthan, the Nagaur seat which was won by Hanuman Beniwal back in 2019, a BJP ally then remained with him even as he switched sides to the I.N.D.I alliance capitalising on local issues, the Jat vote, agrarian discontent against the BJP and support of the Congress party.

In Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra, the BJP's performance may be deemed as mixed with a 50 percent reclamation rate. Out of Korba and Bastar in Chhattisgarh, the BJP could only win the latter testimony to its ability to regain significant ground in the tribal dominated areas of the state where it lost heavily five years ago. Similarly, it also regained Palghar in Maharashtra, another ST reserved seat where it had emerged victorious in 2014 but ceded to its ally the united Shiv Sena then back in 2019. It was reclaimed this time around partly owing to its strong organisational base, firm backing from the Eknath Shinde led Shiv Sena and a divided opposition owing to strong performance by a third party candidate from the Bahujan Vikas Aghadi garnering more than 20 percent of the votes cast here but failed to defeat the Congress in Chandrapur.

Tamil Nadu	39	03	00	0%	Kanniyakumari (35.00%) Coimbatore (31.47%) Nilgiris (Didn't Contest)	Kanniyakumari (35.60%) Coimbatore (32.79%) Nilgiris (22.83%)	Kanniyakumari (+0.60%) Coimbatore (+1.32%) Nilgiris (N.A.)
Telangana	17	02	02	100%	25.70%	37.83%	+12.13%
Uttar Pradesh	80	13	01	7.69%	40.92%	37.03%	- 3.89%
West Bengal	42	02	00	0%	39.24%	38.24%	-1.00%
Overall		41	14	34.15%			

Table 3: BJP's State – Wise Seat Reclamation Performance in 2024

Source: Author's own calculations based on ECI Data

Andhra Pradesh^{xxxiii} also saw the BJP with a more than 66 percent reclamation rate as it won the Narasapuram and Rajahmundry Lok Sabha seats while losing Tirupati only by a small margin witnessing a significant surge in its vote share in the state benefiting from a united anti incumbent vote against the YSR Congress government and a new social coalition in aftermath of its alliance with the Telugu Desam Party and Jana Sena Party yielding promising returns as the NDA won the state decisively both in the Assembly as well as the Lok Sabha polls, recovering older seats won previously in 2014 and also back in the nineties when the TDP had been a major NDA ally. The arrest of former CM and TDP leader Chandrababu Naidu under the Jagan Reddy dispensation also helped generate a sympathy wave in favour of the alliance.

The BJP's best prospects in terms of reclamation were however registered in Madhya Pradesh, Telangana and Odisha winning all seats with an improved vote share available under this category. These also happen to be the states where the party won almost all seats or saw a significant increase from its 2019 tally. In Madhya Pradesh, the BJP also won former Chief Minister and Congress leader Kamal Nath's stronghold of Chhindwara^{xxxiv} defeating his son and sitting Congress MP, Nakul Nath by a substantial margin of over one lakh votes. Fielding Vivek Buntty Sahu, a longtime local party worker and capitalising on the pro – Modi wave in the state helped it win all seats including this one last won by BJP veteran Sunder Lal Patwa in a 1997 bypoll.

In Odisha, where the BJP won 20 of the 21 seats included three of its former constituencies in Berhampur, Nabarangpur and Keonjhar won during the nineties as an ally of the BJD. The Modi

factor in national elections, decline of the Congress in Odisha state politics leading to the unification of the anti – incumbent vote and internal problems of BJD aided the BJP prospects. Even in Telangana, the BJP reclaimed BRS turfs of Medak and Mahbubnagar, seats won in the nineties as a TDP ally managing to consolidate the non – Congress vote while also tapping upon the credentials of local candidates like D.K. Aruna who has been previously associated with other parties including the Congress as a senior minister in the state government. The BJP also recovered the union territory seats of Andaman and Nicobar as well as Dadra and Nagar Haveli partly owing to the popularity of local candidates, former MPs Bishnupada Ray and Kalaben Delkar respectively, the latter winning last time as a Shiv Sena nominee. Overall therefore, just 14 of the BJP’s current tally of 240 seats are reclaimed constituencies (5.83 percent of the total), numerically meagre yet proving crucial in giving the BJP the edge it needed for a third consecutive term in office.

© New Seats Won for the First Time

After its biggest victory ever in the 2019 Lok Sabha Elections, the BJP had drawn up a list of 150 weak constituencies under the stewardship of then BJP President, Amit Shah. The party prepared a plan of action to expand its support base by winning some of these seats in subsequent elections. A large chunk of them however came to be contested by the NDA allies leaving some 106 seats in actual numbers for the BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha Elections. An attempt to examine the ruling party’s performance in these seats would show how barring a few constituencies in Assam, Karnataka, Odisha, Maharashtra, Telangana, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh, most of these constituencies continued to remain out of bounds for the BJP which registered an expansion rate of only 20.76 percent by winning 22 of the 106 available constituencies.

The BJP's best performances in terms of expansion came in Assam, Karnataka and Odisha. In Assam, the BJP won most of the newly created constituencies post delimitation including Kaziranga, Darrang – Udalgiri, Sonitpur and also the tribal dominated seat of Diphu, the stronghold of former Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal who is currently Union Minister. Although the Opposition alleged a clear partisan bias in the delimitation exercise^{xxxv} to favour the ruling party, larger trends in Assam show that by dint of a strong local organisation and leadership spearheaded by CM Himanta Biswa Sarma combined with demographic consolidation helped the NDA improve upon its performance of 2019. Even as the BJP remained stagnant at 9 seats, its allies the Asom Gana Parishad and the United People’s Party Liberal picked up one seat each leading to a roughly two percent increase in overall voteshare for the NDA. The Congress improved largely at the cost of the AIUDF signalling a unification of the Muslim vote and rise in popular support for its youth leaders like Gaurav Gogoi. The results however when extrapolated in terms of Assembly constituency wise outcomes, showed that the BJP led alliance would be on

course for a major victory in the state polls. In Odisha where the BJP nearly clean swept, eight of the seats were retained and three more were reclaimed as discussed above. This left ten more new seats possible to win in a state with 21 Lok Sabha constituencies. Barring Koraput where the Congress candidate and state president Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka prevailed, the BJP managed nine of these continuing its winning run across the state. The BJD's unilateral support for the BJP in parliament over the last decade had perhaps rendered it irrelevant in national elections further helping the BJP sweep by successfully tapping upon localised discontent against the BJD state government and aimed to strike an emotional chord with the voters by raking up the issue of the missing keys of the Jagannath Temple's Ratna Bhandar (sacred treasury) and holding an alleged internal BJD conspiracy responsible for Naveen Patnaik's failing health^{xxxvi}.

In Karnataka's Bangalore Rural constituency, the BJP candidate Dr. C.N. Manjunath who is also the son – in – law of BJP ally JD(S) patriarch former PM H.D. Deve Gowda defeated the sitting Congress MP and brother of Karnataka Deputy CM D.K. Shivakumar, D.K. Suresh to secure the seat for the first time since its creation a decade back. A consolidation of the Vokkaliga vote by dint of the BJP – JD(S) alliance seems to have ensured the BJP victory. In the state of Maharashtra where the BJP won just 9 seats despite a healthy vote share, two of these happened to be seats won for the first time. In Satara and Ratnagiri – Sindhudurg, strong local candidates of the likes of Udayanraje Bhosale, a former NCP MP from the seat and Konkan belt stalwart Narayan Rane helped tilt the scales in BJP's favour capitalising on localised anti-incumbency against sitting legislators even as it lost the seat of Amravati by less than a percentage despite fielding sitting MP Navneet Rana who had won as an independent last time. What deserves credit in this context is the BJP's ability to take measured risk and bargain hard with its alliance partners for contesting in newer constituencies where it stood a fair chance of winning. Had it not been for these seats, the BJP could well have been restricted to a lower single digit tally in Maharashtra.

States & Union Territories	Total No. Of MPs	Seats Never Won But Contested in 2024	Seats Won In 2024	Expansion Rate (%)	Vote Share% (2019)	Vote Share% (2024)	Change In Vote Share%
Andhra Pradesh	25	03	01	33.33%	Araku (1.66%) Anakapalli (1.07%) Rajampet (Didn't Contest)	Araku (36.62%) Anakapalli (57.50%) Rajampet (43.16%)	Araku (+34.96%) Anakapalli (+56.43%) Rajampet (N.A.)
Assam	14	04	04	100%	N.A. (New seats)	53.05%	N.A.
Karnataka	28	01	01	100%	41.40%	56.21%	+14.81%
Kerala	20	16	01	6.25%	Kasaragod (16.13%) Kannur (6.56%) Vatakara (7.58%) Kozhigode (14.97%) Malappuram (6.27%) Ponnani (10.87%) Palakkad (21.44%) Thrissur (28.19%) Ernakulam (14.24%) Alappuzzha (17.24%) Pathanamthitta (28.97%) Kollam (10.67%) Attingal (24.97%)	Kasaragod (19.73%) Kannur (11.27%) Vatakara (9.97%) Kozhigode (16.57%) Malappuram (7.87%) Ponnani (12.16%) Palakkad (24.31%) Thrissur (37.80%) Ernakulam (15.87%) Alappuzzha (28.30%) Pathanamthitta (25.49%) Kollam (17.82%) Attingal (31.64%)	Kasaragod (+3.60%) Kannur (+4.71%) Vatakara (+2.39%) Kozhigode (+1.60%) Malappuram (+1.60%) Ponnani (+1.29%) Palakkad (+2.87%) Thrissur (+9.61%) Ernakulam (+1.63%) Alappuzzha (+11.06%) Pathanamthitta (-3.48%) Kollam (+7.15%) Attingal (+6.67%)

					Thiruvananthapuram (31.30%) Chalakudy (15.60%) Wayanad (Didn't Contest) Alathur (Didn't Contest)	Thiruvananthapuram (35.52%) Chalakudy (Didn't Contest) Wayanad (13.00%) Alathur (18.97%)	Thiruvananthapuram (+4.22%) Chalakudy (N.A.) Wayanad (N.A.) Alathur (N.A.)
Maha-rashtra	48	03	02	66.67%	Didn't Contest	46.63%	N.A.
Mizoram	01	01	00	0%	5.75%	6.82%	+1.07%
Odisha	21	10	09	90%	36.12%	44.51%	+ 8.39%
Puducherry	01	01	00	0%	Didn't Contest	35.83%	N.A.
Punjab	13	10	00	0%	Didn't Contest	17.11%	N.A.
Sikkim	01	01	00	0%	4.69%	4.95%	+0.26%
Tamil Nadu	39	20	00	0%	Sivaganga (21.63%) Rest of the Seats (Didn't Contest)	Sivaganga (18.59%) Thiruvallur (15.86%) Chennai North (12.56%) Chennai South (26.44%) Chennai Central (23.16%) Vellore (31.25%) Krishnagiri (18.36%) Tiruvannamalai (13.67%) Namakkal (9.13%) Tiruppur (16.22%) Pollachi (19.84%) Karur (9.05%) Perambalur	Sivaganga (-3.04%) Rest of the Seats (N.A.)

						(14.33%) Chidambaram (14.44%) Nagapattinam (10.50%) Thanjavur (16.59%) Madurai (22.38%) Virudhunagar (15.66%) Tenkasi (20.10%) Tirunelveli (31.54%)	
Telangana	17	11	02	18.18%	10.90 %	29.52%	+18.62%
Uttar Pradesh	80	01	00	0%	44.09%	35.76%	- 8.33%
West Bengal	42	22	02	9.09%	34.59%	34.44%	- 0.15%
Overall		106	22	20.76%			

Table 4: BJP’s State – Wise New-Seats-Won Performance in 2024

Source: Author’s own calculations based on ECI Data

Newer seats for the BJP also came from Andhra Pradesh where it bagged Anakapalli while improving its vote share significantly across all new constituencies it had been contested by dint of an alliance with the TDP and JSP. In neighbouring Telangana, where the BJP’s tally doubled from four to eight, it secured two new constituencies. In Chevela, the BJP cut into the vote share of the BRS which retained the seat in 2019 while in Malkajgiri, its new candidate, BRS defector and former state Minister Etela Rajender helped the BJP emerge victorious. The BJP’s Lok Sabha tally was definitely boosted by an impressive performance of the NDA in South India decisively winning Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, marking a significant improvement in Telangana and also opening its account in Kerala^{xxxvii}. The BJP won its first seat in Kerala i.e.: Thrissur as actor Suresh Gopi emerged victorious while putting up impressive performances in four other constituencies of Thiruvananthapuram, Attingal, Alappuzha and Palakkad making a dent both in Congress and Left strongholds thereby initiating a phase of tri-polarity in Kerala state politics. Careful selection of local candidates, a revamped organisation and growing appeal of the BJP amongst Nairs, Ezhavas as well as Dalits, tribals and Catholics given the Prime Minister’s frequent meeting with church leaders helped the BJP gain ground in this southern state with

substantial scope for expansion in future years. The 42 Lok Sabha seat strong West Bengal was considered fertile ground for the expansion of the BJP. If the party had to improve upon its 2019 tally, winning newer constituencies was mandatory. With the BJP already reaching its saturation in the North and the North West, Bengal featured as a priority in this regard. However, owing to the TMC's ability to largely retain ground and a stronger performance on part of the Left – Congress alliance saw the BJP's overall tally conversely decline in the state. The BJP could only win two new constituencies, the Adhikari family strongholds^{xxxviii} of Tamluk and Kanthi in East Midnapore district with former Justice Abhijit Ganguly and Leader of Opposition, Souendu Adhikari's younger brother Soumendu emerging victorious.

Even in most other states including the union territory seat of Puducherry where the state Home Minister A. Namasiyyam lost by a significant margin to the Congress candidate, the BJP failed to expand. It failed to win even a single new seat it contested in Tamil Nadu and Punjab despite securing a double digit vote share without support from any major regional party. Uttar Pradesh's Mainpuri remained with SP chief Akhilesh Yadav's wife Dimple Yadav winning comfortably. In the North East as well, the BJP remained limited only to its states of unalloyed dominance i.e. : Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura. The consolidation of the minority vote and resurgence of the Congress also unnerved BJP's regional allies compelling them to look for newer alternatives given the changing political landscape especially in the states of contested dominance such as Manipur, Meghalaya and Nagaland where the NDA was severely defeated. However, the Sikkim Democratic Front and the Zoram People's Front managed to win the lone Lok Sabha seats of Sikkim and Mizoram respectively helping the BJP to maintain its strategic dominance over these states as the former remain committed to close collaboration with the BJP, NDA and in essence the Union government for smooth functioning and progress.

V. Future Insights

What explains the 2024 Lok Sabha results of the BJP is therefore an impressive retention rate of around 70% but a simultaneously suboptimal performance by the party in terms of reclamation and expansion (Fig. 2) as already analysed, offering a strategic perspective into a victory which seem to have sobered the ruling BJP going beyond narratives which had so far dominated the electoral landscape.

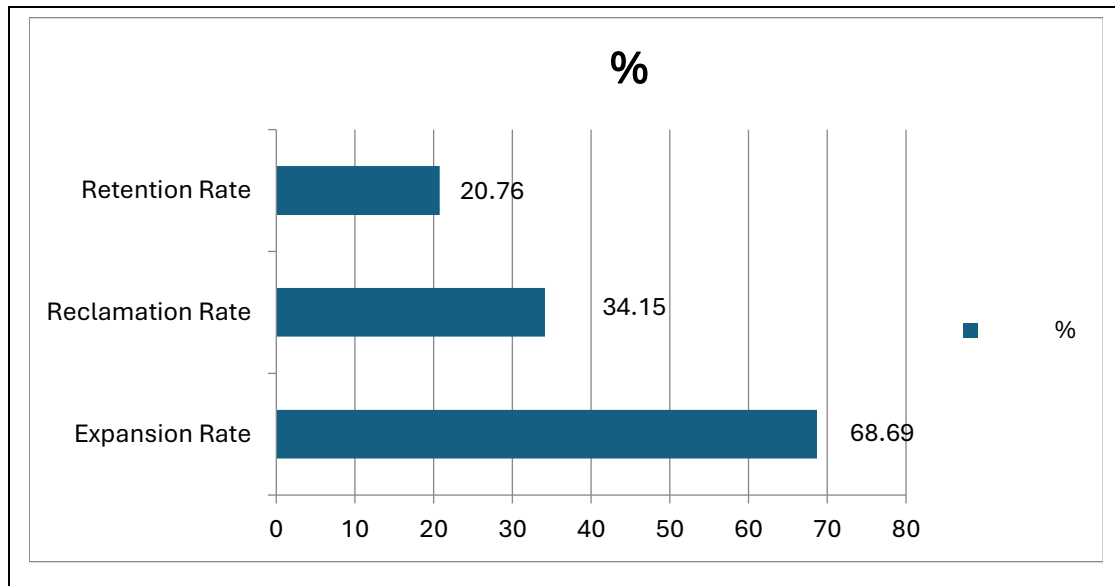


Fig. 2: Comparing the BJP's performance across the three parameters

Source: Author's calculations on ECI Data

The BJP's own tally of 240 seats being more than all parties of the I.N.D.I.A bloc combined enabled it to form the government for a third consecutive term with support from allies. However, there is no denying that there has been a significant dent in its tally when compared to its 2019 performance and ofcourse the party finished well behind the set target of 370 seats. The failure to win an outright majority also came as a psychological blow for the Prime Minister and the BJP what many observers termed as a lesson in humility delivered by the Indian electorate. The results thus proved a mixed bag where the ruling party seemed humbled in victory while the Opposition remained jubilant in defeat. A thorough introspection of these results therefore lies at the heart of providing crucial insights which could prove electorally relevant both for the BJP and the Opposition in and after 2024. The paper not being predictive in nature, considers the stakes of either side depending on how things currently stand – their potentialities, challenges and prospects without being judgmental about future outcomes.

As far as the ruling BJP is concerned,

First, perceptions that the cult of Narendra Modi is fast fading into oblivion seem misplaced. It may be yielding diminishing returns in some cases but data suggests^{xxxix} that the BJP today is more dependent on Mr. Modi for winning national elections than it was in 2019 when more than two – thirds BJP voters agreed that they would vote for the BJP no matter who was the Prime Ministerial candidate. Perhaps, the Balakot air strikes and heightened nationalist sentiments in its aftermath made Modi's personality cult less important but as of 2024, nearly half the BJP voters said that they wouldn't have voted for the party had Mr. Modi not been the face of the BJP's

campaign. Overdependence on one leader has cost political parties in the long run, the Indian National Congress is a prominent example. Moreover, with Mr. Modi nearing his self prescribed retirement age of 75 years, the Opposition has already called upon him to make way for fresh leadership which however seems unlikely in the near future but even if Mr. Modi was to lead the BJP into the next General Elections in 2029, the succession question would have to be settled sooner or later. Grooming the next line of leadership therefore becomes paramount. The RSS – BJP seemingly better at orchestrating a generational shift than its adversaries as it had done even back in 2014 by successfully projecting Narendra Modi as the face of the BJP, happens to be well aware of this limitation. Therefore their current focus on strengthening the BJP's organisational base and fighting state elections increasingly on collective leadership cannot be read in isolation.

Second, the lack of proper synchrony between the government and the party organisation including reports of a possible sidelining of RSS workers^{x1} from BJP's election campaign of 2024 seem to have featured as one of the compelling reasons for the significant dent despite many party functionaries publicly refuting it. The BJP therefore cannot afford to leave anything to chance in future elections given how competitive things have become and seems to be already working towards mending its ties with the RSS and closely involving them in campaign coordination and strategy meetings. The return of RSS veteran Ram Madhav to helm the Jammu and Kashmir election campaign where the BJP fared better than last time and the role of RSS cadre in conducting door to door outreach programmes which helped the BJP retain Haryana for a third term despite expectations of a poor result by dint of ten years of anti – incumbency, are inklings of a subtle shift in the BJP strategy and that course correction measures might be already on track.

Third, not just national but also the cultivation of an impactful sub-national leadership needs to become a priority for the BJP. In times when electoral competition is reaching new intensity and every state seems to be behaving differently, the role of effective leadership at the state, local and even constituency level shall become all the more important

Fourth, with the abrogation of Article 370, abolition of Triple Talaq, consecration of the Ram Temple and enactment of the Citizenship Amendment Act, the core ideological issues carried forward by the BJP from the Sangh days seem to have attained their expiry. These issues had so far played a critical role in holding together the ideological Hindutva votebank which would be difficult to retain without the party crafting a newer agenda and renewing its Hindutva politics. By alleging how the Opposition is trying to divide the Hindus along the lines of castes and snatch their reservation benefits to appease the minorities could well be the genesis of a new Hindutva rhetoric the BJP is testing as a counter to the Opposition's demands for the caste census. However, the focus of attention seems to be largely shifting towards economic bread and butter issues with unemployment, inflation and rural distress becoming a rising concern. The Modi government also known to harbour a pro – big business image which however, in recent times it is trying to neutralise through a reinvigoration of social welfare schemes.

The only solace for the BJP is that even the recent Mood of the Nation, India Today survey^{xli} shows that there is growing optimism that the economic situation will improve in the next six months and voters trust the Modi government's handling of the economy relatively better than the opposition's. However, contentious issues such as the introduction of the Agnipath Scheme and scrapping of the Old Pension Scheme which have attracted considerable criticism need to be taken care of by the Central Government and also sometimes by the state government where the BJP is in power. For instance, the Haryana government has promised the absorption of Agniveers post their tenure in state services. This could ensure that the BJP's electoral propaganda of the 'Double Engine Government' i.e.: BJP rule both at the Centre and states remains well on track.

Fifth, when the BJP registered two back to back electoral majorities in the Lok Sabha Elections in 2014 and 2019 respectively and through successive Assembly election victories became palpably strong at the state level and parallelly improved its Rajya Sabha tally to a high that remains unmatched in the last three decades. Many scholars conceived the BJP's resurgence as harking back to an era of one party dominance albeit with certain qualifiers even as the debate regarding it was never put to rest. While a party is ideally situated to become dominant when it is large, enjoys a deep and broad base of support, and faces an opposition that is both fragmented and stigmatised^{xlii}, the INDIA bloc was a far more coordinated and unified Opposition front at least by Indian standards and the principal opponent the Congress isn't a party stigmatised by others rather most regional parties have worked with it at some point in time given the compulsions of multiparty coalition politics in India. The BJP's main advantage lay in its relatively deep support base in its political strongholds where it has been shaken. However, it has simultaneously become more competitive in almost all states across the country (barring Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Kerala despite witnessing a significant increase in its vote share even here), making the notion of 'dominance' all the more contested and complicated in current times.

Key insights for the Opposition on the other hand would entail,

First, relying on a state specific strategy shall become increasingly vital for the Opposition. The diversity dividend^{xliii} seems best exemplified in the Lok Sabha results as each state threw up a verdict determined by its own specificities and political dynamics. While it would be erroneous to construe that states didn't matter in the past decade for even if the Modi wave helped the BJP decisively win national elections, varied results have followed in the Assembly Elections. State specific alliances dominated the I.N.D.I bloc for instance, the AAP – Congress came together in Delhi and Haryana to stop the BJP its major adversary while they fought independently in Punjab where the BJP was not a major player. Although the BJP significantly boosted its vote share in Punjab, it failed to win a single seat, had the two contested together probably some of their own vote would have shifted to the BJP because on the ground, the AAP and INC are arch rivals in Punjab and this decision wouldn't go down well with the cadre as well. These state specific

alliances also yielded results in Kerala, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh making it a tested route for the Opposition to embrace in the future while keeping their unity intact.

Second, evolving a strong internal mechanism for dispute settlement within the party and also amongst alliance partners. This would avoid discontent from becoming public and therefore electorally detrimental. For instance, factionalism cost the Congress recent state elections^{xliv} in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and even Haryana. The disagreement between I.N.D.I alliance bloc leaders came out in open in the media with respect to seat sharing in Maharashtra, Haryana and Jharkhand polls. The BJP often does better in terms of maintaining intra – party discipline and reigning in discontented allies, the Opposition needs to find a remedy soon.

Third, the Opposition needs to consolidate upon gains made in the recent Lok Sabha polls and retain its momentum. History over the last decade shows poor retention prospects as barring regional parties like the TMC in West Bengal and the Left in Kerala no other party has been able to win back a state after completing a full term in office. Surprisingly the last time the Congress retained a state for another term was back in 2011 when Tarun Gogoi led it to its third consecutive win in Assam. Even in terms of Lok Sabha results barring Tamil Nadu and Kerala which have solidly backed the Opposition both in 2019 and 2024, trends across other states have fluctuated. Hoping for the BJP to lose further ground on its own would be a major fallacy as the party's course correction seems to have already begun and the Opposition needs to perform even better to stand a chance of winning power.

Fourth, strengthening the Congress party^{xlv} not in terms of driving hard bargains with its allies but for head on contests with the BJP. No matter how well its regional allies perform, there are around at least 180 seats where the two major parties are pitted against each other in direct contest. Thus in order to defeat the BJP, Congress resurgence becomes a vital pillar of any opposition formation to provide a national alternative.

Fifth, since the BJP's victory in 2014, the ruling party has always gone onto set the election agenda with the Opposition only reciprocating. The Opposition needs more than mere unity requiring an election agenda and leadership to match the stature of Prime Minister Modi in order to attract increased support but so far seems to have struggled to provide either.

How far each side is able to tap upon their potentialities while tackling their respective shortcomings, converting challenges into opportunities shall determine their significance in the Indian political landscape of coming times.

VI. Moving Forward: A New Party System?

As the 2024 General Elections signalled the end of a decade of single party majority government, debates about the changing nature of the Indian Party System seem to have been reignited. Two perspectives seem to have emerged in this context. One group of analysts point to a return to the era of coalition politics while others concur that in terms of vote share and broader trends the results seem to bear greater affinity to the last two General Elections reinforcing the BJP's centrality.

Despite the dent, the BJP's current tally well surpasses any opposition party singularly or combined. Moreover, the BJP is perhaps stronger than most single largest parties which have led coalition governments since the nineties. At the sub-national level, the BJP either singularly or in coalition with its allies controls nearly 60 percent of them i.e.: 17 of the 28 states and one of the three union territories. In most places where it is not in power, it happens to be the official opposition consequently pushing its Rajya Sabha numbers to a record high unmatched over the past three decades.

Even as the BJP may have lost its clear majority in the Lok Sabha depending on coalition partners, in the states its position seems to be paradoxically strengthening in reversal of past trends. Earlier, the BJP was known for strong Lok Sabha mandates and poor state results. Loss of states (Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Maharashtra) happened on either side of the impressive 2019 Lok Sabha victory. This time around, the BJP won the Hindi heartland states in December 2023 hoping for a repeat in the national elections. However, the BJP fell short of a Lok Sabha majority yet it decisively won Arunachal Pradesh and Odisha where state polls were held simultaneously. It eventually retained Haryana as well despite all odds which is only likely to further strengthen its position in the upper chamber of Parliament.

If these trends hold, a mutated version of BJP dominance may well be observed in the coming years. As regional parties continue to govern crucial states like Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar amongst others, having governed several others intermittently in the past and prove crucial players both in the BJP led NDA government and the Opposition I.N.D.I.A. bloc allows coalitions to feature in a major way once again both at the national and state levels. Therefore, dominance increasingly contested and complicated has come to co-exist with regionalism and coalition politics in the contemporary epoch^{xlvi}.

Party systems being dynamic rather than static, the nature of Indian Democracy however cannot change overnight. What can be concurred currently is that while the dimensions of dominance, regionalism and coalitions may have to be reviewed as elections are becoming increasingly competitive and fragmented once again, the foundations of the Fourth Party System largely remain intact^{xlvii}. Definitive conclusions can only be drawn retrospectively. For instance, until the BJP's major victory in 2014 none could have gauged that India was moving into a new party system altogether. Whether the 2024 General Elections results are just an aberration or signal major political change in the years ahead will depend much on developments hereon.

What remained important in this election was the stark diversity dividend exhibited. Certain voter groups behaved so very differently in different parts of the country like the Scheduled Caste voters^{xlviii} preferred the Opposition I.N.D.I bloc in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan but not to the same extent in Bihar while firmly supporting the BJP in Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. The Scheduled Tribe vote consolidated behind the JMM in Jharkhand and the I.N.D.I bloc in Rajasthan while the BJP could largely hold onto its lead amongst tribal voters in neighbouring Odisha, to a lesser extent even in West Bengal and improved in Chhattisgarh, another tribal dominated state. Why the arrests of Chandrababu Naidu and Hemant Soren could generate a sympathy wave helping their electoral prospects but not for Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal expose dilemmas of the contemporary age reinforcing state politics pivoting back to the centre stage. That arguably, all states in the Indian union may qualify as ‘mini-democracies’^{xlix} given their historical specificities, which are reflected in their distinct electoral choices and the nature of party systems seems to be featuring predominantly once again. Prashant Kishor no wonder said that if the BJP would like to regain its momentum and ensure stable rule at the Centre for the next five years without giving into mounting pressure by its alliance partners, winning at least two of the three upcoming state elections in Haryana, Jharkhand and Maharashtra would be crucial^l. The BJP has already retained Haryana and bested its previous performance in the union territory of Jammu & Kashmir^{li} making elections in Jharkhand and Maharashtra closely watched. In other words, without unforeseen changes future national election outcomes are likely to be an aggregate of state results.

Moreover, the results of an election hinges as much upon the opposition as the incumbent for instance, an economic recession alone may not be enough to remove a government unless the Opposition has the ability to tap into the popular discontent and mobilise the anti incumbent vote. Kenneth. H. Greene^{lii} in examining ‘dominant party equilibrium’ goes onto consider reasons for persistence or downfall of a dominant party as highlighted in his resource theory of single party dominance. One of them is of course incumbency advantages which allow the ruling party to secure a disproportionate hold over men, money and political institutions while imposing significant costs on the Opposition, distorting the level playing field by making elections unfairly competitive distinguishing them from full fledged democracies as well as authoritarian regimes. The other side of the argument is about opposition building and momentum to weaken the incumbent. In 2024, the first factor was perhaps working even more strongly in the BJP’s favour as compared to 2019 yet the decline in the BJP’s seat share in the Lok Sabha Elections shows that the Indian Opposition perhaps did its job better this time around by putting up a more coordinated and unified front than ever before while embracing a strategic approach to corner the ruling BJP resulting in their stronger showing.

An introspection of the recent General Election results in India handing thus cautions the ruling BJP that should it wish to continue its winning run in the future, it must immediately get its house in order and focus on retaining as well as further expanding its support base while giving the Opposition a reality check that despite its resurgence, consolidating upon recent gains and

maintaining their unity would be an arduous undertaking as is overcoming the lasting structural advantages that the BJP has built for itself thereby offering crucial strategic insights for electoral politics which shall continue to resonate in and after 2024.

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^{lii}Kenneth. E. Greene, 'Why Dominant Parties Lose : Mexico's Democratization in Comparative Perspective' (New York, USA : Cambridge University Press, 2007)

Appendix: List of political parties in India

AAP : Aam Aadmi Party

ABLC : Akhil Bharatiya Loktantrik Congress

AGP : Asom Gana Parishad

AIADMK : All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam

AJSU : All Jharkhand Students Union

ADS : Apna Dal (Sonelal)

ASDC : Autonomous State Demand Committee

BJD : Biju Janata Dal

BJP : Bharatiya Janata Party

BPF : Bodoland People's Front

BRS : Bharat Rashtra Samithi

BSP : Bahujan Samaj Party

CPI : Communist Party of India

CPI (M) : Communist Party of India (Marxist)

DMK : Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam

DMDK : Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam

GFP : Goa Forward Party

GPC : Goa People's Congress

HVC : Himachal Vikas Congress

HVP : Haryana Vikas Party

INC : Indian National Congress

IPFT : Indigenous People's Front of Tripura

IND. : Independents

INDIA : Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance

JD : Janata Dal

JD(S) : Janata Dal (Secular)

JD (U) : Janata Dal (United)

JJP : Jannayak Janata Party

JKNC : Jammu and Kashmir National Conference

JMM : Jharkhand Mukti Morcha

JSP : Jana Sena Party

LDF : Left Democratic Front

LKD : Lok Dal

MGP : Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party

MGB : Mahagathbandhan

MNF : Mizo National Front

NDA : National Democratic Alliance

NCP : Nationalist Congress Party

NPP : National People's Party

NPF : Naga People's Front

NC : Nationalist Congress Party

NDPP : Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party

PDP : People's Democratic Party

P.R. : President's Rule

PMK : Working People's Party

RJD : Rashtriya Janata Dal

RLD : Rashtriya Lok Dal

SS : Shiv Sena

SAD : Shiromani Akali Dal

SGF : Save Goa Front

SJP : Samajwadi Janata Party

SDF : Sikkim Democratic Front

SKM : Sikkim Krantikari Morcha

SP : Samajwadi Party

SBSP : Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party

TDP : Telegu Desam Party

TRS : Telangana Rashtra Samithi

TMC : Trinamool Congress

TMC (M) : Tamil Maanila Congress

TUJS : Tripura Upajati Juba Samiti

UGDP : United Goans Democratic Party

UPPL : United People's Party Liberal

UDF : United Democratic Front

UMFA : United Minorities Front, Assam

UPA : United Progressive Alliance

YSRCP : Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party