

STATEWIDE ANALYSIS OF THE FOURTEENTH GENERAL ELECTIONS IN INDIA

HARYANA CSDS Team with Ashutosh Kumar

The Congress swept the polls in Haryana 9 of the 10 Lok Sabha seat and polled 42.1 percent votes, nearly seven percent higher than what the party polled in 1999 Lok Sabha elections. The BJP managed to win the Sonapat seat. The Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) could not even open its account and polled 22.4 percent votes. The twin factors, which worked against the ruling INLD in Haryana were, first breaking of the alliance between the BJP and the INLD and the non-performance of the state government.

During the 1999 Lok Sabha elections, when, the INLD contested the Lok Sabha elections in alliance with the BJP, they had won all the 10 seats and the alliance had polled 57.9 percent votes. Assuming that these two political parties had contested the 2004 elections as allies, the alliance would have polled 39.6 percent votes. But they would still have remained far been the Congress in terms of votes polled. If BJP-INLD had contested the elections in alliance they would have won only 3 Lok Sabha seats and still Congress would have managed to win 7 seats.

It is not only the breaking of the alliance which explains the rout of the INLD, but there is some thing more to explain why voters in Haryana, voted for the Congress in large numbers. High level of dissatisfaction of the people with the Chautala government is the real reason why people turned away from the ruling INLD. In the NES 2004 post poll survey voters gave negative opinions on various issue relating to the Haryana Chief Minister Om Prakash Chautala. Though the government had not been rated very negatively on the issues of development and people

feel that help had been provided to the farmers, but there are large numbers of people who think that, there is a general feeling of terror in the state. No doubt, people prefer to vote against the ruling INLD in Haryana.

The survey indicates though the INLD got largest share of the Jat votes, but even the Jat voters were divided between the three political parties. Among the Dalit voters Congress established a massive lead though it led among voters of all major castes in the state.

ASSAM AND NORTH EAST
CONGRESS RETAINS ASSAM, NDA MAKES SURPRISE INROADS INTO NORTH EAST
CSDS Team with Sandhya Goswami

The 2004 electoral verdict in the North Eastern states presents a mixed picture. The Congress retained its position in Assam, though its tally slipped down by one. On the other hand, it was the BJP itself and its allies which made gains in the other North Eastern states, while the CPI (M) easily retained its traditional stronghold of Tripura.

In Assam, the Congress won 9 seats, followed by the BJP and the AGP at two each. The BJP repeated its tally of 1999, while the AGP recovered from its 1999 debacle when it won no seats. An independent candidate, supported by the BJP, won the remaining one seat of Kokrajhar. The AGP too had not fielded a candidate in this Lok Sabha constituency.

The Congress' victory was mainly due to a divided opposition which led to triangular contests, since it won a majority of the seats with only 35 per cent of the votes. The party's victory was not without its share of defeats. The AGP snatched the Dibrugarh seat from the Congress by defeating Paban Singh Ghatowar, the state party president. This constituency is dominated by the tea garden labourers, a traditional support base of the party and the Congress has never lost this seat since the first general elections in 1952. On the other hand, the Congress won the Autonomous District constituency defeating long time MP Dr Jayanta Rongpi. But probably the most spectacular victory for the Congress was its success in defeating of Dr Bhupen Hazarika, the BJP candidate and a popular icon in the state.

But the Congress' evident victory has an underlying story- it is that of an erosion of its social base, an AGP on the road to revival and a BJP which seems to be getting nowhere in terms of

seats. But first the performance of the opposition. The AGP had been routed in the previous Lok Sabha election. It won no seat then and secured 13 percent votes. In 2004, it has increased its vote share to 20 percent. The revival of the AGP may be credited to the change in leadership and the return of dissident leaders to its fold. The BJP had been hoping for a significant breakthrough in Assam in the Lok Sabha elections. It did increase its vote share significantly from 25 percent in 1999 to 30 percent, along with its allies the JD(U) and one independent to win 3 seats.

But what is more worrying for the Congress is the erosion of its support base amongst its traditional supporters, the Dalits and the tribals. The Muslims, who officially constitute 28 per cent of the state's population, are the only community, which overwhelmingly back the Congress. About 66 percent of the Muslims in Assam support the Congress.

In all other communities, it is the BJP which leads the Congress. The Congress' situation among the Hindu upper castes is even worse. It comes in third after the AGP. But then this is not much of a surprise since the Hindu upper castes had long been alienated from the Congress. Among the OBCs, the BJP leads, while the Congress and the AGP are almost evenly matched.

Among the Dalits and the tribals, the BJP secures 42 percent and 40 percent of the votes respectively, mainly due to its allies. Only 21 per cent of the Dalits and 25 per cent of the tribals, on the other hand supports the Congress. This state of affairs should certainly worry the Congress as it faces the state assembly elections in another two years. It should also be concerned about the possibility of a AGP-BJP alliance in the assembly elections, which might pose a tough challenge, though the same alliance had failed in the 2001 assembly elections. The Congress can perhaps take consolation from the fact that about 60 per cent of the voters are satisfied with the performance of the state government.

If the BJP did not make any spectacular breakthrough in Assam, it managed to establish a presence in the other North Eastern states. Out of the 10 seats for which results are available, the BJP and its allies won 6 seats, the Congress and the CPI (M) two seats. The BJP won both the seats in Arunachal Pradesh, the breakup of its allies is as follows - the Trinamool Congress won one seat in Meghalaya, the Mizo National Front one in Mizoram, the Naga People's Front one in Nagaland and the Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) one in Sikkim. The Congress won one seat each in Meghalaya and Manipur. The success of the BJP in this region has nothing to do

with its ideology or organisational strength. This is mainly due to its ability to attract regional players into the NDA's fold, which may be eroded after the loss of power at the Centre.

In this whole excitement about the national elections, it was not noticed that Sikkim too had assembly elections. The SDF swept the polls thrashing the Congress, recently strengthened by the entry of former Chief Minister and Sikkim Sangram Parishad leader, Nar Bahadur Bhandari. The SDF won 31 out of the 32 seats, of which four were uncontested. The Congress managed to win only one seat, in this lopsided contest.

BIHAR: ELECTIONS 2004 **Sanjay Kumar with Muneshwar Yadav**

Of the total 37 seats for which elections have been completed in Bihar, the RJD and its allies won 26 seats and polled 45.1 percent vote. The BJP and its allies could manage to win only 11 seats and polled 37.1 percent votes. This is almost a reversal of the results during the 1999 Lok Sabha elections when the BJP and its allies took the lead winning 30 seats while the RJD and its allies won only 9 seats of the total 40 seats. The major change in the alliance between these two elections has been switching over of Ram Vilas Paswan from JD (U) to the RJD after forming his party Lok Jan Shakti Party (LJNSP). Many would believe that, the success story of RJD lies in the alliance, which they formed before the Lok Sabha elections.

There is no doubt that the alliance with Paswan's LJNSP did bring some new voters in the RJD fold. The major alliance partners, the RJD and the LJNSP did manage to transfer large number of their voters for the alliance. In the NES 2004 survey we asked from the voters, which party they would have voted if there were no alliances between political parties. Among those who identified as the RJD supporters, 89 percent and among those who identified as LJNSP supporters, 88 percent confirmed voting for the RJD alliance. The Congress supporters did not seem to be very enthusiastic about the alliance and so only 67 percent of them voted in favour of RJD alliance, while 15 percent among them voted for the BJP allies. On the contrary, the voters of the BJP and the JD (U) have not been so enthusiastic about the alliance. The survey indicates that only 78 percent of the BJP supporters voted for the candidates put up by the alliance. The ratio of JD (U) supporters voting for the BJP was slightly higher as 82 percent of them voted for the alliance. It indicates that of the two alliances, it was the RJD alliance, which worked much better compared to the BJP allies.

The political alliance is directly related to social coalitions. The RJD had been very popular among the Yadavs and the Muslims in Bihar who constitute nearly 14 and 15 percent of the population. The alliance with LJNSP added to its fold, another 5 percent Dushad voters. Such a social combination certainly had an electoral strength, capable of upsetting the calculations of the opposition. This is what seemed to have happened in the recent elections in Bihar. Like in earlier elections, the voters belonging to different castes seemed to be divided on party lines. Majority of the upper castes voters voted for the BJP alliance. The OBC voters remained divided, Yadavs voting for the RJD alliance in big numbers, while majority among the Kurmis and Koeris voted for the BJP alliance. The RJD alliance remained the most popular choice of the Muslims voters as well. The BSP polled 3.6 percent vote. The findings of the survey suggest that the BSP did attract some dalit votes.

That however is not the full story. There is some thing more than merely the alliance that explains the success of RJD in recent elections. If we look at the performance of individual parties among the alliance partners one would notice that, the performance of the RJD had been much better compared to its major alliance partner. If we look at the percent votes polled by different parties per seats contested, we would notice that, while the RJD polled 46.6 percent vote, the Congress polled 46.3 percent vote and LJNSP polled 42.3 percent vote. The two alliance partners of the BJP alliance, the BJP polled 37.0 percent and JD (U) polled 35.5 percent vote per seat contested. The RJD remained much ahead of all the parties in the state. The results of 2004 Lok Sabha indicates that *charisma* of the RJD supreme Laloo Yadav still had an upper hand in the electoral race in Bihar.

To add further, there are many people who have positively evaluated the work of the RJD government and its Laloo Yadav. The survey indicates that though people are divided, but still large numbers of people have faith in Laloo Yadav. There are large number of people who firmly believe that, Laloo himself have promoted criminals in Bihar politics and they also believe that it is not only Laloo who can give justice to the backwards. But large numbers of people in Bihar still believe that there is no alternative to Laloo and he is a true messiah of the poor.

With such difference of opinion, it is not surprising that while 52 percent were satisfied with the performance of the work of the state government, 48 percent were dissatisfied. Majority among those who praised the performance of state government voted for the RJD alliance. On the contrary the voters in Bihar were not very happy with the performance of the central government.

This may not necessarily be the reason, people have voted for RJD. Very often satisfaction with government is the outcome and not the cause of decision to vote for a party.

Not surprisingly, 57 percent people believed that the economic policies of the NDA government, have only benefited the rich, another 9 percent also believed that no one has become prosperous in this country during the NDA rule. Only 34 percent people hold positive opinion about the economic policies of the government. It is not surprising that, large section of voters, who are critical of the economic policies of the government voted against the BJP alliance in Bihar.

What made matter worse for the BJP alliance in Bihar was high level of dissatisfaction of the people with their sitting M.P's. Since large numbers of these M.P's were from either the BJP or from the JD (U) these two parties had be the natural loser. This is what contributed to the defeat of large number of sitting M.P's in Bihar.

GOA: A POLARISED POLITY **Peter De Sousa**

Lok Sabha elections in Goa should be seen primarily as a statement on issues of national politics and only secondarily as a comment on the performance of the state government. The BJP is a relatively new entrant to Goa but has rapidly risen to control state power. The last Lok Sabha elections took place when the BJP was in its ascendance. It won both the Lok Sabha seats. This time, the Congress and the NCP came together to fight the BJP and managed to wrest one these seats back from the BJP. The Congress won the Catholic dominated Marmagao constituency in South Goa. The BJP managed to retain the Hindu dominated North Goa seat of Panjim.

The snapshot, provided by NES 2004, of the Goan voter reveals a society polarised along community lines, a polarisation that has been taking place for a decade and a half. If at all there is one consistent story in the data it is that people across caste, education status, economic class, gender, and age seem to have voted along religious lines. In other words 73 % of the Hindu vote went to BJP and only 22 % to the Congress/NCP while 76 % of the Catholic went to the Congress/NCP and only 12 % to the BJP. When this verdict is read across each of the parameters listed earlier one finds an even spread for the two groups. This reveals that since it

entered the political arena in 1989, the BJP has steadily been able to consolidate its vote base across Goa in both constituencies although more in the North. It has in other words been able to convert, what as for several years a Bahujan vote of the MGP, into a soft Hindutva vote. The Catholics, perhaps in response, have consolidated behind the Congress.

The NES 2004 data reveals Goa as a society gives us of a society that seems to be 'feeling good'. Of those interviewed 50.3% said that their financial situation had either remained the same and 31.2% said it had improved while only 12.6% felt it had become worse and 5.9% were unable to answer. Although this aggregate finding can be further fine tuned it points to a paradoxical phase that Goa has entered where government performance has a lower ranking in determining voting preferences in the Lok Sabha elections than community. The Goan voter is reacting to something in oppositional ways along the axis of religious community. This cannot be good for democracy.

GUJARAT

Priyavadan Patel with CSDS Team

On the face of it, the Gujarat outcome looks like a draw: 14 seats to BJP and 12 to the Congress. In terms of vote shares too, the two parties have finished very close to each other. The BJP has secured 47.4 while the Congress finished just two percentage points behind at 45.1. Going by the fate of the incumbent state government, Narendra Modi should be a satisfied man. He has been saved a rout. But this is not the true political significance of this verdict.

The BJP has dominated politics in Gujarat since 1991 and has always led the Congress by ten percentage points. In the run up to the last Assembly election in 2002, the party was on the verge of a defeat. But Modi and the communal conflagration combined to give BJP an aura of invincibility. It has never faced the electorate on the issue of governance. It must be noted that Gujarat did not have 'normal' elections since 1996. First, the Khajuria controversy and moral indignation over the Waghela episode dominated the 1998 Vidhan Sabha elections, then the Kargil hype over nationalism dominated the 1999 Vidhan Sabha elections. Finally during the worst ever communal mobilization in the aftermath of Godhra—elections had the emotionally surcharged political atmosphere all through this period. The recent Lok Sabha elections took place in normal conditions bringing back normal factors like caste, community, performance of government, factionalism and so on. That is perhaps what accounts for this setback for the BJP.

In the aftermath of the massive BJP victory in 2002, even the Congress in the state was demoralized. The BJP had a lead of seven per cent votes over the Congress in the 1999 Lok Sabha elections. But more than these statistics, the all round defeat in the Assembly election and the inability of the party to counter the BJP's communal propaganda all through the post-Godhra period, constituted the main problem of the congress party in Gujarat. And now, almost in spite of itself, the Congress party has become the vehicle of the sentiments and anxieties of ordinary Gujarati people. From just six seats in 1999, the Congress party has won twelve seats in the recently held elections.

While the BJP has lost five percentage points votes across the state, the loss of seats is confined to a few regions. In Saurashtra and Central Gujarat regions, the BJP has lost five and six per cent votes respectively and in South Gujarat, it has lost a huge thirteen per cent votes. The Congress has picked up two additional seats from each of these three regions, besides retaining its hold over North Gujarat. The Congress victories in Central and North Gujarat are particularly significant, for these regions saw the worst communal carnage in 2002. It indicates that the huge gains made by the BJP in the assembly elections following the riots were temporary gains.

The famous feud between Modi and Keshubhai Patel had its share in this setback of the BJP. The former kept emphasising the question of foreign origin of Sonia Gandhi and on the issue of Hindu\Gujarati pride, while the Patel faction focused on development related issues. The agitation led by the RSS on the farmers' issues also had an impact in South Gujarat. Many Gujaratis might have voted through their abstention: compared to last time, there was a drop of two percentage points in the voting in this state known for its low turnout.

So, has the voter of Gujarat rejected communal politics? Perhaps only indirectly. The voter in Gujarat wanted to leave behind the violence and related rhetoric. Politics of hatred did not – could not-- vitiate the election. Voters did not vote as Hindus or Muslims and that gives us an opportunity look into the voting pattern of a normal Gujarat. Of course, the Patidar community continues to support the BJP with seventy one per cent Patidars in our survey reporting a preference for the party. But with over 16 per cent Muslims reporting vote for BJP, the communal divide seems to be softening if not actually narrowing. There could be an element of fear in this, as reported by another survey. Another interesting feature of voter preferences is that Congress

is now getting more support from the rural voter than the urban voter and acceptability of the BJP is higher among the educated voters.

Although the rating of Modi as the preferred chief minister is still intact, with 32 per cent voters supporting him, the overall assessment of the state government by the voters of Gujarat is somewhat negative. One-third voters are dissatisfied with the state government. So, the simple lesson of Gujarat is that communal hatred cannot win elections every time, and the moment a 'normal' election is held, 'normal' partisan preferences and routine anxieties over the performance of the government dominate the voters' mind. That is not good news for the BJP as it prepares for the next assembly elections.

ANDHRA PRADESH. THE ALLIANCE EFFECT COUPLED WITH ANTI-INCUMBENCY **K. C. Suri**

The simultaneous election in Andhra Pradesh became a referendum on Chandrababu Naidu's nine-year rule. While he saw "anti-opposition wind" blowing in the state, the verdict delivered a double blow to the TDP-BJP alliance. Everything seems to have gone against him. The sympathy factor did not work. Women did not vote in large numbers for him as he expected. Farmers, backward classes and the youth sided with the Congress more than the TDP.

For the first time two alliances fought against each other in the elections making it the most intensely contested elections in a polarized situation. Congress followed the alliance tactics adopted by the TDP from the beginning. It forged alliance with the left parties in the state. The alliance with the newly formed sub-regional party, Telangana Rashtra Samiti paid huge dividends in the Telangana region. It performed much better in the coastal region, contrary to the speculation that its alliance with the separatist TRS would invite the wrath of the people of the coastal region. In this Lok Sabha elections Congress polled 41.5 percent votes. It is less than the 42.8 per cent votes that it got in 1999 Lok Sabha elections. But it won 29 seats this time, whereas it could win only five seats earlier. The alliance generated a momentum in favour of the Congress, far more than what it could have achieved had it gone alone. The Congress alliance got 50.6 votes winning 36 seats. While the TDP and the BJP hoped to repeat their 1999 performance through continuing their alliance, they fared poorly by polling the same percentage of votes as the Congress did, and got only five seats. BJP could not get even a single seat. It is exactly a reversal of 1999 verdict.

While we attribute the Congress success to the alliance effect, we need to explain the factors that led to the loss of eight percentage points for the TDP-BJP combine. First, not many people believed in the claim the TDP made about development. The most striking is the people's dissatisfaction about shrinking employment opportunities and irrigation water. As many as 52 percent of voters felt that the employment opportunities have gone down under the TDP government, while 41 percent thought that the situation on the irrigation front has deteriorated. Two-thirds of people felt that the economic policies of the TDP government either benefited the rich or not benefited any one. Similarly, half of the voters felt that whatever development that did happen took place in Hyderabad, while the rest of the state lagged behind.

Notwithstanding Mr. Naidu's image outside the state, it seems that the leadership factor did not work for the TDP. Chandrababu Naidu is known mainly for his extraordinary skills in managing party and factions within the party. But a leader is judged not by his capacity for backroom management. There is a huge credibility deficiency for Chandrababu as a popular leader. The survey found that Congress leader Rajasekhara Reddy is rated much higher than Chandrababu in this respect. It is rare for a sitting CM to be beaten in popularity rating by a challenger who has never occupied the position.

The Survey data shows that about one-fifth of voters who had voted for the TDP-BJP alliance in 1999 elections have switched to the Congress led alliance this time. Dissatisfaction with the NDA government, and a feeling that their financial condition has worsened, contributed to this vote change. The image the TDP acquired during N.T. Rama Rao that it is a pro-women, pro-farmer, pro-backward classes and pro-poor party has undergone a change in recent years. The change in image has been reflected in the change in social profile of the party, as the TDP-BJP combine fared badly among these social groups.

A significant proportion of the poor have supported the Congress this time. Despite the fact that Chandrababu's government pursued the neo-liberal economic policies since 1996, a major portion of the poorer classes voted for the TDP in the 1999 elections. The allegation leveled by the Congress and the left parties that Chandrababu Naidu was acting as per the dictates of the World Bank, that the loans from abroad were used to enrich the party leaders at the local level, seems to have stuck. His claim of trying to balance development (economic reforms) and welfare did not impress many. Unlike N.T. Rama Rao, Naidu is not a mass mobiliser, nor could

he use the pro-poor rhetoric. Unlike in 1999 he could not reel out welfare schemes on the eve of elections, which were thought to have fetched him votes then. In the implementation of welfare programmes, Chandrababu Naidu sounded only apologetic.

The discontent among farmers that agrarian sector has been neglected was widespread. This was due to poor irrigation facilities, lack of remunerative prices, inadequate market facilities, etc., coupled with the persistent efforts of the Congress leaders to highlight them. People blamed the government for all these problems, although the TDP tried to impress that this is due to factors beyond its control. The suicides of farmers heckled the TDP in its face. On the other hand the Congress promise of free power for cultivation attracted the farmers to it. Nearly 70 percent respondents covered in the survey said that power should be supplied free. The TDP leadership hoped that the farmers, notwithstanding with the discontentment, would finally vote for it. This did not happen.

Thirdly, the TDP leadership banked too much on the women vote. They hoped that women who are involved in the large number of women self-help groups (estimated to be about 4.5 lakhs) would vote in their favour. About one-fifth of the TDP candidates in the Vidhan Sabha elections were women. Chandrababu Naidu wrote personal letters to women in self-help groups for electoral support. Even when the exit polls predicted a rout of the TDP-BJP, Chandrababu was asserting that the alliance would win, because it had a lead of 10 percentage points among women. The TDP had not only lost the edge it had in 1999 elections, but it actually did worse among women voters. While the Congress alliance led over the TDP-BJP by 5 percentage points among men, the lead for Congress alliance went up to 13 percentage points among women.

Fourthly, the vote the TDP received among the backward classes has also declined considerably. The strength of the TDP lies mainly in getting a large chunk of the peasant OBC vote. In 1999 it was almost double to that of the Congress. In fact, one of the reasons given for the rise of the TDP to power in early 1980s was attributed to the overwhelming support from the OBCs. TDP-BJP combine had fielded 15 more BC candidates than the Congress alliance in the Vidhan Sabha elections, and three more than its rival alliance in the Lok Sabha elections. But this too did not work.

Finally, the youth also voted against the TDP in large numbers than in the 1999 elections. Resentment against the TDP government has increased over the years, mostly centred around unemployment. While 57 per cent of the youth voted for the Congress alliance, only 38 percent voted for the TDP alliance. TDP cannot expect to win an election when it loses vote across all these social categories. Thus, it is a combination of alliance effect and the swing factor that saw a triumphant return of the Congress after a gap of almost a decade.

MAHARASHTRA

Suhas Palshikar with Nitin Birmal

Maharashtra is one of the few states to have given a split verdict in this election. The BJP-Shiv Sena alliance won 25 of the 48 sets in the state and finished just ahead of the ruling Congress-NCP alliance that won 23 seats. In terms of votes too, both the alliances appear to be evenly poised, with the Congress-NCP alliance getting 44 per cent vote share and the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance getting 43 per cent. This happened because the Congress-NCP has huge margins of victory in some of its strongholds, while the BJP-Sena have won larger number of seats with smaller margins.

This apparently split verdict is the outcome of two factors working in opposite direction. The 'split factor' or the logic of alliances worked in favour of the Congress-NCP alliance, while the 'swing factor' or the popularity shift favoured the BJP-Shiv Sena. In the last instance both these factors balanced each other and produced what looks like a split verdict. The Congress and the NCP fought the elections in 1999 against each other, but in order to keep the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance away from power, they came together and formed the government in the state in October 1999. This government has survived in the last four and a half years, though survival alone can be cited as its main achievement during these years. Burying their differences, the two Congress parties decided to contest the Lok Sabha elections jointly. In the absence of an alliance, they would have met with a disaster, because then both the split and swing factors would have worked against them. Their alliance minimized the damage that could have been inflicted by the swing against them, and the Congress and NCP managed to improve their previous tally of 16 seats to 22 seats this time. Thus, whereas the anti-incumbency factor worked effectively in many other states, it was countered in Maharashtra by the alliance of the two Congress parties. Both the alliances were generally successful in retaining their respective voter base from the 1999 election. both Congress and BJP-Sena alliance retained over eighty per cent of their respective

voters from 1999. In the case of the NCP, just a little over three fourth of its 1999 voters voted for the Congress-NCP alliance and twenty per cent voted for the BJP alliance.

The Congress-NCP alliance did not leave much space for bringing into its fold many 'third front' parties, unlike the grand alliance forged by the Congress in 1998. The Congress-NCP had an alliance with the Gavai, Athavale and Kavade factions of the RPI and with Janata Dal (S) for the Malegaon seat. But they failed to have alliance with Bahujan Mahasangh led by Prakash Ambedkar who himself paid the price by losing his seat. The Congress and NCP could not reach an understanding with the Left, SP and PWP as well. This cost the Congress alliance at least three seats, Amravati, Wardha and Malegaon.

If the Congress-NCP alliance won only 23 seats despite the alliance, the principal reason is the unpopularity of the state government. In fact, if we take into account the vote share of both NCP and Congress for 1999, they could have got 41 seats when fighting jointly. But they ended up with only 23. This gives an idea of the swing factor working against them. At present, voters do not have a very high opinion of the performance of the state government: thirty per cent are satisfied with the performance of the state government and fifty five per cent are dissatisfied. The chief minister, Sushilkumar Shinde, is preferred by only nine per cent voters as the next chief minister.

The appearance of a split verdict also conceals fairly clear verdicts in the different regions of the state. The Congress has recorded victory in Mumbai and Konkan region, but has lost its stronghold of Vidrabh. The NCP has retained its strength in Western Maharashtra but both the parties failed to dent the Shiv Sena in Marathwada region. Ironically, the Mumbai-Konkan region, known for its support to the Shiv Sena-BJP, has produced surprising results, out of eleven seats from this region, seven seats have gone in favour of the Congress. This regional variation indicates that the real battle for the political space in the state has only begun. Another indication of the complexity of electoral competition in the state is the relatively moderate rate of retention of seats by parties. In all, barely fifty per cent seats remained with the same party, with NCP and Shiv Sena retaining most of their respective seats and both BJP and Congress exchanging almost half of their seats. Half of the state's 48 MPs managed to get back to the Lok Sabha, two of them on the ticket of a different party from the last time!

How parties fared in different regions

Underneath the moderate success of the Congress-NCP alliance, there lies a story, a story that is unfolding over the last decade. The social base of Congress has been slipping out of its hands gradually. As far as the support of the dominant peasant community of Maratha-Kunbis is concerned, the Shiv Sena and the NCP have been trying hard to attract this community. And the NCP and the Congress are engaged in a tussle over the support of the Dalits and Muslims. The survey shows that Shiv Sena and the NCP have emerged as the main players in the politics of the state and the initiative is fast slipping out of the hands of the Congress party.

This is evident from the voting preferences of the Maratha-Kunbi caste cluster. Seen for long as the main social base of the Congress party, this social section has been slowly moving away from the Congress party over the last decade. Since its formation in 1999, the NCP has been trying to project itself as the party of the Marathas. This time around, the NCP and Shiv Sena have got the support of the Maratha community. This has consolidated the decade-long trend. Today, barely seven per cent Marathas vote for the Congress. This has very serious implications for the Congress party. The party has not been able to compensate for the loss of support from the Maratha community. Even among the OBCs, the party has not done too well. So, the serious question for the Congress is: can the Congress survive in the politics of the state without the support of the numerically larger communities like Marathas and OBCs? The social profile of the Congress voter from Maharashtra appears very much like that in Rajasthan, where the party depends disproportionately on the vote of the Dalits, Adivasis and the Muslims. In contrast, the social base of the NCP voters is more balanced and somewhat identical.

How caste groups\ communities voted in Maharashtra

In particular, the NCP and Shiv Sena are competing for a greater share of the Maratha vote. Our survey shows that Shiv Sena has an edge over the NCP in this respect. During the campaign, the NCP tried its best to project itself as the representative of the interests of the Maratha community. Some time before the elections, NCP deputy chief minister Bhujbal had to resign. Taking this opportunity, the party installed a Maratha leader as the deputy chief minister. During the campaign, the party avoided projecting Bhujbal, who is seen as the leader of the OBCs. In the absence of Sharad Pawar when he had to undergo a surgery, R.R. Patil, the NCP leader and home minister was leading the campaign. The NCP made every effort to mobilize the Maratha community on the issue of the controversial book by a foreign scholar on Chhatrapati Shivaji. It is however doubtful whether this strategy worked, because very few of our respondents knew about the controversy. This dissatisfaction, and the shift in the support of the

Maratha community, do not portend well for the Congress and the NCP in view of the coming Assembly election. The ruling alliance in the state might have saved its face this time around, but the ground reality in the state is a dire warning to the Congress and the NCP. The BSP has made an entry into the state (with almost three per cent votes) and has already cost at least three seats for the Congress alliance and if this trend continues, the days of the Republican factions may just have come to an end.

JAMMU AND KASHMIR
CSDS Team with Rekha Chowdhary and G. M. Wani

The results from Jammu and Kashmir indicate that all these four political parties, the Congress, the BJP, the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) contesting elections separately, registered its presence in recently concluded Lok Sabha elections. Though the BJP could not win any seat, but it polled 23 percent votes. The Congress won the Udhampur and Jammu seats and polled 27.8 percent votes; JKNC won two Lok Sabha seats from the valley, the Baramula and Srinagar seats and polled 22 percent votes. The PDP leader Mehboba Mufti won from the Anantnag Lok Sabha seat. The PDP polled 11.9 percent votes. The Ladakh seat had been won by an independent candidate, who was supported by the Congress.

During the 1999 Lok Sabha elections the National conference had won 4 seats while the BJP had won 2 Lok Sabha seats. The Congress drew a blank. The success of the Congress in 2004 Lok Sabha elections could be credited to two things. First the positive vote for the Congress, which is an alliance partner in the present PDP government in Jammu and Kashmir. In the survey 52 percent mentioned that they were satisfied with the performance of the state government, while 48 percent were not happy with the performance of the state government. Among those who were happy about the performance of the state government, large number of voters voted for the Congress.

What provided an edge to the Congress was that, the party was already sitting on a larger support base and among them large number of voters voted in favour of the Congress. In the NES 2004 post poll survey, the voters were asked to mention, which party they or their family members have been voting during past few elections. The survey indicated that, 30 percent people identified themselves as traditional Congress supporters, 25 percent voters identified

themselves as traditional supporters of the National Conference and 21 percent voters identified themselves as traditional supporters of the BJP. The Congress had an advantage over other parties since among the traditional Congress supporters, 91 percent voted for the party.

The survey indicates that 56 percent people mentioned having great faith in the peace process initiated by the Central government, while only 15 percent people were not satisfied with the government's initiative. There is great degree of support about various issues with goes in direction of bringing peace in the state. People are in favour of bringing the Kashmiri Pandits, back to the Kashmir valley.

Two things, which are noticeable in the results of the recent elections in Jammu and Kashmir are, one increasing participation of the people and secondly, a real four way contest between the four major political players. The voter's turnout increased from 32.2 percent in 1999 to 35.2 percent in the recent Lok Sabha elections. An increase in turnout by nearly 3-percentage point indicates higher participation of the people. And the splitting of the votes between the four political parties indicates the emergence of an era of competitive politics in the state.

JHARKHAND

Sanjay Kumar with Harishwar Dayal

The swing and the split factor both worked against the ruling BJP in the first election, in the state since its formation, pushing it into a humiliating defeat. The ruling BJP suffered a sharp decline in the vote share for the party of about 12.5 percentage point compared to the 1999 Lok Sabha elections. Compared to 45.5 percent vote the BJP polled in 1999 Lok Sabha elections, it polled only 33 percent vote in the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections. What made matter worse for the BJP, was the alliance, which the Congress managed to enter into with parties like the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), the CPM and the CPI. In spite of this defeat, the BJP polled more votes than any other party but lagged far behind the combined vote of the Congress alliance, which polled 46.6 percent vote.

No wonder the Congress alliance swept the polls in Jharkhand winning 13 of the total 14 seats in this state. Of these 13 seats, 6 seats have been won by the Congress, 4 by the JMM, 2 seats by the RJD and the lone CPI candidate, Bhubneshwar Prasad Mehta defeated the foreign minister,

Yashwant Sinha from Hazaribagh Lok Sabha seat. The BJP, which had won 11 of the 14 Lok Sabha seats during the 1999 Lok Sabha elections could manage to win only the Kodarma Lok Sabha seat, where Babu Lal Marandi defeated Champa Verma, the JMM candidate.

The political alliance among different political parties resulted in such a formidable social coalition that it provided a decisive edge to the Congress alliance in recent elections. The past studies have indicated that the JMM has a strong support base among 28 percent Adivasis voters in the state. The congress has its support base among 12 percent dalit voters and the RJD have been somewhat popular among the OBC voters, who constitute about 38 percent of state population.. The political alliance of Congress, JMM and RJD enabled these three numerically dominant social communities to come together.

Majority of the voters belonging to these social communities voted in favour of the Congress led alliance. Except for those belonging to the upper castes, voters of all other communities voted for the Congress in large numbers. Among the Adivasis, 56 percent voted for the Congress alliance and only 33 percent voted for the BJP. The alliance of the Congress with the JMM has managed to tilt the adivasis in favour of the Congress alliance. The alliance also took as lead among the OBC voters in the state, while the Dalit voters got divided between the Congress alliance and the BJP.

The creation of this new state has raised some hope and aspirations among the people. But the survey indicates that, people has put a question mark on the performance of the state government. There were expectations that more employment opportunities would be generated, but 35 percent people mentioned that the employment opportunities have deteriorated, while only 21 percent mentioned that improved during the past five years. Clearly, of those who felt that employment opportunities have deteriorated, 62 percent voted for the Congress and only 29 percent voted for the BJP alliance. In search of employment opportunities, people are forced to migrate out of the state. It is not surprising that in the survey, 69 percent people confirmed that still large numbers of people are migrating from Jharkhand to other state for employment opportunities.

With high degree of unemployment, it is not surprising that 21 percent people felt highly dissatisfied with the performance of the Jharkhand government, while only 10 percent voters mentioned high degree of satisfaction with the performance of the state government. When

people came out to vote on the election Day, they voted against the ruling BJP resulted in a negative swing for the BJP in the state.

KARNATAKA. CLARITY ABOUT DELHI, HAZY PICTURE CLOSER HOME
Sandeep Shastri

The voters in Karnataka have clearly distinguished between the Lok Sabha and the Assembly poll. The BJP won 18 of the 28 Lok Sabha seats and the Congress secured 8 and the Janata Dal (S) notched up the remaining two. The Assembly verdict was more divided, with the BJP securing 79 of the 224 seats and its ally the Janata Dal(U) winning 5 seats; the Congress nominees being elected in 65 seats and the Janata Dal (S) winning 58 seats. Clearly, what the BJP lost at the Assembly level, the Janata Dal (S) gained. There is not much difference in the percentage of seats that the Congress won in state, in the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections. Karnataka has witnessed a clear ticket splitting, with a significant percentage of voters supporting different parties in the Lok Sabha and Assembly poll. The survey data reveals that 85% of those who voted for the Congress candidates in the Lok Sabha poll endorsed the candidates of the same party in the Assembly poll too. In the case of the BJP, this percentage drops to around 70% (if the votes transferred to the ally the JD(U) is taken into account). The shift was more or less in equal proportion to the Congress, Janata Dal (S) and independents. In the case of those who voted for the Janata Dal (S) at the Lok Sabha polls, around 74% continued to vote for the same party candidates in the Assembly poll also. This vote split explains the fact of a Legislative Assembly in Karnataka with no single party with a clear majority on the one hand and a Lok Sabha contingent from the state with a clear BJP majority.

A more detailed analysis of aggregate data with regard to the Lok Sabha and Assembly polls reveals the clear difference in the pattern of voting. In Karnataka, each Parliamentary constituency has 8 Assembly segments. Of the 28 constituencies in the state, in half of them – 14, the party that won the Lok Sabha seat was not able to secure a majority of the 8 Assembly seats that fell within that Lok Sabha constituency.

The polls were witness to an intense three cornered contest. The margin of victories in most constituencies, both Lok Sabha and Assembly was very slender. Only 5 Lok Sabha winners secured more than 50 percent of the votes.

The survey data clearly reveals the mind of the Karnataka voter. When asked to assess the performance of the NDA government in the last five years, nearly 48 percent said that they were somewhat satisfied with its performance. Another 20 percent said that they were fully satisfied with its performance. The victory of 18 BJP candidates is significant in this context. When asked to assess the performance of their state government, nearly 60 percent of the respondents said that they were somewhat dissatisfied with the performance. An additional 11% opined that they were highly dissatisfied with the government's performance. Further, on a few major issues the voters were categorical in their criticism of the state government. Nearly 50% felt that corruption in the administration had increased, 45% felt that the drinking water problem had worsened and nearly 40% were upset with the erratic power supply. As many as 58 percent of the respondents felt that the state government had given more importance to urban areas and had neglected the problems of rural areas. When asked whether the state leaders had protected the interests of the state, 60% of those who took a stand on the subject felt that the state leaders had failed in this regard. The contrast in their evaluation of the two governments is transparent.

The dissatisfaction with the Congress state government resulted in what is often called an `anti-incumbency` vote. However, this rejection vote was not channelised in the direction of any single party but got divided between the BJP and the Janata Dal (S). In the past 20 years, Karnataka has been witness to the ejection of a ruling party in the Assembly poll. However, in the past, the voters expressed their preference for a clear alternative – either the Janata Party/Dal or the Congress. This time around neither the BJP nor the Janata Dal (S) has been able to present itself as a viable alternative to the Congress across the state. For several years, the state has been witness to a clear bi-polar competition. Elections 2004 has reversed this trend and Karnataka has once again entered a phase of multi cornered contests.

The defeat of the Congress can be attributed to several factors. The first factor was the choice of candidates. As many as 13 of the 17 sitting MP's were re-nominated; 8 of them were defeated. In the Assembly poll, it re-nominated 106 sitting MLA's. More importantly, 25 of them were those who had been elected to the previous assembly on the ticket of some other party and had now chosen to join the Congress. Of the 108 sitting MLA's given the party ticket, as many as 74 were defeated, including 17 of the `defectors`. Further, the poor assessment of the state government also contributed to the decline in the fortunes of the party.

The Congress support has declined in all the four regions of the state. In the Old Mysore region, the Janata Dal(S) did very well. The BJP success was essentially in Coastal Karnataka and the Mumbai Karnataka regions where it won all the Lok Sabha seats and a significant number of Assembly seats. The BJP seems to have successfully established its base here. The Janata Dal (S) gave a tough fight to the Congress in the Hyderabad Karnatak region. It is also important to record that the Congress party did exceptionally badly in Northern Karnataka comprising Mumbai Karnataka and Hyderabad Karnataka. In these regions, the survey data reveals that more than 65 per cent of the respondents felt that successive governments had ignored northern Karnataka.

The survey data clearly reveals that the BJP continues to have significant support among the forward castes. The majority of the dalits appear to back the Congress. There seems to be a three way split of the Backward Caste vote. It is also important to emphasise that in Karnataka the role of the two dominant castes – the Vokkaligas and Lingayats is crucial. The survey data reveals that nearly half the Vokkaliga vote went to the Congress party headed by S.M.Krishna, a prominent Vokkaliga leader. The balance was split between the BJP/JDU alliance and the JD(S). Deve Gowda, a prominent Vokkaliga leader, would have hoped for a bigger share of his communities vote for the JDS. Such a switch would have increased the JDS tally in the state. More than 60 percent of the Lingayat vote has gone to the BJP/JDU alliance. The Lingayats had, for long seen Ramakrishna Hegde as representing and protecting their interests, though he was a Brahmin. With his death, the BJP seems to have made deep inroads into the Lingayat vote and their success in Northern Karnataka is linked to this development. The survey reveals that the Congress was able to secure 28% of the Lingayat vote.

Karnataka politics today appears to be at the crossroads. The state has sent a sizeable chunk of MP's from the BJP but they would have to sit in the Opposition. In the case of the Assembly, with no clear majority party, a phase of coalition/minority governments is inevitable. Such governments are not new to Karnataka as Hegde's first government (1983-85) was a minority government with outside support. State politics seems to be in transition. From clear bi-polarity the shift is now to multi-polarity. This multi-polarity itself could be a transition to a new bi-polarity.

KERALA

CSDS Team with G. Gopa Kumar

For the first time in Kerala's electoral history, Congress and the alliance led by it was defeated comprehensively. Only the 1967 election comes close to it, when the Congress could bag only one seat, Mukundapuram. Even the more popular leaders of the Congress such as Ramesh Chennithala (in Mavelikara) and V.M. Sudheeran (in Alappuzha) have lost. The set back to the Muslim League is no less. It lost the Manjeri seat, which it held for three decades.

In a way, Kerala has done it once again by going differently from the national trend, as in previous occasions, but this time more forcefully. Although the Congress got favourable results elsewhere, especially the way the DMK-Congress swept the elections in the neighbouring Tamil Nadu, it had to yield ground completely to the LDF. In a state known for its closely fought electoral battles in a bipolar political system, this is truly surprising. All that the LDF needed to achieve this spectacular performance was 3 per cent swing in its favour. In the 1999 Lok Sabha elections it won 9 seats with 43.7 per cent vote and this time its vote share increased to 46.1 per cent. The vote share of the UDF has gone down from 46.9 per cent to 38.4 per cent.

Before the election many people did not show any interest in Kerala election, saying that either way it matters little as far as the formation of the government is concerned, because both the UDF and the LDF were opposed to the NDA. The clean sweep made by the LDF enhanced its place in the scheme of things in Delhi. In a way it went along with the other southern states by voting for the non-NDA parties.

What could be the possible factors for such a humiliating defeat for the Congress. One reason that most commentators pointed out was the intense factional rivalry in the party, especially the ones led by Antony and Karunakaran. No wonder that 72 per cent respondents said that groupism affected the party chances of winning in this election. The 25 year-old group rivalry between Antony and Karunakaran got intensified in recent times, as Karunakaran attempted to reestablish his control over the party and Kerala politics by promoting his family members in politics. But he received his greatest set back: his son Muraleedharan lost the bye-election to Kerala assembly, even as his daughter, Padmaja, lost the Mukundapuram parliamentary constituency. K.M. Mani of Kerala Congress too followed suit in Moovattupuzha.

The verdict also could also be attributed to the dissatisfaction against the performance of Antony government. Voters were critical of the state government for the deterioration of conditions on several fronts, especially agriculture and employment. Anti-incumbency in Kerala was not without issues and reasons. Factionalism in the Congress and dissatisfaction with the UDF government could be the reasons why the voters moved away from the UDF. The post-poll Survey shows that LDF was able to attract voters from other parties: 11 per cent from the traditional Congress supporters and 44 per cent from other parties.

Dissatisfaction with the Antony government

	Deteriorated	Same as before	Improved	No opinion
Law and order	31	30	32	8
Drinking water	49	32	16	3
Public Distribution System	38	42	14	6
Public health	27	43	23	7
Education	23	31	38	7
Electricity	31	44	19	6
Employment	50	32	13	5
Agriculture	59	22	13	6
Industries	40	34	15	11

LDF vote basis was mostly among the Ezhavas, Nairs, OBCs and the dalits, as it did in the 1999 Lok Sabha elections. However, the margins between the UDF and the LDF among these social groups had increased and that made the difference. UDF could save its honour because of the strong support it received among the Muslims and Christians.

Fronts retain basic social pattern

	LDF	UDF	BJP
Hindu upper caste	40	37	18
Nairs	41	29	27
Ezhavas	59	22	18
OBCs	49	36	13
Dalits	71	15	10
Muslims	39	58	2
Christians	28	64	2

There is a correlation between social status and voting preferences in Kerala. The more a person high on the social and economic background, it is more likely that he would vote for the

UDF, and the vice versa in case of the LDF. The poorer classes, the less educated and the relatively disadvantaged sections of the society voted in large number to the LDF. Its vote share among women is also more.

	LDF	UDF	BJP
Gender			
Male	43	42	12
Female	49	36	12
Education			
Non-literate	62	29	4
Primary	52	37	9
Upto matric	46	35	15
College and above	41	46	10
Locality			
Rural	46	38	13
Urban	48	40	8
Class			
Very poor	53	32	13
Poor	50	38	9
Lower middle	42	41	12
Middle	35	46	15

The BJP-led alliance did perform well in this election by securing about 12 percent votes, the highest ever. In Moovattupuzha, P.C. Thomas of the IFDP, an ally of the BJP, was able to inflict defeat on his arch-rival, Mani of the Kerala Congress, from where he was thrown out allegedly for his resistance to dynasty politics in the party. BJP polled 30 percent votes in Thiruvanthapuram, 21 per cent in Palghat, 14 per cent in Kasergode. This is far above its performance in the 1999 elections. The increased BJP shares of votes could be another factor for the poor performance of the UDF. This subtle shift of votes in the State may provide a level playing ground for the LDF in future too. The question is whether the BJP could break the bipolar politics of Kerala in future or whether it is a passing phenomena. If not, the growth of the BJP would eat into the support bases of the both the fronts, and thus may pose a challenge to both the fronts.

HIMACHAL PRADESH
Sanjay Kumar

The results from four Lok Sabha seats in Himachal Pradesh indicate that there has been very little change in the popularity of the Congress party in the state since the last assembly elections held in 2003. The Congress had won 40 assembly seats and polled 40.7 percent vote in that election. The party would have won all the four Lok Sabha seats, had it been a Lok Sabha election.

But in the 2004 Lok Sabha elections, the Congress managed to win three of the four Lok Sabha seats and polled 51.9 percent vote. Even in this election the Congress would have won all the four Lok Sabha seats had the party not lost marginally the Hamirpur seat. The BJP candidate Suresh Chandel won the Hamirpur Lok Sabha seat, defeating the Congress candidate, Thakur Ram Lal by a narrow margin of 1625 votes. Though the party could not win all the four Lok Sabha seats, but its vote share increased by nearly 11 percentage point compared to the last assembly elections.

The return of Sukh Ram to Congress certainly made a difference in the support base of the Congress. The increase in the vote share of the Congress indicate that his return to the parent party not only added 5.8 percent votes which the Himachal Vikas Congress (HVC) polled during the 2003 assembly elections, but gave some additional strength to the party. In the NES 2004 post poll survey also, 47 percent voters confirmed that the return of Sukh Ram has resulted in an increase in the support for the Congress, while 26 percent mentioned that it made no difference.

There is something more, which explains the victory of the Congress party than mere Sukh Ram return to Congress. The performance of the state government has been positively rated by the people of Himachal Pradesh. More than 66 percent people were satisfied with the performance of the state government, while only 31 percent voters were unhappy about the performance of the state government. Among those voters, who felt satisfied with the performance of the state government, 70 percent voted for the Congress giving the party a decisive lead.

There is a general feeling that during the past one and a half year since the Congress came to power, there has been development in the state. Nearly 28 percent voters share this opinion, while only 11 percent disagree to this. It is not surprising that when, asked to compare the present Congress government, with the previous BJP government, 47 percent people rated this

government to be better compared to the previous BJP government. All these meant, an advantage for the Congress over the BJP, which ultimately translated into a big victory for the party.

With the party riding on such high popularity, it is not surprising to note that Congress led over BJP among voters belonging to all social communities. The survey indicates that, if the poor and the upper castes were more or less divided between the two main political parties, Congress established a decisive lead among the dalit, illiterates and the rich voters.

WEST BENGAL **CSDS Team with Dwaipayan Bhattacharya**

With the fragmentation of the opposition and the inability of the Trinamul to cross the electoral threshold West Bengal has become virtually one party state. The combined vote of the Congress as well as the Trinamul alliance did not match the votes polled by the Left Front. The Left Front exceeds the combined vote of the rival parties by 6 per cent votes. This is truly a large margin for a party that has completed silver jubilee as a ruling party.

The fears and hopes which some people entertained some years ago that the Left forces would not continue in power after the exit of Jyoti Basu had been dented by LF victory in the Assembly election. A three way division of vote makes the Left Front performance much more visible. The victory in Bengal, coupled with the sweep of the LDF in Kerala made it an important actor at national level, as seen from the enthusiasm with which Harikishan Singh Surjeet assumed the role of coordinator to form the new government, although the CPI(M) finds it difficult to make a choice on this matter.

In the recent assembly elections, the Trinamul Congress led by Mamata Banerjee had emerged a challenger to the Left Front. The 2001 Assembly elections was the best chance for the Trinamul Congress, which had fought in alliance with the Congress, to snatch power from the Left Front. But this did not happened. The story after that is the decline of the Trinamul, mainly due to Mamata Banerjee's mercurial personality and internal feuds. In this election, the results of this state-of-affairs was clear. The Left Front managed to win back their support from urban areas, especially Greater Calcutta. The Congress also managed to improve its tally. It managed

to win Darjeeling seat due to support from the Gorkha National Liberation Front and Jangipur seat by securing additional Muslim support.

The post-poll survey data shows that the about 53 per cent people said that they were satisfied with the performance of the government. The Left Front commands a solid support among the middle and poor classes. The support it receives among different communities is also impressive. It receives a minimum of 40 per cent support among all communities, while it goes upto two-thirds in case of some. Compared to 1999 elections the Left Front retained most of its support, in addition to increasing support among OBCs and the SCs. The support for the Left Front has declined among the Muslims. Earlier, it used to receive overwhelming support from the Muslims, but in 2004 only 48 percent supported the Left Front.

One more victory in a series of sterling electoral performances may not have mattered a great deal to the Left Front. But this one would be particularly sweet for the Left, coming as it does after some extraordinary measures by the Election Commission to ensure 'free and fair' elections in West Bengal.

ORISSA. A FORMIDABLE ALLIANCE RETAINS POWER
CSDS Team with S. N Mishra

Orissa is one of the few states which withstood the Congress resurgence across India. Despite the dual dangers of incumbency at State and national level, the BJD and the BJP could hold on to their position in the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections. Two factors seem to explain the ability of the BJD-BJP alliance to retain power: one, the extent of trust and support Naveen Patnaik enjoys among the Oriyas and two, the strength of the BJP-BJD alliance. He is widely seen as a leader determined to curb corruption in the state. Voters are unhappy over shrinking employment opportunities. But they seem to be happy with the leadership of Naveen Patnaik. Oriyas seem to have preferred a non-functioning government of Patanaik instead of opting for a Congress government, that too under the leadership of J.B. Patnaik, whom very few would prefer to be Chief Minister of the State.

Secondly, BJP and the BJD were two strong parties, with considerable electoral strength on their own. This in a sense represents a change in the party system in Orissa, which has become triangular in nature. The BJP has emerged a strong third player in the state. Thus the combination of these two strong parties thus represents a solid block in Orissa's electoral

politics. In 1999 Lok Sabha elections the combined strength of the BJD and the BJP was 58 per cent (compared to 37 percent for the Congress) and it was 47 in 2001 Assembly elections (compared to 34 per cent of the Congress). Even if they had lost some of this support in the interregnum, this would not have led to the defeat of the BJD-BJP alliance, unless the swing is a huge one crossing more than 10 percentage points. This time the alliance partners were able to secure about 49 per cent of total vote against 40 per cent for the Congress in the Lok Sabha. In the Assembly elections the alliance polled about 45 per cent compared to 38 percent for the Congress. There was three per cent swing against the alliance, but the loss was limited to 13 seats. But the point to note was that the 13 percentage points lead enjoyed by the BJP-BJD alliance in the previous assembly elections has been cut down to 7 percentage points. Also, the alliance partners were able to successfully transfer their respective voters to the other partner. The ticket splitting was not very significant. This means the preference of the voter for both the Lok Sabha and the assembly elections was largely the same, unlike in Karnataka where the preferences widely diverged.

As the overall vote and seat changes show, the Congress failed to mobilise any real movement of voters away from the BJD-BJP combine. Even amongst groups who have traditionally been seen as more likely to be Congress supporters, there was no significant shift. The support bases of the two main competitors remained remarkably stable between the 1999 and 2004 elections. The BJD-BJP retained its dominance among the upper castes and OBCs. Congress was more popular amongst the dalits and adivasi voters, although the BJD-BJP received substantial support from these social groups.

The BJD-BJP alliance has been able to function relatively smoothly, up till now. The two have strengths in different areas of the state, with the BJD strongest in the coastal region, whilst the BJP saw its strongest growth in the west and tribal areas. Similarly, there is an apparently neat fit between the BJP's traditional appeal to upper caste voters and the BJD's support from OBCs, going back its roots in the Janata Dal.

Naveen Patnaik has managed to stay in control of the tensions within the coalition, and maintain a widespread popularity within the electorate. Asked who would be the first choice for the next Chief Minister in Orissa, over half those who voted opted for Naveen. Even amongst Congress voters, support for Naveen Patnaik as Chief Minister was surprisingly strong at 38 per cent. Most voters in Orissa thought Naveen Patnaik was the true inheritor of his father, Biju Patnaik's, legacy, and as to the charge that he was not a true Oriya, only 27 per cent agreed. Only 19 per

cent of voters thought he did not care for the people of the State, and, perhaps crucially, less than 10 per cent thought he was not honest and sincere. This positive assessment was shared by considerable numbers of Congress voters, and his ability to retain the trust and good faith of the electorate appears to have been a key factor in the BJD-BJP alliance's resilience in this election.

Nearly 79 per cent of voters thought Naveen was either a good or very good leader, a positive rating almost double that of his main rival, the Congress leader J B Patnaik. And where computers failed Chandrababu Naidu in Andhra Pradesh, corruption seemed to have a broader resonance with the electorate for Naveen Patnaik in Orissa. It is doubtful whether Naveen Patnaik could have maintained his reputation for honesty and sincerity if his focus on the issue had only amounted to empty words. While most state governments faced the wrath of the people over poor performance resulting in the loss of electoral support, this did not happen in Orissa, probably due to low expectations that people of Orissa have from their government.

The voters have shown a nuanced assessment of the performance of the BJD government. In terms of the employment situation, nearly 60 per cent thought that the situation had deteriorated, and less than a third of voters thought that the electricity situation had improved. However, on the provision of drinking water and condition of the roads, over half the voters saw an improvement, and there were generally favourable assessments of the changes in the state of primary education and the situation regarding law and order. It needs to be underlined that Orissa is one of the few states in the country that have not seen any Mandalisation or class based mobilization. This low politicisation may have created a contest that enables Naveen Patnaik to survive without doing anything spectacular.

PUNJAB
CSDS Team with Ashutosh Kumar

The BJP- Siromani Akali Dal (Badal) [SAD (B)] swept the 2004 Lok Sabha elections, winning 11 of the total 13 Lok Sabha seats in the state. The two alliance partners the SAD (B) polled 34.3 percent votes, and the BJP polled 10.5 percent vote. On the other hand the Congress which had seats adjustment with the left parties, the CPI and the CPM, won only two Lok Sabha seats. The Congress also polled 3.2 percent vote, but in terms of the number of seats, it lagged far behind

the SAD (B). The Congress candidate Rana Gurjeet Singh and Preneet Kaur got elected from Jullandhar and Patiala Lok Sabha seats respectively.

This is complete reversal to the results of the 1999 Lok Sabha elections and the 2002 assembly elections. In both these elections it was the Congress, which took the lead over its rivals. During the 1999 Lok Sabha elections the Congress, won 8 seats while the SAD (B) won only two Lok Sabha seats. Similar trend continued during the 2002 assembly elections, when Congress won 62 assembly seats and polled 36.5 percent votes, while the SAD (B) polled only 30.5 percent votes and won only 41 assembly seats.

But only two years later, the thumping victory of the SAD (B)-BJP alliance indicate that the people of Punjab have rejected the ruling Congress party. Two things, which seemed to have worked in favour of the SAD (B) are the positive evaluation of the BJP led NDA government at the Centre and some degree of dissatisfaction with the performance of the state government. In the NES 2004 post poll survey, when asked to compare performance of the present Congress government with the previous Akali-BJP government, 45 percent rated the Akali-BJP government to be better than the present Congress government. Only 37 percent hold a contrary opinion about this. There were voters, who could not give a firm answer to this. It is not surprising to note that, majority among those who rated the previous Akali-BJP government better voted for the Akali-BJP alliance, while among those who thought that the present Congress government was better large numbers of voters voted for the Congress. Certainly, the Akali-BJP was bound to establish a lead over its rival, the Congress.

What made the matter worse for the Congress in Punjab was the positive evaluation of the economic policies of the central government. It is true that 49 percent people mentioned that there have been no change in their financial situation during the past five years, but at the same time, 35 percent people mentioned that their financial situation has improved. Only 16 percent people mentioned that their financial situation has deteriorated during the past five years. On the issue of the impact of the economic policies of the NDA government, 35 percent mentioned that there has been general prosperity in the country while 50 percent people still believed that only the rich have benefited from the economic policies of the NDA government. On the overall financial situation, 68 percent people felt satisfied while 32 percent people were dissatisfied with their present economic condition.

Clearly when asked to assess the overall performance of the BJP led NDA during the last five years, a huge majority of voters rated the performance of the government positively while only 31 percent were dissatisfied with the performance of the NDA government. No doubt, with such high degree of satisfaction with the performance of the NDA government, people voted for the SAD (B)-BJP alliance in large numbers giving them a decisive lead.

TAMIL NADU **CSDS team with G. Koteswar Prasad**

The election results in Tamil Nadu have confirmed the reading that the Democratic Progressive Alliance (DPA) – a grand alliance of the DMK, the Congress, the communist parties, the PMK, the MDMK, and the Muslim League – has become the most formidable alliance that the state has seen in recent times. Going by the preferences expressed by the voters during the post-poll survey in 2001, the DMK led alliance controls the loyalty of about 52 percent while the AIADMK –BJP combine accounts for 37 percent. The final outcome in the Lok Sabha elections showed a outcome bigger than that.

Although the credit for starting alliance politics goes to Jayalalithaa, this time DMK leader Karunanidhi proved to be one up in this game. The alliance he cobbled together became an unbeatable one. The DPA alliance polled 57.4 per cent votes, whereas the rival AIADMK-BJP alliance could only secure a meagre 34.8 per cent vote. The massive lead of 23 percentage points wiped out the possibility of any representation for the NDA in Lok Sabha from Tamil Nadu. When the election process began it was felt that Tamil Nadu will hold key for the formation of government at the Centre after the elections, and indeed it did by blotting out the NDA and giving all seats to the DPA. Tamil Nadu once again reverted to the old familiar pattern of electoral waves, where one of the two Dravidian parties, in alliance with the Congress, takes all or nearly all the seats in an election. More than any thing else, it is the alliance arithmetic that explains the verdict in Tamil Nadu.

The social support the DPA enjoyed by virtue of alliance was truly enormous. The survey data shows that the DPA alliance polled more than 50 percent votes among all social groups, except two: the upper castes and the dalits. The NDA alliance has the edge among upper castes, while the dalit vote was shared by the NDA, DPA and others, including the third front. The two major dalit political organisations, Dalit Panthers of India (DPI) and Puthiya Tamilagam (PT), failed to

get into the DPA. The refusal of Karunanidhi to accommodate the dalit leaders caused heartburn among the dalits but it has not affected the election result much. The PMK partnership successfully shifted the Vanniyar vote towards the DPA. The DPA this time could take away Thevar vote too which has been largely with the AIADMK in several elections in the south. Muslims also seem to have voted for the DPA en bloc.

As it happens in any wave election, the DPA polled significantly higher proportion of votes in both rural and urban areas, but more in urban areas. The lead of the DPA cuts across all age groups. Although the DPA leads the rival alliance among all classes, the support is greater among the poor and lower middle classes. The AIADMK has managed to cut down the DPAs's massive lead to a single digit among the very poor. This legacy of the MGR days is also reflected in the relatively better showing of the AIADMK among women voters.

Yet the margin of the DPA's victory suggests that we are not dealing with the alliance effect only. Assuming that the DPA enjoyed a 15 point lead over the NDA by virtue of alliance arithmetic alone, we are still to account for another 8 percentage point gap between the two alliances. This is clearly a swing effect due to the unpopularity of the Jayalalitha regime. During her three year rule Jayalalitha has alienated more and more sections from her party and government. Her autocratically style of functioning, dealing with the opposition leaders, the media and the striking government employees has not gone down well. Besides, the survey shows that more and more people have felt that their economic condition has deteriorated over the years. The proportions tend to increase as one goes down in the class hierarchy. More than one-third of the poor and half of the lower middle classes reported that their economic condition has worsened during the past five years.

Drought and water shortage – drinking as well as irrigation – in many parts of the state have become important issues in the campaign. About 50 percent of the voters felt that the drinking water facilities had deteriorated; 62 per cent felt that the condition relating to irrigation water had deteriorated. Most importantly, 71 per cent saw a worsening of the conditions in terms of employment opportunities.

All this is directly linked to the popularity of the leader. One-third of the sampled respondents felt that Jayalalitha as a leader is bad, while only 13 per cent felt that Karunanidhi is a bad leader. A majority of the respondents see Karunannidhi as good or very good leader, while the

corresponding figure for Jayalalitha is only 31 percent. All this is very bad news for the AIADMK. The state government stands defeated and robbed of legitimacy mid-way through its term. While this may not have any implications for the longevity of the state government, given the comfortable majority for the AIADMK in the state assembly, it may affect long-term political realignment in the state. Karunanidhi has to think of ways of keeping the DPA intact till the next assembly elections due in 2006, while Jayalalitha has to start looking for new allies.

UTTAR PRADESH

V B Singh and A K Verma with CSDS Team

As expected and as the polls predicted, the verdict in Uttar Pradesh was fractured. However, the striking feature of the results was the wide divergence between the votes secured and the seats won. The Congress won 9 seats with 12.5 percent votes, while the BJP and allies managed 11 seats with nearly double the votes at 23 percent votes. The BSP won 19 seats with 24.7 percent votes. But the clear winner was the Samajwadi Party (SP)-Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) combine which won 38 out of the total 80 seats with 31.2 percent votes. Out of this tally, the SP won 35 and the RLD won three seats.

The real loser in the whole story is clearly the BJP. The party had been banking upon significantly increasing its tally in the state in order to return to power at the Centre. The BJP has been steadily declining in the state ever since the 'Ram Lehar' of the mid 1990s has receded. Besides, this the BJP in the state had been wracked by internal fighting, though after the return of former chief minister Kalyan Singh to the party, its hopes had increased. But this was not to be so. The post-poll survey data indicates that the return of Kalyan Singh has not had its desired effect since only 31 percent of the respondents feel that their support for the BJP has increased due to this.

The desperation of the BJP was clear in the campaign as evinced by its vain attempts to woo the Muslims and describe Mulayam Singh Yadav as its ideological ally. The results of the post-poll survey indicate that the BJP's support base is also slipping. The party is losing its dominance of the upper caste votes. While the BJP still polls a majority of the upper caste votes, the Congress has been making inroads among the Brahmins and the upper castes and the SP among Rajputs.

The SP and RLD alliance has benefited both the parties. It has combined the Yadav-Muslim support base of the SP with the RLD's support among other peasant proprietary castes, especially the Jats. The BJP still leads among the other OBCs, but SP-RLD is close behind the BJP. The SP-RLD combine get overwhelming support from the Muslims. 62 percent of the Muslims voted for the combine, an indication that the BJP's propaganda campaign against Mulayam Singh did not succeed. The Congress comes second among Muslims with 15 percent of the community preferring the party.

The BSP has retained its traditional support among the Dalits. Among the community, 71 per cent voted for the party. The BSP has also gained significant support among the OBCs. In many ways, the real gainer has been the Congress. It managed to retain its tally of the 1999 Lok Sabha elections. With a small proportion of votes it has managed a respectable tally of seats. Perhaps it has been the gainer of the constituency wise consolidation against the BJP. The survey data confirms popular perception that the support for the Congress has increased with the entry of the Gandhi siblings in politics. About 52 percent of the respondents said that their support for the Congress has increased due to this fact. But it is equally clear that this has not translated into a similar rise in votes.

Furthermore, the survey also reveals a high level of political partisanship. A bulk of the voters are reluctant to believe negative statements about the leaders or parties whom they support. Only 5 percent of the BSP voters feel that Mayawati is responsible for the Taj scam, while 23 percent of BJP voters feel that Lalji Tandon is responsible for the sari scam. About 30 percent of the SP-RLD voters refuse to agree with the assertion that the SP government in Uttar Pradesh was overthrown by the BJP.

But the overall verdict in the state disguised an irony. The SP-RLD won 38 seats and the SP leadership hoped that it could play the kingmaker in Delhi. But the electoral verdict in other states made the SP almost irrelevant in the numbers game of the 14th Lok Sabha. Perhaps for the first time in India's electoral history, the winner of Uttar Pradesh is playing no role in determining the Central government. The SP's stunning victory thus is an hollow one.

UTTARANCHAL

Sanjay Kumar

The results of the 2004 Lok Sabha elections is hardly different from the 1999 Lok Sabha elections. The two major political parties, the Congress and the BJP polled more or less similar vote in both these elections. While in 1999 the BJP polled 39.6 percent vote, in the recent election it polled 40.9 percent votes. Similarly, during the 1999 Lok Sabha elections the Congress polled 38.1 percent vote, while in the 2004 Lok Sabha elections it polled 38.3 percent votes. The only change is in terms of the seats won by different political parties. During the 1999 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP had won four of the five Lok Sabha seat and the Congress had own one seat. But during the 2004 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP won three seats, while the Congress candidate K.C Baba got elected form Nanital Lok Sabha seat. The Samajwadi Party (SP) candidate Rajendra Kumar got elected from Haridwar reserved Lok Sabha seat. He defeated the Bahujan Samajwadi Party (BSP) candidate Bhagwan Das.

The neck-to-neck contest in terms of vote share between these two parties could be explained by the fact these two parties are more or evenly matched in terms of their support base. In the NES 2004 post poll survey people were asked to identify, themselves as to which party they have been the traditional supporters. While 37 percent voters in Uttaranchal identified themselves as traditional supporters of BJP, 39 percent identified themselves as traditional supporters of the Congress. There were 24 percent voters who have been voting for different political parties in different elections.

The BJP did manage to establish a lead over the Congress since the traditional supporters of BJP voted for their party in greater numbers compared to the traditional supporter of the Congress voters. The support of the floating voters have been more or less equally divided between the two major political parties.

RAJASTHAN, MADHYA PRADESH AND CHHATTISGARH: REPEAT PERFORMANCE OF ASSEMBLY, 2003

Sanjay Lodha, Ram Shankar, Baba Marayam, Pushkar Raj

Last December, the three states of Rajasthan, M.P and Chhattisgarh voted the BJP into power with comfortable margins, while in Delhi, they returned the Congress to power. In Chattisgarh, the BJP's victory was helped by the presence of the NCP, which split the Congress votes.

These state governments are yet new, they have some goodwill and there is also an air of expectancy about them. So, it is not a surprise that the BJP won handsomely in all the three states and the Congress swept Delhi. In fact, the three states, with 56 BJP MPs have helped the BJP post a decent tally in the new Lok Sabha. Apart from the 'honeymoon goodwill' enjoyed by the ruling party there, the organisational weaknesses of the main adversary, the Congress, have also contributed to the success of the BJP. This same analysis equally applies to Delhi, which also stuck to its electoral choice of December, 2003. In Delhi, the Congress benefited when the JD(S) candidate withdrew from the Chandni Chowk constituency. If anything, the trend of 2003 has only consolidated in the Lok Sabha elections from these states and from Delhi.

In MP, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, a new chief minister has been installed and people have no reason to be dissatisfied with the leadership yet. Similarly, in Delhi, having reposed their faith in the Congress government, the voters continue to believe that these governments would now deliver. The voters in these three states and Delhi are reasonably satisfied with the performance of their respective state governments. This has contributed mainly to electoral success of the party in power in Lok Sabha elections 2004. Furthermore, in all four states, the ruling party at the state level increased its lead in the Lok Sabha elections over its main rival when compared to the lead in the assembly elections of 2003. In Madhya Pradesh, the BJP's lead over the Congress increased from 10.9 percentage points in 2003 to 14 percentage points in 2004. In the case of Chhattisgarh, the BJP's lead went up from 2.5 percentage points to 7.62 percentage points. The BJP's lead over the Congress in Rajasthan increased from 3.5 percentage points in 2003 to 7.6 percentage points in 2004. In Delhi, the Congress' lead over the BJP went up from 12.9 percentage points to 14.1 percentage points.

In Madhya Pradesh, the BJP has maintained its strength, while the exit of Digvijay Singh, from state politics, has left the Congress in a very weak situation. The Congress has also failed to gain the confidence of the OBCs in the short period after the Assembly elections. In Chhattisgarh, the BJP does well among the OBCs, apart from getting a large chunk from the STs to support it. In Rajasthan, the upper castes and tribals have extended strong support to the BJP and the Jats are divided between the BJP and the Congress. Thus, the BJP has been able to construct a broad based social coalition in its favour. The Congress has become the party mainly of the Dalits, Adivasis and the Muslims in these three states. In contrast, the Congress in Delhi, receives support from OBCs and the upper castes in addition to the support from Dalits and

Muslims of Delhi. The Congress, like the BJP in these three states, has constructed a broad based social coalition in Delhi. Like the Congress in the three states, the BJP's support base is restricted to a few social groups; the BJP in Delhi is a party of largely Punjabi Khatri and Vaishyas.