

INDIA UNBOXED

ELECTIONS 2024

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Over a billion people of India, living inside and outside, rural and urban, Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Parsi, and others, are waiting for the results of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Many factors will play crucial roles in this election outcome: from the aspirations of 18.5 million first-time voters aged 18–19 with a substantial portion of the electorate under 30, to diminishing Modi factor, to disillusionment of the people on employment and ache din front. Young voters were instrumental in the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) victories in 2014 and 2019. Campaigns and manifestos are increasingly tailored to address the concerns and aspirations of this dynamic group; this will continue to be in the BJP way. But the INDIA bloc and other regional parties opposing the BJP/NDA bloc have managed to gain a lot of ground in penetrating and reaching to the masses and talking to them about the dangers of an extreme right-wing government backed by corporate giants. The concerned civil society has majorly moved away from the BJP/NDA side. Civil society in India hugely value the ideals of secularism, democracy, and the constitution. With democracy and secularism in danger, political parties advocating policies, opportunities and benefits to favour a religious majority and conveniently excluding certain communities, blatant hate speech and then blatant denial of it, reinforcement of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), etc. have further damaged the image of the ruling establishment, and the trust common people had on them.

The Lok Sabha Election of 2024 in India showcased several noteworthy trends that would shape the political outcome of the elections:

Digital Campaigning Dominance The influence of digital campaigning continued to rise, with political parties leveraging social media platforms, targeted advertising, and data analytics to reach voters.

Regional Parties' Resurgence Regional parties play a pivotal role in several states, emphasizing regional issues and forming strategic alliances with national parties. These parties capitalise on their strong grassroots networks and deep understanding of local dynamics to secure significant electoral gains.

Focus on Development Putting aside religion and ideologies, the electorate exhibit a continued emphasis on development-oriented agendas, including infrastructure, employment generation, healthcare, and education. Parties that present credible and innovative development plans garner significant support from voters, especially in rural and semi-urban areas.

Identity Politics and Social Issues Identity-based politics remain a significant factor, with parties appealing to caste,

religious, and linguistic identities to mobilise support. Additionally, social issues such as gender equality, environmental conservation, and minority rights gain prominence, influencing voter preferences and candidate selection.

Evolving Coalition Dynamics Coalition politics remain integral to the Indian electoral landscape, with pre-poll and post-poll alliances determining government formation. The fluidity of coalition dynamics underscore the importance of strategic partnerships and consensus-building in a diverse and multi-party democracy like India.

Corruption Disclosure of major scams like, electoral bonds, will definitely have an effect on the way informed voters cast their vote.

Technological Innovations in Voting The adoption of technological innovations to streamline the voting process, including electronic voting machines (EVMs), and online registration facilities, which are aimed to enhance transparency, efficiency, and accessibility in the electoral process, may make it easy for the powerful to misuse it and manipulate it to their advantage.

An analysis of seven states that come among the 10 biggest states (having the most number of constituencies) indicates a decline of the unquestioned continuity of reign of the BJP/NDA bloc. With the over-dependency on temple politics and hindutva ideology, people have lost faith in them and have stopped believing that they would bring about progress and employment in the modern sense of the term. Their outward image as a party with less corruption is broken with the surfacing of electoral bonds scam. NDA has poorly managed the Manipur unrest, farmer's protest, and attacks on minorities and institutions. After the initial phases of voting the BJP side look doubtful of their own victory, and are going desperate.

What has worked positively for the Congress-led INDIA bloc is that they have stood together as an opposition force, though some have moved away and are contesting independently; programmes like the Bharat Jodo Yatra by Rahul Gandhi have projected Congress as a party that knows the needs and aspirations of the common folks, and Rahul has emerged as a competent leader; Congress has won elections in recent major state elections, like, Karnataka and Telangana; and Congress' and its allies' image as a side that upholds the constitution and its democratic and secular values.

**UTTAR PRADESH
UNBOXED**

Constituencies

80

Major Political Parties

**BJP
Congress
SP**

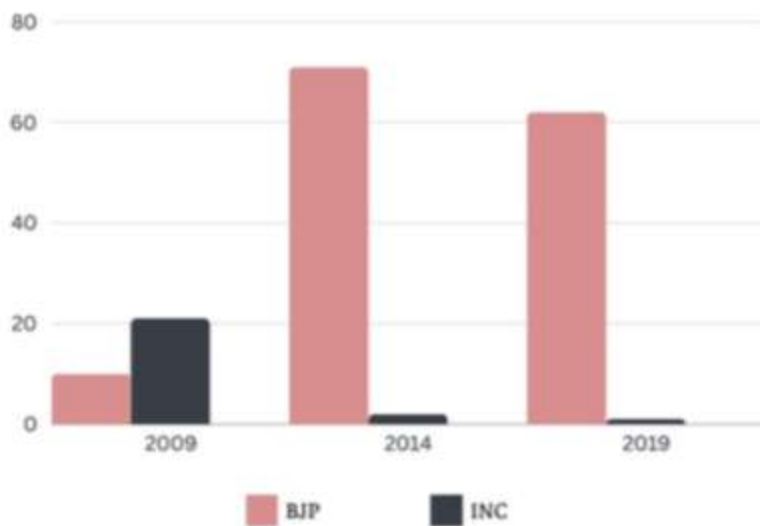


Uttar Pradesh

The BJP-led state, Uttar Pradesh, has the highest number of constituencies, 80. Though a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) bastion for the last one decade, Indian National Congress (INC) and Samajwadi Party (SP) also used to have a hold on the population. BJP made a historic comeback by securing 255 out of 403 seats in the 2022 State Assembly Elections; and Congress was pushed farther back. Uttar Pradesh saw an average voter turnout of 55% in the first five phases. With two major political leaders, Rahul Gandhi and Narendra Modi, contesting in different constituencies in this state, the tensions are high.

Likely Outcome

The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) with the completion of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, highlighting progress in the campaign, and the Modi and Yogi factor may not be enough to retain the seat tally. INDIA bloc could surprise all and win over 20 seats in UP. The Jodo Yatras by Rahul and the campaign by Priyanka and others will have results.



Maharashtra

With a constituency count of 48, Maharashtra sees a tough competition between the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) bloc. In the 2019 State Assembly Elections, BJP-SS alliance bagged the majority.

Likely Course

Maharashtra politics has taken near-chaotic twists and turns between 2019 and 2024, following the splits in the Shiv Sena and the NCP, toppling of the Maha Vikas Aghadi government and swearing in of Eknath Shinde-led Mahayuti government. It would be next to impossible for the BJP alliance to make a clean sweep in the state like the last two elections. The Congress led INDIA alliance may claim back 10–15 seats this time.

**MAHARASHTRA
UNBOXED**

Constituencies

48

Major Political Parties

**BJP
INC
SS
NCP**



**WEST BENGAL
UNBOXED**

Constituencies

42

Major Political Parties

**AITC
CPI(M)
BJP
INC**

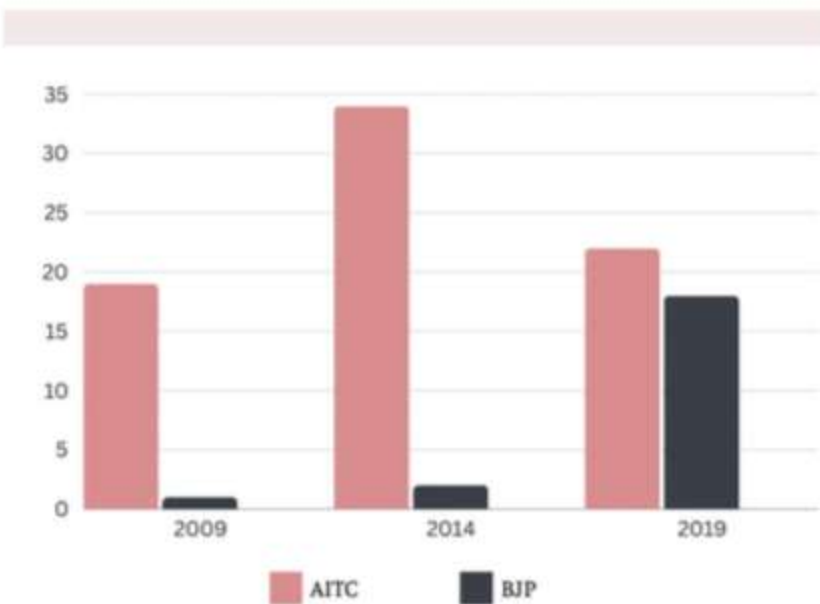


West Bengal

With 42 constituencies, West Bengal, ruled by the All India Trinamool Congress (AITC), who has opposed Modi and his politics openly, will pose a serious threat to BJP-led NDA's aspirations in West Bengal. The secularist ideology and advocacy of support to all communities that AITC stands for, is supported by many in the state; and will reflect in the way the population votes.

Likely Outcome

2024 Lok Sabha elections are seeing much less aggressive AITC and BJP in West Bengal. The hyper-nationalistic narrative of BJP, and personal attacks on leaders have mellowed down, and parties are focusing on local issues of the state. It is a state to watch out, AITC is contesting alone, INDIA bloc mainly consists of Congress and AAP; and both are fighting the BJP. Both the fronts are equally posed, but AITC has better chances, and could win 21-24 seats.



Bihar

A state with 40 constituencies, Bihar is a state where politics of religion can be prominently seen in competition between NDA and INDIA bloc. The recent death of the JD(U) leader Saurabh Kumar in an attack has raised tensions within the NDA alliance.

Likely Outcome

The BJP-led NDA will dominate election results in Bihar. People still have admiration for Modi, they look up to him; thus NDA could win in over 60% of seats. INDIA may make progress from the last Lok Sabha elections and win in five to seven seats. Though many may not like Nitish Kumar, the Modi wave is very strong in Bihar.

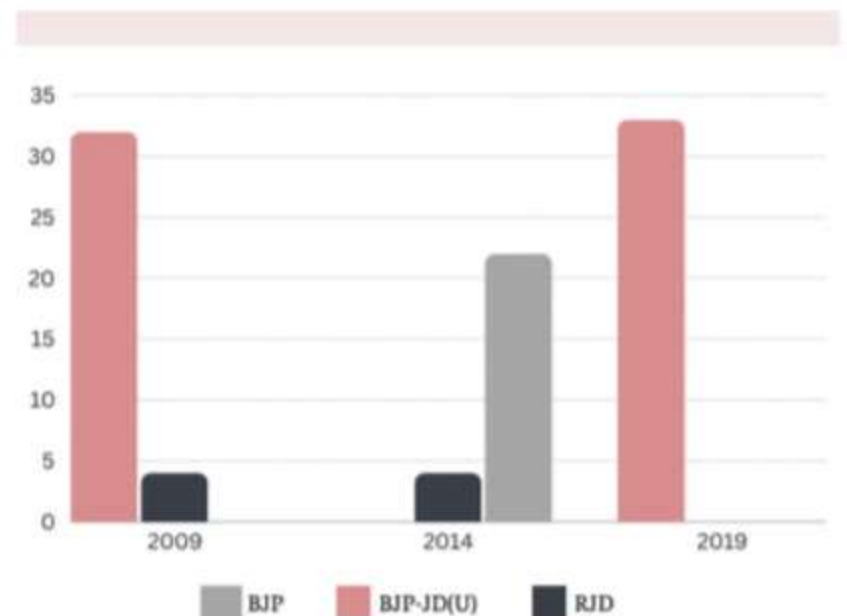
**BIHAR
UNBOXED**

Constituencies

40

Major Political Parties

**BJP
JD(U)
Congress
HAM**



Tamil Nadu

With 39 constituencies, the DMK-ruled (INDIA bloc) state of Tamil Nadu saw almost 70% of voter turnout. In 2021 DMK ended AIADMK's decade-long rule by winning the State Assembly Elections. BJP claims that they have grown in Tamil Nadu, but Stalin and his team is doing well; and that will hurt the hopes of the BJP in the state.

Likely Outcome

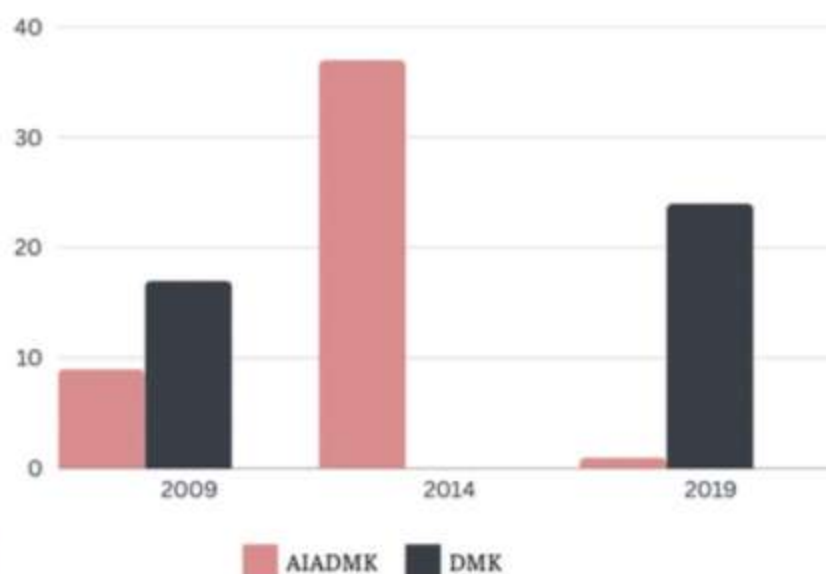
DMK enjoys strong support for effective governance, directly benefiting citizens. There is also a strong anti-Modi wave and anti-Hindi wave in the state. The state, like other states in the South has a strong stance against Hindutva politics. Thus national BJP leaders have had no impact in Tamil Nadu. INDIA bloc with DMK with it will win most of the seats. AIADMK is on the back foot. BJP, in all probability, will open account in the state.

Constituencies

39

Major Political Parties

DMK
AIADMK
Congress
BJP

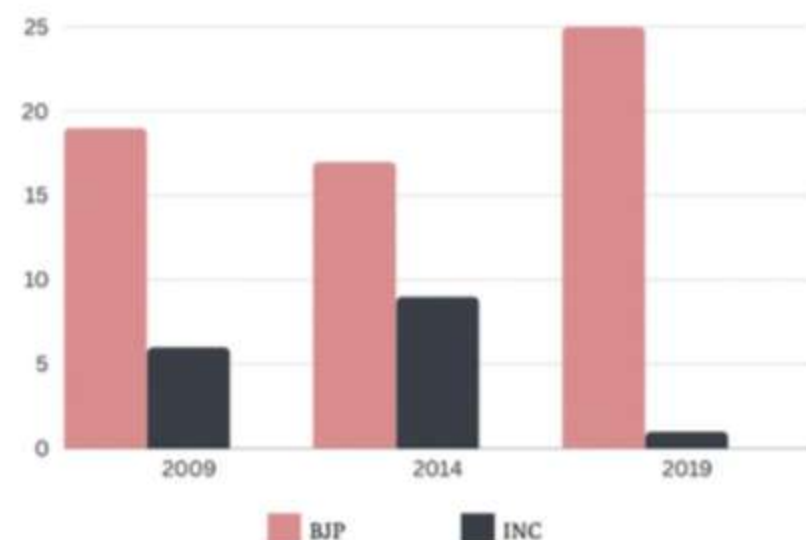


Constituencies

28

Major Political Parties

BJP
Congress
JDS



Karnataka

A state with 28 constituencies, Karnataka is favoured by the minority despite the not so recent wins by the BJP. Though earlier Lok Sabha polls went in favour of the BJP, in the 2023 State Assembly Elections, Congress emerged victorious with 43% vote share. Recent, people and especially women centred, policies, and urban and rural developments, paired with hateful comments by NDA leaders have pushed the minority to stand with the Congress.

Likely Outcome

Congress, with strong state leadership, enjoys the favour of people; and that will end the decade long BJP dominance in Lok Sabha elections. INDIA bloc could win in 18–20 seats. The recently surfaced sex scandle of JD(S) MP candidate will further harm the image of NDA in the state.

Gujarat

With 26 constituencies, the power struggle between Congress and BJP is prominent in the state of Gujarat, though Congress is no match for BJP here. The political shift in the state is observed in anticipation as Congress and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) gear up as INDIA alliance. Having won the Surat seat already, it is clear that even the campaigning is dominated by the BJP; Congress-led INDIA is almost not visible in the state.

Likely Outcome

BJP is most likely to secure almost all seats hands down. But unlike in 2014 and 2019, Congress-AAP alliance not only will have an increase in their vote share, but might even win a couple of seats; thus spoil the BJP's dreams of a hat-trick.

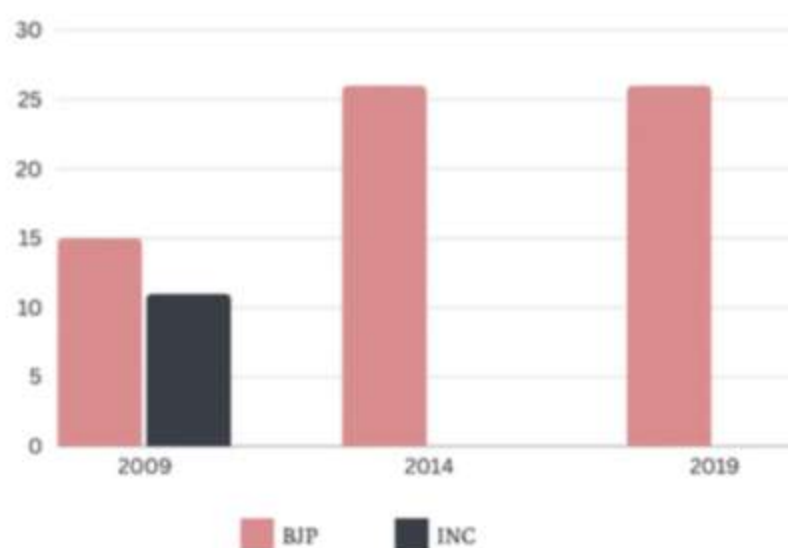
If these seven states, having 303 seats out of 543, are of any indication, the NDA/BJP have a slight edge. BJP could win in around 300 seats with their alliances.

Constituencies

26

Major Political Parties

BJP
Congress



On 4 June when the Lok Sabha election boxes (EVMs) are unboxed, who will have the last laugh? If the above discussed seven states, having 303 seats of 543, are of any indication, the NDA/BJP have a slight edge. BJP with their alliances could win in around 300 seats.

But there are other extraneous factors, like the small states and minorities with big problems of exclusion, less attention given to them, and being at the verge of losing their identity and position

often because of the generic BJP stance, 'one nation, one vote, one language, one religion, etc.'" BJP has failed to deliver in many important fronts like, employment, price fluctuation, and human rights. The clean image of BJP is broken with the electoral bonds scam. The Modi wave factor is diminishing. Many regional small parties have resurged and taken their position against BJP. And, after 10 years of BJP rule, with the anti-incumbency factor, many look forward to a change. Yes. The changing political and social landscape of India could reduce NDA below 250; and BJP below 200. The country awaits the greatest election results on the planet—a result that is capable of changing the nature and destiny of a nation of over 1.2 billion people.