



Electoral performance of the Bharatiya Janata Party in 1999 parliamentary election: Alliance politics

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Abstract

The 1999 parliamentary elections as the last elections of the 20th century in India provided a new version to the Indian politics in the form of 24-party coalition. This election continued the trends experienced throughout the 1990s both at the national and state levels. Keeping in view all this, the present work has been focused on the performance of the BJP in the 1999 parliamentary elections. The 1999 election has been analyzed in detail in terms of percent votes, seats won and seats contested by the BJP. An attempt also has been made to find the reasons behind the repeated majority and becoming largest party for the second time.

Keywords: elections, Indian politics, bharatiya janata party

Introduction

The 1999 parliamentary elections were the last elections of the 20th century in India. It provided a new version to the Indian politics in the form of 24-party coalition. Broadly, this election continued the trends experienced throughout the 1990s both at the national and state levels. "Niche" political parties "at the state level continue their inroads into larger political entities so that coalition politics [was] essential. Political parties capable of winning a parliamentary majority on their own no longer exist at the national level, and [were] becoming rarer at the state level. The BJPs recognition of this central political fact enabled it to construct the winning National Democratic Alliance (NDA) prior to the 1999 elections" (Wallace, P., 2003) [4].

The failure of the BJP in the state elections in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Delhi in November 1998, and prediction of the return of the Congress at the centre by India Today-ORG-MARG Nationwide Opinion Poll (India Today, 28 December 1998, pp. 20-26) alarmed the BJP leadership. It began to improve its image both as a party organization and as a functioning government. "Vajpayee assumed an assertive role in the functioning of his government and in dealing with his coalition partners, particularly (AIADMK) Jayalalitha. His determination to improve relations with Pakistan, opening of a direct bus route between Delhi and Lahore, his own bus journey to Lahore and the warm reception he received from his Pakistani counterpart brought his image on to a recovery path. The Congress, which professed not to indulge in any activity destabilizing the Vajpayee government suddenly got scared and went on to dislodge the BJP led-Government. It manipulated the withdrawal of AIADMK support to the government, almost forced a presidential directive to Vajpayee to prove his majority in the Lok Sabha, and managed to make the BJP Government lose the confidence motion by one vote" (Singh, V. B., 2004) [2] on April 17, 1999. This episode, however, went in favour of the BJP politically. Sonia Gandhi's claim to form an alternative government and her failure to mobilize the requisite support

earned a lot of sympathy for BJP and its government. The House was dissolved and fresh elections were announced.

The extended tenure of Vajpayee's caretaker government and its firm handling of the Kargil conflict with Pakistan further improved the position of the BJP. In the overall situation, "Vajpayee proved to be a strong leader, strong enough to say 'no' to the US president. As the opinion polls suggested, he became the most preferred leader to lead the country. The BJP also managed to forge alliance in most of the states. Moreover, a split in the Congress on the issue of Sonia Gandhi's foreign origin strengthened Vajpayee's image vis-à-vis Sonia Gandhi even further" (Singh, V. B., 2004) [2].

One of the major characteristics of the 1999 elections was the construction of full-blown BJP-led alliance of 24 parties before the elections. The National Democratic Alliance (NDA), headed by Vajpayee was a broad "catch-all" spectrum of parties. It included major regional parties based on language such as the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in Andhra Pradesh with 29 seats. It also included non-Hindu based political parties such as the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) in Punjab which won two seats, and the Muslim-based National Conference (NC) from Jammu & Kashmir, with four seats in the Lok Sabha. "Fiery secular leaders such as Mamata Banerjee heading the All India Trinamool Congress (AITC) from West Bengal contributed eight seats, while the non-ideological Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) from Haryana provide[d] five seats" (Wallace, P., 2003) [4].

All the earlier predictions went wrong. The BJP won 182 seats on its own and the NDA along with its allies managed to get a majority in the house. On the other hand, the Congress suffered a great set back and could win only 114 seats in the 1999 Lok Sabha elections. The BJP at the same time, had not only enhanced "its reach to wider segments of society, but also seem[ed] to have firmed up its grip among the voters moving away from the Congress since the 1991 Lok Sabha elections" (Singh, V. B., 2004) [2].

The 1999 Lok Sabha elections were the third mid-term polls within a period of four years. The nation went to polls in

September-October, 1999. The BJP resorted to socio-political engineering. It made alliance with 23 smaller, regional parties of diversified character and background. The NDA was redesigned with the combination of a good number of new allies to face the election. This election became a water-shed for the BJP in the history of two decades. The party did not publish its manifesto which many said has led to the dilution of the party, its image and identity. The BJP had contested the 1999 elections more as NDA than as BJP. Vajpayee became the unanimous choice of the leaders of the NDA and he was projected as an able Prime-ministerial candidate. The NDA adopted a national agenda for governance, which put a suspension on the issues of the BJP: Ayodhya, Article 370 and uniform civil code. In the 12th Lok Sabha, the NDA had captured 278 seats sharing 42.8% of popular votes. It had increased its seat tally to 301 sharing 46.8% of the popular votes the 13th Lok Sabha. However, the BJP on its own had less percentage of vote shares. It came down to 23.75% in 1999 from 25.59% in 1998.

The three general elections, held between 1996 and 1999, showed the vulnerability of coalition governments in India and the shifting political loyalties of the parties. During this period, the BJP was on the ascending, while the Congress was systematically on the decline. This tendency was reinforced in the 1999 Lok Sabha elections. The BJP retained its position in the Parliament with 182 seats. In this election, in terms of social base, the BJP drew “its support from almost all social groups of the country although in some regions it is still in the periphery. A national survey of the political mood conducted in the mid-1990s by the Delhi-based Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) revealed that the BJP and its electoral allies had a sizable base in almost all social classes” (Ghosh, Partha S., 1999)^[8].

The description of BJP’s electoral performance in the 1999 Lok Sabha polls either as repeat performance or renewal of 1998 can be disputed mainly on two counts: first, “several political parties which were not part of the NDA coalition in 1998 had now allied with the BJP right on the eve of the 1999 elections. They were TDP, DMK, JD (U), Indian National Lok Dal, Himalaya Vikas Congress and 4 other smaller parties

who together in the end contributed 60 seats to the NDA total of 301 seats. Similarly, a few parties like AIADMK, Haryana Vikas Party, and Janata which were part of the BJP-led alliance quit the coalition just before the 1999 polls were held” (Naidu, D. S., 2004)^[3]. Consequently there was a fundamental change in the composition of parties/members supporting and opposing the NDA. Its new members (60) outnumbered the members representing its 1998 allies. Secondly, the BJP’s repeated performance in 1999 elections by winning an identical number of seats was a proof of renewal of the mandate for the Vajpayee government.

Studies have shown that the BJP has become a formidable national party within a short period. It stepped into “the mantle of the Congress by trying to become an umbrella organization by accommodating diverse cleavages and at the same time binding them with its distinctive ideological cement” (Appaiah, Parvathi, 2003)^[5]. In this election, the support base of the BJP was widened further with “increasing support by lower status groups including scheduled castes and tribals” (Wallace, P., 2003)^[4].

Seats Contested by the BJP in 1999

In this Lok Sabha election, the party out of the total 543 parliamentary seats, contested 339 seats and won 182 seats with 23.75 percent vote of electorate.

The party had fielded its candidates on all the seats in the states and union territories of Jammu & Kashmir, Chandigarh, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Gujarat, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Goa, Daman & Diu and Andaman & Nicobar Islands (Table 1). In addition, it had also contested 77 seats (out of 85) in Uttar Pradesh, 29 seats (out of 54) in Bihar, 26 seats (out of 48) in Maharashtra, 24 seats (out of 25) in Rajasthan, 19 seats (out of 28) in Karnataka, 14 seats (out of 20) in Kerala, 13 seats (out of 42) in West Bengal, 12 seats (out of 14) in Assam, 9 seats (out of 21) in Orissa, 8 seats (out of 42) in Andhra Pradesh, 6 seats (out of 39) in Tamil Nadu, 5 seats (out of 10) in Haryana, 3 seats each in Punjab (out of 13) and Himachal Pradesh (out of 4) and 1 seat (out of 2) each in Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Tripura (Table 1).

Table 1: Electoral Performance of BJP, 1999 Indian Parliamentary Elections

S. No	State / U.T.	Seats			Votes Polled (%)	Swing in Votes Polled (%)
		Total	Contested	Won		
1	Jammu & Kashmir	6	6	2	31.56	3.52
2	Himachal Pradesh	4	3	3	46.27	-5.16
3	Punjab	13	3	1	9.16	-2.51
4	Chandigarh	1	1	-	45.1	2.74
5	Haryana	10	5	5	29.21	10.32
6	Delhi	7	7	7	51.8	1.07
7	Uttar Pradesh	85	77	29	27.64	-8.85
8	Madhya Pradesh	40	40	29	46.58	0.85
9	Bihar	54	29	23	23.01	-0.97
10	Orissa	21	9	9	24.63	3.44
11	West Bengal	42	13	2	11.13	0.93
12	Sikkim	1	-	-	-	-
13	Arunachal Pradesh	2	1	-	16.3	-5.45
14	Assam	14	12	2	29.84	5.37
15	Meghalaya	2	2	-	9.45	0.44
16	Nagaland	1	1	-	5.12	-

17	Manipur	2	1	-	1.02	-11.59
18	Mizoram	1	-	-	-	-
19	Tripura	2	1	-	12.82	4.63
20	Rajasthan	25	24	16	47.23	5.58
21	Gujarat	26	26	20	52.5	4.22
22	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	1	1	-	20.8	-32.93
23	Maharashtra	48	26	13	21.18	-1.31
24	Goa	2	2	2	51.5	21.46
25	Daman & Diu	1	1	-	43.13	1.17
26	Karnataka	28	19	7	27.19	0.24
27	Andhra Pradesh	42	8	7	9.9	-8.4
28	Kerala	20	14	-	6.5	-2.48
29	Tamil Nadu	39	6	4	7.14	0.28
30	Pondicherry	1	-	-	-	-
31	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	1	1	1	52.7	17.17
32	Lakshadweep	1	-	-	-	-
	All India	543	339	182	23.75	-1.84

The party had not fielded its candidates in the states and union territories of Sikkim, Mizoram, Pondicherry and Lakshadweep.

The spatial patterns of seats contested in 1999 elections and its comparison with 1998 elections indicates the following:

1. In this election, the party had contested 339 seats (49 seats less) as compared to 388 seats in the 1998 election.
2. The patterns of seats contested by the party to the north of Vindhyas remained more or less consistent to that of 1998.
3. The decrease in the number of seats contested by the party was maximum in South Indian States (34 seats) followed by the Hindi-Speaking States (11 seats), and North-Eastern States (4 seats);
4. The broad change in the patterns of seats contested in the South Indian States was more perceptible in the case of Andhra Pradesh. From 38 seats in 1998, the party had contested only 8 seats in 1999 in the state.
5. The change in number of seats contested by the party was basically in the states of Uttar Pradesh (82 to 77), Andhra Pradesh (38 to 8) and Kerala (18 to 14). In Andhra Pradesh the party had contested 30 seats less than what it was in 1998 due to its seat adjustments with TDP.
6. Out of the total 339 seats contested by the party in 1999, 331 were those seats contested by it in 1998 also.

Votes Polled by the BJP in 1999

The party in this election had polled 23.75 percent vote and registered a negative swing of 1.84 percent than the preceding elections. However, the negative swing in the vote percentage did not make any dent in its seats tally. It continued to be 182. The party had recorded maximum gains in percent vote in the states and union territories of Goa (21.46%), Andaman & Nicobar Islands (17.17%), Haryana (10.32%), Rajasthan (5.58%), Assam (5.37%) and Tripura (4.63 %). The maximum losses on the other hand were in the states and union territory of Dadra & Nagar Haveli (32.93%), Manipur (11.59%), Uttar Pradesh (8.85%), Andhra Pradesh (8.4%), Arunachal Pradesh (-5.45%) and Himachal Pradesh (5.16%) (Table 1).

In this election, the average percentage of vote for the party was 39.64 percent. There were 12 states (Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Orissa, Goa, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu) and 4 union territories (N.T.C. Delhi, Chandigarh, Daman & Diu

and Andaman & Nicobar Islands), where the average percentage of vote for the party was above its national average. Among all the national political parties in this election the BJP ranked second in terms of percentage of vote polled (Table 2). The party maintained its status since 1991 elections. However the margin in the vote percentage between the Congress (first ranking) and the BJP got increased from 0.23 in 1998 to 4.55 in 1999.

Table 2: Performance of National Parties in 1999 Parliamentary Elections

Party	Seats		Votes Polled (%)
	Contested	Won	
BJP	339	182	23.75
INC	453	114	28.3
CPM	72	33	5.4
JD (U)	60	21	3.1
BSP	225	14	4.16
JD (S)	96	1	0.91
CPI	54	4	1.48

The percent vote data also indicates that the party had quite substantial electoral support in the states and union territories of Andaman & Nicobar Islands (52.7%), Gujarat (52.5%), N.T.C. Delhi (51.8%), Goa (51.5%), Rajasthan (47.23%), Madhya Pradesh (46.58%), Himachal Pradesh (46.27%), Chandigarh (45.1%) and Daman & Diu (43.13%).

The constituency-wise analysis of the percentage of vote for the party clearly shows that, there were 15 (34 in 1998) constituencies, where the party had polled below 10 percent. There were other 14 (29 in 1998) constituencies, where the percentage of vote for the party was between 10 to 20 percent. There were 54 (35 in 1998) constituencies, where the party's vote percent was between 20 to 30 percent. Similarly, in the 70 (110 in 1998) constituencies, the range of percentage of vote for the party was between 30 to 40 percent (Table 3).

In the other 103 (124 in 1998) constituencies it had polled in the range of 40 to 50 percent. There were 83 (56 in 1998) constituencies where the polling in favour of the party was above 50 percent of the total 339 constituencies contested by the party, in as many as 186 (i.e. 54.86 percent) its vote share was above 40 percent. The percentage of such constituencies was 46 percent in 1998. On the other side, there were only 29

constituencies (63 in 1998) where the party had polled less than 20 percent. This clearly indicates that the party vote in this election was on a higher side. This was also attributed from the fact that the average percent vote share for the party had increased from 36.26 percent in 1998 to 39.64 percent in 1999.

The spatial analysis of the percent vote polled in favour of the party, in this election, clearly indicates that all 15 constituencies, where it had polled below 10 percent were from extreme north, south and east (Figure 1). Of these constituencies, 8 were from Kerala, 4 from J&K and 1 each

from Meghalaya, Manipur and Nagaland. Out of total 14 constituencies, where the party's vote share was between 10 to 20 percent, 5 were from Kerala, 3 from Uttar Pradesh, 2 each from Maharashtra and Karnataka and 1 each from Meghalaya and West Bengal (Table 3). Of the total 54 constituencies, where the party had polled between 20 to 30 percent, more than 70 percent (i.e. 39) were from Uttar Pradesh (central and Poorvanchal regions), 3 each from Maharashtra and West Bengal, 2 from Assam and 1 each from Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tripura, and Dadra & Nagar Haveli.

Table 3: Frequency Distribution of the BJP Vote, 1999 Parliamentary Elections

S. No	State / U.T.	Percent Vote and no. of constituencies						Total Seats
		Below 10	10-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50 & Above	
1	Jammu & Kashmir	4	-	-	-	2	-	6
2	Himachal Pradesh	-	-	-	-	-	3	3
3	Punjab	-	-	-	1	2	-	3
4	Chandigarh	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
5	Haryana	-	-	-	-	1	4	5
6	Delhi	-	-	-	1	1	5	7
7	Uttar Pradesh	-	3	39	26	8	1	77
8	Madhya Pradesh	-	-	1	6	17	16	40
9	Bihar	-	-	1	7	14	7	29
10	Orissa	-	-	-	-	-	9	9
11	West Bengal	-	1	3	5	3	1	13
12	Sikkim	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
13	Arunachal Pradesh	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
14	Assam	-	-	2	7	3	-	12
15	Meghalaya	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
16	Nagaland	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
17	Manipur	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
18	Mizoram	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
19	Tripura	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
20	Rajasthan	-	-	1	1	10	12	24
21	Gujarat	-	-	-	1	10	15	26
22	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
23	Maharashtra	-	2	3	8	12	1	26
24	Goa	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
25	Daman & Diu	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
26	Karnataka	-	2	1	3	12	1	19
27	Andhra Pradesh	-	-	-	1	4	3	8
28	Kerala	8	5	1	-	-	-	14
29	Tamil Nadu	-	-	-	2	1	3	6
30	Pondicherry	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
31	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
32	Lakshadweep	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	All India	15	14	54	70	103	83	339

Of the total 70 constituencies, where the percentage of vote for the party was between 30 to 40 percent, 26 were from Uttar Pradesh, 8 from Maharashtra, 7 each from Bihar and Assam, 6 from Madhya Pradesh, 5 from West Bengal, 3 from Karnataka, 2 from Tamil Nadu and 1 each from Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Punjab, Rajasthan and N.T.C. Delhi. Out of the total 103 constituencies, where the party's vote share was between 40 to 50 percent, 17 were from (northern Madhya Bharat and Chhattisgarh) Madhya Pradesh, 14 from (southern) Bihar, 12 each from (north Maharashtra and Marathawada) Maharashtra and (coastal and southern) Karnataka, 10 from Rajasthan (southern and western), 8 from Uttar Pradesh, 4 from Andhra Pradesh (Telangana), 3 each

from Assam and West Bengal, 2 each from J&K and Punjab and 1 each from Chandigarh, Delhi, Goa, Daman & Diu and Tamil Nadu. Out of the total 83 constituencies, where the range of vote percent for the party was above 50 percent, 16 were from (central and western Madhya Bharat and southern Chhattisgarh) Madhya Pradesh, 15 from Gujarat (Saurashtra and southern Gujarat), 12 from Rajasthan (east and central), 9 from Orissa (northern and south-western), 7 from Bihar (central), 5 from N.T.C. Delhi, 4 from eastern Haryana, 3 each from Himachal Pradesh, coastal Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu and 1 each from Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, and Andaman & Nicobar Islands (Figure 1).

To summarize, the BJP had polled 8,65,62,209 vote in this election. There was a loss of 77,08,979 vote for the party from 1998 elections. This loss was also attributed to the party contesting less number of seats in Uttar Pradesh (82 to 77), Bihar (32 to 29), Andhra Pradesh (38 to 8) and Kerala (20 to 14). In Andhra Pradesh alone there was a loss of 25,32,622 vote due to less number of seats contested by the party. However, this all (contesting less number of seats) was done by the party strategically. It allowed its regional allies to contest maximum seats for better results.

The regional-wise analysis of the party vote shows that the share of the Hindi-Speaking Heartland was 55.43 percent. It was 61.49 percent in 1996 and 57.21 percent in 1998 – indicating a regular decline. The share of Uttar Pradesh also declined from 22.64 percent in 1996 to 21.60 percent in 1998 and further to 17.35 in 1999. The main supporting states, outside the Hindi-Speaking belt, for the party remained Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka. The former two contributed 16.34 percent (15.85 in 1998) in the total vote polled by the party in this election.

In addition, the party had improved its performance in the Southern and the North-Eastern States also. The number of constituencies polling more than 40 percent vote for the party has increased from 21 in 1998 to 25 in 1999 in South Indian States. Similarly in the North-Eastern States for the first time there were three constituencies where the party had polled 40 percent and above vote.

Seats Won by the BJP in 1999

In this parliamentary election, the party had contested on 339 seats (out of the total 543) and marked its victory on 182 seats with 23.75 percent votes. Despite contesting 49 seats less than 1998, the party's seats tally stood at the figure of 1998 elections, i.e. 182 seats. The party maintained its status of being the largest political party since 1996. Not only the BJP has maintained its status of largest party but the numerical difference between seats won by the first ranking party (the BJP) and the second ranking party (the Congress) has widened over the period. It was of 21 seats in 1996 which rose to 41 seats in 1998 and 68 seats in 1999.

In this election, out of the total 182 victories for the party, 29 each were from Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, 23 from Bihar, 20 from Gujarat, 16 from Rajasthan, 13 from Maharashtra, 9 from Orissa, 7 each from Delhi, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, 5 from Haryana, 4 from Tamil Nadu, 3 from Himachal Pradesh, 2 each from Jammu & Kashmir, West Bengal, Assam and Goa and 1 each from Punjab and Andaman & Nicobar Islands (Table 1). The state-wise details are as follows:

In Uttar Pradesh there was a negative swing of 8.85 percent in the party vote and consequently at loss of as many as 28 seats in this election. The seats won by the party were basically from the Utrakkhand, Western and Poorvanchal regions of the state (Figure 2). The party was almost completely washed off from Rohilkhand, Bundelkhand, and central Uttar Pradesh.

The party also won the seat of the union territory of Andaman & Nicobar Islands by increasing its vote share from 35.53 percent (in 1998) to 52.7 percent in 1999. The party snatched this seat from the Congress.

The party had not won any seat in the states and union territories of Kerala, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, Sikkim, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu, Pondicherry and Lakshadweep.

The spatial patterns of the party victories in this election clearly highlights that majority of the seats won by the party were from six states (Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra). These states constitute about 71% of the total seats won by the party in this election. The seats won by the party were basically from Jammu region of Jammu & Kashmir; Himachal Pradesh; northern Punjab; Utrakkhand, Western and Poorvanchal regions of Uttar Pradesh, central and southern Bihar; Mahakoshal and Chhattisgarh regions of Madhya Pradesh; Gujarat (barring northern parts); eastern and central Rajasthan; northern and western Orissa; north and Marthawada regions of Maharashtra; and north and central Karnataka (Figure 2). In this election, the party won both seats of Goa for the first time. In this election, the party improved its tally basically in the states of Rajasthan (5 to 16), Maharashtra (4 to 13), Haryana (1 to 5), Andhra Pradesh (4 to 7), Bihar (20 to 23), Orissa (7 to 9), and Goa (0 to 2). The maximum losses for the party were recorded in the states of Uttar Pradesh (57 to 29), Karnataka (13 to 7) and Punjab (3 to 1).

The map showing the party victories clearly indicates that the party had won majority of seats (112 seats) from Hindi-Speaking States (Figure 2). This was despite the fact that in comparison to 1998 election the party had lost its 11 seats (123 seats in 1998) in these states. However, the party advanced in the Western States by winning 33 seats as compared to 23 seats in the 1998 election. The party performed well in the South Indian States and North-Eastern States with 18 seats and 2 seats, respectively.

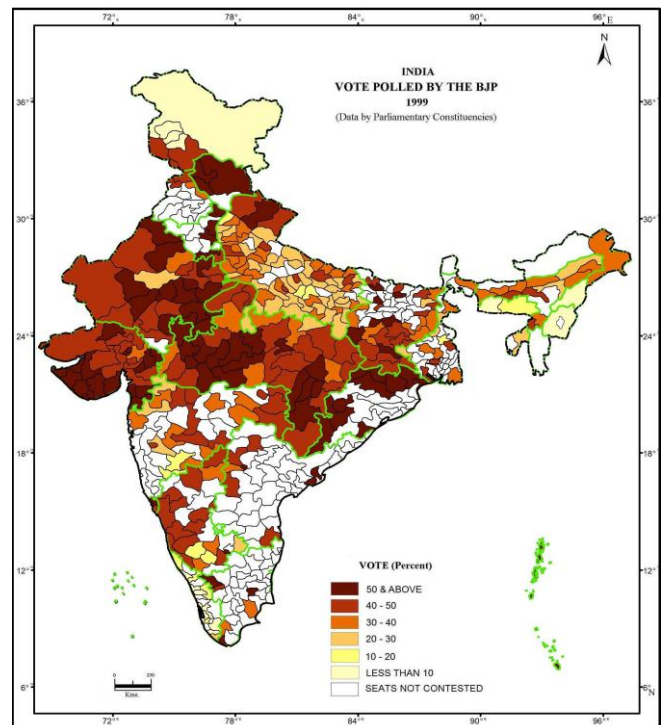


Fig 1

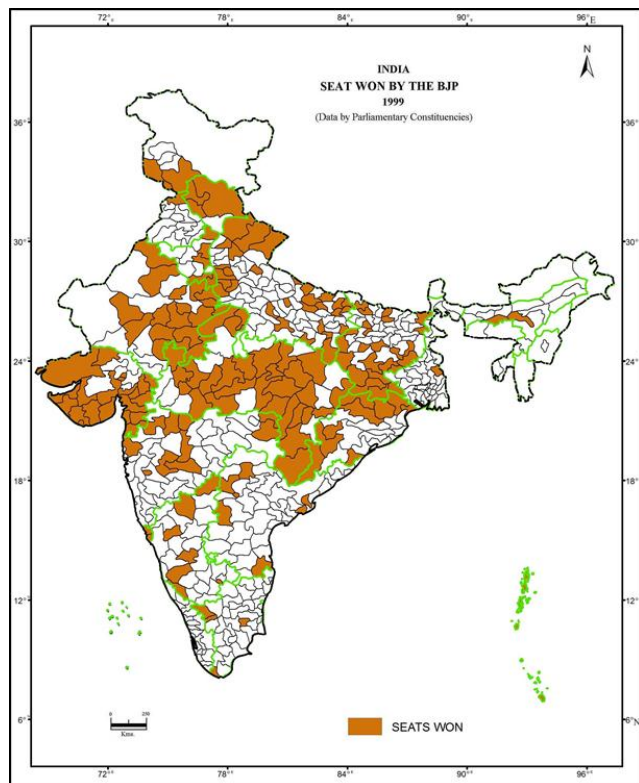


Fig 2

Conclusion

In this election also, in terms of seats won the BJP continues to be largest political party. Although it had won identical number of seats in 1999 to that of 1998 elections, but the gap between it and the seats won by the second ranking the Congress widened further. It was of 21 seats in 1996, 41 seats in 1998 and 68 seats in 1999. In terms of vote percentage, however, the gap between the parties had increased in favour of the Congress. This was basically due to less number of seats contested by the BJP in this election. The increase in the percentage average vote by the BJP from 36.26 percent in 1998 to 39.64 percent in 1999 indicates the consolidation of the party vote bank. In total, the BJP had polled 8,65,62,209 vote in 1999 (a loss of 77,03,979 vote from 1998). Despite attained a declining trend, the Hindi-Speaking States continues to be the main supporting region for the BJP. It contributed 55.43 percent to total vote bank of this election. Outside this region, the main supporting areas for the party were Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka. In terms of seats won also, the main contributor was the Hindi-Speaking region. The party won 112 seats (123 in 1998) from this region. Outside this region, the party further improved its position in Gujarat and Maharashtra. Its alliance in the case of Karnataka with JD (U) could not work well and the party was at a loss of 5 seats in this election. The biggest change for the party came in the state of Uttar Pradesh wherein the party was at a loss of 28 seats (57 to 29). This was due to shift of upper caste and Jat votes and also attributed to the strong case put forward by the BSP which had changed the whole arithmetic of electoral politics in the state. In overall terms, in this election, the BJP was confined to its traditional supporting areas with a certain loss in Uttar Pradesh. This could be

attributed from the fact that the party of the total 182 seats won, 179 were from those 331 constituencies contested by it in 1998 also.

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