



- Contrary to pollsters' predictions, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has managed to retain power in Haryana by increasing its seats from 40 to 48 & vote share from 36.5% to 39.9%, securing a third consecutive term.
- The Congress's vote share also accrued a whopping 11 points to register 39.1% but its seat tally increased marginally, by six, to 37.
- The two regional parties catering to the influential Jat community, the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) and Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) did poorly as their combined vote share fell from 21% in 2019 to 7% in 2024, aiding the Congress.
- But the BJP's astute social engineering, gaining support from non-Jat OBCs by propping up leaders from among them, besides its strengths in urban areas, helped it sail through.
- BJP had to two challenges to deal with — anti-incumbency & a resurgent Congress .
- While the farmer & wrestler-led agitations helped the Congress to do well in rural areas, it was not enough to break the BJP's social coalition there or dent the BJP's urban strongholds.
- The win also adds gloss to the BJP's central leadership that had taken some flak since the party's underwhelming performance in the 2024 general election.
- In Jammu & Kashmir , BJP increased its share by five points to 45% in Hindu-majority Jammu, helping it win in 29 seats and retain its seat shares in the region.
- The National Conference-Congress-led alliance (INDIA bloc) won in four seats reserved for Scheduled Tribes. In the Kashmir Valley, the INDIA bloc changed the script from a decade ago by winning 41 out of the 47 seats & reducing the PDP to three seats.
- The INDIA bloc's ability to compete in Jammu & dominate in Kashmir was enough for it to win a decisive majority of 49 seats, a number that should have been higher if not for rebel candidates winning in a few seats.
- The BJP's strategy of isolating the mainstream polity in Kashmir and to use delimitation to manufacture a majority were not successful as the electorate clearly favoured the strongest opposition to it, in the Valley in particular.
- Interestingly, the difference between the vote share of the BJP and the Congress is less than 1%.
- The BJP got 39.94% votes while the Congress secured 39.09% vote share.
- The Jannayak Janata Party (JJP), the former coalition partner of the BJP, which in 2019 sprung a

## CLASS NOTES HARYANA ELECTORAL ANALYSIS

- surprise by winning 10 seats, failed to open its electoral account in this election.
- The Indian National Lok Dal (INLD), which fought the election in alliance with the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), won only two seats.
- The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), was seeking a 'chance' to let it replicate the 'Delhi & Punjab model of governance', drew a blank.
- The ruling BJP fought the election focusing on its "effective fight against corruption and nepotism" & "ensuring transparency" during its governance while the Congress was harping upon the anti-incumbency factor against the BJP & attempted to corner the BJP on adopting policies that have been against all sections of society — be it farmers, workers, traders, youth, women, and government employees.
- The key issues raised by the Congress to target the BJP included — the danger to the Constitution, the Agnipath scheme, unemployment, price rise, sidelining of Scheduled Castes, OBCs, adopting anti-farmer stance and making policies to assist 'big corporates' and industrialists.
- In Haryana, where around 36 castes make its social mosaic .
- To reduce the impact of anti-incumbency, the BJP replaced party candidates in about two dozen seats, & the results/trends show that the party has won close to 15 seats, where candidates were dropped or replaced.
- The BJP focused its electoral politics surrounding the consolidation of non-Jats, primarily the backward class, which is about 35% of the State's population.
- Earlier this year, by replacing Manohar Lal Khattar with Nayab Singh Saini, an Other Backward Classes (OBC) leader, as Chief Minister, the BJP seemed determined to maintain an electoral hold over the OBCs and also attempted to negate the anti-incumbency factor, which seems to have worked in its favour.
- Besides, the party's outreach to Deprived castes has come in handy as it has successfully increased its tally in the Scheduled Caste (SC) reserved category seats.
- In Haryana, there are 17 reserved seats, and the BJP is ahead in seven, up with two seats compared to 2019 when it had five seats.
- The micro-management at the booth level by the BJP appeared to have made a difference.
- The party's effort with its cadre based leaders to successfully counter the Opposition's narrative

surrounding 'farmers, soldiers and wrestlers' to corner the BJP was handled aptly.

- Dharmendra Pradhan, the party's in-charge for Haryana elections, Satish Poonia, the party's State-in-charge, Mr. Khttar and incumbent Mr. Saini, held several rounds of meetings with Arun Kumar, who is the interface between the party and the cadre to implement the party's strategy on the ground.
- On the hand, the Congress failed to put up a united fight & yet again appears to have scummed to the party's State unit's 'internal factionalism', which the party repeatedly continues to deny.
- The division in the party among the camps of former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda & Lok Sabha MP Kumari Selja was evident and on public display in the run-up to the polls.
- The failure of the party's central leadership to address the critical factionalism issue has raised several questions.
- The Congress State unit has been running for the past 10 years without block and district committees, and the key reason behind it is the party's internal factionalism.
- Apart from this, the Congress was heavily relying on the consolidation of Jats (agrarian class), who are about 22% of the population, besides the Scheduled Caste community, 20% of the State's population, for victory. But with Scheduled caste votes getting divided, the party has suffered a dent.
- The Jannayak Janta Party (JJP), the former coalition partner of the BJP, faced a complete drubbing as it failed to open its account.
- JJP, which draws its support largely from the agrarian class, appears to have ended splitting its vote among the BJP, the Congress, and the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD).
- The INLD, once a reckoning force in Haryana's politics, yet again failed to deliver an impressive show as it was leading on merely two seats.
- The BJP translated its superior vote share compared to the Congress in urban areas (48.8% versus 27.7%) and semi-urban areas (46% versus 33.6%) into a substantial lead in seats (18 versus 5 overall).
- However, the Congress was unable to translate the vote share differences in rural areas (40.4% for Congress versus 36.4% for the BJP) and semi-rural areas (46.3% for Congress versus 37.8% for the BJP) into victories (only 32 versus 30 seats overall).
- Since Haryana is predominantly rural or semi-rural (65 out of the 90 seats amount to 72% of the vote share), a higher vote share for the Congress in these areas should have helped it win many more seats and the election itself. But this was not to be.
- In urban seats, the BJP won five seats with nearly 50% or more votes and the Congress just won one (Rohtak).
- Even in seats where the BJP won a lower vote share (Ambala Cantt: 44.9% and Ballabgarh: 42.2%), the Congress' performance was dismal (10.9% and 5.9% of the votes, respectively).
- In the semi-rural & rural seats, the Congress secured a high vote share in a number of seats and won. However, the BJP gave it good competition in a substantial number of seats as well. So, why did the Congress's overall higher vote share in semi-rural and rural seats not translate into a higher number of seats?
- The proportion of minority voters is among the highest in semi-rural seats such as Ferozepur Jhirka (70.4%), Nuh (63.9%), and Punahana (73.4%). Owing to the BJP's image as a party that endorses Hindutva, the minority voters in these seats strongly preferred the Congress.
- This earned the party substantial vote shares (72%, 59.3%, and 70.1%, respectively) and increased its overall vote share in semi-rural areas. However, the BJP's competitive performance in other rural/semi-rural areas — largely due to its emphasis on targeting the non-Jat Other Backward Classes votes; and the split in the Scheduled Caste votes — helped it win substantially and dented the Congress's margin.
- Congress alliance has significantly improved its vote share in rural areas compared with the 2019 polls. In districts with a high share of cultivators and agricultural workers, Congress has made notable gains in vote share compared to previous elections.
- However, these gains in rural areas and districts with a high proportion of agricultural workers & cultivators have come at the expense of other parties, such as the Jannayak Janta Party and the Indian National Lok Dal, which have lost a significant share of votes in these regions.
- In seats where cultivators & agricultural workers make up more than 65% of the total workforce, the Congress alliance has secured a 40.4% vote share in the 2024 Assembly polls, marking an 18 percentage point increase from the 2019 elections.
- In seats where the share of cultivators and agricultural workers is between 50-65%, the Congress alliance has gained 9 percentage points compared to the 2019 polls.
- However, in areas where the share of such workers is below 50%, the Congress alliance has only gained 4.5 percentage points.
- Congress has made most of its gains in farmer-intensive districts.
- In seats which are not farmer-intensive, it has not made significant inroads.
- In rural areas, the Congress alliance secured a 40.4% vote share in the 2024 polls, marking a 14.7 percentage point increase from the 2019 elections.
- In semi-rural areas, it has also increased its vote share by 12.7 percentage points.

- A broad alignment of non-Jat communities against Jat dominance was successfully developed & exploited by BJP.
  - Incumbent Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, who is set for a second term, became the face of the BJP's mobilisation of Other Backward Classes.
  - The BJP's strategy of offering political space for marginalised Hindu communities is one that is working well for it.
  - Jats possibly united against the BJP, as the eclipse of the INLD & JJP suggest, but that worked in the BJP's favour by aiding the counter-mobilisation of disparate groups.
  - The Haryana poll outcome also helps Prime Minister Narendra Modi reinforce his authority over the party.
  - The Congress failed to inspire confidence among a wider spectrum of society as former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda and his son Deepinder dominated the campaign.
  - Their own Jat community rallied behind the party which possibly caused a counter consolidation of the rest.
  - The Hoodas have so controlled the Congress in Haryana that the party organisation is either non-existent or ineffective. They stalled the central leadership's efforts to form political alliances.
  - The Congress's Haryana setback follows the pattern of the Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh elections that it lost in 2023 — regional leaders who refused to accommodate party colleagues & broaden the social base which failed the party.
  - The party is struggling to find a balance between having a robust regional leadership and ensuring that its national outlook is not undermined.
  - Senior leader Rahul Gandhi could not enforce his social justice agenda in the party's Haryana strategy. Scheduled Caste party leaders were humiliated, opening space for others.
  - The data shows that this election is much closer than the 2019 polls. Based on the latest data, in at least four seats, the margin between the runner-up and the leader is less than 1,000 votes.
  - At the 100% vote-count mark, Uchana Kalan, Loharu, Rohtak, and Dabwali are the four seats where the win margin is below 1,000 votes.
  - In 14 seats, the margin of lead/win ranges between 1,000 and 5,000 votes, while in 13 seats, it is between 5,000 and 10,000 votes.
  - In the 2024 elections, 30 out of the 90 seats in which the BJP and the Congress are leading/winning have a lead/win margin of less than 10,000 votes.
  - In 24 seats, the win/lead margin was less than 5%.
  - The JJP alliance's vote share dropped dramatically from 14.8% in 2019 to just 1% in 2024, while the INLD alliance saw a slight decrease from 6.6% to 6%.
  - This combined drop in vote share, from over 21% to 7%, was largely captured by the Congress, with the BJP also benefiting slightly.
  - The Congress gained the most, increasing its vote share by over 11 percentage points to 39.3% in the State.
  - The BJP also saw a modest gain, raising its vote share by over 3 percentage points to about 40%.
  - As a result of the decline in the State parties' fortunes, Haryana's political landscape has become more bipolar, with only the two national parties—Congress and BJP—emerging as serious contenders in most constituencies.
  - An analysis of vote shares using the Laakso & Taagepera method shows how many parties were effectively in the race in each constituency.
  - In the 2024 Haryana elections, out of 90 seats, 3 were uncompetitive, meaning only one effective party was in the race in these constituencies.
  - In more than 67 seats, the contests were bipolar, with the BJP and Congress being the only effective contenders.
  - There were triangular contests in 15 seats, while only 4 seats saw four-cornered contests.
- RURAL - URBAN DIVIDE
- As the crow flies to the west of Delhi and towards Punjab, there is a visible distribution of economy and society along the varying geography of the State.
  - Urban regions of Gurugram and Faridabad in the south and Ambala, Panipat and Kurukshetra in the north have more industries and are dominated by businessmen, traders and middle-class voters who are occupationally linked to the non-farm sectors.
  - The agrarian belt in the south-central area, from Rewari, Bhiwani, Jhajjar, Jind with a primarily rural population and some peri-urban population in Rohtak, Sonapat, Hisar are places where voters are closely linked to the farming sector. This region is also home to a significant Jat population, often described as the Jat belt of Haryana.
  - Speaking to Jat farmers in the villages of Uchana Kalan, three major issues shaping the electoral discourse for this campaign. These were: *Kisan* (the farmers' protest & the contentious farm bills, which were later rescinded by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government), *Jawan* (the Agniveer scheme launched by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in New Delhi), and *Pehehwan* (the wrestlers' protest against the alleged sexual harassment by BJP politician and former chief of the wrestling federation).
  - In some villages, a few disgruntled young men also add a fourth dimension to this discourse by bringing up the issue of rising unemployment.
  - In the industrial regions and among businessmen, traders as well as among many service-based communities within the Other Backward Classes

(OBCs), one can easily find support for the BJP, which ranges on multiple persuasions, from Prime Minister Modi's strongman image to the BJP's emphasis on nationalism and patriotism.

- However, even within this support base, there is no visible enthusiasm for any State-level leadership within the BJP.
- According to election commission, 67.90% voting took place on October 5 for the 15th Assembly General Election-2024 in the State.
- Former Haryana Finance Minister Ajay Yadav said inadequate representation to different castes in Congress, unlike the Bharatiya Janata Party, was one of the reasons for the former's defeat in the recently concluded Assembly elections.
- Mr. Yadav said Other Backward Classes (OBC) leaders in the BJP like Rao Inderjit Singh, Bhupender Yadav and Krishan Pal Gurjar are Ministers at the Centre and Chief Minister Nayab Saini is also an OBC.
- The practice of switching party loyalties and becoming a turncoat is a fixed feature of the Indian political experiment. Haryana both follows the trend and is the trend-setter: the phrase "*Aaya Ram, Gaya Ram*" originated following the first legislative assembly elections in newly-created Haryana, in 1967, when then Hasanpur MLA Gaya Lal switched parties three times in a span of 15 days.

#### SOCIAL JUSTICE AS A POLITICAL NARRATIVE

- Equity-based social justice, which emerged as a powerful counter narrative in the recent Lok Sabha election, has clearly shaped the discourse of electoral politics in Haryana.
- A significant majority of voters in the State do not subscribe to the old, conventional, and almost outdated social justice debates of the 1990s.
- Instead, there is a lot of emphasis on fairness, impartiality, and need-based affirmative action policies for the most marginalised social groups in the State.
- The CSDS-Lokniti survey identifies three clear reflections of this emerging socio-political configuration
- First, there is an overwhelming assertion in favour of need-based reservation
- More than three-fourths (76%) of respondents claimed that reservation should be given to the most backward communities.
- This finding underlines a silent yet growing feeling among the major social groups, including the SCs, that the scope of the reservation should be expanded to address the multifaceted forms of exclusion.
- Second major finding is crucial to substantiate that Haryana voters favour a need-based reservation framework – Most respondents (56%) supported the idea of conducting a caste census in the State.

- The third and perhaps most debatable issue in contemporary Haryana politics — the Jat reservation.
- A significant section of Haryana voters (45%) supports the claim that Jats should be recognised as OBCs in Haryana for affirmative action.
- Interestingly, one finds an equally powerful rejection of this demand by around four of every 10 (39%) respondents (which also includes 19% Jat respondents, who opposed the demand of reservation).

#### LEADERSHIP ROLE

- The leadership factor played an important peripheral role. The most preferred chief ministerial candidates were the leading faces of the two parties.
- Incumbent Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini from the BJP was marginally ahead of former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda from the Congress as the preferred choice of Chief Minister.
- The Narendra Modi factor had some salience in propelling support for the BJP.
- A similar trend was not seen in the case of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi.
- The incumbent Chief Minister had been in power for just over six months. Yet, when asked to rate the Saini government against the previous Manohar Lal Khattar government, there was higher appreciation (by 10 points) for the work done by Mr. Saini than for Mr. Khattar.
- When asked which party was better for farmers' welfare and development, the respondents gave a higher score to the BJP than the Congress. However, when the responses were filtered to focus on farmers, they believed that the Congress was better at safeguarding their interests.
- The beneficiaries of welfare schemes for farmers largely voted for the BJP; the Congress was only able to garner significant support among those who were non-beneficiaries.
- The BJP did better than the Congress in securing the support of women. Importantly, half of those who felt that the safety of women had improved in Haryana in the last five years voted for the BJP.
- The Congress tried to consolidate the Jat vote in its favour. While it did secure a majority of the Jat vote, there were two corollary developments.
- The Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) was able to garner a chunk of the Jat vote too, thus splitting the vote that the Congress was hoping to fully consolidate.
- More importantly, the attempt at Jat consolidation led to a stronger non-Jat consolidation behind the BJP.
- The BJP strengthened its base among the Brahmins, Punjabi Khatri, Yadavs, and non-Jatav Scheduled Castes. This new rainbow coalition was able to work to the party's advantage.

- As the BJP is also in power at the Centre, the Haryana government has been able to function without any interference from the Union government.
- It has had an assured flow of fund for running welfare schemes and developmental projects for improving educational and health infrastructure and for creating new job opportunities, especially for the educated youth.
- Where did the incumbent government perform relatively well and where did it fall short? For a majority of the respondents (60%), the supply of electricity improved over the past five years. Over half the voters also reported that road conditions had improved under the incumbent government
- However, only four out of 10 respondents said the quality of healthcare in government-run hospitals had improved.
- Very few of respondents felt that the quality of education in government schools had improved.
- Only one in three respondents (31%) believed that irrigation facilities had improved over the past five years. Worse, nearly two in five respondents (39%) held the view that recruitment for government jobs had not been taking place regularly.

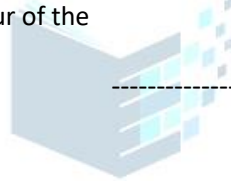
#### THE PARTY FACTOR

- About six of every 10 respondents in the Lokniti-CSDS survey indicated that the party was the most critical factor in deciding who to vote for.
- Incumbent BJP Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini was mentioned by one-third (33%) of the respondents, while two-time Congress Chief Minister Bhupinder Hooda was close behind.
- The support for the top two names was clearly on party lines.
- The survey also tapped the impact of the Central leaders of the two major parties.
- More than two-thirds of the BJP voters said that even without Narendra Modi's leadership, they would have voted for the BJP.
- The Congress successfully mobilised a significant number of Jatav votes, a community to which Congress leader Kumari Selja belongs, along with support from the Gujjar community, Muslims, and Sikhs, who constitute 7% and 4% of total voters, respectively
- The mobilisation of Jats and OBCs in favour of the Congress and the BJP can be attributed to organised community meetings held prior to the election.
- This divided support for the Congress and the BJP stems from voters' perceptions of how effectively the BJP addressed the interests of their caste communities.
- Survey findings clearly indicate that a significant number of Jats believed their community's interests had been neglected — a sentiment that is understandable given the BJP selected both its Chief Ministers over the past 10 years from non-Jat

communities in a State where Jats have historically played a dominant role in politics.

- One notices that there was a limit to the Jat consolidation by the Congress as the regional players as well as the BJP garnered a substantive chunk of Jat votes.
- The Congress's success in mobilising Jats, Jatavs, and minority communities had its limits. The BJP's appeal to non-Jat upper castes and OBC voters highlights the fractured nature of caste politics in Haryana
- Unemployment emerged as the top concern for voters, with two in five citing it as the most important issue.
- This is not surprising given Haryana's staggering unemployment rate of 37.4% in 2022, which was not only the highest in India but also 4.5 times higher than the national average.
- The hiring of contractual workers, repeated instances of paper leaks, and delay in job placements have only worsened the situation.
- Adding to this quandary are the rising prices of essential commodities, identified by one in seven voters as a key electoral issue.
- Corruption also surfaced as a significant electoral issue, cited by 5% of voters. Beyond these concerns, local issues strongly resonated with the electorate — especially the needs of *Jawan*, *Kisan* and *Pehelwan*. In particular, about 5% cited farmers' issues (*Kisan*) and 4% the Agnipath scheme (*Jawan*)
- To regain voter support after two consecutive terms, the BJP announced several attractive welfare policies just before the election, such as ₹2,000 per month for women, 300 units of free electricity, and promises of two lakh government jobs.
- These announcements were made in quick succession, signalling the party's intention to cater to rural voters, who often view welfare schemes as crucial for their livelihood.
- A CSDS-Lokniti survey in Haryana highlights a significant trend among voters, showing a clear preference for parties that prioritise welfare schemes and development work over those that focus on representing specific caste communities.
- This trend is even more pronounced among rural voters, where nearly three in every four (72%) expressed a preference for candidates focusing on welfare schemes, while less than one in every four (23%) favoured caste representation.
- In urban areas, while a majority still support welfare-focused candidates (60%), there is a slightly higher inclination toward caste-based voting (33%) compared with rural areas.
- This pattern suggests that welfare politics strongly influences voter behaviour, particularly in rural areas, where development initiatives resonate more with voters than traditional caste loyalties.

- The survey shows that Union government schemes have had a broader reach compared with those of the State, with more beneficiaries overall.
- However, aside from Ayushman Bharat (48%) and Ujjwala Yojana (36%), the percentage of people benefiting from other schemes remains relatively low, with approximately one in five voters reporting they received benefits .
- In fact, just before the election, the government announced that 46 lakh families with an annual income of less than ₹1.80 lakh, who are beneficiaries under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, would receive gas cylinders for ₹500.
- The State government also launched a housing scheme for the urban poor, the Haryana Mukhyamantri Shahari Awas Yojana, which benefited 20% of the urban voters.
- However, other State schemes, such as Saksham Yuva Yojana, which focuses on youth employment, showed lower outreach, with only 16% of the population benefiting from it.
- Among the beneficiaries of Ayushman Bharat Yojana and Ujjwala Yojana, the BJP maintained a slight lead over the Congress.
- This suggests that, even though a large portion of the population benefited from these schemes, it did not translate into a decisive vote in favour of the BJP.
- For another Union government scheme, the Prime Minister Awas Yojana, the BJP fared better among its beneficiaries.
- However, the beneficiaries of State government schemes strongly preferred the BJP over the Congress. The non-beneficiaries, strongly favoured Congress
- The BJP government also launched the Parivar Pehchan Patra (PPP) scheme, which aimed at streamlining access to government services by creating a unique family identity for households.
- A remarkable three-fourths (72%) of voters, or their family members, are registered under the PPP scheme.
- The data suggest that over three-fifths of them believe the PPP has made access to government services easier (combining “very” and “somewhat”)
- Among those who felt the scheme greatly improved access, more than half (53%) voted for the BJP, indicating that voters who directly benefited from smoother access were more likely to support the party.
- In conclusion, welfare schemes, especially those launched by the State government, contributed to the BJP’s electoral gains.
- The ease of access to these schemes through the PPP played a significant role.



New Vision IAS Academy  
 ...wings to aspirations