

Areas of Strength of the BJP in Indian Parliamentary Elections (1989-1991)

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Abstract

The paper analyses the trends and patterns of margin of victory for the BJP in Indian parliamentary elections (1989-1991) which examines the geographical spread of the party. The constituency-wise analysis of the margin of victory for the BJP reveals that the main area of Strength of the party was North India in general and Hindi Speaking States in particular. Outside this region, the state of Gujarat has emerged the key state for the party. The party performed appreciably well in the states of Maharashtra and Karnataka.

Introduction

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is the most significant one in the contemporary political prospect of the Hindu nationalism¹. As the time passes away, this party has turn into one of the most important political parties in the country, challenging the Indian National Congress which sustain a form of secular nationalism and held affect over the Indian politics for a long period. The argument over the twofold membership of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh² members as members of the party and that of the R.S.S. (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) in the Janata regime was the deciding aspect behind the establishment of BJP as a self-regulating party. With its new embodiment as Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)³ from Bharatiya Jana Sangh, entered into the mainstream of Indian politics. Taking the whole length of period (1989 to 1991), it would not be wrong to say that its electoral gains were highly significant for this national party.

Methodology

The detailed constituency level analysis of margin of victory for the BJP has been carried out for two parliamentary elections, 1989 and 1991. The spatial patterns of margin of victory of the party are examined at the unit of parliamentary constituency

with the help of tables and maps for the selected parliamentary elections. Wherever required such patterns are also examined at the unit of state and region for testing the regional character of the party. Among the cartographic techniques, choropleth method is used to show the patterns of margin of victory. Bar diagram and line graph are also used to show the trends in margin of victory for the party.

For all the elections under study, the source of data remained the election reports as published by the Election Commission of India.

Margin of Victory of the BJP in 1989

The analysis of the data on margin of the victory of the party indicates that of the total 85 victories the party had in 1989 election, in as many as 63 constituencies the victories was with more than 10 percent margin. The party had won 28 seats with a margin of 20 percent and more (Table 1). The patterns of margin of victory indicate that the party performed extremely well in eastern Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, central and Kutch region of Gujarat. The party won seats with less than 5 percent margin in Chhattisgarh and Vindhya Pradesh of Madhya Pradesh, and Poorvanchal region of Uttar Pradesh. This can be inference from the analysis that the party was extremely popular in eastern Rajasthan, Madhya Bharat, and central and Kutch region of Gujarat (Figure 1).

Table 1: Margin of victory by the BJP, 1989 Parliamentary Elections

Sr. No.	State/U.T.	Percent Margin of Victory and no. of constituencies					
		Below 5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-25	25&Above
1	Jammu & Kashmir	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	Himachal Pradesh	-	2	1	-	-	-
3	Punjab	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	Chandigarh	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	Haryana	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	Delhi	1	-	2	-	1	-
7	Uttar Pradesh	3	-	1	3	1	-
8	Madhya Pradesh	3	2	7	8	4	3
9	Bihar	3	1	1	1	-	2
10	Orissa	-	-	-	-	-	-
11	West Bengal	-	-	-	-	-	-
12	Sikkim	-	-	-	-	-	-
13	Arunachal Pradesh	-	-	-	-	-	-
14	Assam	-	-	-	-	-	-
15	Meghalaya	-	-	-	-	-	-
16	Nagaland	-	-	-	-	-	-
17	Manipur	-	-	-	-	-	-
18	Mizoram	-	-	-	-	-	-

19	Tripura	-	-	-	-	-	-
20	Rajasthan	1	1	2	2	3	4
21	Gujarat	-	-	2	1	2	7
22	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	-	-	-	-	-	-
23	Maharashtra	2	3	4		1	
24	Goa	-	-	-	-	-	-
25	Daman & Diu	-	-	-	-	-	-
26	Karnataka	-	-	-	-	-	-
27	Andhra Pradesh	-	-	-	-	-	-
28	Kerala	-	-	-	-	-	-
29	Tamil Nadu	-	-	-	-	-	-
30	Pondicherry	-	-	-	-	-	-
31	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	-	-	-	-	-	-
32	Pondicherry	-	-	-	-	-	-
	ALL INDIA	13	9	20	15	12	16

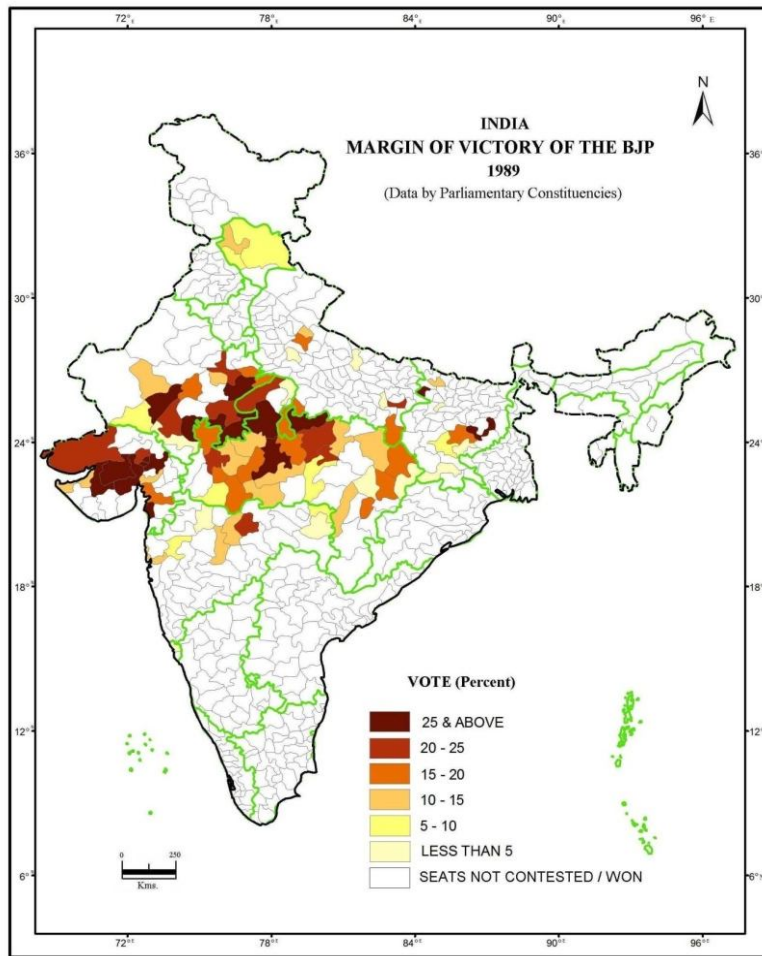


Figure 1

Margin of Victory of the BJP in 1991

The analysis of the margin of victory for the BJP in 1991⁴ parliamentary elections clearly indicates that out of the total 120 victories, there were 37 constituencies where the margin of victory for the party was below 5 percent. In the 29 constituencies the margin of victory was between 5 to 10 percent, in 20 constituencies the margin of victory was between 10 to 15 percent. There were 17 constituencies, where the margin of victory for the party was between 15 to 20 percent. There were 12 constituencies in the category of 20 to 25 percent and 5 in the category of 25 percent & above (Table 2).

Table 2: Margin of victory of the BJP, 1991 Parliamentary Elections

Sr. No.	State/U.T.	Percent Margin of Victory and no. of constituencies					
		Below 5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-25	25&Above
1	Jammu & Kashmir	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	Himachal Pradesh	2	-	-	-	-	-
3	Punjab	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	Chandigarh	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	Haryana	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	Delhi	3	1	1	-	-	-
7	Uttar Pradesh	15	16	6	10	2	2
8	Madhya Pradesh	4	1	3	3	1	-
9	Bihar	-	1	3	-	-	1
10	Orissa	-	-	-	-	-	-
11	West Bengal	-	-	-	-	-	-
12	Sikkim	-	-	-	-	-	-
13	Arunachal Pradesh	-	-	-	-	-	-
14	Assam	1	1	-	-	-	-
15	Meghalaya	-	-	-	-	-	-
16	Nagaland	-	-	-	-	-	-
17	Manipur	-	-	-	-	-	-
18	Mizoram	-	-	-	-	-	-
19	Tripura	-	-	-	-	-	-
20	Rajasthan	5	2	1	-	4	-
21	Gujarat	3	3	5	3	5	1
22	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	-	-	-	-	-	-
23	Maharashtra	2	2	1	-	-	-
24	Goa	-	-	-	-	-	-
25	Daman & Diu	-	1	-	-	-	-
26	Karnataka	2	1	-	-	-	1
27	Andhra Pradesh	-	-	-	1	-	-
28	Kerala	-	-	-	-	-	-
29	Tamil Nadu	-	-	-	-	-	-

30	Pondicherry	-	-	-	-	-	-
31	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	-	-	-	-	-	-
32	Pondicherry	-	-	-	-	-	-
	ALL INDIA	37	29	20	17	12	5

The constituency-wise analysis of the margin of victory for the party shows that of the total 37 victories, where the margin for the party was below 5 percent maximum were from north-central and southern Uttar Pradesh (15), central and south eastern Rajasthan (5), north-central Madhya Pradesh (4), Delhi (3) and central Gujarat (3).

Of 29 constituencies, where the party's margin of victory was between 5 to 10 percent majority were from north-western and eastern Uttar Pradesh (16), besides, 3 from Gujarat, 2 each from Rajasthan and Maharashtra, and one each from Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Assam, Daman & Diu and Karnataka (Figure 2).

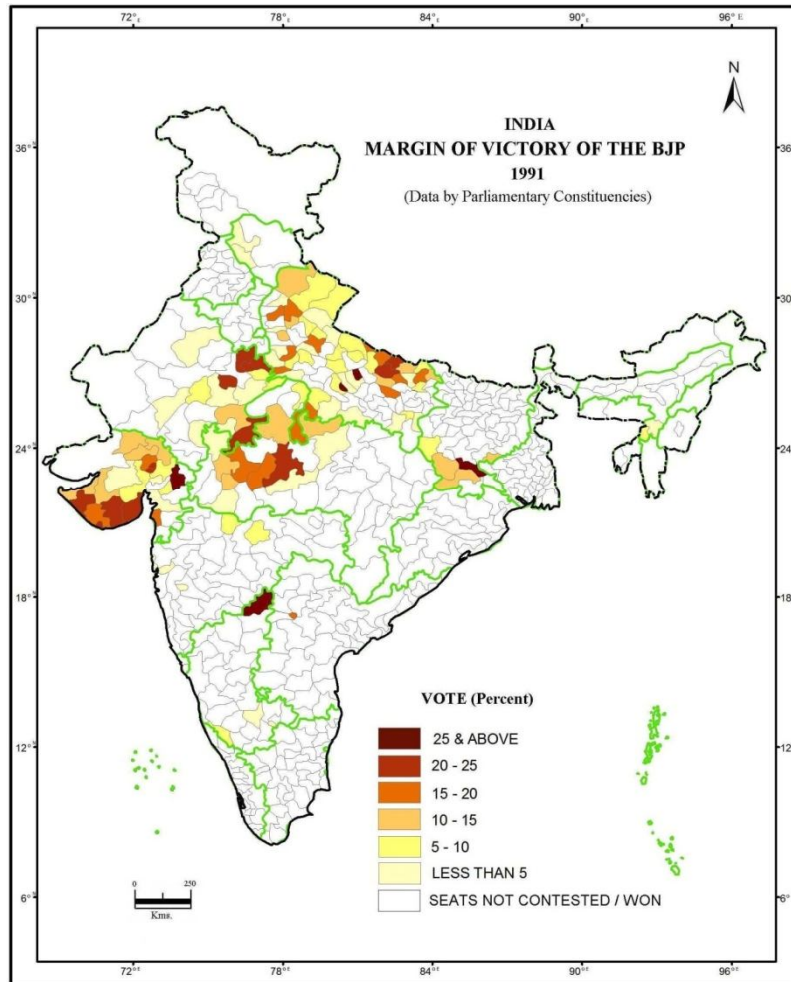


Figure 2

Similarly, Out of the 20 constituencies, where the party's margin of victory was between 10 to 15 percent, 6 were from Uttar Pradesh, 5 from Gujarat, 3 each from Madhya Pradesh and Bihar, one each from Delhi, Rajasthan and Maharashtra. Out of the 17 constituencies, where the margin of victory for the party was between 15 to 20 percent, 10 were from Uttar Pradesh, 3 each from Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat and one from Andhra Pradesh.

Of 12 constituencies where the margin of victory for the party was 20 to 25, 5 were from Gujarat, 4 from Rajasthan, 2 from Uttar Pradesh and one from Madhya Pradesh. Of the 5 constituencies which belonged to the category of 25 percent & above, 2 were from Uttar Pradesh and one each from Bihar, Gujarat and Karnataka.

The overall conclusion from the map showing the pattern of the margin of victory for the party in the 1991 election is that the constituencies won by the party with good margin were basically restricted to the central and western parts of the country (Figure 2).

Trends and Pattern of Margin of Victory

Winning seats with a margin of five percent and above, and maintaining the same in space and time framework is a good indicator of measuring and mapping the strong areas of the party.

The analysis of the margin of victory of the party in 1989 elections shows that in total there were 72 constituencies where the margin was 5 percent and above. Out of these, maximum were from Madhya Pradesh (24), Rajasthan (12), Gujarat (12), and Maharashtra (8). In the 1991 election, the number of seats was 72 (a gain of 11 seats) where the party's candidates won with 5 percent and above. Majority of the constituencies were from Uttar Pradesh (36), Gujarat (17), Madhya Pradesh (8), Rajasthan (7), and Bihar (5).

The regional distribution of the margin of victory of the party clearly indicates that majority of the constituencies where the party has registered 5 percent and above margin of victory was from the Hindi-Speaking States (Fig. 3). The share of this region was 72.22 percent in 1989 elections, while in 1991; it was 69.87 percent (a slight decrease of 2.35 percent). Outside this region, the Western India has emerged as states of the party as this region contributes more than 25 percent in both the elections (27.77 percent in 1989 and 25.3 percent in 1991). The Southern States also has registered their presence.

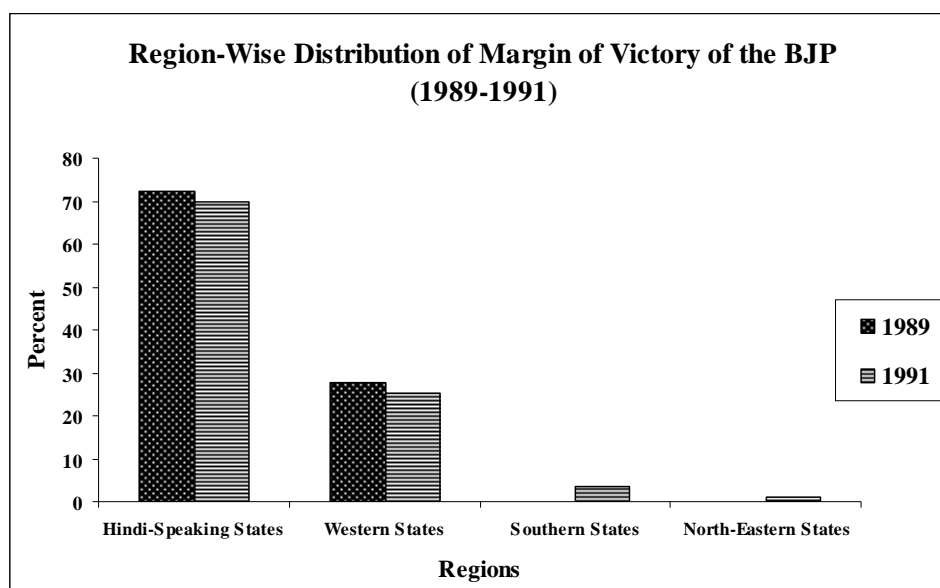


Figure 3

Consistency in Margin of Victory

In total there were 129 constituencies where the margin of victory for the party was five percent or above. This includes 26 constituencies where this level of margin is maintained for the party in both elections (Table 3). The pattern of 26 constituencies indicates that these constituencies are from Madhya Pradesh (7), Gujarat (8), Bihar (6), Rajasthan (5), Uttar Pradesh (3), Maharashtra (2), and Delhi (1) (Fig. 4). The regional character of the margin of victory of the party clearly shows that the Hindi-Speaking States with 61.53 percent has emerged as the stronghold of the party. Besides this, the party registered its presence in the Western States as this region shared 38.46 percent of seats where the party's margin of victory was 5 percent and above.

Table 3: Consistency in Margin of Victory (1989-1991)

States	Margin 5 percent & Above
Delhi	1
Uttar Pradesh	3
Rajasthan	5
Madhya Pradesh	7
Gujarat	8
Maharashtra	2
Total	26

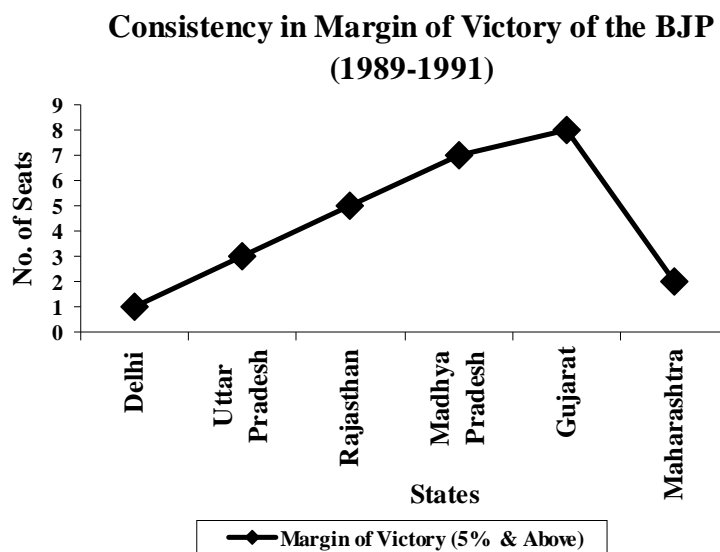


Figure 4

Runner-up Candidates

The spatial analysis of the BJP candidates as runner-up candidates is also important in making an overall assessment about the party's areas of strength. In 1984 when the party could win only two seats, there were 102 seats where its candidates were runner-up. Of these 97 were from North India (75 from Hindi Speaking States) and the remaining 5 from South India. In those elections in which the party was able to win more seats, the number of runner-up candidates was found to be less.

This is natural also as the area of influence of the party is regionalized and whenever the number of seats won increases the number of runner-up candidates decreases. The number of runner-up candidates was maximum in 1991 (i.e. 128) when the party had experienced a gain of 35 seats from 1989 elections. Majority of the runner-up candidates for the party were from North India and more specifically the Hindi-Speaking States (86).

The state wise analysis of runner-up candidates reveals that in addition to the Hindi Speaking States and Western India (25 candidates), the party is giving stiff competition in the state of Karnataka (with 14 runner-up candidates).

Conclusion

In nutshell this can be summarized that by all means undertaken for analyzing the electoral performance of the BJP in terms of margin of victory, it was found that the party's core area of strength was the Hindi-Speaking heartland. From this region, the core states for the party were Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar (Jharkhand area) and Delhi.

The study, however, has also revealed that the party certainly has extended its support base beyond the Hindi Speaking States. Outside the Hindi Speaking States, the party has emerged as a strong electoral force in the states of Gujarat and Karnataka. In certain states its performance largely depends on the working of its alliance with regional parties' viz. Maharashtra, and Punjab.

References

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