



## **Electoral performance of the Bharatiya Janata Party: 2004 parliamentary election**

**Kiran Bala**

Department of Geography, Kishan Lal Public College, Rewari, Haryana, India

### **Abstract**

The 2004 Lok Sabha election was held much before the term of Atal Bihari Vajpayee expired because of the mounting pressures from the coalition partners. This was first election of its kind in terms of “a contest at the national level between two serious coalitions, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and the United Progressive Alliance (UPA). In this election, the BJP was reduced to second position from its position of single largest party in 1999 election. The present work has been carried out on the electoral performance of the BJP in the 2004 Lok Sabha elections 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 losses.

**Keywords:** lok sabha election, national democratic alliance (NDA), united progressive alliance (UPA)

### **Introduction**

The General elections 2004 was held much before the term of Atal Bihari Vajpayee expired. It was reported that Vajpayee was not in favour of an early poll but the mounting pressures from the coalition partners forced him to do so. The main reason behind forcing Vajpayee for an early election was the BJP's victory in Gujarat. The assembly elections were held in Gujarat after the infamous Godhra carnage and gave thumping majority to the BJP. The party had won 126 (out of the total 181) seats and polled nearly 50 percent vote. The Congress on the other hand, had won only 51 seats. This victory gave a lot of confidence to several of the partners in the ruling coalition of the certainty of the return to power by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). The NDA went to the polls on “the basis of economic growth that they labeled ‘India Shining’. Thus the economy and governance became issues” (Roy, R. and Wallace, P., (eds.) 2007) <sup>[1]</sup> for the elections. Such issues were unusual in the Indian Democracy where elections are basically contested on the lines of caste, tribe, language, religion, personality etc. The Congress and its partners targeted the “India Shining” factor with “emphasis on attacking poverty”.

This election was also first of its kind in terms of “a contest at the national level between two serious coalitions, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and the United Progressive Alliance (UPA), though the latter was named only after the elections” (Sridharan, E., 2004) <sup>[4]</sup>. In the words of Jayal, the election of 2004 was an election of many firsts: “it was the first Lok Sabha election of the twenty-first century; it was the first election in which political communication came to be conducted in the corporate vocabulary of image-making, branding and marketing; it was the first election after the first ever non-Congress government completed a full term in office; and it was the first election after which the elected leader of the single largest party declined the prime ministership and nominated another. It was also arguably the

first general election in which the minority vote was assiduously courted by a party whose very identity was since the early 1990s, defined by its hostility to minorities” (Jayal, Niraja Gopal, 2004) <sup>[5]</sup>.

The General Elections of May 2004 was more or less the same as that of 1996, 1998 and 1999 elections, which saw coalition politics and large scale defections in action. The Congress, which secured just 145 seats in comparison to BJP's 138 seats, was able to form the Government with the support of the regional parties and the left. In this election, the BJP was reduced to second position (by winning 138 seats from 364 seats it had contested) from its position of single largest party (182 seats from 339 seats contested) in 1999 election.

Sheth was of the view that although 2004 election results removed the BJP-led ruling coalition from the power and gave the Congress-led UPA a mandate to govern, it falls in the category of “normal elections”. The reason being that “the election verdict did not indicate any spectacular movement of voters from the previous election of 1999, “either between the two contending parties (the Congress and the BJP) or the coalitions (NDA and UPA) and produce a clear majority for the winning coalition of the kind it did in 1999 for the NDA” (Sheth, D. L., 2005) <sup>[2]</sup>. The popular vote of the Congress party was just 26.53 percent, while it was 22.16 percent in the case of the BJP, i.e., 4.37 percent less than that of the Congress. The average vote share of the Congress and the BJP indicates that whereas, in the case of the Congress it improved only marginally by 1.3 percentage points, it showed a marked decline of 5.12 percentage points in the case of the BJP.

The BJP was self-assured of its victory at the 2004 Lok Sabha polls. But its electoral performance was much below than what was expected. On the top of this, its key alliance partners (TDP in Andhra Pradesh, AITC in West Bengal), barring a few (BJD in Orissa, SAD in Punjab), did worse. Some of its heavyweight candidates were defeated. Important among them were: Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, Yashwant Sinha and Saheb

Singh Verma. The BJP's defeat can also be attributed to the fact that "it dropped its 1999 allies and decided to go alone in states like Haryana and Jharkhand and changed allies in Tamil Nadu. Despite its proven skills in coalition making, it seems the BJP had a secret desire to set itself on the course of winning an electoral majority for itself. The result was that both the BJP and its allies went down, each losing a substantial number of seats; the BJP lost 44 and its allies as many as 67 seats" (Sheth, D. L., 2005) [2]. On the other hand, the Congress registered a gain of 31 seats to its 114 seats in the preceding election. The outcomes of 2004 elections have also produced a stabilizing effect for the new multiparty system that emerged in the wake of the 1989 election.

It seemed that the India shining campaign was in large measure conceived to counteract the possible consequences of Gujarat on the elections. In fact, there were voters who liked Hindutva as an inclusive cultural national ideology until they encountered its exclusionary politics of violence in the Gujarat massacres. This change in thinking about the party had led to shifts which "though even small in size, became critical, producing a fairly coherent action on the part of the BJP's own voters. Those supporters of 1999 who found it difficult to accept the fact that their own party had violated the limits (*maryada*) of Hindutva politics in Gujarat - belonging mostly to the dalits, tribals and lower OBCs who were attracted to the Hindutva party as they saw in its politics the possibility of their upward economic and social mobility-deserted the party in 2004" (Sheth, D. L., 2005) [2].

A close look at the 2004 survey data reveals that "the marginal loss of support for the BJP allies, and the consequent loss of power, was mainly due to two types of voters deserting the BJP: (a) the dalits, tribals and the lower OBCs who felt that they did not belong to the BJP's newly formed exclusive 'feel good club of India'. Its formation instantly sent a message to the vast number of these supporters of the NDA that they were not entitled to the new, transcendent identity that the club membership projected; (b) a significant section of BJP's conventional middle class supporters who endorsed the party's economic policies also turned away because they felt that the majoritarian politics of hate and reforms do not go well together. These included significant section of urban, upper caste Hindu voters as well most upper class members of minority communities who had supported the BJP and its allies in 1999" (Sheth, D. L., 2005) [2].

The party's election slogan 'India Shining' was supposed to be like a *mantra* that could bring success for it. This mantra was supported by a number of issues as 'National Disinvestment', success in Kargil war etc. Such issues failed to work for the party as they were quiet peripheral to the basic needs of the common man. "The persistence of drought conditions in many parts of the country, the mounting rate of suicides among the farmers, an increasing army of the unemployed, the pursuit of policies that reduced the livelihood of ordinary people—all these factors took away the shine and luster from the slogans 'India Shining' and 'Feel Good'" (Roy, R. and Wallace, P., (eds.) 2007) [1]. The survey data also revealed that "a large number of 1999 BJP voters (14.1%) just did not turn up to vote for the party they had supported earlier and another 19% turned out to vote against the BJP" (Sheth,

D. L., 2005) [2]. It was also noted that by "dropping allies in Jharkhand, Haryana and some other states and by changing allies in Tamil Nadu, the BJP lost about 26 seats" (Frontline, 7 May 2004).

The 2004 general elections were basically an aggregation of state elections. The BJP did well in states "where local conditions favoured the party; as in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Orissa, Maharashtra and Karnataka. It faltered either on account of local anti-incumbency factor in Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh or the failure to enter into alliance in states; like as, Assam, Bihar and Haryana and inner-party problems in Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. Nowhere was Hindutva an overriding issue. There was, of course, an area where Hindutva played a role. The Congress and the Left successfully used the images of the post-Godhra riots to consolidate the Muslim vote against the BJP. The BJP, on the other hand, consciously shied away from any countervailing mobilization. The party leadership was horribly misled by a few Muslim intellectuals who suggested that the peace process with Pakistan would lead to a significant minority of Muslims voting for the BJP. Moreover, it was felt that the assurance of an imminent negotiated settlement of the Ayodhya dispute would placate the religious-minded Hindus" (DasGupta, Swapan, 2005) [3].

The BJP leadership deliberately kept itself away from Hindutva for 'good governance' not only to pacify the secularist establishment, but the "reordering of political priorities between 1998 and 2004 were a consequence of the belief that there was insufficient Hindu disquiet in the country to warrant the type of aggressive mobilization that was undertaken during the Ram Janambhoomi agitation. It was felt that Narendra Modi's resounding triumph in the Gujarat Assembly poll of 2002 was born of exceptional circumstances and that Hindutva issue would carry diminishing returns for the party. In any case, the compulsions of coalition politics ruled out any departure from the 1999 NDA manifesto" (DasGupta, Swapan, 2005) [3].

In the aftermath of the NDA's defeat in the 2004 general election, it was a routine exercise for the Hindu nationalists, particularly the VHP and the RSS office bearers to attribute the electoral failure to the BJP's insufficient commitment to Hindutva politics.

#### **Seats Contested by the BJP in 2004**

In this parliamentary election, the election was held on all the 543 seats. The party had fielded its candidates on 364 seats and won 138 seats with 22.16 percent vote of the electorate (Table 1).

In this election, the party had contested all the parliamentary seats in the states and union territories of Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Haryana, N.T.C. Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Goa, Daman & Diu, Pondicherry and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

Further the party had also contested 82 seats (out of 85) in Uttar Pradesh, 30 seats (out of 54) in Bihar, 26 seats (out of 48) in Maharashtra, 24 seats (out of 28) Karnataka, 19 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 42) in Andhra

Pradesh, 9 seats (out of 21) in Orissa, 6 seats (out of 39) in Tamil Nadu, 3 seats (out of 13) in Punjab and 1 seat (out of 2) each in Meghalaya and Tripura (Table 1).

The party had not fielded its candidates in Sikkim, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Lakshadweep.

The spatial patterns of the seats contested by the party in 2004 elections and its comparison with 1999 elections highlights the following:

- 1) Broadly, the patterns of seats contested in 2004 election was more or less similar to that of 1999 election. This could be inference from the fact that out of the 364 seats contested by the party in this election, 326 were those contested by it in 1999 also. However, in this election the party had contested 25 seats more than what it was the case in 1999 election (i.e. 339 seats);
- 2) In comparison to the preceding elections, the party had

contested five additional seats each in the states of Uttar Pradesh (77 to 82); Haryana (5 to 10), Karnataka (19 to 24) and Kerala (14 to 19);

- 3) Once more, the party had contested less number of seats in Punjab, northern Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra due to its alliance with state parties, such as: SAD, JD (U), AITC, BJD, TDP, AIADMK and Shiv Sena respectively in these states.

#### Votes Polled by the BJP in 2004

The party had polled 22.16 percent vote in this election. There was a negative swing of 1.59 percent vote for the party in this election. In terms of percent vote, the maximum gains in this election for the party were in the states of Arunachal Pradesh (37.55%), Manipur (19.63%), Karnataka (7.58%), Daman & Diu (5.29%) and Kerala (3.88%). And

**Table 1:** Electoral Performance of BJP, 2004 Indian Parliamentary Elections

Sr. No.	State / U.T.	Seats			Votes Polled (%)	Swing in Votes Polled (%)
		Total	Contested	Won		
1	Jammu & Kashmir	6	6	0	23.04	-8.52
2	Himachal Pradesh	4	4	1	44.24	-2.03
3	Punjab	13	3	3	10.48	1.32
4	Chandigarh	1	1	0	35.22	-9.88
5	Haryana	10	10	1	17.21	-12
6	Delhi	7	7	1	40.67	-11.13
7	Uttar Pradesh	85	82	13	23.06	-4.58
8	Madhya Pradesh	40	40	35	48.02	1.44
9	Bihar	54	30	6	19.02	-4.01
10	Orissa	21	9	7	19.3	-5.33
11	West Bengal	42	13	0	8.06	-5.07
12	Sikkim	1	0	0	0	-
13	Arunachal Pradesh	2	2	2	53.85	37.55
14	Assam	14	12	2	22.94	-6.9
15	Meghalaya	2	1	0	8.63	-0.82
16	Nagaland	1	0	0		-
17	Manipur	2	2	0	20.65	19.63
18	Mizoram	1	0	0		-
19	Tripura	2	1	0	7.82	-5
20	Rajasthan	25	25	21	49.01	1.78
21	Gujarat	26	26	14	47.37	-5.13
22	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	1	1	0	15.56	-5.24
23	Maharashtra	48	26	13	22.61	1.43
24	Goa	2	2	1	46.83	-4.67
25	Daman & Diu	1	1	0	48.42	5.29
26	Karnataka	28	24	18	34.77	7.58
27	Andhra Pradesh	42	9	0	8.41	-1.49
28	Kerala	20	19	0	10.38	3.88
29	Tamil Nadu	39	6	0	5.07	-2.07
30	Pondicherry	1	1	0	35.65	-
31	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	1	1	0	35.95	-16.75
32	Lakshadweep	1	-	-	-	-
	All India	543	364	138	22.16	-1.59

The maximum losses were in the states and union territories of Andaman & Nicobar Islands (16.75%), Haryana (12.0%), Delhi (11.13%), Chandigarh (9.88%), Jammu & Kashmir (8.52%), Assam (6.9%), Orissa (5.33%), Dadra & Nagar Haveli (5.24%), Gujarat (5.13%) and Tripura (5%) (Table 1). In the preceding elections also, the party had experienced a negative swing of 1.84 percent in its percent vote. Consequent

upon this continuous decline, the party was at the loss of as many as 44 seats in this election (182 in 1999 to 138 in 2004). The average percentage vote for the party in this election was 34.51 percent. It was also lower than 1999 (39.64 percent) and 1998 (36.26 percent). In this election, there were 12 states (Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra,

Goa, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh) and five union territories (Chandigarh, N.T.C. Delhi, Daman & Diu, Pondicherry, and Andaman & Nicobar Islands), where the party had polled more than its national average.

The analysis of data on percent vote polled by the national political parties indicates that the BJP ranked second in this election (Table 2). It continuously maintained its status since 1991 elections. In this election, the difference in its percent vote and that of the first ranked, the Congress, was 4.37 percent (4.55 percent in 1999).

**Table 2:** Performance of National Parties in 2004 Parliamentary Elections

Party	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Votes Polled (%)
INC	417	145	26.53
BJP	364	138	22.16
CPM	69	43	5.66
BSP	435	19	5.33
CPI	34	10	1.41
NCP	32	9	1.80

The data on percent vote for the party also indicates that, the party had substantial support in the states and union territories of Arunachal Pradesh (53.85%), Rajasthan (49.01%), Daman & Diu (48.42%), Madhya Pradesh (48.02%), Gujarat (47.37%), Goa (46.83%), Himachal Pradesh (44.24%) and Delhi (40.67%).

The broad view of the spatial patterns of the party percent vote clearly indicates that majority of the constituencies where it had polled 40 percent and more in the 2004 elections were more or less similar to the patterns of 1999 elections. Majority of such constituencies were from Jammu region of Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, central and southern Bihar, northern and south-western Orissa, North and Marathwada regions of Maharashtra and coastal, east-central and southern regions of Karnataka (Figure 1).

In this election, there were 28 (15 in 1999) constituencies, where the party's vote percentage was below 10 percent. In the 38 (14 in 1999) constituencies, it had polled between 10 to 20 percent. There were as many as 62 (54 in 1999) constituencies, where the range of percent vote for the party was between 20 to 30 percent. In 84 (70 in 1999) constituencies, its vote share was between 30 to 40 percent and 102 (103 in 1999) constituencies between 40 to 50 percent. There were 50 (83 in 1999) constituencies, where the party had polled above 50 percent vote. The comparison of this election data with preceding election clearly marked downward trend in the performance of the party. From 186 constituencies in 1999 where the party had polled 40 percent and above vote, their number decreased to 152 in 2004. On the other hand, the number of constituencies where it had polled below 20 percent increased from 29 in 1999 to 66 in 2004. The downfall in the performance of the party can also be

judged from the fact that the average percent vote figure had decreased from 39.64 percent in 1999 to 34.51 percent in 2004.

The spatial analysis of the constituency-wise data on percent vote for the party clearly indicates that out of the total 28 constituencies, where the party had polled below 10 percent, 12 were from Kerala, 9 from Uttar Pradesh (central and Poorvanchal regions), 4 from Jammu & Kashmir, 2 from Haryana and 1 from West Bengal (Table 3).

Of the 38 constituencies, where its vote share was between 10 to 20 percent, 16 were from Uttar Pradesh (barring Utrakhland, scattered throughout), 6 from Kerala, 4 each from Haryana and West Bengal, 3 from Assam and one each from Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Tamil Nadu (Table 3). Out of the 62 constituencies, where the percentage of vote for the party was between 20 to 30 percent, majority were from Uttar Pradesh (37). The remaining were from southern Bihar (7), central West Bengal (4), 3 each from Assam and Haryana, and one each from Delhi, Manipur, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Majority of the constituencies where the party had polled between 30 to 40 percent vote were scattered in different state and did not form any specific region. Of these 16 were from Bihar (north-eastern and southern parts), 15 from Uttar Pradesh (north-central), 9 from Madhya Pradesh, 7 each from Maharashtra and Karnataka, 5 from Andhra Pradesh, 4 each from Assam and western and southern Tamil Nadu, 3 from Rajasthan, 2 each from Jammu & Kashmir, Gujarat and West Bengal and one each from Himachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Haryana, N.T.C. Delhi, Orissa, Goa, Pondicherry and Andaman & Nicobar Islands (Figure 1). Of the total 102 constituencies, where the party had polled between 40 to 50 percent, 18 were from Maharashtra (north, Vidarbha and Marathwada regions), 17 from Gujarat (barring southern Gujarat), 14 from Madhya Pradesh (Chhattisgarh and Vindhya Pradesh), 11 from Karnataka (Coastal and southern), 10 from Rajasthan (central and western), 7 were from Bihar (southern), 6 from Orissa (northern and western parts), 4 from N.T.C. Delhi, 3 each from Himachal Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh, 2 each from Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, and West Bengal and 1 from Daman & Diu. Out of the 50 constituencies, where the poll percent for the party was above 50 percent, 17 were from Madhya Pradesh (Madhya Bharat and Mahakoshal), 12 from Rajasthan (eastern parts), 7 from Gujarat, 4 from Karnataka, 3 from Uttar Pradesh, 2 each from Arunachal Pradesh and Orissa, and 1 each from Punjab, N.T.C. Delhi and Goa. In the vote percentage category of 50 and above, the gains for the party were less than the losses. The gains were basically from Karnataka (1 in 1999 to 4 in 2004), Uttar Pradesh (1 to 3) Madhya Pradesh (16 to 17) and Arunachal Pradesh (nil to 2). Main losses were from Gujarat (15 in 1999 to 7 in 2004), Orissa (9 to 2), Delhi (5 to 1), Bihar (7 to nil), Haryana (4 to nil) and from three constituencies to nil each in Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

**Table 3:** Frequency Distribution of the BJP Vote, 2004 Parliamentary Elections

Sr. 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	-	-	-	1	3	-	4
3	Punjab	-	-	-	-	2	1	3
4	Chandigarh	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
5	Haryana	2	4	3	1	-	-	10
6	Delhi	-	-	1	1	4	1	7
7	Uttar Pradesh	9	16	37	15	2	3	82
8	Madhya Pradesh	-	-	-	9	14	17	40
9	Bihar	-	-	7	16	7	-	30
10	Orissa	-	-	-	1	6	2	9
11	West Bengal	1	4	4	2	2	-	13
12	Sikkim	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
13	Arunachal Pradesh	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
14	Assam	-	3	3	4	2	-	12
15	Meghalaya	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
16	Nagaland	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
17	Manipur	-	1	1	-	-	-	2
18	Mizoram	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
19	Tripura	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
20	Rajasthan	-	-	-	3	10	12	25
21	Gujarat	-	-	-	2	17	7	26
22	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
23	Maharashtra	-	-	1	7	18	-	26
24	Goa	-	-	-	1	-	1	2
25	Daman & Diu	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
26	Karnataka	-	-	2	7	11	4	24
27	Andhra Pradesh	-	-	1	5	3	-	9
28	Kerala	12	6	1	-	-	-	19
29	Tamil Nadu	-	1	1	4	-	-	6
30	Pondicherry	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
31	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
32	Lakshadweep	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	All India	28	38	62	84	102	50	364

The BJP in this election had polled 8,63,71,561 vote. In this way, the party was at a loss of 1,90,648 vote than the 1999 elections. In comparison to the preceding elections, there was a negative swing of 1.59 percent vote for the party in this election. Similarly, the average vote percent for the party also decreased from 39.64 percent in 1999 to 34.51 percent in 2004. The region-wise analysis of the party vote indicates that it continues to draw maximum vote (52.48 percent in 2004) from the Hindi-Speaking belt. However, the share of this region in the total vote polled by the party has noticed continuous decline. The share of Uttar Pradesh also attained record low in the party vote share. It declined from 22.64 percent in 1996 to 21.60 percent in 1998, to 17.35 percent in 1999 and 14.94 percent in 2004. Outside the Hindi-Speaking belt, the states of Gujarat and Maharashtra contributed 17.31 (16.34 in 1999) percent vote to the party total vote bank. In this election, the state of Karnataka also contributed 10.11 percent. In this election, the party had experienced negative swing in majority of the states and union territories. These included all the states and union territories of the Hindi-Speaking belt (barring Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh), Jammu & Kashmir, Orissa, West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya,

Tripura, Gujarat, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Goa, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. In rest of the states and union territories it was positive swing for the party.

The overall conclusion that can be drawn from the map showing the patterns of the BJP vote percentage in 2004 is that the prominent supporting areas for the party continued to be the western and central parts of the country (Figure 1). These include majority of the constituencies from Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh. The party, however, also extended its support base in the Southern (Karnataka in particular) and North-Eastern States also.

#### Seats Won by the BJP in 2004

In this parliamentary election the party had put up its candidates on 364 seats (out of the total 543) and won 138 seats with 22.16 percent votes (Table 1). In contrast to 1999 elections, the only increase the party had recorded in 2004 was in the number of seats contested (339 in 1999 to 364 in 2004). The party lost 44 seats in this election as compared to its earlier seats tally of 182 seats in 1999 elections. In the case of percent vote also the party had recorded a negative swing of

1.59 in this election. The party also lost its status of being the largest political party in this election. It could win 138 seats, whereas, the seats tally for the Congress was 145.

In this election, the party had won 35 parliamentary seats from Madhya Pradesh alone, 21 from Rajasthan, 18 from Karnataka, 14 from Gujarat, 13 each from Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra, 7 from Orissa, 6 from Bihar, 3 from Punjab, 2 seats each from Arunachal Pradesh and Assam and 1 seat each from Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, N.T.C. Delhi and Goa (Figure 2). In the remaining states and union territories, the party failed to win any seat. State-wise details are as follows:

In this election, there were 16 states and union territories where the party had failed to win any seat. These were Jammu & Kashmir, Chandigarh, West Bengal, Sikkim, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry, and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

The spatial pattern of the party victories in this election highlights that the majority of seats won by the party were from six states (Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka). These states constitute more than 82% of the total seats won by the party. The seats won by the party were basically from northern Punjab, Utrakhland and Terai belt of Uttar Pradesh, eastern Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, north and south-western Orissa, Rajasthan Gujarat, North Maharashtra and Vidharbha regions of Maharashtra, and north, coastal and southern Karnataka (Figure 2).

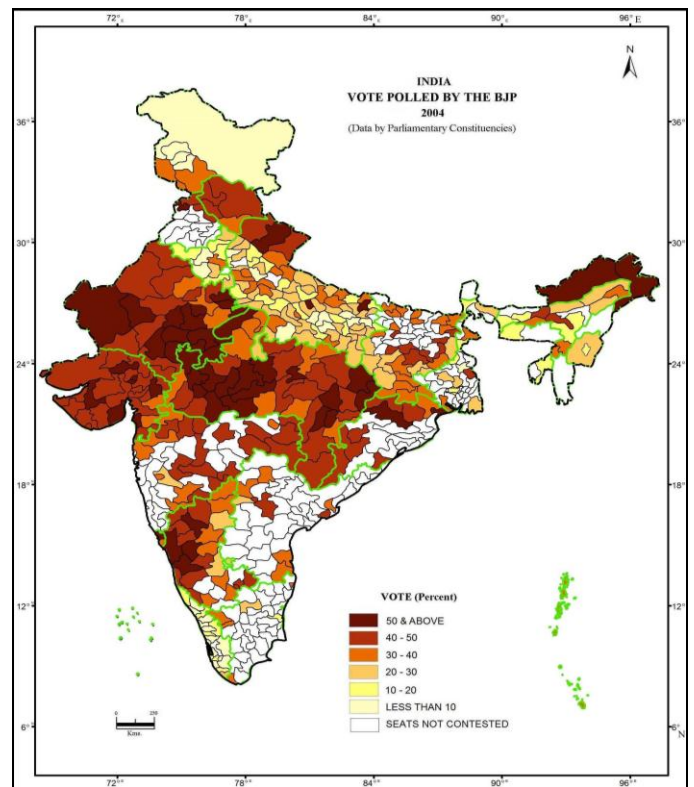
In this election, the party improved its seats tally in the states of Madhya Pradesh (29 to 35), Rajasthan (16 to 21), Karnataka (7 to 18 seats), Punjab (1 to 3) and Arunachal Pradesh (zero to 2). The party had maintained its seats tally number in the states of Assam (2) and Maharashtra (13) with that of 1999 elections. The party had recorded maximum losses in the states of Uttar Pradesh (29 to 13), Bihar (23 to 6), Delhi (7 to 1), Gujarat (20 to 14), Haryana (5 to 1), Himachal Pradesh (3 to 1), Goa (2 to 1), West Bengal (2 to zero), Andhra Pradesh (7 to zero) Tamil Nadu (4 to zero) and J&K (2 to zero).

The spatial patterns of the seats won by the party also indicates that it had won 34 seats less in the Hind-Speaking States as compared to the 112 seats of the 1999 elections and 6 seats less in the Western States of Gujarat and Maharashtra. In the Southern States, it won 18 seats in comparison to 19 seats in 1999 elections. However, all of these 18 seats in this election were from Karnataka. In addition, the party added 2 seats more in the North-Eastern States in this election. The overall conclusion in regard to the seats won by the BJP was that the party's victories were basically restricted to the states of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka (Figure 2). This indicates further deteriorating of the areas of the party's strength.

**Conclusion**

In this election, the BJP despite contesting 25 seats more than

the 1999 parliamentary elections had lost the status of largest political party which it gained in 1996. Except the increase in number of seats contested there was an overall decline for the party. The percent vote decreased from 23.75 percent in 1999 to 22.16 percent in 2004. The average percent vote declined from 39.64 percent in 1999 to 34.51 percent in 2004. The number of seats won by the party also declined from 182 in 1999 to 138 in 2004. There was a loss of 1,90,648 vote for the party in this election. There was regular decline in the share of the Hindi-Speaking Heartland in terms of votes polled and seats won. In this election, the party had received 52.48 percent vote from the Hindi-Speaking Heartland. The state of Uttar Pradesh which had contributed 22.64 percent to the party's total vote bank in 1996 could contribute only 14.94 percent in 2004. Outside the Hindi-Speaking Heartland, the main areas of vote strength for the party were Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka. In terms of seats won, the Hindi-Speaking Heartland gave 78 seats to the party. It was 34 seats less than the 1999 election. The position of the party further weakened in the states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. The party, however, had improved its seats tally in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Karnataka. In overall terms, the position of the party worsened further in Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu. Rather than a national party, the performance of the party is basically restricted to 5 states: Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka.



**Fig 1**

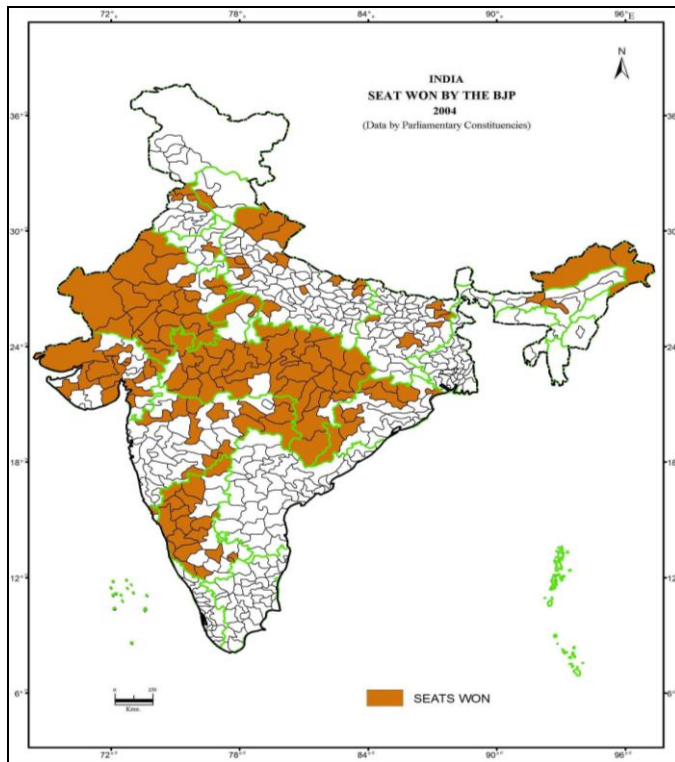


Fig 2

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