



Parliamentary elections 1989: An upsurge of the Bharatiya Janata Party

Kiran Bala

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

Abstract

The present work has been focused on the electoral performance of the BJP in the 1989 parliamentary elections. The 1989 Lok Sabha 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 advancements made by the BJP in this election from 2 seats to 85.

Keywords: electoral performance, BJP, votes

Introduction

The BJP, which had won only 2 seats in the eighth Lok Sabha elections of 1984, increased its seats tally to 85 (out of the total 225 seats contested) in the 1989 Lok Sabha elections with 11.36 percent vote. In terms of both seats won and votes polled, the party ranked third after the Congress and the Janata Dal which had won 197 and 143 seats and polled 39.53 and 17.79 percent vote respectively.

In this election, the electoral experience was indeed a memorable and morale-booster for the party. The electoral outcomes were unprecedented in its history since the days of the BJS. Previously, "it had never exceeded 10 percent of the vote or 35 seats nationally, except for 1977 when as a component of the Janata Party it won 99 of 295 seats won by the Janata Party" (Sridharan, E., 2005) ^[1]. These results were also in striking contrast to the dismal debacle faced by the party in the 1984 general elections. From an incredible all time low of two seats in the eighth Lok Sabha to a reasonably resounding return of 85 candidates in the ninth Lok Sabha was the beginning of the BJP's upward journey.

This change in the electoral fortunes for the party was due to a combination of two factors—one, seat adjustments with the JD (Janata Dal) resulting in one on one contests against the Congress in most of the seats it had contested in Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, and two, a sizeable swing of vote in its favour. The other important reasons were the change in the party leadership and the party's reaffirming faith in the Bharatiya Jana Sangh ideology.

The distinct features of the party during this election were: abolition of article 370; replacement of Minorities Commission by a Human Rights Commission; implementation of Uniform Civil Code and above all construction of Ram Mandir at the site believed to be the birth place of Shri Ram.

The BJP's electoral debacle in the 1984 parliamentary polls was indeed tragic. The party blamed the ruling party for making clever use of the situation "resulting from operation Blue-Star, the ghastly assassination of Indira Gandhi and bloody riots following the assassination" (Puri, Geeta, 1992) ^[9].

After the eighth general elections, the party constituted a working group at its national executive held in Calcutta on 15 March 1985, which gave a lengthy report on the ideology, electoral strategy, organizational structure, front organizations and agitation planks of the party. After the consideration on the report, the party decided to accept Deen Dayal Upadhaya's 'integral humanism' as the basic philosophy of the party.

At its plenary session held in 1986, the party elected L.K. Advani as the president of the party. It was generally believed that under the leadership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, lots of members of the party who were strongly rooted in the political tie-ups and ethos of the BJP-RSS were disappointed by the dilution of the BJS legacy. This had led to a serious "identity crisis" for the party.

Advani rejuvenated and reincorporated many familiar ideological concerns of the BJS into the BJP's doctrinal campaigns. The principle planks of the BJS like the "common civil code", the abrogation of Article 370", "status of Hindus in Pakistan", the "abolition of cow slaughter", attacks on "pseudo-secularism", "minorityism" and "nuclearisation of India" were raised under the leadership of L K Advani to pacify the disillusioned BJS-RSS inspired members of the party.

The post-1984 party scenario witnessed the powerful resurrection of the BJS. The advent of Advani's leadership meticulously performed this job. Thus by the time of the announcement of the ninth general elections, Advani's resurrection satisfying the political emotions of the grassroots party members, was complete. Advani also succeeded in legitimizing the concept of Hindutva for the party's mass members. "Thus the organization was more powerful in terms of ideological coherence and unified leadership backed by the RSS charismatic culture. The 1980-1985 intra-party 'identity crisis' was, therefore, solved on the 1989 election eve" (Puri, Geeta, 1992) ^[9].

After the General Elections of 1984, the BJP because of its dismal performance got so disturbed that as a strategic move to consolidate the Hindu vote bank, the party openly associated itself with the Ram temple issue and named it as a movement. "At its National Executive meeting held in June

1989 the party had officially demanded that the ‘temple controversy’ should be decided in favour of Hindus. Earlier in April 1989, addressing a RSS meeting in Mumbai, Vajpayee demanded that the government had to hand over the mosque site to the Hindus” (Abid, Mohammad, 2004) [2]. Further in June 9-11, 1989 during the National Council meeting at Palampur (Himachal Pradesh) the party had passed the resolution that “the sentiments of the people must be respected, and Ram *Janmasthan* [Ram birthplace] handed over to the Hindus” (Puri, Geeta, 1992) [9]. This session was a milestone for Advani also as the party proposal for alliance with Shiv Sena and party’s position on the Ayodhya affairs was finalized there. This was treated by Advani as his moral victory as prior to this, a division in terms of the face of the Hindu nationalism the party should plead, was widening between him and Vajpayee. The latter was in favour of a more moderate face of the Hindu nationalism.

Similarly, on the Shah Bano case also, the BJP was able to project the decision of Rajiv Gandhi government to undo the Supreme Court verdict in favour of the traditional Muslims as a retrograde step to appease the Muslims.

Based upon its past electoral experience and the gradual rise of the Hindu political consciousness, the BJP concentrated on the Hindu votes, giving up the hope of gaining the Muslim support. With the adoption of its changed electoral strategy, the BJP leadership expected to poll around 20 to 25% of the votes in the 1989 elections. “But while the BJP made a spectacular comeback in the 1989 parliamentary elections and the number of seats in the Lok Sabha went up by 43 times, it was nevertheless nowhere near its goal of 25% of the total votes: it won 11.36% of the votes and 16% of the Lok Sabha seats. However, the results in 1989, when distributed on a state wide basis, show that the BJP had kept alive the tradition of building a strong mass base in some of the key North Indian States” (Malik, Y. K. and Singh, V. B., 1992) [8].

In this election, the BJP allied with the National Front which was led by the Janata Dal. It was a great event in the history of BJP’s as it succeeded in installing a non-Congress government in power.

This was the time wherein VP Singh and his original party Jan Morcha (in 1987) represented a crucial development in Indian politics. He became the opposition’s most prominent politician by mounting a campaign against Rajiv Gandhi, the then Prime Minister and accused in the Bofors scandal. After many ups and downs, V.P. Singh succeeded in forgoing an opposition party, the Janata Dal. In the initial phase, he distanced from the BJP and regarded the Communists as “natural allies”. However, things had started to change when in September 1987, Devi Lal (one of the formers of the National Front) became Chief Minister of Haryana with the support of the BJP. A meeting was called by Devi Lal to unite all the opposition parties so that a new alternate to the Congress government could be germinated. The BJP attended the meeting but the Communists boycotted the meeting and in a way gave a hint to V. P. Singh to choose between them and the BJP.

The BJP which wanted to join the mainstream of the Indian politics could not risk complete isolation particularly in the aftermath of its 1984 electoral debacle. The only way out for the BJP was to prove to V.P. Singh “how strong it was, and to

do so by means of actions free of any communalist connotations. This was probably why, far from respecting the compromise reached by the National council in January 1988 (which was already unraveling), the party [to begin with] concentrated on socio-economic themes at the expense of ethno- religious mobilization. The cancellation of debts owed by peasants to public authorities and cooperatives was given the highest priority” (Jaffrelot, C., 1996) [7].

Despite all this, BJP was not part of the negotiations held in August 1988, regarding the formation of a National Front. However, the attitude of National Front for the BJP as its part changed after the local elections in Uttar Pradesh – the state which had the largest number of Lok Sabha seats and the state where the Janata Dal was expecting to get maximum number of seats. The growing popularity of the BJP in north Indian states and in Gujarat forced the Janata Dal to accommodate the BJP in its alliance to avoid a division in non-Congress votes. For the purpose of avoiding the splitting of non-Congress vote, V.P. Singh was able to convince the Communists (particularly Jyoti Basu) to co-operate with BJP. The Communists also looked at this as an opportunity to grow spatially beyond their traditional strongholds of West Bengal and Kerala. The BJP all along with the Communists and other outfits of the National Front took part in the *Bharat Bandh* (all India strike) on 30 August, 1989 to make an opposition unity and to over turn the Congress (I) at the centre.

There was complete harmony for the BJP in terms of seats adjustment with allies of the National Front in the states of Gujarat, Rajasthan and Haryana. There was adjustment on limited seats in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Delhi. There was no adjustment in Himachal Pradesh, Orissa and other states. These seat adjustments were not in the nature of alliance or joint campaigning.

On 25 October, 1989, negotiations concerning seat adjustments were held between the BJP and the Janata Dal. The number of constituencies where the risk of confrontation between the two parties was staved off finally reached 350, out of a total of 543, the BJP contesting 225. In the Hindi-Speaking north, the Janata Dal and the BJP fought each other in only 44 seats out of 216- 18 in Uttar Pradesh, 12 in Bihar, 5 in Rajasthan, 5 in Madhya Pradesh, two in Himachal Pradesh, and one each in Delhi and Chandigarh.

The BJP entered into an alliance with the Shiv Sena, an aggressive regional Hindu organization, in Maharashtra. The RSS cadres of the BJP found natural affinity with the Shiv Sena. “While the BJP traditionally enjoyed the support of Brahmins, banias and the middle class, the Shiv Sena was able to attract OBC youth in urban as well as rural areas. This forced the BJP to ally with Shiv Sena” (Palsishikar, Suhas and Deshpande, R, 1999) [6].

In spite of fundamental differences between the BJP and the Janata Dal on many issues, viz; ‘Abolition of Article 370’, ‘minorityism’ and ‘pseudo secularism’, and ‘dislocation of Babri Masjid and reconstruction of Shri Ram Temple’, both the parties could not afford to go ‘alone’ in the 1989 elections. This was the period wherein despite the Left-BJP confrontation and lack of total seat-adjustments between the BJP and Janata Dal, the overall political scenario projected an atmosphere of ‘opposite unity’, leading to the decisive defeat of the Congress (I) which was a definite departure from its

unprecedented massive performance in 1984.

The BJP by virtue of reading the circumstances prevailing around 1989 elections in a better way was benefited a great deal. To some political commentators, it was basically the inability of the National Front on many occasions which helped the BJP not only to grow geographically but also to adopt a militant approach. In the words of Basu, "The National Front, led by V P Singh contributed to the BJP's growth by relying on its support to form a government at the centre. Furthermore, in negotiations with the BJP prior to the 1989 elections, the National Front failed to condemn it for refusing to compromise its position on the Ram Janmabhumi campaign. In its anxiety to supplant the Congress, it tacitly encouraged the BJP to pursue the militant approach it was fostering. Even after L.K. Advani embarked on his *rath yatra* to Ayodhya in October 1990, V.P. Singh was slow to check the BJP for fear of precipitating the government's downfall" (Basu, Amrita, 2000) [5].

In this election, the BJP on the one hand had forged electoral alliances with mainstream opposition parties and on the other associated itself with the campaign to build a Hindu Temple in Ayodhya in which Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) contributed a great deal. VHP started the work for the proposed temple way back in 1984. In the first Dharma Sansad (7-8 April, 1984) it demanded "the liberation of the site at Ayodhya". The VHP had organized the second Dharma Sansad on 31st October at Udipi. It announced a *satyagraha* for 9 March 1986 if by that time temple was not opened to worshippers. On 31 January 1986 an appeal was made to the District and Session Judge of Faizabad for the gates of the Babri Masjid to be unlocked, who ordered on 1 February 1986 that the mosque should be unlocked. On 3 Feb. 1986, Ram Janamabhoomi Trust was formed by a large *Sant Sammelan* and called on government to transfer the property right of Ayodhya site so that the biggest temple in the world could be built.

Muslim leaders organized on the issue and formed "Babri Masjid Action Committee" (BMAC) on 5 Feb. 1986. The committee organized various *satyagrahas* in various parts of UP and Delhi. It was announced that a march on Ayodhya would take place on 14 October 1988. It was responded by VHP that it will organize a *Shri Ram Maha Yagna* at Ayodhya from 11-15 Oct. 1988. The tension intensified in the state and riots took place at Aligarh, Muzaffarnagar and Faizabad. This led the then Home Minister, Buta Singh, to intervene who pressed the committee members to suspend the march. The proposal was accepted by many leaders of the committee on the promise that the whole issue will be put before the High Court in Allahabad. The Hindu nationalists treated this as another step of the Congress government to please the Muslim leaders.

The VHP organized its third Dharma Sansad in Allahabad in February, 1989 which was attended by a large number of Sadhus. Two resolutions were passed at the time of Sansad. One was to elect politicians who were favourable to Hindus and the other was to build Ram Temple. It was also resolved that funds for the construction of Ram Temple would be collected from door to door. Each donor will donate Rs. 1.25 per family and would receive a certificate in exchange. This process was accompanied with processions in which *pujas* (prayers) were offered to bricks inscribed with the name of

Ram (called-*Ram Shilas*) which would be used in building of the Ram Temple. The Ram Shila Pujans were held in various parts of the country and more particularly in North Indian States.

The projection of "Ram" as a national character was certainly helped by the broadcasting of the Ramayana serial on national network between 1987 and 1988. This was followed by the episodes of Mahabharata serial which had played a leading role in creating a national Hindu identity, a form of group consciousness.

As a consequence of all this, and the factors discussed above the BJP in the elections, had emerged as the single largest party in Delhi, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan and it did well in Bihar, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh. Its phenomenal success in as much as six states heightened its hopes of emerging as a national alternative to the Congress. "Along with its aggressive Hindu nationalist posture, the BJP was also expanding its support base by working with the people, particularly the tribals in south Bihar and Gujarat and the lower backward class communities in U P and M P" (Singh, V. B., 2004) [3].

Seats Contested by the BJP in 1989

In 1989, Lok Sabha elections were held on 529 seats. In this election, the BJP had fielded its candidates on 225 parliamentary seats. From only 2 seats in the eight Lok Sabha (1984), the party in this election had increased its seats tally to 85 with 11.36 percent vote of the electorate.

In this parliamentary election, the party had contested all the seats in the states and union territory of Himachal Pradesh, Kerala and Chandigarh. Besides, the party had contested 33 seats (out of 48) in Maharashtra, 33 seats (out of 40) in Madhya Pradesh, 31 seats (out of 85) in Uttar Pradesh, 24 seats (out of 54) in Bihar, 19 seats (out of 42) in West Bengal, 17 seats (out of 25) in Rajasthan, 12 seats (out of 26) in Gujarat, 6 seats (out of 21) in Orissa, 5 seats (out of 28) in Karnataka, 5 seats (out of 7) in Delhi, 3 seats (out of 39) in Tamil Nadu, 3 seats (out of 13) in Punjab, 2 seats (out of 42) in Andhra Pradesh, 2 seats (out of 10) in Haryana, 2 seats (out of 6) in Jammu & Kashmir, 1 seat (out of 2) in Goa, 1 seat (out of 2) in Manipur and 1 seat (out of 2) in Tripura (Table 1).

The party had not fielded its candidates in the states and union territories of Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Pondicherry, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, and Lakshadweep (Table1).

The spatial patterns of seats contested in 1989 elections and its comparison with 1984 elections clearly highlights the following

1. The overall patterns of seats contested by the party in 1989 remained more or less consistent with that of 1984 elections;
2. Out of the total 225 seats contested by the party, 147 (65 percent) were those contested in 1984 also. There were 78 new contested seats, of which majority belong to the states of Maharashtra (15), Kerala (15), West Bengal (11), Uttar Pradesh (9) and Bihar (8);
3. The party in this election had fielded more candidates in

the South Indian States. From contesting only 14 seats (out of the total 132) in these states in the preceding election, the party had fielded its candidates on 30 seats in this election. This change basically came as a result of the party contesting all the seats in the southern Communists stronghold Kerala. It helped the party, to some extent in shedding its image of north India party only.

4. The increase in number of seats contested by the party was maximum in West Bengal (9 to 19); Maharashtra (20 to 33); and Kerala (5 to 20). Majority of the seats contested by the party in West Bengal were those constituencies which make international border with Bangladesh. These were the constituencies where the impact of the party's issues regarding Bangladeshi infiltration, was maximum. In the case of Maharashtra, the number of seats contested by the party had increased as a result of its seats adjustment with Shiv Sena.
5. There were also states where the party had contested fewer

seats as compared to the 1984 election: Uttar Pradesh (50 to 31); Bihar (32 to 24); Rajasthan (24 to 17); and Madhya Pradesh (40 to 33). As discussed previously the basic reason behind this was the adjustment of seats between the BJP and the Janata Dal in these states.

Vote Polled by the BJP in 1989

In this election, the party had received 11.36 percent vote of the electorate, thereby registered a positive swing of 3.62 percent. The maximum percent vote gain for the party was in the states and union territories of Himachal Pradesh (22.03%), Maharashtra (13.63%), Gujarat (11.86%), Madhya Pradesh (9.71), Delhi (7.35%), Chandigarh (6.7%), Bihar (6.08%) and Rajasthan (5.91%) (Table 1).

Among all the national political parties in this election, the party ranked third (after the Congress and the Janata Dal) both in terms of vote received and seats won (Table2).

Table 1: Electoral Performance of the BJP, 1989 Indian Parliamentary Elections

S. No	State / U.T.	Seats			Votes Polled (%)	Swing in Votes Polled (%) (1984-1989)
		Total	Contested	Won		
1	Jammu & Kashmir	6	2	-	7.2	5.49
2	Himachal Pradesh	4	4	3	45.3	22.03
3	Punjab	13	3	-	4.2	0.8
4	Chandigarh	1	1	-	12.3	6.7
5	Haryana	10	2	-	8.3	0.76
6	Delhi	7	5	4	26.2	7.35
7	Uttar Pradesh	85	31	8	7.6	1.18
8	Madhya Pradesh	40	33	27	39.7	9.71
9	Bihar	54	24	8	13	6.08
10	Orissa	21	6	-	1.3	0.12
11	West Bengal	42	19	-	1.7	1.3
12	Sikkim	1	-	-	-	-
13	Arunachal Pradesh	2	-	-	-	-
14	Assam*	14	-	-	-	-
15	Meghalaya	2	-	-	-	-
16	Nagaland	1	-	-	-	-
17	Manipur	2	1	-	2.3	-4.66
18	Mizoram	1	-	-	-	-
19	Tripura	2	1	-	0.6	-0.17
20	Rajasthan	25	17	13	29.6	5.91
21	Gujarat	26	12	12	30.5	11.86
22	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	1	-	-	-	-
23	Maharashtra	48	33	10	23.7	13.63
24	Goa	2	1	-	0.7	-2.34
25	Daman & Diu	1	-	-	-	-
26	Karnataka	28	5	-	2.6	-2.08
27	Andhra Pradesh	42	2	-	2	0.22
28	Kerala	20	20	-	4.5	2.75
29	Tamil Nadu	39	3	-	0.3	0.23
30	Pondicherry	1	-	-	-	-
31	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	1	-	-	-	-
32	Lakshadweep	1	-	-	-	-
	ALL INDIA	529*	225	85	11.36	3.62

* In 1989, elections were held on 529 seats. Elections were not held on 14 seats in Assam.

Table 2: Performance of National Parties in 1989 Parliamentary Elections

Party	Seats		Votes polled (%)
	Contested	Won	
INC	510	197	39.53
JD	244	143	17.79
BJP	225	85	11.4
CPM	64	33	6.55
CPI	50	12	2.57
ICS(SCS)	14	1	0.33
JNP (JP)	155	0	1.01
LKD (B)	116	0	0.20

The constituency-wise display of the BJP percent vote in this election clearly shows that there were 51 constituencies where the party had polled 50 percent and above vote. The map showing the constituency-wise percent vote of the party clearly indicates that all these constituencies either belonged to the Hindi Speaking States or Western India (Figure 1). The states of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat alone constituted 41 such constituencies. The states where the number of such constituencies were more than 40 percent of the total seats included Rajasthan (48%), Gujarat (46%), Delhi (42.8%) and Madhya Pradesh (42.5%). Out of the total 36 constituencies where the party had polled between 40 to 50 percent vote, majority were from Madhya Pradesh (11) and Maharashtra (10). The constituencies where the party had polled between 30 to 40 percent were scattered and did not

form a specific region (Figure 1).

Of the total 25 constituencies where the party had polled between 20 to 30 percent, 7 were from Maharashtra, 6 each from UP and Bihar, 4 from Madhya Pradesh and one each from Punjab and Karnataka (Table 3). Out of the 21 constituencies, where the party's vote share was between 10 to 20 percent, 7 were from UP, 4 from Bihar, 2 each from Orissa, Maharashtra and Karnataka and 1 each from Jammu & Kashmir, Chandigarh, Rajasthan and West Bengal (Table 3).

There were 75 constituencies where the party had polled less than 10 percent. Out of these 75 constituencies 38 were from the traditional communist strongholds Kerala and West Bengal. In all the contested constituencies of Manipur, Tripura, West Bengal (except one seat), Orissa, Goa, Tamil Nadu and Kerala the party had polled less than 10 percent (Table 3). In as many as 47 constituencies where the party had fielded its candidates in 1989 election than 1984, it had polled less than 10 percent.

Seats Won by the BJP in 1989

In this parliamentary election, the party had won 85 seats of the 225 seats it had contested. In terms of seats won, the party recorded a gain of 83 seats in this election than the preceding election.

Out of the total victories the party had in this election, 27 were from Madhya Pradesh, 13 from Rajasthan, 12 from Gujarat, 10 from Maharashtra, 8 each from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, 4 from Delhi and 3 from Himachal Pradesh (Table 1).

Table 3: Frequency Distribution of the BJP Vote, 1989 Parliamentary Elections

State /U.T.	Percent Vote and no. of constituencies						Total
	Below 10	10-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50& Above	
1	Jammu & Kashmir	1	1	-	-	-	2
2	Himachal Pradesh	-	-	-	1	2	4
3	Punjab	-	2	1	-	-	3
4	Chandigarh	-	1	-	-	-	1
5	Haryana	-	-	-	-	2	2
6	Delhi	-	-	-	1	1	5
7	Uttar Pradesh	10	7	6	4	4	31
8	Madhya Pradesh	1	-	4	-	11	33
9	Bihar	3	4	6	6	3	24
10	Orissa	6	-	-	-	-	6
11	West Bengal	18	1	-	-	-	19
12	Sikkim	-	-	-	-	-	-
13	Arunachal Pradesh	-	-	-	-	-	-
14	Assam	-	-	-	-	-	-
15	Meghalaya	-	-	-	-	-	-
16	Nagaland	-	-	-	-	-	-
17	Manipur	1	-	-	-	-	1
18	Mizoram	-	-	-	-	-	-
19	Tripura	1	-	-	-	-	1
20	Rajasthan	3	1	-	-	1	17
21	Gujarat	-	-	-	-	-	12
22	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	-	-	-	-	-	-
23	Maharashtra	5	2	7	5	10	33
24	Goa	1	-	-	-	-	1
25	Daman & Diu	-	-	-	-	-	-
26	Karnataka	2	2	1	-	-	5
27	Andhra Pradesh	-	-	-	-	2	2
28	Kerala	20	-	-	-	-	20
29	Tamil Nadu	3	-	-	-	-	3

30	Pondicherry	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
31	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
32	Lakshadweep	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	ALL INDIA	75	21	25	17	36	51	225

The party had recorded a positive swing of 3.62 percent (7.74 percent in 1984 to 11.36 percent in 1989) and improved its seats tally from 2 in 1984 to 85 in this election. It is important to note that out of the total 85 victories, 75 were from those 147 seats contested by the party in both 1984 and 1989. The party could win only 10 seats out of the 78 new seats contested in 1989. Out of these 10 victories, 5 were alone from Gujarat. The party’s seat adjustments with the Janata Dal in many North Indian States and Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, worked well.

The spatial patterns of the party victories in this election indicates that in terms of seats won, the party remained a North India party as majority of the seats won by the party were from four states (Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra) (Figure 2). These states constitute about 72 percent of the total seats won by the party in this election. In addition, of the total 85 victories by the party more than 74 percent were from the Hindi-Speaking States. These were the states which had polled about 61 percent of the total vote polled by the party.

Conclusion

The overall conclusion from the map showing the patterns of the BJP vote percentage in 1989 is that the vote strength areas for the party were basically restricted to central and western parts of India (Figure 1). In this election out of the total

3,41,71,477 votes polled by the party about 61 percent (68 percent in 1984) were from the Hindi Speaking States. Outside this heartland, the share of Gujarat and Maharashtra which was about 23 percent in 1984 had increased to about 31 percent in 1989. In the case of West Bengal, the party vote had increased from 1, 01,165 in 1984 to 5, 29,618 in 1989.

“The 1989 elections allowed the BJP to improve its representation through out North India and in Maharashtra, where its association with the Shiv Sena helped it to obtain 23.7% of the vote. In the states of the Gangetic plain (from Haryana to Bihar), the Hindu nationalists remained in a weak position compared to the Congress (I) and Janata Dal. The situation was evidently much more favourable in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, where it won respectively 12 seats out of 12, 13 out of 25, 3 out of 4 and 27 out of 40” (Jaffrelot, C., 1996)^[7]. It is to note that in the states of Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh, the victories for the party were basically due to its strong organizational base.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that BJP’s performance in the 1989 elections was substantially influenced by its ‘seat-sharing’ with the Janata Dal in majority of the states and ceremonies related to *Ram Shila Pujans*. In this election, a kind of party’s extension in South Indian States was also noticed but by and large the party remained a North-India party as was the case in 1984 elections.

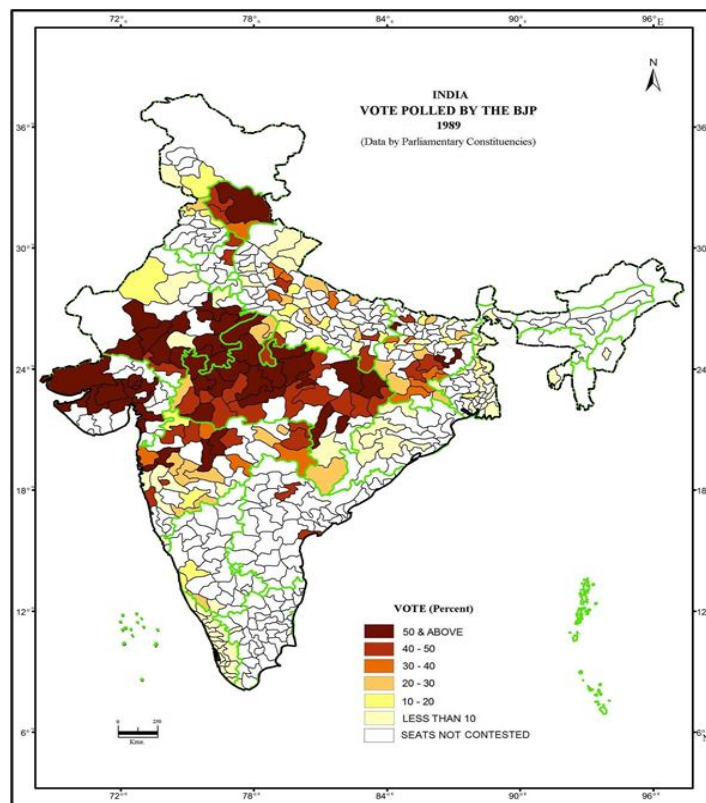


Fig 1

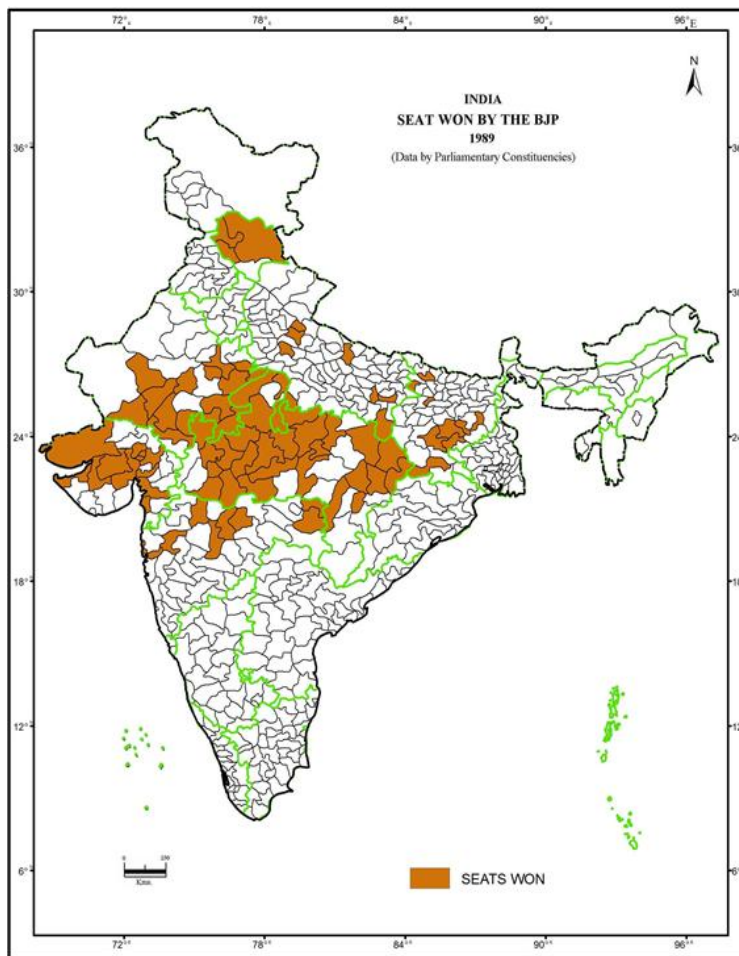


Fig 2

References

1. Sridharan E. Coalition Strategies and the BJP's Expansion, 1989-2004, *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*. 2005; 43(2):194-221.
2. Abid Mohammad. Electoral Politics in India: An Overview, *Indian Journal of Politics*. 2004; XXXVIII(4):27-39.
3. Singh VB. Rise of the BJP and Decline of the Congress: An Appraisal, in Vora, Rajender and Palshikhar, Suhas (eds.), *Indian Democracy Meaning and Practices*, Sage Publications, New Delhi. 2004, 299-324.
4. Gillan M. Assessing the 'National' Expansion of Hindu Nationalism: The BJP in Southern and Eastern India", 1996-2001, *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*. 2002; 25(3):17-39.
5. Basu Amrita. The Transformation of Hindu Nationalism? Towards a reappraisal in Frankel, Francine R. et.al. (eds.), *Transforming India*, Oxford, New Delhi. 2000, 379-403.
6. Palshikar Suhas, Deshpande R. Electoral Competition, Structures and Domination in Maharashtra, *Economic and Political Weekly*. 1999; XXXIV(34-35):2409-2422.
7. Jaffrelot C. *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics*, Penguin Books India Ltd, New Delhi, 1996.
8. Malik YK, Singh VB. Bharatiya Janata party: An Alternative to the Congress (I)? *Asian Survey*. 1992; XXXII(4):318-336.
9. Puri Geeta. An Exhilarating Electoral Experience: The BJP Overcomes Its Identity Crisis in Singh, M. P. (ed.), *Lok Sabha Elections 1989: Indian Politics in 1990s*, Kalinga Publications, Delhi. 1992, 134-163.
10. Sinha Dipankar. Singh VP, Chandra Shekhar. Nowhere Politics in India, *Asian Survey*. 1991; XXXI(7):598-612.
11. Vidyasagar R. Southern Perspectives, *Seminar*. 1990; 368:28-33.
12. Puri Geeta. A Question of Identity, *Seminar*. 1989; 362:27-33.