



ELECTORAL BEHAVIOR OF VOTERS IN KARNATAKA ELECTION 2023: A GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS

¹ Dr. Sharmila Badhwar, ² Dr. Naresh Kumar

¹ Associate Professor, ² Associate Professor

¹Department of Geography,

¹Government College for Women, Sonipat, Haryana, India

Abstract: In this paper, we are analysing the voters' behaviours, especially younger voters, in the Karnataka Assembly Election 2023. In this paper, we studied newspaper analysis and took the data from the website of the Election Commission of India. In this election, localised election campaigns, impactful social engineering, strong local leadership, etc. played a major role in the victory of the Congress party in the state.

Index Terms – Karnataka elections, voter behavior, geographical analysis

I. INTRODUCTION

Election outcomes are influenced by voter behaviour, particularly that of new and younger voters. There are numerous factors that influence voting behaviour. In this paper, we've tried to ascertain voter behaviour as it relates to the various political regions of Karnataka. There are six political regions in Karnataka: (i) Kalyana Karnataka and (ii) Kittur Karnataka. South Karnataka, often known as the Old Mysore region, Central Karnataka, Greater Bengaluru, and Coastal Karnataka are the other three.

II. ANALYSIS

The Indian National Congress (INC) secured 135 seats and a 42.9% vote share overall, making it evident that they had won the election. According to political activist Yogendra Yadav, this election represents "any party in Karnataka's largest success since 1989, having a vote percentage above 43 per cent with 178 elected members. That was during Veerendra Patil's administration. During the year 1999, INC got 132 members, having 40.8 per cent of the votes cast, and in 2013, 122 seats with a support of 36.6 per cent of voters were recorded by this party, as per the data presented on Twitter by Mr Yadav.

Janta-Dal-Secular secured 115 seats in total in 1994, having 33.5% of total votes cast. While BJP managed a win on 104 spots in 2018, taking 36.3% of voters' support after gaining the support of 36.8% of voters with 110 seats in 2008. BJP received 79 seats overall in 2004, followed by 28.3% of the vote.

1994- 115, 40.84% (INC)

2004- 79, 28.33% (BJP)

2008- 110, 33.86% (BJP)

2013-122, 36.6% (INC)

2018- 104, 38.3% (BJP, BSY)

Previous Record is 1989- 178, 43.76% (INC)

KARNATAKA ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2023

INC
135



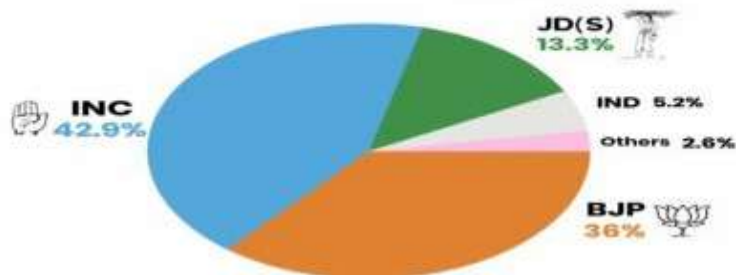
BJP
66

JD(S)
19

Party	2023 Results	2018 Results	2013 Results	2008 Results
INC	135	80	122	80
BJP	66	104	40	110
JD(S)	19	37	40	28
IND	2	1	9	6
KRPP	1	-	-	-
SKP	1	-	1	-
KJP	-	-	8	-
BSRCP	-	-	4	-
BSP	-	1	-	-
KJPJ	-	1	-	-
Others	-	-	2	-
Total	224	224	224	224

Source: ECI

KARNATAKA ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS VOTE SHARE 2023



Party	2023 Vote Share	2018 Vote Share	2013 Vote Share	2008 Vote Share
INC	42.9%	38.1%	36.6%	34.8%
BJP	36.0%	36.2%	19.9%	33.9%
JD(S)	13.3%	18.3%	20.2%	19.0%
IND	5.2%	3.9%	7.4%	6.9%
KRPP	0.0%	-	-	-
BSP	0.3%	0.3%	0.9%	2.7%
SKP	0.2%	-	1	-
Others	1.6%	3.2%	2.6%	2.8%
KJP	-	0.02%	9.8%	-
BSRCP	-	-	2.7%	-
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: ECI

The regional breakdown of the results of the 2023 Karnataka elections reveals that the Congress party has increased its vote shares across all six areas but has firmly taken control of three of them. Particularly in the Mumbai/Kittur Karnataka and Central Karnataka regions, the Congress won 44 of the 62 seats with a 44.9% vote share, an increase of a staggering 6.2 percentage points and 24 seats over the results of the 2018 assembly elections. In contrast, the BJP's vote share decreased to 39%, and its seats decreased by 23, while it gained 23 seats.

Source: Election Commission of India

2023, 2018, 2013, and 2008 Election Results Analysis over 6 Political Divisions

Karnataka Vidhan Sabha Election Results

Coastal Political
Division
21 ACs

Kittur / Belgaum
/ Mumbai
Political Division
50 ACs

Central Political
Division
36 ACs

Mysuru/
Southern
Political Division
50 ACs

Kalyana /
Gulbarga /
Hyderabad
Political Division
31 ACs

Political Divisions are not
defined by ECI or state
administration. This is a
subjective classification
based on Karnataka's socio,
political, historical, and
economic understanding.

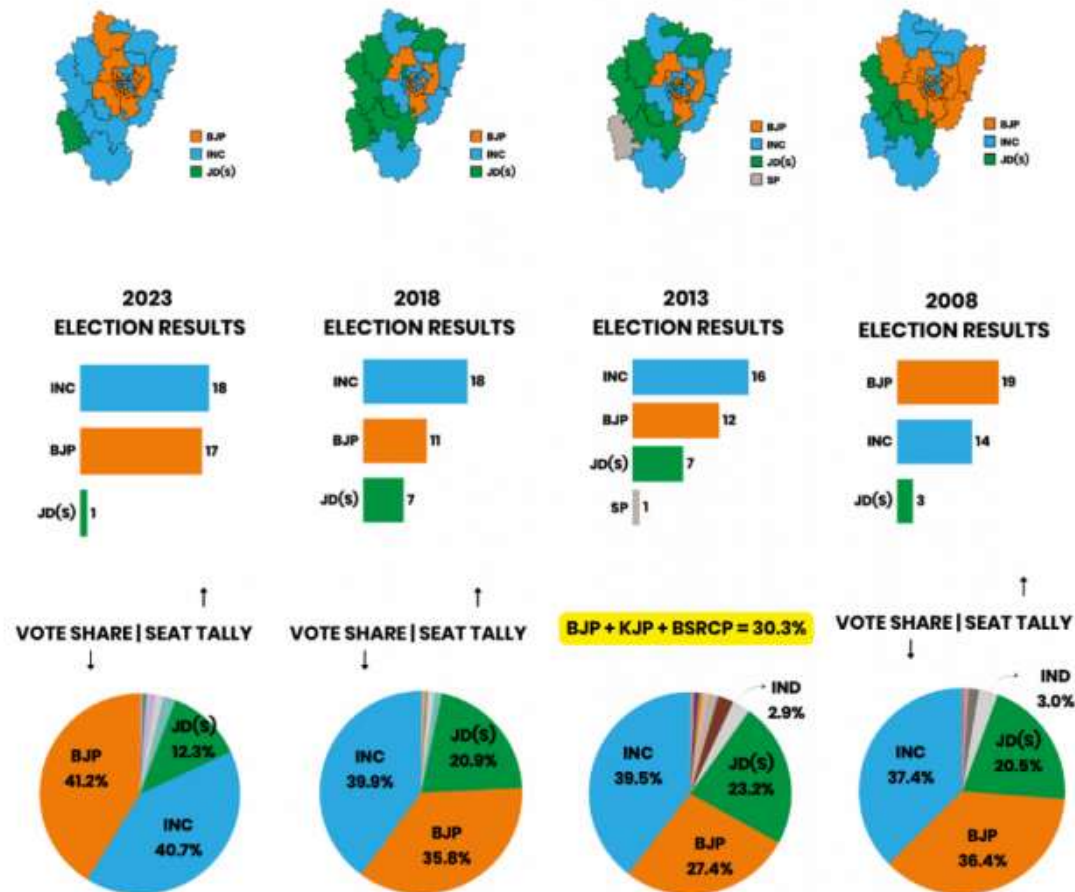
Bengaluru
Political Division
36 ACs

Seat Classification

Political Division	GEN	SC	ST	Total
Bengaluru Karnataka	30	6		36
Central Karnataka	21	7	8	36
Coastal Karnataka	20	1		21
Hyderabad Karnataka / Kalyana/ Gulbarga	20	8	3	31
Mumbai Karnataka/ Belgaum	42	7	1	50
Southern Karnataka/ Mysuru	40	8	1	50
Grand Total	173	36	15	224

When seen in the context of Karnataka's six political divisions, the Vidhan Sabha election study offers more insightful information. As seen in the above illustration, the regions include coastal areas, Bengaluru, Mysuru/South Belgaum/Kittur/Mumbai, Gulbarga/Kalyana/Hyderabad and central.

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BENGALURU POLITICAL DIVISION

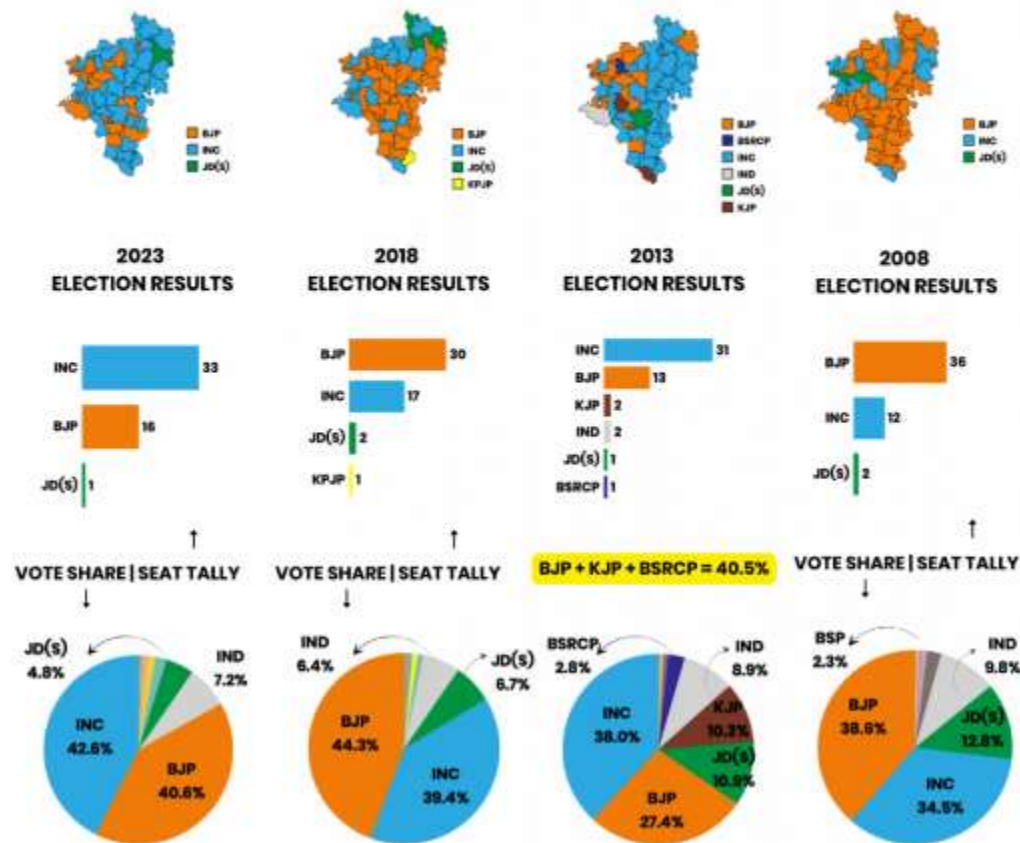
The INC has gradually increased their vote share in the legislative assembly election for the Bengaluru political range, the most urbanised division in Karnataka, from 37.40 per cent in 2008 to 39.50 per cent in 2013, further to 40.70 per cent for the 2023 legislative assembly.

In the year 2013, B.J.P., K.J.P., and B.S.R.C.P. received a joint 30.30% of the votes. In the 2023 electoral outcomes, the BJP managed to improve its proportion of votes, reaching 41.2%. In the Bengaluru division, the BJP increased their vote share (from 35.8% to 41.2%) and seat count (from 11 to 17).

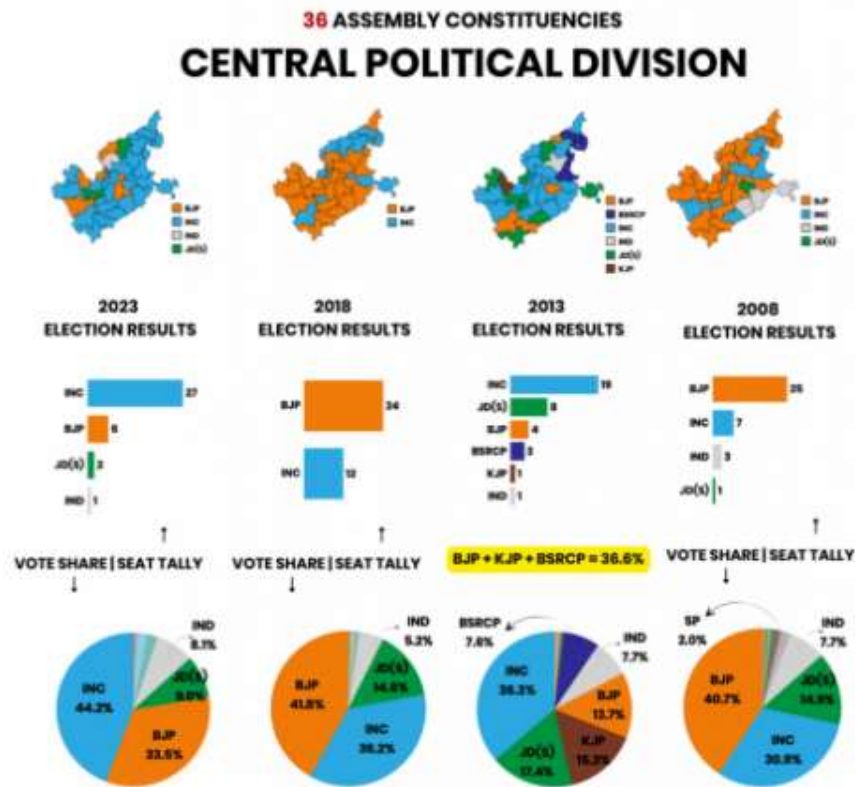
The largest loss in this division, however, has been for JD(S), which saw its vote share drop from 20.9% to 12.3% and its seat total drop from 7 to 1 between the most recent two assembly elections.

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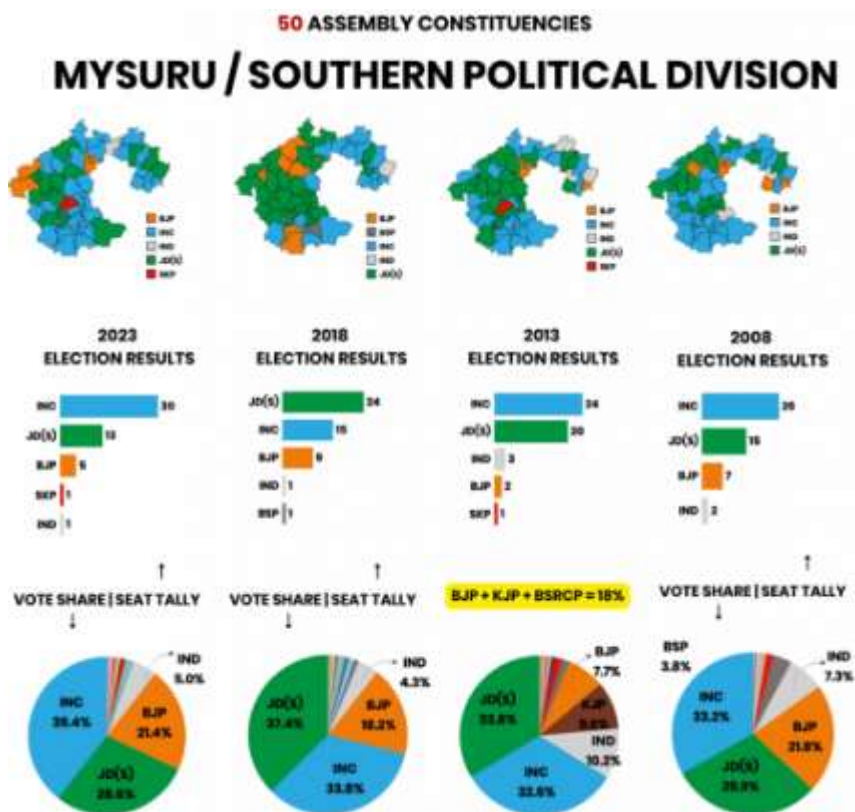
KITTUR / BELGAUM / MUMBAI POLITICAL DIVISION



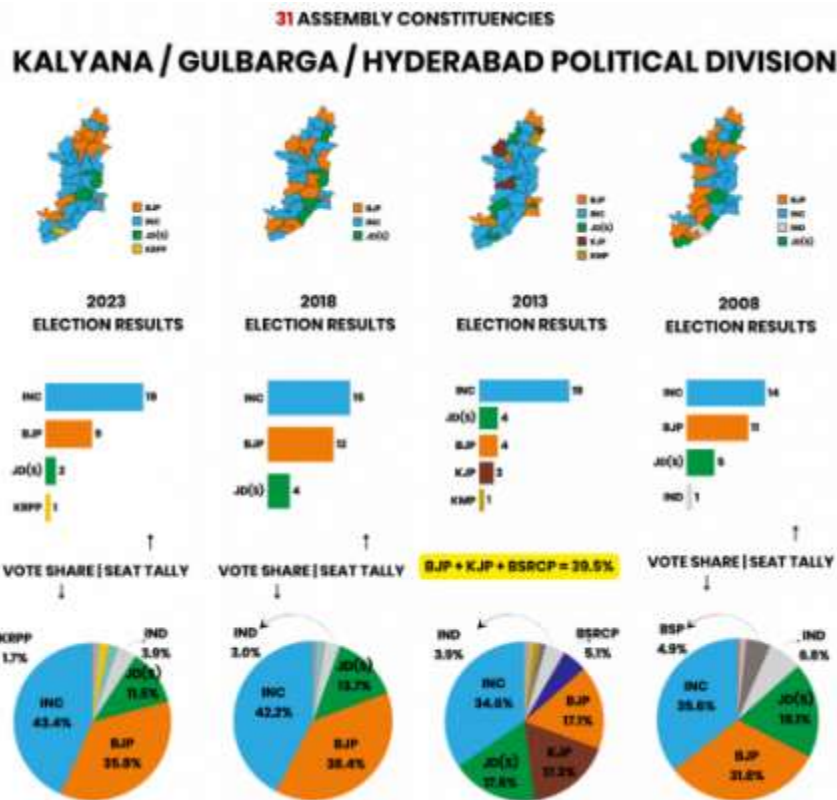
In the Kittur division, the Congress proved effective in eroding the BJP's control. Moreover, the 2023 Vidhan Sabha elections saw a notable improvement for the Belgaum Political Division, as the INC was able to surpass its prior results. In this division, the BJP had won the 2018 elections with a resounding victory. But in the recently held elections, the Congress succeeded in increasing its number up to 33 from 17 and its member percentage from 39.4 to 42.6.



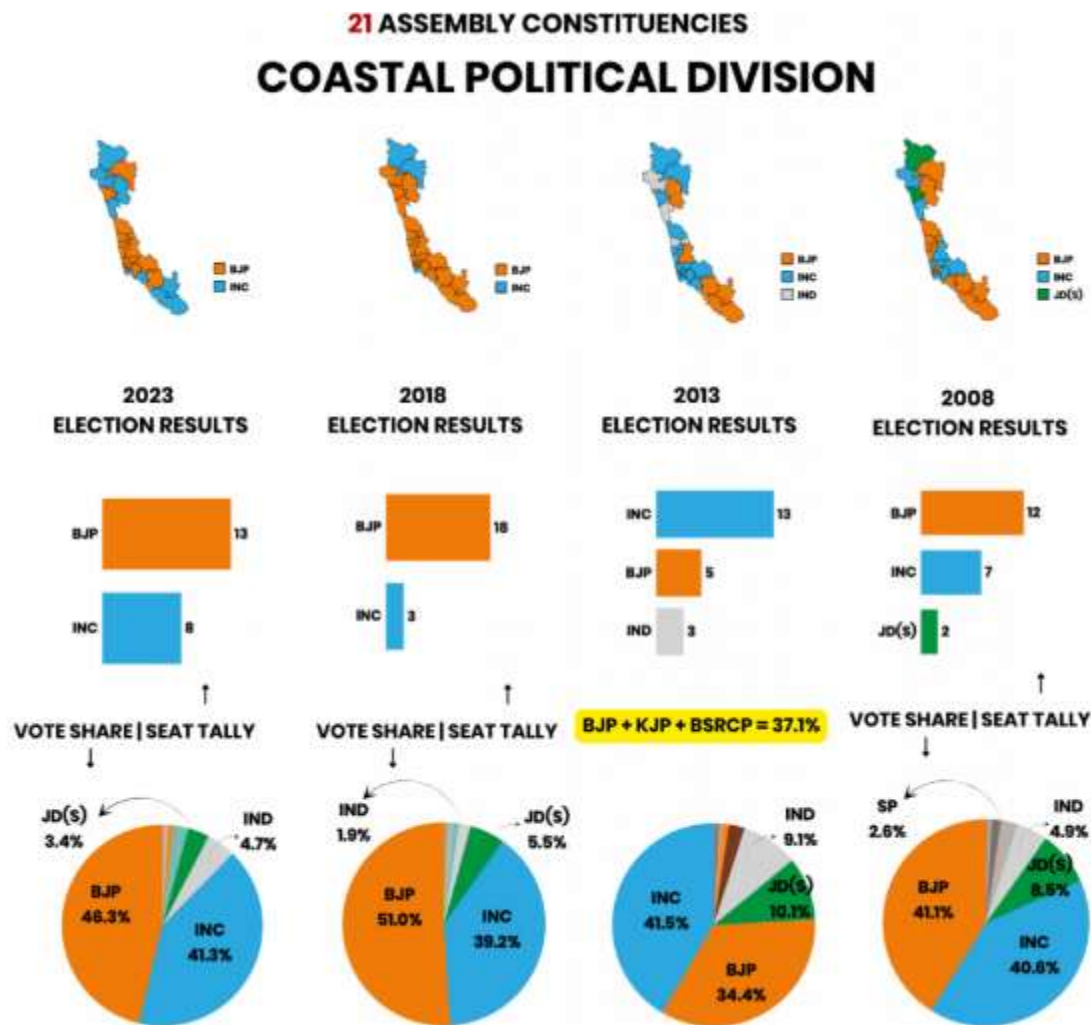
One of the BJP's worst setbacks was for the Central Zone, by losing six positions from its previous total of 24 members. The BJP performed admirably in the Central Political Division of the 2018 Vidhan Sabha elections, but the INC managed to greatly outperform it in the latest 2023 assembly election. INC had a gain in both their vote and seat totals, going from 12 to 27 seats and 36.2% to 44.2%, respectively. However, while increasing its seat total in this division to two, the vote percentage for JD(S) decreased, going from 14.60 to 9.



Contrary to common assumption, the BJP raised its vote percentage in the Mysuru division from 18.2% in 2018 to 21.4%. The JD(S), which gave up about 9% of the vote share in this election, changed the nature of politics as a whole. JD(S) and INC have been well-represented in Southern Karnataka, while BJP has steadily increased its voters during the last four elections. Moreover, Congress manages to raise its voters by 5.8 per cent by winning 30 positions in the 2023 Vidhan Sabha elections, showing a major gain from the 16 positions of the 2018 assembly election.



The 2023 assembly outcomes saw an improvement for Congress in the Gulbarga/Hyderabad Political Division by raising its number from 15 members to 19 members with a voter percentage improved from 42.20 to 43.40. INC had a strong showing in the 2018 Vidhan Sabha. On the other hand, the vote share and seat count for the BJP and JD(S) have both decreased.



The BJP has long maintained a grip on the Coastal Political Division. In this division, the BJP received 51% of the votes in the 2018 Vidhan Sabha. Despite having lost votes and seats in the 2023 Vidhan Sabha elections, it is still the biggest shark of this parliamentary district. INC contrasted significantly improved with raising its vote share from 39.2% to 41.3% and its numbers from three to eight. The BJP's voter percentage dropped from 51 to 46.30, and their positions went from eighteen to thirteen.

III. REASONS THAT LED TO THE CONGRESS' WIN AND THE BJP'S DEFEAT

The analysis of Congress' victory in Karnataka throws light on five reasons behind the Congress victory.

1. Localised Election Campaign

The BJP has traditionally held sway in the Coastal Political Division. In this division of the 2018 assembly, the BJP received 51 per cent of the voters' count. Even though it had decreases in vote share and seat count in the 2023 Vidhan Sabha elections, it still maintained its position as the major political hunk of this parliamentary district. However, INC significantly improved, going from 3 to 8 seats and from 39.2% to 41.3% of the vote.

The number of seats held by the BJP has reduced from 18 to 13, and its vote share has decreased from 51% to 46.3%. In addition, the party avoided criticising the BJP on national matters and hardly ever went after PM Modi directly. This strategy is comparable to the one used by the party in Himachal Pradesh last year, where concentrating only on local issues helped the party win.

2. Impactful Social Engineering

The Congress was able to successfully manage support from different groups in a state with a number of castes and subcastes as well as a sizeable Muslim minority. The Congress party's support among Scheduled Castes jumped from 46% in 2018 to 60% this year, according to the India Today Axis My India exit poll.

The Congress had strong support from 88 per cent of Muslims, according to the exit poll. The Congress profited from the BJP's declining support from the Lingayat community, which has historically supported the party. The combination of that and the continuous emphasis on AHINDA greatly aided the party.

3. Strong Local Leadership

The Congress may have the strongest local leadership in Karnataka, as each leader makes use of their particular strengths. The popular movement AHINDA, which stands for minorities, backward classes, and Dalits in Kannada, has been revived by former CM Siddaramaiah. The rising youth appeal of DK Shivakumar, the fact that he supported and campaigned for a number of Congress candidates, as well as his astute political scheming, were all significant factors.

Also relevant was Mallikarjun Kharge's election to the position of national president of the Congress after serving a record 37 years as an MLA from Gurmitkal, Karnataka. Despite now being a leader at the national level, Kharge closely campaigned this election cycle, spending many months ahead of the vote in the state. While Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi did campaign in the state, the local leadership was mostly responsible for carrying out the bulk of the work.

4. Threw Infighting to the Wayside

Although Siddaramaiah and DK Shivakumar are both vying for the coveted position of Karnataka Chief Minister, it is possible that the strong local leadership was a sticking point. Many predicted that this would surely lead to the two leaders publicly fighting, giving the BJP a sizeable edge.

However, the Congress leadership was able to maintain its composure because Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar ran their campaigns together. Shivakumar and Siddaramaiah sat down for a talk in the last week when reports started to circulate that the two may be heading towards enraged infighting in the lead-up to the elections. The conversation was videotaped and posted on all Congress sites.

Looking back on the results of the election cycle, the two talked about the congressional campaigning. The fact that the two were able to maintain their composure before the state's elections placed the party in good stead, even though much of this friendship was really for show and things may change once it comes to determining who will truly become the next chief minister.

5. BJP's Lapses

In addition to what the Congress did correctly, the opposition also benefited from the BJP's mistakes. After B. S. Yediyurappa resigned as chief minister, the BJP, for one, lacked a potent local leadership. CM Bommai wasn't quite as well-liked as his predecessor, despite being a Lingayat himself.

The Lingayat reservation demands were then poorly handled by the party, and its attempt to pacify the Lingayats and Vokkaligas by removing the Muslim reserve at the last minute fell flat.

The BJP was accused of corruption, and the "40% Sarkara" slogan especially resonated with Karnataka's residents, which greatly benefited the Congress. Finally, the BJP's desperation was evident when, over the course of the last ten or so days, the state witnessed a number of rallies and road shows by PM Modi, the use of the Bajrang Bali narrative to criticise the Congress' manifesto promise to outlaw the Bajrang Dal, and the bringing up of the Tipu Sultan issue. None of these tactics ultimately paid off for the BJP, directly helping the Congress.

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