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PERSPECTIVE

The 2024 Indian Election Results and Its Development Correlates – An Update

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi has just about begun his third consecutive term. Since the country's independence in 1947, only the Congress stalwart, Jawaharlal Nehru, had the honor of being the country's Prime Minister for three consecutive terms. Prime Minister Modi has thus rewritten history. Although the actual number of parliamentary seats for the Lok Sabha that the National Development Alliance (NDA, led by Prime Minister Modi) has been somewhat less than most opinion and exit polls predicted, NDA still has a comfortable majority.

Upon swearing in as the Prime Minister for a third consecutive term, he has formed his cabinet. In his third term, Prime Minister Modi has a job cut out for him: fostering rapid economic growth, reducing the economic and social inequities in the country, and at the same time raising the status of the country on the world stage – Vishwa Guru – as he is so fond of referring to it. Even as he focuses on achieving these forward-looking goals for the country, it is also an opportune time to take a look at the political landscape that emerged from the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

Figure 1 plots the percent of seats won by the National Development Alliance (NDA – headed by Prime Minister Modi) in each State and the State-wise percent of deviations in HDI from its national average of 63.3 – referred to as 'adjusted HDI'. There is a notable negative correlation between State-wise percent of seats won by the NDA and the percentage deviations in HDI from its national average. The two lines in the Figure are indeed the obverse of each other: peaks in the percent of State-wise seats won by the NDA are inversely correlated with the troughs in the 'adjusted HDI' and vice versa. The average HDI for all the States in India stands at 63.3, with Kerala posting the highest figure of 75.2, closely followed by Goa (75.1), Chandigarh (74.4),

and Puducherry (72.1). In contrast, at the lower end of the spectrum, Bihar has the lowest HDI of 57.1, closely followed by Uttar Pradesh (59.2), Jharkhand (58.9) and Madhya Pradesh (59.6).

HDI is a composite measure of socioeconomic development that not only includes per capita income but also incorporates health and education indicators of the population. More specifically, HDI has three components: per capita income, educational achievements, and health indicators, all three weighted equally. In one simple stroke, the HDI, as the very name suggests, reflects the socioeconomic development, not just the per capita income, of a State. (<https://globaldatalab.org/shdi/table/shdi/IND/>).

It is interesting that a 2021 paper by the Pew Research Center, authored by Jonathan Evans, found that “in the 2019 general elections, BJP received some of its highest vote shares in the Northern (68%) and Central (65%) regions of the country. By comparison, 46% of Hindu voters in the East and just 19% of the South Indian voters said that they voted for the BJP” (<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2021/08/05/in-india-hindu-support-for-modis-party-varies-by-region-and-is-tied-to-beliefs-about-diet-and-language/>). We now know most of the voters for the BJP and its allies came mostly from regions with low socioeconomic development, represented by HDI, which is a far better proxy for socioeconomic development than the per capita income.

HDI is a much broader measure of socioeconomic development than per capita income in whatever way the latter is measured – at current prices, at constant prices, or at purchasing power parities. HDI had its origins in the scholarly work of two well-known economists – Mahbub Ul Haq and Amartya Sen. The Index ranges from 0 to 1; But to make it user-friendly, I have multiplied the published figures by 100, so it ranges from 0-100. This does not any harm the Human Development Index, or the results derived from it.

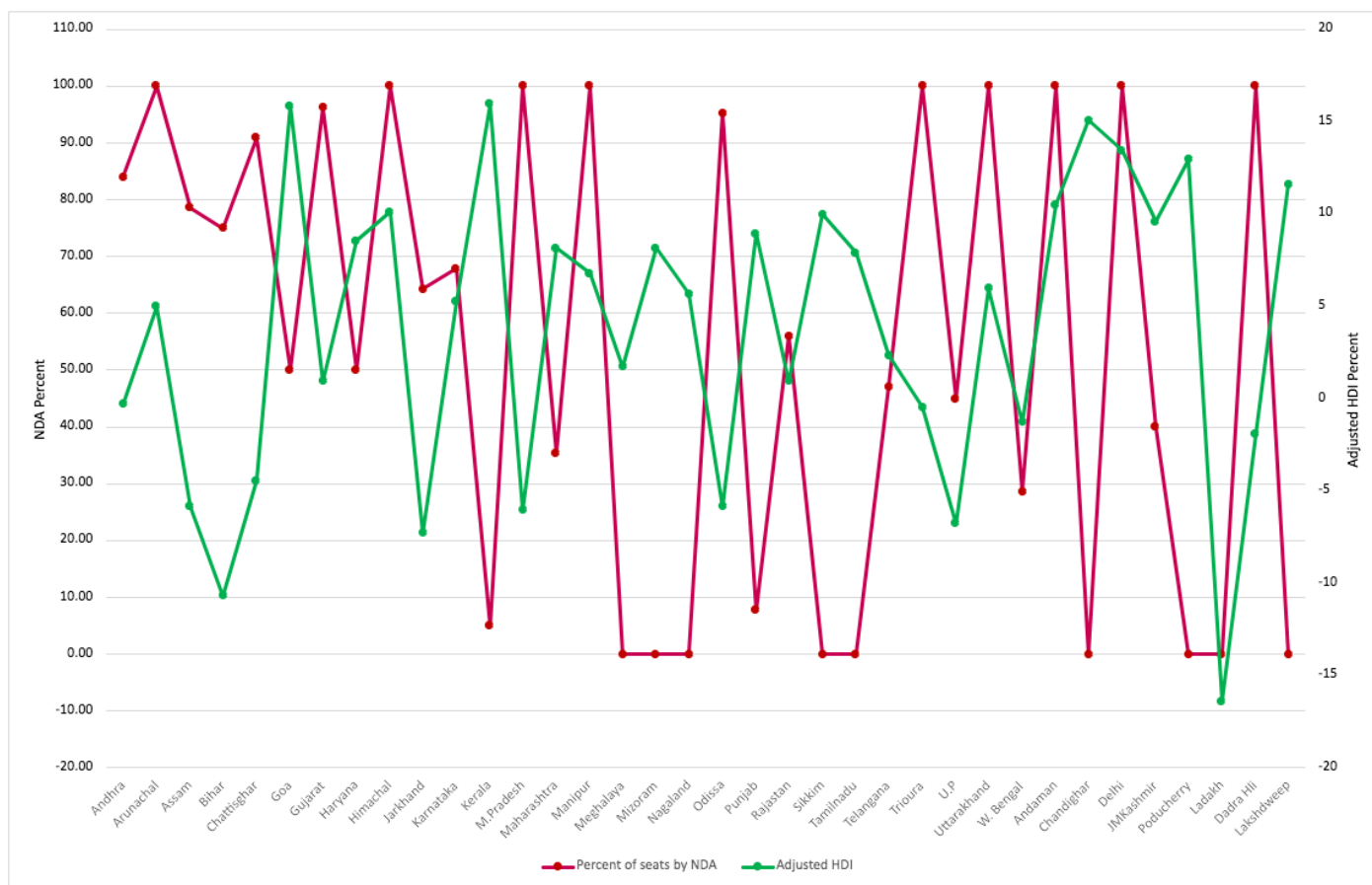
It is plausible that there must be differences voting patterns across sub-regions within a State and also between urban and rural Voters. Much as I would have liked to look at those differences and their voting patterns, I am constrained by the fact that the data for HDI are available only at the State-level. Note also that I am not using any opinion polls or exit polls of any kind, but use the actual numbers after the elections were completed. The key message from all this seems to be that the poorer sections of the 1.4 billion Indians are looking up to PM Modi as their savior, one who could help them in getting out of their multi-faceted poverty and promote their well-being.

Figures 2 and 3 compare the results of the 2024 parliamentary election results with those of the 2019 results. One could easily see how number of parliamentary seats won by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) declined sharply from 303 in 2019 to 240 in 2024. In 2019, the party had lost on a thin stripe of the southeastern parts of the country. That stripe has significantly widened by 2024. In addition, the party has also lost its parliamentary seats in the northern tips of the country. In other words, in 2024 the party won mostly in the central parts of the country. To put it in geometrical language, in 2019 the BJP had nearly an ‘*oval-shaped*’ presence covering most parts

of country. But by 2024, that ‘oval shape’ has been vastly compressed. Indeed, BJP’s presence is now confined mostly to the central parts of the country.

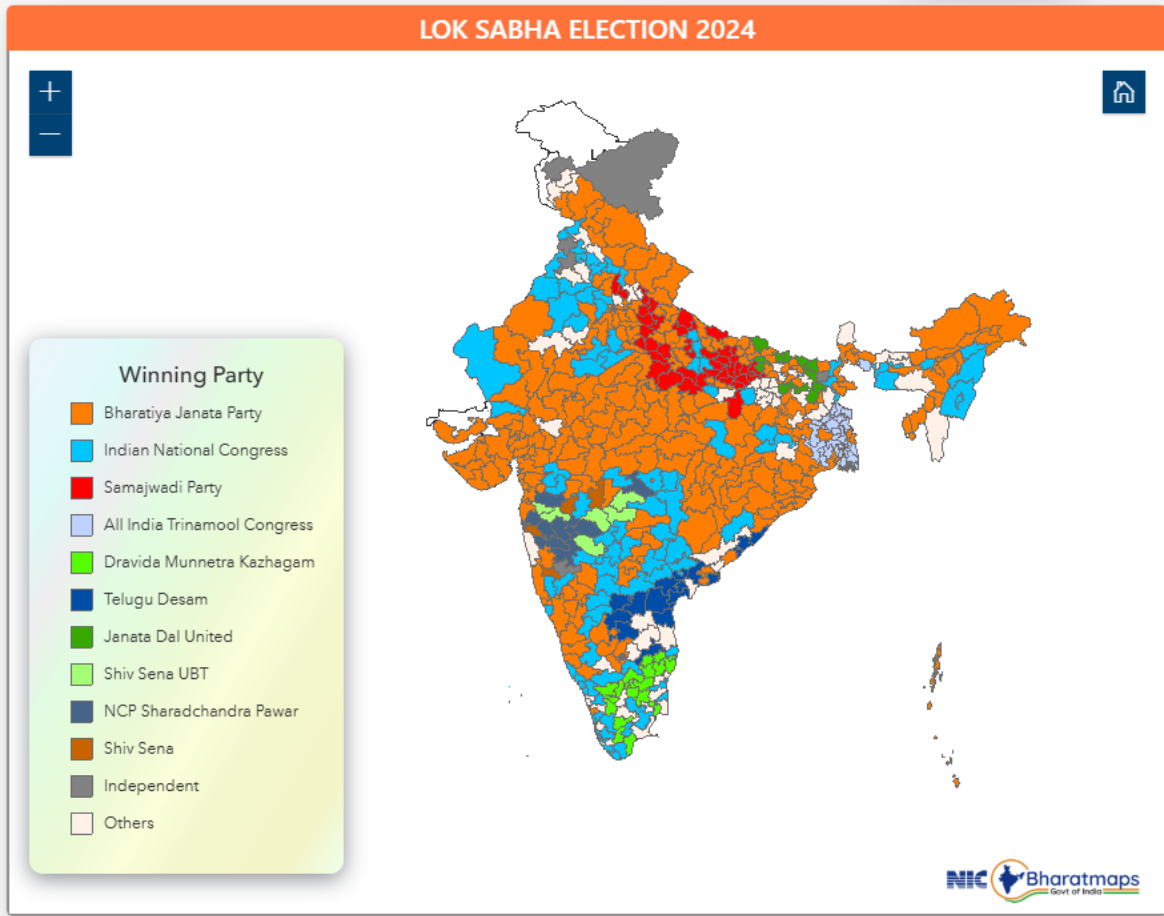
There is a flood of information, news, and analysis of the 2024 Indian elections, perhaps keeping in line with the size of our country’s population and also due to India’s good old tradition of public debate and pluralism -- proclivity for prolixity -- that Professor Amartya Sen – had so eloquently explained in his classic book ‘The Augmentative Indian’. In that spirit, this Update adds only a bit of addition to the flood of information and analysis that already exists on the 2024 Indian election results.

Figure 1: State-wise Percent of Parliamentary Seats Won by NDA the State-wise Adjusted HDI



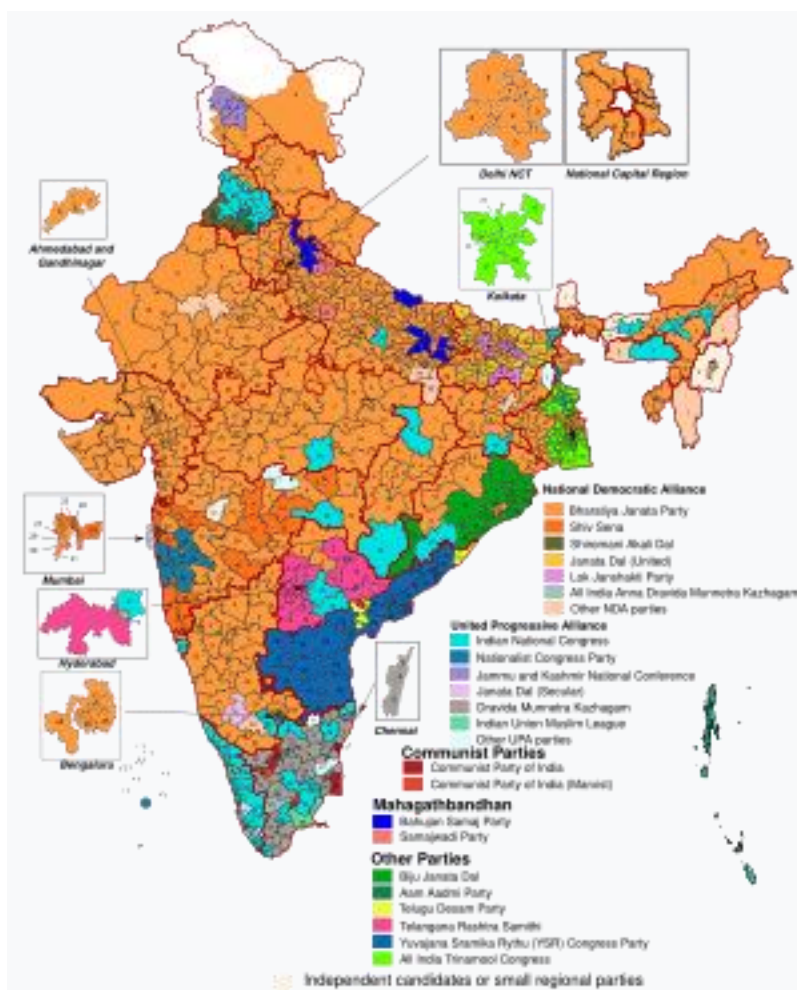
Source: Computed from data Sourced from (<https://globaldatalab.org/shdi/table/shdi/IND/>) (accessed on 14 June 2024 – for the Human Development Index and <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/lok-sabha-elections-2024-breakdown-of-state-wise-results/articleshow/110730725.cms> (sourced on 14 June 2024 for the State-wise results of the 2024 Indian election results).

Figure 2: Party-Wise 2024 Indian Parliamentary Election Results



Source: <https://bharatmaps.gov.in/election2024/> (accessed on 2 July 2024)

Figure 3: Party-Wise 2019 Indian Parliamentary Election Results



Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Results_of_the_2019_Indian_general_election (accessed on 2 July 2024)

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