

Review of: "Indian National Congress's Hits and Misses in General Elections 2024"

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Indian National Congress's Hits and Misses in General Elections 2024

Introduction

The research paper on the Indian National Congress's (Congress) performance in the 2024 General Elections offers an insightful analysis of the sociopolitical dynamics within Indian society. This paper highlights the intricate relationship between political institutions, leadership structures, and societal changes influencing electoral outcomes. Congress's electoral journey is examined not merely as a political contest but as a reflection of deeper social currents, including class, caste, regional identities, and the evolving nature of democratic engagement in India.

Historical Context and Party Identity

Congress, once a hegemonic force in Indian politics, historically positioned itself as the vanguard of the Indian freedom struggle and the architect of the post-independence state. The party's decline in recent decades is a political shift and reflects a broader transformation in Indian society. New identity politics and economic liberalisation have challenged traditional authority and political allegiance. The paper traces Congress's identity crisis to its failure to adapt to these societal shifts, highlighting the implications of its decline on the lived realities of India's diverse populace. The weakening of local party offices, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas, reflects a broader erosion of traditional party structures, which have historically served as mediators between the state and the citizenry.

Leadership Dynamics and Social Stratification

One of the paper's central themes is the role of dynastic leadership in shaping Congress's fortunes. From a sociological perspective, the persistence of dynastic control within Congress can be seen as both a product and a perpetuator of social stratification in India. The Gandhi family's dominance has reinforced the hierarchical nature of the party, where power is concentrated among a select few, often at the expense of broader democratic participation within the party. This leadership structure mirrors the broader societal patterns of patronage and hierarchy characterising Indian society. The failure to promote leadership from diverse social backgrounds within Congress can reflect the party's inability to engage with marginalised communities' aspirations. As Indian society becomes more socially and politically fragmented, the party's reliance on a narrow elite for leadership undermines its ability to resonate with the increasingly pluralistic electorate.

Electoral Performance and Regional Variations

The paper's analysis of Congress's electoral performance across different regions of India reveals the complex interplay between regional identities and national politics. The uneven impact of Congress's strategies, such as the 'Bharat Jodo Yatra,' underscores the growing importance of regionalism in Indian politics. This regional variation can be understood as a reflection of India's diverse socio-cultural landscapes, where local issues and identities often take precedence over national narratives.

The success of regional parties and the BJP in these elections highlights the growing significance of regional identities in shaping electoral behaviour. Congress's failure to effectively engage with these regional dynamics indicates a broader disconnect between the party's national leadership and the local realities of Indian voters. The paper suggests that Congress's revival will depend on its ability to decentralise its decision-making processes and empower regional leaders who can effectively address their constituencies' specific needs and aspirations.

Class, Caste, and Political Realignment

The paper also discusses the role of economic distress and social justice issues in Congress's campaign strategy. These issues are deeply intertwined with the class and caste structures of Indian society. Congress's focus on these issues reflects its historical role as a party that championed the cause of the marginalised. However, the party's failure to translate these issues into electoral success suggests a shift in the political alignments of these social groups. The upsurge of the BJP and other regional parties can be seen as part of a broader political realignment, where traditional support bases of Congress, particularly among lower castes and economically disadvantaged groups, have shifted their allegiance in response to changing social and economic conditions. The paper argues that for Congress to reclaim its position, it must reassess its ideological stance and policy positions to align with the evolving aspirations of these groups.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the paper comprehensively analyses the factors contributing to Congress's performance in the 2024 General Elections. The party's challenges are deeply rooted in the broader transformations within Indian society. The decline of Congress is not merely a political phenomenon but a reflection of the changing social fabric of India. For Congress to revive itself as a political force, it must engage with these sociological realities. This involves addressing leadership and organisational structure issues and reconnecting with the diverse social groups that form the backbone of Indian society. The future of Congress will depend on its ability to advance in response to these changing social dynamics and redefine its role in a rapidly transforming India.

Thus, the paper has analysed the facts, tried novelty in its approach, and recommended publication with editorial inputs.