

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

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This article is well worth a read. It's clear and offers a nuanced analysis of why the Congress Party, led by Rahul Gandhi, failed to win the Indian General Elections of 2024. In terms of novelty, it offers a useful analysis of why Congress failed to address grassroots factionalism and dissensions.

The article should aspire to offer a more in-depth explanation of some of the factors it identifies for the failure of Congress to win.

First, the author should explain why the BJP election manifesto and campaigning worked. One reason could be that Congress's call for a secular-based democracy and its grand slogan of saving democracy sounded hollow to voters due to its record of divisive politics, corruption, and the absence of intra-party democracy. The author should explain this in a paragraph or so.

Second, these lines from the article need a more in-depth explanation: "It failed to revive in the 2019 national elections, as populist demagoguery and promising the moon did not appeal to the voters, resulting in a slight increase in parliamentary seats. A much deeper assessment of why it failed should be offered here, right in the beginning.

Third, these lines from the article need more assessment: "The dynastic leadership of RG remains a liability as it failed twice in winning national elections, but Congress reposed faith in him. In the 2024 elections, the party went to lengths to neutralize the negativity of his personality traits and minimize the impact of inherited family legacies, but he once again failed in bringing back the party to power." Explain more about this deep-seated loyalty to a family (Gandhi) that is turning into a liability for Congress. What are the inherent antecedent conditions that render Congress vulnerable to this kind of dynastic fealty? Moreover, why is the Gandhi family itself not reflective enough to realize they are a liability, not an asset, to Congress, given the clear indication of their failure to win? The author should explain this fixation with the Gandhi family for Congress since his readership is global.

Finally, I found the paragraph on party leadership transition in provinces rather useful. Offering some examples of provincial leadership changing parties will prove effective. A case in point is the Chief Minister of a major historically Congress-led state like Assam, where Himanta Biswa Sarma, a top-level Congress leader, changed parties to the BJP. Deciphering the reasons why he did so will prove useful.

This article is a good addition to the literature on Indian elections. It, however, requires some in-depth explanations along the lines suggested in this review.

