

Spatio-Temporal Analysis of Electoral Performance of Political Parties in Narnaund Assembly Constituency, Haryana

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Abstract

The paper is an effort to trace the spatial pattern of support and electoral performance of political parties at a sub-assembly (Narnaund) level in the 2009, 2014 and 2019 state assembly elections. The paper is based on secondary vote share data to the parties compiled from Form-20 (Final Result Sheet) of the Election Commission of India. Descriptive statistics, frequency tables, and maps were used as analysis tools. It was found that the assembly witnessed two tri-polar contests in 2009 and 2014, and a bipolar contest in 2019. Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) was the only consistent party in the assembly, as it increased its vote share in every election. The spatial pattern of support suggests that the BJP dominated the eastern part of the assembly, while the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) dominated the southern part. The western part was a direct battlefield for the BJP and the INLD. Both parties had stable support in the assembly. INLD lost much of its support base to the Jan Nayak Janta Party (JJP) in the 2019 elections.

Keywords: Assembly elections, party performance, spatial pattern of support, Narnaund assembly constituency.

Introduction

Political parties contest elections through their candidates. Candidates may contest as party representatives or as independents. Those who contest elections under party symbols seek to promote their party's agenda or ideology within the constituency and aim to connect with the state

leadership to secure votes. In contrast, independent candidates focus more on local issues and emphasise localism. Nonetheless, various factors influence voting decisions, which can vary from one place to another. Consequently, it is challenging to ascertain why people vote in a particular manner (Amani,

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1974). Additionally, the level of political office is a significant factor in voting patterns, as voters tend to participate more in assembly elections than in Lok Sabha elections (Chandidas, 1972).

Not only the voting participation but voting behaviour also changed with the level of elections. A study analysed the voters' preferences in assembly vis-à-vis parliamentary elections and also traced the positive correlation between voter participation and urban development. Further, the study finds out the regional and temporal variations in the voting participation of women. The research concludes that secular considerations play a more important role in parliamentary elections than state assembly elections, where local, regional and ethnic issues become more important (Sharma, 1992).

State politics and local issues played an important role in the voting pattern at the assembly level. The state politics interacted with national politics. Haryana is one of the best examples of this phenomenon, as the last four state elections were won by the parties that won the national elections. Thus, state politics or local politics (at the assembly level) are sometimes realigned under national party labels and also under politicians (Wallace, 1980). The assembly elections of 2014 considered a paradigm shift in the state politics. The election was considered a turning point in state

politics as a new party grabbed the state's power for the first time (Singh, 2014). This was also an example of the realignment of state politics with national politics. The election was labelled by a party as well as a politician.

Political parties also strive to increase their vote share. Parties try many ways to win voters' support, one of which is to attract voters from competitor parties. However, the potential to attract votes in different ways differs by party and place (Lichteblau, Giebler, and Wagner, 2020).

Electoral geography is concerned with mapping the voting distribution and is explained by non-spatial sociological factors. It also traces the spatial patterns of support for the different parties. This support may vary from place to place and election to election (Agnew, 1996 & Sharma, 2006).

Electoral Performance

The Narnaund assembly constituency in Haryana had a tri-polar contest in the 2009 assembly elections as the top three performers secured above 90 per cent of votes, while all other had less than 10 per cent. In 2014, it was again tri-polar as the top three performers secured above 88 per cent of votes, but the others got less than 10 per cent. It was bipolar in the 2019 assembly elections as top two performers secured above 88 per cent of votes, and none of the others secured 10 per cent or above. In terms of parties, it was among the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD),

Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) and Indian National Congress (INC) in 2009. In 2014, it was among the BJP, INLD, and an Independent. In 2019, it was between the Jan Nayak Janta Party (JJP) and the BJP. Thus, four political parties had their vote bank in the assembly constituency (Table 1).

Table 1

Narnaund Assembly Constituency: Vote Share (%) by Political Parties, 2009, 2014 and 2019.

Political Parties	2009	2014	2019
BJP	29.4	34.91	40.07
INLD	37.4	31.13	3.01
INC	29.57	7.28	5.37
JJP	NA	NA	47.97
Others	3.63	26.68	3.58

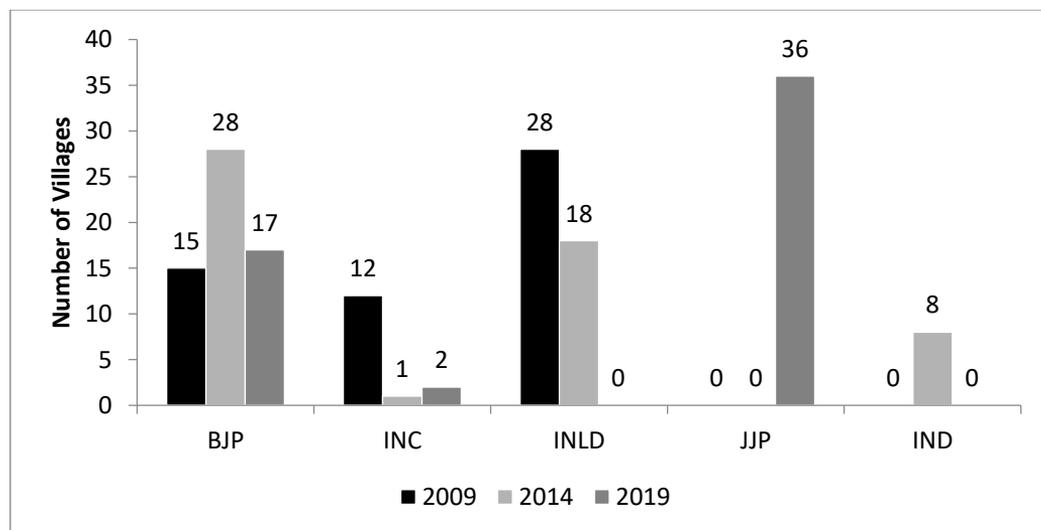
Source: Calculated from Form-20 (Final Result Sheet) of the Assembly.

Village-wise leading and next to leading party status also represents the spatial representation of political parties in the assembly. It is found that the assembly was won by the party that won the maximum number of villages. This was true for all three elections under study. However, the number of winning villages changed, as it was 28 by INLD in 2009, 28 by BJP in 2014, and 36 by JJP in 2019 (Figure 1).

The spatial distribution of political representation suggests that INLD dominated in the northern and southern parts of the assembly. The BJP dominated in the western and eastern parts of the assembly, and a candidate who contested all the three elections but on different symbols,

Figure 1

Narnaund Assembly Constituency: Performance of Leading Political Parties at Village Level, 2009, 2014 and 2019.



*Data is not available at the village level. Polling station-wise data provided by the election commission was recast at the village level. Digits denote the number of villages in which a political party was leading in terms of total votes polled at polling stations of the village.

i.e. on INC symbol in 2009, Independent in 2014 and on JJP symbol in 2019, dominated in the central part. However, INC did not have any specific part, and JJP canvassed almost the entire assembly constituency in the 2019 elections. (Map-1). Further electoral performance and spatial support of these parties will be discussed. Frequency tables and maps of the vote share categories in the assembly present the level of performance. Any party securing above 50 per cent of the vote share in a village is categorised as very high. In the same way, 40 to 50 per cent is high, 30 to 40 per cent is moderate, 20 to 30 per cent is low, and below 20 per cent is very low.

Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP)

BJP is one of the important players in the assembly. The party won the assembly in the 2014 assembly elections. The party's vote share increased continuously from 2009 to 2019. In the 2009 assembly elections, the party secured 29.4 per cent of total valid votes, which increased to 40.07 per cent in 2019 (Table 1). While the distribution of vote share was analysed village-wise, it was

found that only two villages were above 50 per cent of the vote share for BJP in 2009, which increased to 10 villages in 2019. Maximum villages voted 20 to 30 per cent of votes to BJP in 2009, 30 to 40 per cent in 2014 and 40 to 50 per cent in 2019. Thus, the party's growth also had its spatial dimensions (Table 2).

Table 2
BJP: Vote Share Category-wise Frequency of Villages

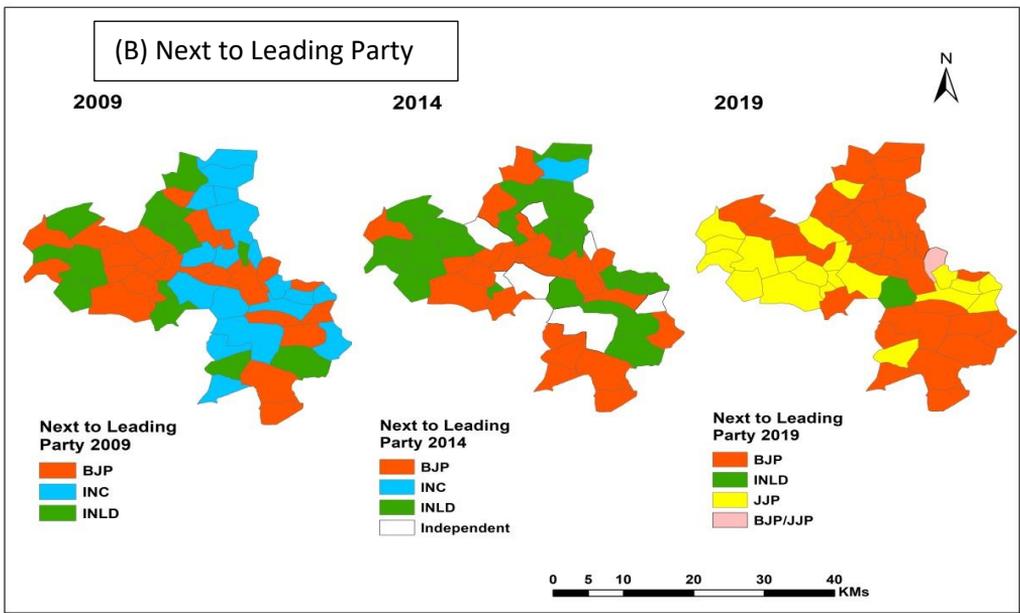
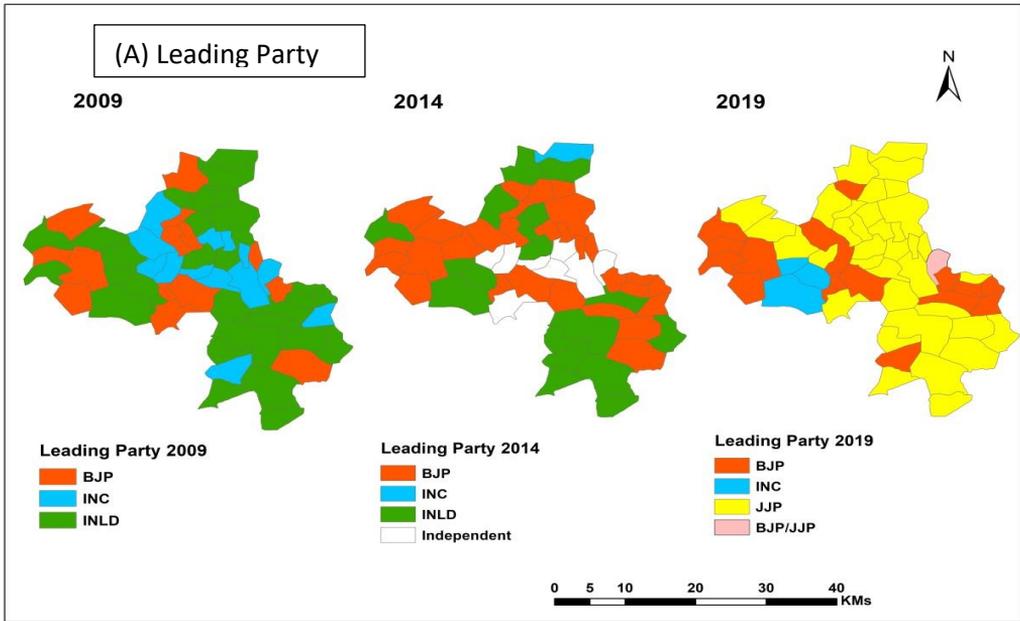
Vote %	BJP 2009	BJP 2014	BJP 2019
	Number of Villages	Number of Villages	Number of Villages
Above 50	2	3	10
40-50	3	14	20
30-40	20	24	20
20-30	22	9	4
Below 20	8	5	1
Total	55	55	55

Source: Computed from Form-20 (Final Result Sheet) by the Election Commission of India for the Assembly

*Polling station-wise data provided by the election commission was recast at the village level. The same holds for subsequent tables.

Map 1

Narnaund Assembly Constituency: Political Representation of Leading Party (A) & Next to Leading Party (B) at Village Level, 2009, 2014 and 2019.



* Data is not available at the village level. Polling station-wise data provided by the election commission was recast at the village level. Maps show the villages in which a political party was leading or next to leading in terms of total votes polled at polling stations of the village.

Note: The Polling station-wise data provided by the election commission was recast at the village level. Further, the Narnaund assembly constituency has 63 census villages, including the urban area of the Narnaund Municipal Committee, which were merged into 55 units/villages for statistical analysis and 51 units/villages for spatial (Maps) analysis (Six Units/Villages represented by two units/villages in map i.e. Bass Badshapur, Bass Akbarpur, Bass Khurd Bejan and Bass Azamshapur represented by Bass; Sisai Kalirawan and Sisai Bola represented by Sisai).

The vote share distribution was put on the maps for spatial analysis of the party support. In 2009, the party received major support from the western parts of the assembly. Another strong spatial belt was in the eastern part of the assembly. However, the belt of the west also extended towards the central-northern parts of the assembly. Khanda Kheri, Sindher, Gamra, Jamni Khera, and Majod were the villages that voted for the BJP in High and Very High categories.

In the 2014 elections, major support for the party was in the assembly's western, northern and eastern villages. Some new villages in *the High* vote share category were added from the central and south-eastern part of the assembly. Khanda Kheri, Dharam Kheri, Sindher, Khera Rangran, Masudpur, Gamra, Jamni Khera, Bhaklana, Haibatpur, Mohla, Nara, Gurana, Lohari Ragho, Moth Rangran, Sisai Kalirawan, Madha and Puthi Saman were the villages given

support to the party in High and Very High categories of vote share.

In the 2019 assembly elections, parties' vote share and spatial support were strengthened, but even after that, the party could not save the assembly. The support was strengthened throughout the assembly, but the major additions came from the central and southern parts. This time, 30 out of 55 villages were voted more than 40 per cent of votes, and ten villages were voted more than 50 per cent to the party. The election was bipolar contest, and the BJP lost to the JJP in the assembly election. Major parts of support for the party were the western and eastern parts of the assembly. However, the central part of the assembly was added in 2014 and also existed in 2019. Thus, a straight belt of major support could be traced from east to west in the very centre of the assembly constituency (Map 2).

Indian National Lok Dal (INLD)

The Narnaund assembly was considered a stronghold of INLD. The party won the assembly in 2009 and was runner-up in 2014. In the last three elections, the party continuously lost its vote share. The party lost almost 34 per cent of the vote share in this period. Thus, the party was in fourth rank in 2019 (Table 1).

The village-wise distribution of votes to the party reflected that 25 villages voted above 40 per cent in

2009, and only six villages voted below 20 per cent. The highest number of villages was found in the 40- 50 per cent of the vote category. In 2014, the maximum number of villages was found in the 20-30 per cent vote category and in the Below 20 per cent category in 2019.

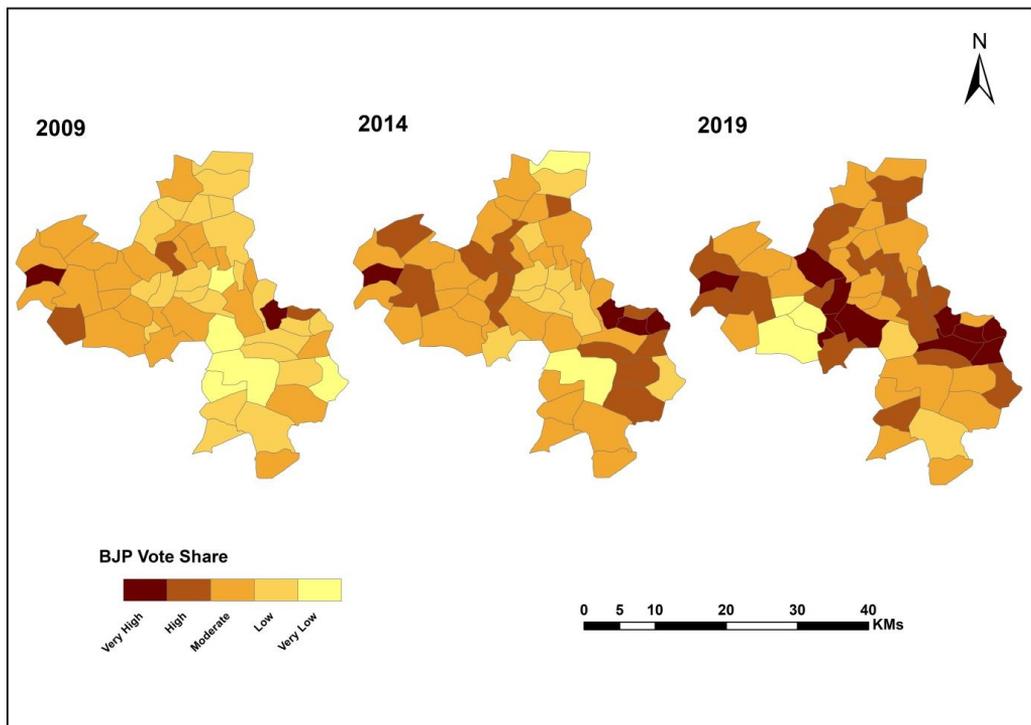
Drastically, 54 villages were in the lowest vote category out of 55 in 2019, and the single village was in the

30-40 per cent category. The only village, Petwar, was the native village of the candidate (Table 3).

Spatial analysis for the party in Narnaund suggested that the southern, northeastern and a belt in the western parts of the assembly were a major part of support for the party in 2009.

Map 2

Narnaund Assembly Constituency: Spatio-Temporal Pattern of Support to BJP in 2009, 2014 and 2019.



*Data is not available at the village level. The Polling station-wise data provided by the election commission was recast at the village level, as is also the case with Maps 3 and 4. Source: Computed from Form-20 (Final Result Sheet) by the Election Commission of India for the Assembly.

Table 3

INLD: Vote Share Category-wise Frequency of Villages

Vote %	INLD 2009	INLD 2014	INLD 2019
	No. of Villages	No. of Villages	No. of Villages
Above 50	7	3	0
40-50	18	11	0
30-40	16	15	1
20-30	8	16	0
Below 20	6	10	54
Total	55	55	55

The villages of Bass Akbarpur, Bass Badshahpur, Bass Khurd Bejan, Bhaklana, Madan Heri, Badala, Koth Khurd, Dharam Kheri, Khanpur, Petwar, Badchapper, Budana, Sisai Bola, Singhwa Khas, Mohla, Sisar, Bass Azamshahpu, Bhaini Amirpur, Rajpura, Nara, Jamni Khera, Singwa Ragho, Datta, Mirchpur, and Kinner received votes in the High and Very High categories for the party.

In 2014, the party lost 11 villages from the High and Very High categories, accounting for a total of 6.27% of its vote share. However, the primary support in this election came from the assembly's southern, western, and northern regions. Bass Badshahpur, Bass Akbarpur, Bass Khurd Bejan, Sisai Bola, Budana, Singhwa Khas, Khanpur, Badala, Ugalan, Madan Heri, Koth Khurd, Nara, Kheri Jalab, and Mohla were the villages within the assembly that voted in the High and Very High categories for the party. The 2019 assembly election was recognised as a game changer in the party politics of Narnaund, as the INLD recorded its lowest vote share. None of the villages cast their vote for the party,

even in the High category. The highest vote share came from Petwar village at 32.92 per cent. Consequently, the party lost all its stronghold areas in the assembly. The primary reason for this situation was the division within the INLD party, which was subsequently bifurcated into the INLD and JJP in 2018 (Map 3).

Indian National Congress (INC)

The INC was also a participant in the assembly but did not secure a seat at any time. The party relies on the vote banks of its candidates. In the last three elections, the party has consistently lost its vote share, decreasing to 5.37% of votes in 2019 from 29.57% in 2009 (Table 1).

The village-wise frequency distribution of vote shares for the party revealed that eight villages received more than 40 per cent of the total valid votes in the 2009 elections, whereas only eight villages received less than 20 per cent. However, the highest number of villages fell within the 20-30% vote category. In the 2014 election, only one village, Koth Kalan, received more than 40 per cent. This village was the candidate's native village for the party's election. Additionally, 52 out of 55 villages cast votes below 20 per cent of the total valid votes. The subsequent election in 2019 mirrored the previous outcome. Once again, only one village, Sisai Bola, voted above 50 per cent of the share, and it was also the candidate's native village. This time, 53 villages out of 55 received a vote share of less than 20 per cent (Table 4).

Table 4
INC: Vote Share Category-wise Frequency of Villages

Vote %	INC 2009	INC 2014	INC 2019
	No. of Villages	No. of Villages	No. of Villages
Above 50	4	0	1
40-50	4	1	0
30-40	16	0	1
20-30	23	2	0
Below 20	8	52	53
Total	55	55	55

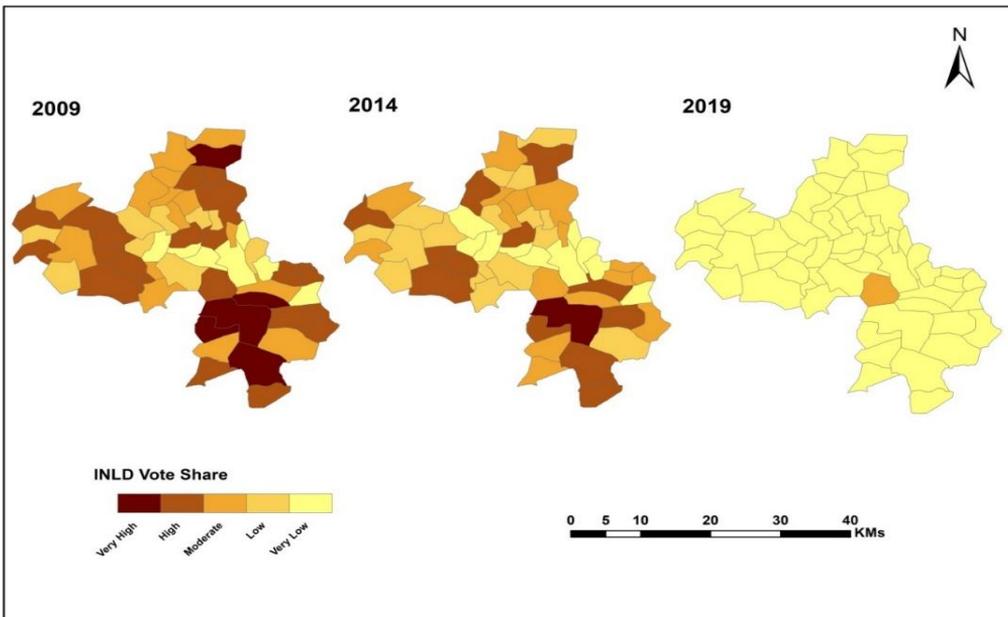
Source: Computed from Form-20 (Final Result Sheet) by the Election Commission of India for the Assembly.

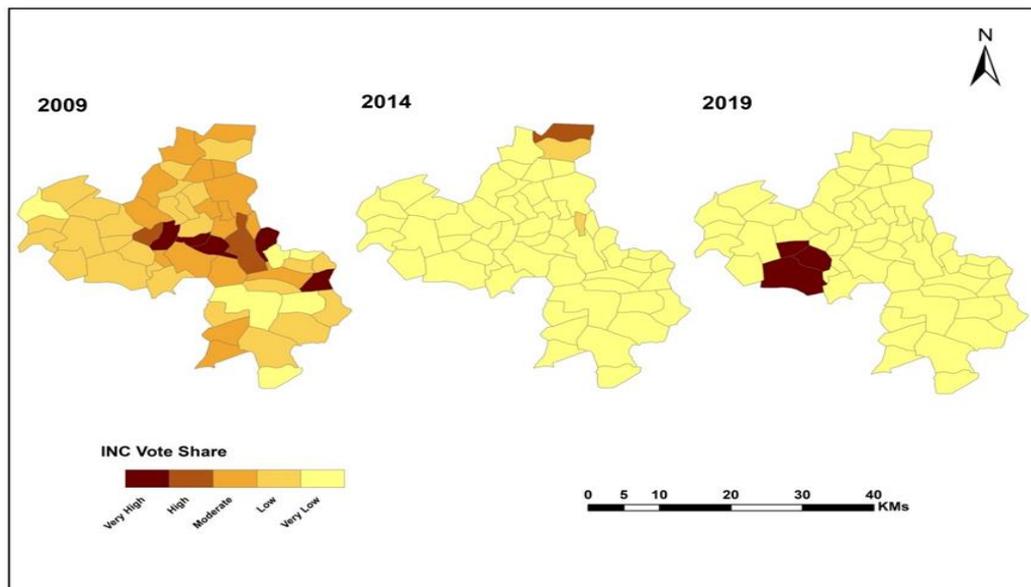
While spatial dimensions of party performance were traced, it was found that the party had no stronghold in the assembly. However, in the 2009 assembly election, a belt from north to south in the centre of the assembly voted more for the party. However, there were no traces

of the belt in the next two elections, and the party only performed up to the mark in the candidates' native villages. The effect is known as *localism* or *friends and neighbours voting* in electoral geography. Thus, the 2009 high support belt was also an effect of party the candidate. The candidate was not contested on the party symbol in 2014 and 2019 (Map 4).

It is clear from the maps that the party had no specific part of support in the assembly. However, it should not be concluded that the party was insignificant in the assembly. The INC secured five per cent and above vote share in the elections under study. The vote shares significantly impacted the results of the seats for other parties.

Map 3
Narnaund Assembly Constituency: Spatio-Temporal Pattern of Support to INLD in 2009, 2014 and 2019



Map 4*Narnaund Assembly Constituency: Spatio-Temporal Pattern of Support to INC in 2009, 2014 and 2019*

**Data is not available at the village level. Polling station-wise data provided by the Election Commission was recast at the village level.*

Conclusions

The performance of different political parties was different in the Narnaund assembly. Only the BJP was consistent, as the party increased its vote share election after election. In the 2009 elections, the INLD won the assembly in a tri-polar contest between INLD, BJP and INC. In 2014, the BJP won the assembly in another tri-polar contest between BJP, INLD, and the independent candidate. In 2019, JJP won the assembly in a bipolar contest between JJP and BJP. Thus, the BJP was a competitor in all three elections. The INLD as a party lost its support base to the JJP in 2019. The JJP was split from INLD in 2018, a year before the elections.

Another finding suggests that an increasing vote share alone does not guarantee win; the number of parties or contestants in contest is also a deciding factor. It is also a fact that in elections, the party that won the maximum number of villages wins the assembly. In the 2009 elections, the INLD won the assembly with 28 villages. The BJP also won 28 villages in 2014, and JJP won the assembly by winning 36 villages in 2019.

The spatial pattern of the leading and next to leading parties suggests that the western part of the assembly had a direct battle between BJP and INLD. A shift was noted in the central and northern parts of the assembly in the behaviour of the voters. In the southern part, the

INLD in the contest with BJP and the independent, and in the same way, BJP had a close contest against the independent and INLD in the eastern part. However, in the 2019 election, the fight was directly between JJP and BJP across the assembly, as JJP is a faction of the INLD, and represented by the candidate who had the impact in the assembly.

The BJP has a strong support base in the western and eastern parts of the assembly. The northern part of the assembly also supports the party with some deviation. However, the party's support bases in the central and southern regions are weaker.

The INLD has major support in the northeastern and southern parts of the assembly. The party also overlaps a strong support base with the BJP in the western part. The central and eastern parts of the assembly were weaker for the party. However, the INLD lost its entire support base in the 2019 elections after separating one faction, resulting in a new party named JJP.

The INC had no support base in the assembly. In the 2009 elections, the candidate of the party had some influence in the central part of the assembly, which includes the candidate's native village and its surrounding villages. After 2009, the party did not secure moderate vote shares except from the candidates' native villages. The BJP, JJP parties, and the candidate have a support base in the assembly.

Thus, the study presents the spatio-temporal support base and performance of the political parties in

the assembly. However, it is also important to know how to vote for a particular party or candidate, as various factors are responsible for voting behaviour.

A study on voting behaviour classified factors for voting into two major categories, i.e., money and meaning. Money stands for the transactional factors and meaning refers to the act of voting in the sense of duty and other values. The study finds that poor people also dislodged the transactional factors over meaningful factors and created a new social order. These non-transactional factors for voting are increased in Indian elections as the specific groups respond to the question of why they vote. However, the study still has not rejected the transactional factors and is still found behind the voting (Banerjee, 2019).

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